

Introduction

Daniel may be the only person in the Bible, besides Jesus Christ, of whom no sin is mentioned. Of course, Daniel was a sinner like the rest of us and saw himself as a sinner (9:20).

Apparently, as a teenager, maybe around 16 at the time, Daniel was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. The problem with dating Daniel's age is that this is the only framework we have to go on. The common practice was to take teenagers into the king's service.

As far as we know, Daniel never married, and he never returned to the land of Judah after he was taken, even though he lived all the way through the captivity. There were some who lived all the way through the captivity who did return to Judah (Ezra 3:12).

Daniel was from the tribe of Judah. He may have been from the lineage of David (1:3). He was physically attractive and intelligent. He was a contemporary of Ezekiel, both having been taken captive. In Ezekiel chapters 14 and 28, Ezekiel refers to Daniel as a righteous man.

While Ezekiel was older and lived among the captives in Babylon, Daniel lived with the king. Daniel served four kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus). Much like Joseph, Daniel was promoted over his contemporaries. He began by serving Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful man in the world. He saw the fall of Babylon and the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire. He saw the known world go through a major transition of empires.

He was a man of prayer and a student of Scripture. He was also skilled in the literature and wisdom of Babylon. He spoke and wrote Hebrew and Aramaic (the main Babylonian language). He changed from Hebrew to Aramaic in chapter 2 of the book.

Daniel wrote the book that bears his name (confirmed by Jesus in—Matthew 24:15). Daniel was not listed as a prophecy book when it was written. He was not called a prophet during his life. He was not considered to be a prophet until Jesus called him one. His book was part of the Scripture, but it was considered under the sacred writings, not prophecy. Daniel demonstrated that it is possible to consistently live for God in the midst of a society ruled by pagans. The reason is, God is in control of those pagan societies. What we see repeatedly in the book is that God's sovereign hand is over the nations of the world. *It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings* (Daniel 2:21).

Times of Daniel

Babylon and Egypt are at opposite ends of the Fertile Crescent and had a hatred for each other, like mega-powers competing for control of the world. In May–June 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar ended that struggle by capturing Egypt. Then he began working his way back to Babylon by capturing Syria and Judah. When his father died, he returned to Babylon to be crowned emperor. In September, he came back to Jerusalem and took Daniel captive.



In **597**, Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem again because of the rebellion of Judah's King Jehoichin, and that's when Ezekiel and his wife with 10,000 others were taken captive.

Nebuchadnezzar returned for a third time (fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel against Jerusalem), and he killed the remaining Jews and destroyed the Temple in **586 B.C.**, the time usually given for beginning of the Babylonian Captivity.

The 70 years of captivity of the Jews saw a lot of cultural changes for them. They took the Aramaic language as their own, which they were still speaking at the time of Christ. The other change was the creation of the synagogue and the Pharisees, rabbis (teachers) in the synagogues. It became the center of worship, education, and their whole social life. When they came back from the captivity, they not only rebuilt the Temple, they also continued to build synagogues. After the war of the Maccabees, the Pharisees separated from the Maccabees because the Maccabees set up a non-levitical priesthood in the Temple. When the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, the synagogues were the only place left for worship, and they were built all over the world.

The first 6 chapters are in chronological order. The rest of the book is not. In a sense, there are two books of Daniel overlaid on top of each other. One is the story of Daniel's life and his responses and challenges. The other is the prophecy that is foretold through Daniel's visions and interpretations. Unlike other prophecy books, Daniel tells things in **sequential order**. There are three places in Scripture that prophecy is given in sequence: Daniel, Matthew 24, and Revelation 6–19.

Daniel's prophecies also differ from the others in that they give **pinpoint detail** about the future. Daniel's prophecies are so accurate, that until the recent discovery of the Qumran scrolls, liberals dated Daniel as history in 150 B.C. But it's been confirmed that Daniel was copied as early as 250 B.C., and most of the specific accurate prophecies that Daniel made are prior to that time. Daniel predicted with detail the war with Antiochus Epiphanes and his abomination of desolation in the Temple. But his predictions don't stop there. He also predicted a future 7-year tribulation, and expands this abomination of desolation into a future tribulation. Jesus confirmed that what Daniel talked about was the time before His Second Coming (Matthew 24:15), but Daniel also predicted a future kingdom of the Messiah on the earth.

The History of the Last Five Kings

King **Josiah** was a godly king over Judah. He reigned for 31 years, but when the Egyptian Pharaoh Neco passed through Judah on his way to attack Assyria, Josiah met him in the Jezreel Valley, and Pharaoh killed him at Megiddo (2 Kings 23).

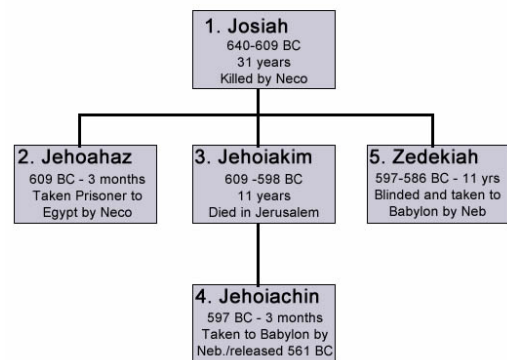
The people made Josiah's son **Jehoahaz** king, but he did evil in the sight of God. He reigned only 3 months when Pharaoh took him as prisoner to Egypt, and he died there (2 Kings 23:28-33).

Pharaoh then made Josiah's other son **Jehoichim** king of the Jews in 609 B.C. He was heavily taxed by Pharaoh. He also did evil in the sight of God (2 Kings 23:34-37). Jehoichim wasted the state funds building a new palace for himself. He also destroyed Jeremiah's writings, which warned of his future judgment. When Egypt fell to the Babylonians, he served them for three years, but then he rebelled (Jeremiah 22:13-19), which resulted in the first invasion in 605, when Daniel, and other young men, were taken captive to Babylon. Jehoichim died in Jerusalem in 598 B.C.

He was replaced by his son **Jehoiachin** (also called Jechoniah or **Coniah**), who was also an evil king in Judah. During his reign of 3 months, Babylon once again besieged Jerusalem in 597. At this second deportation, Jehoiachin, Ezekiel, and 10,000 Jews were taken captive to Babylon (2 Kings 24:6-16).

The king of Babylon then made Jehoiachin's uncle **Zedekiah** (Jehoiakim's brother, Josiah's other son) king of the Jews. He also did evil in the sight of God. When Babylon invaded Jerusalem for the third time in 586, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, they killed Zedekiah's sons before him and then put out his eyes and took him to Babylon, where he died (2 Kings 25). He was the last Davidic king of the Jews.

Judah's Last Five Kings



I must stop here to show a huge prophecy in Jeremiah 22:24-30. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God said of Coniah (Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim), *"I shall give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life...into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. And thus says the Lord, "Write this man down childless...For no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah."* But God had already promised David, *"I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his [David's] kingdom forever...your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever"* (2 Samuel 7:12-16).

So here's the issue. God promised David that one of his descendants would be on the Davidic throne forever. BUT God cursed Coniah [a Davidic king] and said no one from his descendants would sit on the throne. He had no children to reign. His uncle Zedekiah, a son of Josiah, reigned, but his sons were killed in front of him. So there were no Davidic descendants to reign.

But God had another plan. Rather than going through Solomon, Mary's ancestors went through David's son Nathan (Luke 2), so Jesus is of the bloodline of David but not through the cursed line of Coniah. The legal right to reign went through Joseph (Matthew 1), but Joseph's (cursed) blood was not in Jesus.

Therefore, both things are true. A descendant of David will be on the Davidic throne forever, that is, Jesus Christ. But also true, the blood descendants of Coniah will not be on the throne. They are cursed.

Chapter 1

The True Daniel Diet

Verse 1—In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it—This would be the first invasion, in 605 B.C. Jeremiah 25:1 says it was the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. The Jewish calendar began in September–October and the Babylonian one began in March–April. So this could just be the difference between Jewish and Babylonian reckoning.

APPLICATION—With the invasion of Babylon, the prophetic “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) began. It’s that extended period of time in which the Land given to Abraham and his descendants is occupied by Gentile powers and the Davidic throne is empty of any rightful heir in the Davidic line. The times of the Gentiles will continue until the Messiah returns and takes His rightful place as King of the Jews. [It has nothing to do with the church age.]

Verse 2— *The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand*—Babylon was sent by God to capture Judah. This is a judgment by God on Judah for their wickedness and idolatry. Jehoiakim remained in Judah, as a vassal to Nebuchadnezzar, but he rebelled, causing the second invasion. When he died, his son Jehoiachin (Coniah) became king in his place.

- ***along with some of the vessels of the house of God***—When King Hezekiah was healed, Babylon sent “get well” wishes to Hezekiah, who in arrogance showed them the treasures in the Temple (Isaiah 39). This becomes the “earthly” motivation for the Babylon invasion.
- ***and he brought them to the land of Shinar***, i.e., Babylon
- ***to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god***—Nebuchadnezzar took many of the vessels of the house of God back to Babylon and put them in the houses of his own idol gods.

Verse 3—*Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials*—called this six times (1:7-11, 18). “Official” is also the word for “eunuch.” Although Potiphar (who had a wife) was called this (Genesis 37:36), Jewish literature claims Daniel and these captives were castrated.

—to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles—they may have been considered hostages, to guarantee Judah’s submission to Babylon. At this point, they are a group of unknown young Israelites, to be manipulated by the Babylonians

Verse 4—*youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge*—being members of the royal family and nobles, it is assumed these young men already had the advantages of nobility, physically and mentally. They would already be trained and educated.

- ***and who had ability for serving in the king’s court***—not serving food but serving in some administrative way—maybe as intermediaries between Babylon and captured Judah.
- ***and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans***—This would assimilate them into the Babylonian culture, as well as court life.

Verse 5—*The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king’s choice* [lit. “delicacies”] ***food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king’s personal service***—This was a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy to King Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:18). This was a daily “brain washing” for a full 3 years.

Verses 6-7—*Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël and Azariah. Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and*

- ***to Daniel*** [“God is judge”] ***he assigned the name Belteshazzar*** [“May Bel protect his life”]
- ***to Hananiah*** [“Yahweh is gracious”] ***Shadrach*** [“command of Aku”]
- ***to Mishaël*** [“What God is”] ***Meshach*** [“What Aku is”]
- ***and to Azariah*** [“Yahweh has helped”] ***Abed-nego*** [“servant of Nebo (son of Bel)”]

Because these names are from ancient Akkadian language, the meanings are not exact. But their Jewish names honored the God of Israel. They contained “El” or “-iah” (or “-yah”), all meaning Yahweh. Their new names contained references to Bel, the Babylonian idol god. Probably changing their names was an attempt to erase their former identity and life.

APPLICATION—They tried to convert them with four things:

- (1) to think like the world (education of literature—today we might say “Internet,” and social media)
- (2) to speak like the world (the language of the Chaldeans)
- (3) to eat and drink like the world, and
- (4) to change their names to identify them with the world

We see the same thing in our world today. And it’s not just the young people.

Times are bad. The temple has been destroyed. The articles of the temple are taken to temples of foreign gods. The upcoming leaders are taken to be converted to the Babylonian ways. Their names are changed to honor the false gods. Yet in the middle of all this, we have the story of one of the most godly men of all history.

Verse 8— *But Daniel*... In a sense, this is the theme of the book: “But Daniel.” Up to now, the Babylonians were deciding Daniel’s life and name—but here was an opportunity for Daniel to decide his own fate. Daniel reminds me of Joseph—both young men, shipped off to a foreign country against their will, placed in a royal court, yet without compromising their faith.

- ***made up his mind***—it was his own personal decision. No parents, etc. were with him. Solomon wrote, *For as he thinks within himself, so he is* (Proverbs 23:7). So watch out for what you think!! Count on it—if you think it—you will be it!
- ***that he would not defile himself with the king’s choice food or with the wine which he drank***—Why would it defile him? I’ve read reasons like: the king’s food had been offered to idols, it was unclean food...But in 10:3, Daniel has been eating tasty food and drinking wine. Perhaps it was his reasoning early in his captivity, to stay Jewish. The text simply does not say why. I’m amazed at how many pages are written about something that isn’t even in the text!!!
- ***so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself***—By asking permission, he now involved this commander in his decision. Also, he wanted to be supplied with vegetables, not simply not eat the king’s food.

Verse 9—Now *God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials*—God granted it—there was no value in the diet itself. Again, reminding us of Joseph, *the Lord was with Joseph*... (Genesis 39:3, 21-23).

Verses 10-13—The commander said, “*I’m afraid of my lord the king...you would make me forfeit my head to the king.*” Why? Because he assumed the king’s food was better than Daniel’s vegetable diet. Most people will assume that what is accepted by the general society is true. Daniel does not get his convictions from what others believe. Daniel said, “***Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink...and deal with your servants according to what you see.***” In all Daniel’s dealing with the pagan world, he never asks them to have blind faith or mysticism. Daniel proves everything. Everyone being a vegetarian is not a biblical virtue. The point is not that everyone eat only vegetables. Daniel had a diet that was stricter than the Mosaic Law.

Verses 13-16—After ten days, ***their appearance seemed better...than all the youths who had been eating the king’s choice food.*** So the overseer continued to give them vegetables. Ten days is not enough time to appear that much better...unless God was making it happen.

Verse 17—As for these four youths, *God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom.* Daniel and his three friends were in the world but not of the world, but that did not mean that they didn’t learn the wisdom and ways of the world. They were not ignorant of the pagan world in which they lived. Yet they were godly in the midst of their knowledge of the

ungodly. So the secret to godly character was not in avoiding knowledge of the world. The problem is not in not knowing the world. The problem is in knowing that the world is wrong.

- ***Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams***—He was given special ability the others didn't have to understand visions and dreams, which becomes very important in the book.

Verse 18—Three years later, *the commander...presented them before Nebuchadnezzar.*

Verses 19-20—*The king talked with them...they entered the king's personal service. As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm.* Why and how?

Because **God gave them knowledge and intelligence** (v. 17). Actually, they knew the pagan world better than the pagans, 10 times better.

Verse 21—*Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king* of Persia (10:1). So Daniel lived through the 70 years of the captivity and into the reign of Darius the Mede (chapter 6) and then into the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia. It was the Medo-Persian rule that allowed the Jews to return back to the Land. So Daniel died sometime in his 90s. Except for the first 15 years or so of his life, he lived the rest of his life in Babylon, never to return to the Land.

Chapter 2

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream about the Statue

Verse 1—*Nebuchadnezzar had dreams*, evidently the same dream over and over. He was so troubled by it, *his sleep left him*.

Verses 2-3—*The king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers...to tell the king his dreams.* He not only wanted them to tell him his dreams, he said, *"...my spirit is anxious to understand the dream."* To interpret a dream would be easy to do, but to tell someone what their dream was—impossible humanly speaking.

Verse 4—*Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic:* Starting here, the text is in Aramaic through 7:28. The rest of the book is in Hebrew, the language of the Jews.

- Just tell them the dream, no problem, they would interpret it.

Verses 5-6—Nebuchadnezzar was not stupid. He wants them to *make known to me the dream and its interpretation*. If they can't do it, they *will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap* [but no pressure!!]. **But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and great honor.**

Verse 7—*They answered a second time*—they want Nebuchadnezzar to tell them the dream.

Verse 8—The king replies, *"I know for certain that you are bargaining for time... but the command from me is firm."*

Verse 9—Now the king says, *"You have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed...tell me the dream..."*

Verses 10-11—But they say:

1. *There's not a man on the earth who could declare the matter for the king.*
2. *No great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician...*

3. *There is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods...* [Exactly!!]

Verses 12-13—So *the king became...very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men...and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.*

Verses 14-15—Daniel replied “*with discretion and discernment*” instead of magic and mysticism. His discernment was totally dependent on God. He asked the commander, “*For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?*” *Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter.* Daniel was not in the group who had talked to the king. Therefore, we can conclude that Daniel was not involved with the magicians. So Daniel was known as a wise man (v. 12) but not involved in mystical religion.

Verses 16-19—First, Daniel asks the king for time. Then he goes to his friends (calling them their Hebrews names) to ask them to pray to God, *so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men....Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.*

Verses 20-23—What Daniel says about God when his prayer is answered:

1. *Let the name of Elohim be blessed forever and ever*
2. *Wisdom and power belong to Him*, He is the source.
3. *It is He who changes the times and epochs* [periods of time, ages] (from v. 1:28).
4. *He removes kings and establishes kings* (see also Romans 13:1-4).
5. *He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding.* (No matter how wise and knowledgeable you are, you should be humble because it doesn't come from you, it comes from God.)
6. *It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things.* He is the source of revelation. There are no secrets from God.
7. *He knows what is in the darkness* (i.e., to us it is darkness).
8. *Light dwells with Him.* He brings light to the darkness. He doesn't bring opinions or political perspective. When Jesus comes back, He's not going to take sides, He's going to take over!
9. Daniel gives thanks and praise to God, *For You have given me wisdom and power*
10. *For You have made known to us the king's matter.*

Verses 24-25—He went to Arioch, who was to destroy them, and said, “*Do not destroy the wise men...Take me into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king.*” So Arioch *hurriedly brought Daniel* to the king, and said, “*I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!*” Not quite. He didn't find Daniel, Daniel found him.

Verse 26—So the king asked Daniel, “*Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?*”

Verse 27—Daniel says, “No.” His answer is almost the same as the answer of the other wise men. These men are right. No man can do that. *...neither wise men...are able to declare it to the king.*

Verses 28-29—However, there's a God of revelation Who brings light to darkness Who can help, Who reveals mysteries (another theme in Daniel). *There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days.*

Verse 30—...*this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king.* All the training, wisdom, etc. that the king has done with all these people will not get Nebuchadnezzar the knowledge of this dream. There are certain things we cannot know, no matter how much wisdom we have. General revelation comes through nature (Romans 1) and through our conscience (Romans 2). You can know about God through general revelation, but it will not lead you to special revelation (the specific words of God and the person of Christ). You can't go from general to specific.

Verses 31-35—*You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; ...and its appearance was awesome. The head...fine gold,...breast and arms...silver, ...belly and thighs...bronze, legs...iron, feet partly of iron and partly of clay...a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them....The statue became like chaff...and the wind carried them away...but the stone...became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.* Daniel had Nebuchadnezzar's attention!

Verse 36—*This was the dream, now we will tell its interpretation...*

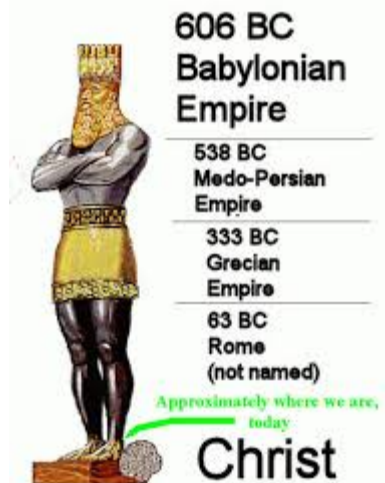
Verses 37-38—*You, O king, ...to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom...are the head of gold.*

Verse 39—*After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you*—This is the breast and arms of silver, which we know were the Medes and Persian Empire.

- *Then a third kingdom of bronze*—the belly and thighs, which is the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great.

Verse 40—*Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things*—This is the legs of iron, which was the Roman Empire.

Verses 41-42—*the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom...some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle*—This fifth kingdom is the Roman Empire. Daniel emphasizes the ten later in the book (the ten nations under the antichrist). This is going to be a divided kingdom.



Verse 43—*they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.*

Verse 44—The sixth kingdom, *the God of heaven will set up...*

1. *which will never be destroyed* (as the other kingdoms were)
2. *that kingdom will not be left for another people* (as the other kingdoms were)
3. *It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms* (as *the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed* the rest of the statue)
4. *It will itself endure forever (the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth)*

Verse 45—*The great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future*

- *The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy*

Verse 46-47—*Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.*

Verse 48—The king still sees the ability in Daniel. *The king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and the chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.* Why did Daniel accept the promotion based on the false assumption that Daniel had some special ability beyond ordinary men, which Daniel had already denied? I suggest (speculation) four reasons:

1. Because Daniel saw it as an act of God, not a promotion of Daniel. Not only is everything in the sovereign plan of God, every good thing comes from God.
2. God had more prophetic purposes of Daniel in that position.
3. Daniel was in a position to help the Jews, much like Esther was.
4. There was no sin involved in the promotion.

APPLICATION—If you are given wealth or a position of prominence, accept it as a gift from God. Serve and obey Him wherever you are. Be a steward of what He has given you. Just remember, *each one of us will give an account of himself to God* (Romans 14:12).

Verse 49—*Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, which Daniel was at the king's court.* Already, think of how different the administration was under these men rather than under the Babylonian “wise men.”

Chapter 3

The Fiery Furnace



Verse 1—*Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold.* This would not be solid gold but overlaid with gold. A cubit is about 18 inches, making the statue 90 feet high (a present-day eight-story building). The width was 9 feet at the base. It was set on the Plain of Dura, about 2.5 miles southeast of Babylon, where many people could gather to worship it.

APPLICATION—I wonder if he didn't get the idea for this statue from the one in his dream, but changed it so instead of just the head being gold, the whole statue was gold, to contradict God's prophecy?!?! He had that arrogance about him.

Verses 2-3—*Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble...all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.* It seems at this point, they were not aware of why they were assembling.

Verse 4—*Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language,* probably people the Babylonians had conquered and brought there as captives.

Verse 5—*at the moment you hear the sound of the...instruments, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up*—this was not only political. The fact that they were to *worship* shows it was religious—worshipping the statue of Nebuchadnezzar was worshipping him as a god is inferred because no other gods were mentioned. A reversal of the scattering of Babel (Genesis 11)—at, or near, this very site.

APPLICATION—It’s interesting that these many instruments were used to create the atmosphere of worshipping the statue. Music creates a fervor (intense, passionate feeling) for many, if not all, religions. We say the music is worshipping God—but I ask: Are the words of the music accurately describing God as He is described in the Bible? Is the music, to you, worshipping God or just making you feel good?

Verse 6—*But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.*”

APPLICATION—What will the Jews do? They didn’t seem to mind bowing to statues/idols when they were in Judah!! Their judgment then was to be cast from the Land into a foreign land. But now they are tested again. Will they bow?

Verse 7—*all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image,* just as the people will accept the mark of the beast in the tribulation (Revelation 13).

Verse 8— *...at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges* [lit. “tear in pieces”] ***against the Jews***—Their motivation was to destroy the accused. Why? It seems out of jealousy. Because Daniel stated Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its interpretation, he and three of his fellow Jews were appointed as leaders in Babylon, with authority over these Babylonian rulers. Captives should have been servants, not rulers!

APPLICATION—The statue/religion undergirds the Babylonian state. In our country, we fight to keep God and biblical morals undergirding our laws and government. But they are slowly being taken away. What “god” is there then? It seems to me that it’s like the time of the judges, where *everyone did what was right in his own eyes* (Judges 21:25). Of course, the antichrist will make his own statue to which the people will then bow. They need a “god” to undergird their government.

Verse 9— “*O king, live forever!*”—“A comment of typical court courtesy that is not necessarily indicative of the real sentiments of the speaker. Ancient oriental court protocol could sometimes require a certain amount of hypocrisy” (“NET” Bible).

Verses 10-11—These Babylonian satraps (local rulers), et. al., repeated the king’s directive to worship the image and whoever doesn’t was to be thrown into the fiery furnace. No doubt, they were pointing out their own obedience compared to the disobedience of the three Jewish rulers.

Verse 12—*certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon*—maybe to protect themselves they remind the king that these Jews were appointed by him.

- ***Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego***—their Babylonian names. [We do not know why Daniel is not included with these men. Perhaps he was out-of-town on business for Nebuchadnezzar.]
- ***These men*** (1) ***have disregarded you*** [Nebuchadnezzar], (2) ***they do not serve your gods*** [evidently, they did not bow down to other Babylonian idols, but it was not a punishable deed until this statue, (3) ***or worship the golden image which you have set up*** [now it was an offense that these satraps could charge against the Jews and have them killed].

Verses 13-14—*Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger...*—The extreme nature of his reaction shows the statue has personal value to him, not just religious or political value. “Nebuchadnezzar’s own standing was tied up with the statue. He is offended at the affront, not just at their blasphemy or their rebellion. His expectation is “You shall have no other god but me” (WBC–OT).

- He ***gave orders to bring*** the three Jewish men; ***then these men were brought before the king.*** The king doesn’t take the word of others. He questions the men themselves. He asks them: ***Is it true...that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?***

Verse 15—In view of his angry response, it seems amazing that he gave the three men another opportunity to bow before the statue. He wanted to see with his own eyes that they refuse to bow to the statue. And if they bow, *very well*. They will escape the punishment.

- ***But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire***—No trial. Immediate punishment.
- ***What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?***—He sees himself as above all gods. And no one, not any God, can challenge his authority. So, the situation becomes a conflict between Nebuchadnezzar and Yahweh, the God of Daniel's friends.

Verse 16—First they answered, ***“We do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.”*** I think maybe because they were willing to let the events speak for them. “Who can deliver them?” Let's just wait and see.....

Verse 17—***“If it be so***—The NET Bible says this is a difficult phrase to translate. It has the sense of existence, so translated, “If our God...exists,” probably referring back to Nebuchadnezzar's comment back in verse 15, which denies the existence of a god capable of delivering from the king's power.

- ***our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king***—It's not a matter of if God exists. He does. It's not a matter of if He has the power to deliver the men. He does. It's a matter of His plan. His choice. The Living God makes the golden statue look like nothing!

APPLICATION—When we obey God, we should not expect God to deliver us. Obeying God is more important than life. If God chose to not deliver the three Jews, they would still obey Him. Too many Christians define God's character by their circumstances, or their “words” from God, or their answers to prayer. God is always good—but He gets to define what “good” is.

Verse 18—***But even if He does not***—They believe God will deliver them out of the hand of Nebuchadnezzar—either through death or deliverance from the furnace. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar never did have control over them. He just thought he did.

- ***let it be known to you, O king***—They want to make sure the king knows that whatever happens, it won't change the results that the king desires, that they worship the statue.
- ***that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up***—At this point, these men know nothing of proving they are right or of resurrection. Their commitment is made simply to worship God and only God. Remember, they are captives in a foreign land, away from Israel, their Temple is destroyed, still they trust in God.

Verse 19—***Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered***—his face became distorted with rage, to think that any God was exalted over him.

- ***He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated***—The king made the fire seven times hotter than normal. Archaeological discoveries of furnaces the Babylonians used for making bricks were huge, with a ramp going up to the top. It also had an opening near the bottom.

APPLICATION—The three are not delivered from the fire but are delivered in the fire! Romans 8:37

Verses 20-22—***He commanded certain valiant warriors...in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire...because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.***



- ***Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego...were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps, and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire***—All this clothing was flammable and would make them catch on fire even quicker.

Verse 23—In contrast to the warriors who took the men to the furnace, who died just carrying them there, the three men ***fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up.***

Verse 24—From a safe distance, Nebuchadnezzar must have been looking through the opening at the bottom of the furnace. He ***was astonished and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, “Was it now three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?” They replied, “Certainly...”*** Now the king has a problem. The evidence contradicted what he believed.

Verse 25—***He said, “Look! (1) I see four men (2) loosed and (3) walking about (4) in the midst of the fire (5) without harm, (6) and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!”***

This could have been an angel, but it seems to be the preincarnate appearance of Jesus, as an angel would not accept the description of “like a son of the gods.” The appearance of Jesus in the midst of the fire had to be brighter than the fire in order for Nebuchadnezzar to see His form. [When Paul saw the light from heaven on the road to Damascus, he described it as *a light from heaven, brighter than the sun* (Acts 26:13).] Nebuchadnezzar did not know of the Son of God but he did recognize that the Person appearing in the fire looked supernatural.



Verse 26—***Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire***—the lower door, on ground level, compared to the top into which the men were thrown.

- ***he responded and said, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!”*** And they ***came out of the midst of the fire.*** I can’t help but think they would have preferred to stay in the fire, talking to Jesus!!
- The term “the most High (lit. the “Highest”) God” occurs 13 times in Daniel, more than in any other book except Psalms. Of those 13 times, 7 pertain to Nebuchadnezzar (3:26; 4:2, 17, 24-25, 32, 34) and 2 to Belshazzar (5:18, 21). The other 4 are in chapter 7 (7:18, 22, 25, 27).
- Although Nebuchadnezzar recognized that the God of the three men was “the Most High God,” he did not acknowledge Him as his God.

APPLICATION—God gets no glory when He keeps you from a furnace situation. But He gets much glory when He delivers you through the furnace.

“As chap. 2 shows that there is a God who can reveal the mysteries of heaven, so chap. 3 shows that there is a God who can intervene in individual and national life, discrediting human pretensions and the monuments that embody them. The statue is now forgotten...” (WBC-OT).

Verse 27—The government officials, who had brought charges against Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego gathered around them and ***saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them.*** So God not only delivered them from the fire, He delivered them from all aspects of the fire, i.e., there was no evidence that they had even been in the fiery furnace.

Verse 28—***Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, (1) “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, (2) who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in***

Him, (3) violating the king's command, (4) and yielded up their bodies (5) so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. He recognizes this God is greater than his gods, who could never deliver anyone from the furnace. He doesn't think God is the only God but only the best of the other gods.

Verse 29—*Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue (1) that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego (2) shall be torn limb from limb (3) and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, (4) inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.* A decree similar to the one to worship the image, i.e., Nebuchadnezzar thinks it is safest to worship all the real gods and not to anger any of them.

Verse 30—*Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.* Their faith brought deliverance, protection, reward, and glory to God.

Chapter 4

Nebuchadnezzar Learned Humility

Verses 1-2—This chapter is an official public decree made by Nebuchadnezzar and circulated throughout his realm. The Holy Spirit led Daniel to include this decree in Scripture.

- *Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound!"*—This is addressed to every human on the earth. Nebuchadnezzar, as king of the Babylonian Empire, sees himself as king of the world.
- *"It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me"*—This declaration ends up being a testimony.

Verse 3—*"How great are His signs And how mighty are His wonders!"*—Nebuchadnezzar has personally seen these wonders—the telling of his dream and its interpretation, the three men not burned in the fiery furnace.

- *His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom And His dominion is from generation to generation.*—This earthly king acknowledges the King, the *Most High God*, whose kingship is not limited by time as Nebuchadnezzar's is.

Verses 4-5—*I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace*—Does it get any better than this?

- *I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me*—For a second time, God gave His revelation to Nebuchadnezzar through a dream. Though content and prosperous, now Nebuchadnezzar was afraid.

Verse 6—So he brought in *the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners*, only this time he only ordered them to *make known to me the interpretation of the dream*. Notice, even though they have failed before, they still have their jobs!!

Verse 7—*...I related the dream to them*—Last time, he demanded that they make known the dream. This time, he told them the dream and expected an interpretation of it from them.

- *But they could not make its interpretation known to me*—Even though Nebuchadnezzar had called God *the Most High God*, he still had confidence in his own gods and their *wise men*. It's obvious that the dream is bad news and there's no way to make it good news.

APPLICATION—In our age, we can do the same thing. Maybe on Sunday, we look to God’s Word, but on the weekdays, we look to the world for our morality. We are double-minded.

Verses 8-9—*But finally Daniel came in before me*—Why would Nebuchadnezzar even ask his wise men? Why not ask Daniel right away? Text doesn’t say. The word *finally* suggests some time passed before Daniel came in. The dream is bad news, even if he doesn’t know exactly what it means. This is obvious because it made him *fearful* and *his mind kept alarming me*. The king is afraid of the dream and even more afraid of the meaning of the dream.

- *...in whom is a spirit of the holy gods*—he could be referring to his own gods in general or because the word can be translated in the singular (*holy God*), he may refer to Israel’s God.
- Reminding us that Daniel is named *Belteshazzar according to the name of my god*...oh, yeah—his god who could not relate the dream, who could not save from the furnace...oh, him!
- *And I related to dream to him*—

APPLICATION—From what I have discovered, God told His revelation to unbelievers only in dreams, but then the unbeliever had to come to one of God’s chosen people (a Jew) to get the interpretation.

Verses 10-17—Read the text.

Verse 18—Nebuchadnezzar again states his confidence in Daniel’s *interpretation; ...for a spirit of the holy gods is in you*.

Verse 19—*Then Daniel...was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him*—Sometimes messengers who brought bad news to kings were killed (maybe why the magicians didn’t want to give an interpretation to the king). But Nebuchadnezzar assures him, “*do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.*”

- *My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries!*—Daniel apparently grew to have some affection for Nebuchadnezzar, and was reluctant to announce God’s judgment to the king.



Verses 20-22—First, the good news. The tree represented Nebuchadnezzar. Like the tree, Nebuchadnezzar *became large and grew strong*. His kingdom had become greater than any kingdom up to that time.

Verse 23—Now the bad news. By a decree *descending from* heaven, the tree will be chopped down, but a stump will be left with its roots, and he will share with the beasts for seven periods of time.

Verse 24—*this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king*—It’s interesting that this chapter began with a decree from Nebuchadnezzar and now we have a decree from God as to what will happen to Nebuchadnezzar.

Verses 25-26—Nebuchadnezzar:

1. *will be driven away from mankind*
2. *his dwelling place be with the beasts of the field*
3. *he will be given grass to eat like cattle*
4. *he will be drenched with the dew of heaven*
5. *for seven periods of time*
6. *until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and*
7. *bestows it on whomever He wishes*
8. *it is commanded to leave the stump...your kingdom will be assured to you*
9. *after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules*

Verse 27—Daniel then gave Nebuchadnezzar advice that was not part of the dream. *My advice...break away now from your sins by doing righteousness*, which Daniel defined as *showing mercy to the poor*. Perhaps, *in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity*. This was not a message of salvation but of averting the judgment of God.

Verse 28—*All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king*. He did not heed the warning. But, then, this was his problem to begin with—pride.

Verse 29—*Twelve months later...* The revelation given to Nebuchadnezzar was forgotten. Daniel's warning was ignored.

Verse 30—One of greatest statements of pride in the Scripture. *“The king reflected and said, ‘Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself*

have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?’ The city of Babylon had walls 60 miles long and about 15 miles wide. They were 80 feet thick and 300 feet high. It had 100 gates. It was filled with roads and canals with boats.

They even had chariot races on top of the walls.



Verses 31-32—*While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you*—The prophecy in the dream came true. God's timing is not our timing.

APPLICATION—This is similar to what mockers say today about the Lord's Coming, saying, “Where is the promise of His coming?” (2 Peter 3:3-10). But Peter goes on to say, “But the day of the Lord will come...”

Verse 33—*Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws*. We don't know what story was given to the people to explain his absence or how the kingdom continued to function, although we know Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego helped rule.



Verses 34-35— *“But at the end of that period—at the end of the 7 years (verse 25).*

- *I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me*—Just as God showed His power and His faithfulness to His word in bringing judgment on Nebuchadnezzar, so He does again in bringing the time of Nebuchadnezzar's judgment to an end. God restored Nebuchadnezzar's reasoning so he *blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever*.
- *For His dominion is an everlasting dominion*—Nebuchadnezzar's rule can be suspended or ended, but God's never is.
- *And His kingdom endures from generation to generation*—God's rule continues even after Nebuchadnezzar dies. The first dream of the statue showed there were going to be kingdoms after the Babylonian one.

- *All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing*—It's all about God's will, not our will
- *But He does according to His will in the host of heaven*—the forces of heaven are under His unquestioned command (Daniel 10–12)
- *And among the inhabitants of earth*—and all the people of the earth are under His command
- *And no one can ward off His hand*—Man is answerable to God, not God to man
- *Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'*—No one on earth has a right to question God. *Who are you, O man, who answers back to God? ...Does not the potter have a right over the clay? ...* (Romans 9:19-23).

Verse 36— “*At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me—*It’s not what he did but what God gave him.

Verse 37—“*Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride*”—in contrast to verse 30. The key for serving God is humility, not pride. Pride is never good. Pride is independence from God. *Pride goes before destruction* (Proverbs 16:18). *God is opposed to the proud* (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). *Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord* (Proverbs 16:5). There is no “good” pride and “bad” pride. The Bible does not make that distinction.

Humility is always good. Humility is dependence on God. *Thus says the Lord, "...to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My Word"* (Isaiah 66:1-2).

Chapter 5

Belshazzar Saw the Handwriting on the Wall

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C. He was succeeded by his son Amelmarduk (lit. “evil Marduk”—Jeremiah 52:31). Nebuchadnezzar also had a daughter, who with her husband murdered Amelmarduk, enabling her husband (Nargel-sharezer) to be king for awhile. He was succeeded by his son Labashi-Marduk, who was murdered by a group of people led by Nabonadus. Then Nabonadus became king. (We don’t know the relationship between Nabonadus and Nebuchadnezzar, though most believe he was a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar in some way, possibly the son of Amelmarduk). Nabonadus retired to Arabia and left his son Belshazzar in charge of Babylon. So Nabonadus is first ruler, Belshazzar is second ruler, who promises the third ruler spot to whoever can interpret the handwriting on the wall.



As this chapter opens, Babylon is being besieged by the Persians, who surrounded the city and had been for some time.

Verse 1—*Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles*

Verses 2-3— *...bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them.*

Verse 4—*They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.* Their sins: (1) they were disgracing the vessels designed for worshipping God and (2) they were praising the gods of gold and silver. It was a challenge to God. In the midst of the worship of idols, made of gold and silver, appears the living hand of the Living God.

Verse 5—*Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing—*We read about this finger before. In Exodus 31:18, it is the finger of God that writes the Ten Commandments on the tablets (twice!).



Verse 6—*Then the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together—*he is scared!!!

Verse 7—*The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners—*These mystical men are still around. They are the “priests” of the idol worship.

- *“Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom”*—Reminding us of Mordecai’s purple robe and royal authority (Esther 8:15). As already mentioned above, Nabonidus was king, and Belshazzar his co-regent, so the next highest office was that of third ruler.

APPLICATION—Pagan wisdom, power, and reward is helpless when God intervenes to speak and act!

Verses 8-9—*The wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king.* Of course!! However, this produced even more fear in the king. *Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed.*

Verse 10—*The queen entered the banquet hall—*This would not be Belshazzar’s wife because his wives were with him in the hall (verses 2-3). She was most likely his mother or even his grandmother, an older woman.

- *the queen spoke and said, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale”*—i.e., quit being afraid. What was the king afraid of? The sight of an obviously supernatural hand writing on the wall? Afraid of what the words mean? Afraid for his life? We don’t know.

Verses 11-12—*“There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans and diviners. This was because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation.”*

APPLICATION—Daniel has proved to be someone through whom God speaks. The queen attributed to him a wisdom to solve difficult problems, for example, more than we are made aware of in the text. And, of course, many years have passed since we last heard about Daniel. It’s interesting that she remembers and refers to him by his Hebrew name, even though he was re-named a Babylonian name. In fact, he has been noticeably absent from the book. But “he’s back!”

Verses 13-14—*Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you*—First, they need someone to even read what is written on the wall—what does it say? Then they need to know what it means. But then they need the application—what does it mean for them. They need Bible study methods!!

Verses 15-16—The king then repeats the fact that his conjurers could not read the message, but the king heard that Daniel could, and if he is able to do so, there would be great riches for him and he would have authority as the third ruler in the kingdom (a reward which, we know, would only be for a short few hours at best, because they are about to be conquered by the Persians).

Verse 17—*Daniel answered, ... “Keep your gifts...give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription...and make the interpretation known...*

Verses 18-21—Daniel gives the history of Nebuchadnezzar from God’s point of view (chapter 4). God gave him his position, he became proud, and God removed it from him until he recognized that God is sovereign.

Verses 22—*Yet you, his son* [lit. “descendant”], *Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this*—He had purposely brought out the vessels which his father (or grandfather) Nebuchadnezzar *had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem* (verse 2). He was not ignorant of the past that happened to his own father (or grandfather). He knew and it should have taught him. Instead, he has the same pride Nebuchadnezzar had before God humbled him.

Verse 23—Daniel then gives a theological perspective and context in which to understand the inscription. The point is that Belshazzar has not learned anything (humbled his heart) from what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. Instead he:

- 1) *exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven*
- 2) *they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them*
- 3) *you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand*
- 4) *But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified*

APPLICATION—Reminds me of Romans 1:21-23 *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened...and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.*

Verse 24—*the hand was sent from Him* (the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways)

“On the surface, the inscription records the assessment of something in terms of monetary weights: “counted at a mina, a shekel, and halves.” Under the surface, Daniel sees in these words a message for Belshazzar. All three are moments in God’s dealings with Belshazzar as king: the past moment when God appointed him, the present moment when God is evaluating his performance, and the coming moment when God breaks off



his dynasty because of its failure. All three are prophecy, and like many Old Testament prophecies, they speak of coming events as already actual, on the basis of God's decision that they should take place." (WBC-OT)

Verse 25—*this is the inscription that was written out: "MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN."* [The Greek version does not repeat the *mene*.]

Verse 26—"MENE" is an Aramaic noun referring to a measure of weight of 50 shekels, equal to 1 ¼ pounds. Daniel said that meant that **God has numbered** (to reckon or calculate) **your kingdom and put an end to it**.

Verse 27—"TEKEL" — This was a verb meaning "to weigh." Daniel said meant **you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient**. Belshazzar was free to make his own decisions. Plus, he had the extra benefit of knowing what happened with Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 28—"PERES." **PERES** is the singular of **PHARSIN**. **UPHARSIN** is "and Pharsin." This is a noun meaning a half-mina (25 shekels or about 2/3 of a pound). It is from the verb meaning "to break in two, to divide." *Pharsin* is obviously a wordplay with the name "Persian." Daniel said it meant **your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians**.

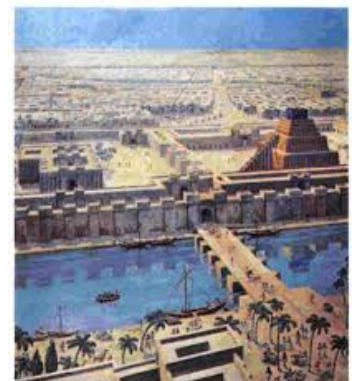
APPLICATION—The fall of Babylon is a major turning point. The Babylonians failed to recognize the God of the Judean exiles, even with Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego as some of their rulers. This is prophetic as the Babylon in Revelation 17–18 is the empire of the antichrist, again, the people who fail to recognize God and His people. The result is the same. Babylon—GONE!

Verse 29—*Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.* Even though the interpretation was bad news for Belshazzar and you'd think he would be angry with Daniel, instead he kept his word regarding the reward. However, Daniel's promotion was very short, as that very night Babylon was invaded by the Persians.

The date was October 12, 539 B.C. Daniel would have been approximately 81 years old.

The city had been under assault by the Persian army for a long time. The Babylonians had stored 20 years of supplies, therefore, a big feast/party that night was no problem. The Euphrates River ran through the city from north to south, giving them plenty of water. They had a false sense of security, however. They had gates that went below the surface of the water. But the Persians divided their army, half to the north and half to the south. The northern army dug a canal and diverted the water to a

nearby lake, thus lowering the surface of the river below the level of the gate. Then they went under the gate and entered the city. One of the greatest kingdoms of the world came to an end in one night. This not only fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel, it also fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 47:1-5.



Verse 30— *That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.*

Verse 31—*So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two—*

Nebuchadnezzar's statue dream from God has begun to come true. We've now left the head of gold and moved down to the chest and arms of silver—The Medo-Persian Empire, the second phase of the Times of the Gentiles.

Chapter 6

Darius Puts Daniel in the Lions' Den

Verses 1-2—*It seemed good to Darius—*There is no historical evidence outside the Bible for his reign. There are several possibilities: Darius may have been another name for Cyrus the Persian, or Darius was appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon, or Darius (another name for Gubaru) was appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon, or some think Darius is Cambyses, Cyrus' son. No one knows for sure.

*—to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss—*Darius organized his newly conquered kingdom. Three commissioners were responsible for possibly 40 satraps each.

Verse 3—*Then this Daniel (1) began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps (2) because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and (3) the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.* Daniel is now in his 80s and had extensive experience in the governing of the Babylonian kingdom, possibly why he quickly got this Persian job as administrator. Or maybe his reputation, of predicting the Persian victory over Babylon at Belshazzar's feast, preceded him. But how do these satraps feel about a Judean captive in authority over them? They wanted to get rid of him.

Verses 4-5—*Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs.* However, (1) *they could find no ground of accusation* (2) *or evidence of corruption, inasmuch* (3) *as he was faithful* to the king, and (4) *no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.* They conclude that they cannot find anything against him—(5) *unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God.* They observed that Daniel's loyalty to God was greater than his faithfulness to the king. His "vulnerability" was in his commitment to God.

Verses 6-7—*All the commissioners...have consulted together that...* This, of course, was a lie. Daniel was one of those commissioners, whom they did not consult. But the king believed it was all of them. There were 122 of them—how would the king know one was missing?

- This position in government gave Daniel the opportunity for greater responsibility. However, it also caused others to be jealous and seek to topple him. So these commissioners, et. al., came to the king to recommend *that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den*—All prayers were to be addressed to the king in recognition of his religious power (as we saw Nebuchadnezzar did in chapter 2). It's not that these commissioners had some religious hostility toward Daniel. They could care less who he prayed to. It was just that Daniel's prayer life was important to him, therefore, it was what they considered to be his "weak" point.
- At first reading, you may think this is similar to 2:5-6. But there are some differences:

- In chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar made a statue to worship. Here, Darius wanted people to worship him, not a statue.
- In chapter 2, the command was only to worship the statue. Here, Darius also commanded that no one could make *a petition to any god or man besides you* (Darius). So this was a specific command directed to Daniel's prayer life.
- Also, the punishments were different. One was a fiery furnace and the other was a lions' den.
- In chapter 2, Daniel was absent. It was his three friends who were held accountable. Here, it's the opposite. It's about Daniel. His three friends are absent (possibly dead by now).
- In chapter 2, the men were young. Here, (in spite of many of the artistic renderings), Daniel is an old man.
- In chapter 2, they are fairly new captives. Here, Daniel has been captive many years.
- In chapter 2, the three men were minor ministers. Here, Daniel is one of 3 main ministers and about to be appointed #1.
- How much did Darius realize? He appears to not know of Daniel's prayer life, as he is *deeply distressed* when he finds out he must put Daniel in the lions' den (verse 14). Is he just a victim of his own vanity? We don't know. But, at this point, he did not seem to realize that he was being manipulated as a puppet by his own ministers.
- The fact that they made the law for **thirty days** is interesting. Daniel could have reasoned: "I can just skip praying—it's only for 30 days!" Or, he could have prayed silently. On the other hand, 30 days is a lot of proof that Daniel continued to pray each and every day, so the ministers would be sure to catch him in the act on one of those days.
- It's also interesting that these ministers suggested a punishment. Persian punishments were so cruel, I don't even want to mention them here.

APPLICATION—That same hostility toward those who believe in God has been seen throughout the centuries, right into our own time. You can worship in any religion, and the world thinks it's okay. But if you worship the God of the Bible, it's not allowed. Satan hates God and anyone or anything associated with God. Satan is your enemy! He regards your dedication to God to be your weakness and vulnerability. It's where he will attack you. Dedication to the Word of God makes you vulnerable to attacks—even from other Christians.

Verses 8-9—"*Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.*" We see this law of the Persians also in Esther 1:19 and 8:8. The thing is—God's law makes an absolute demand. But so does the king's law. Governments often think their laws are to be the absolute authority—such as Communism or the Nazi or Stalin governments, as well as ancient governments such as the Persians and Romans.

- **Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction**—This could be a good law, if it was a good decision but if it's a poor decision, then the law becomes a disaster. Why did Darius not investigate before signing—I suppose because he trusted all 122 of his ministers!

APPLICATION—We know one of the things Daniel was praying for was the end of the Babylonian Captivity and that the Jews could return to their Land (chapter 9). The 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah was done (Jeremiah 25:11). Daniel was praying according to God's plan. That plan included the Persians conquering the Babylonians and allowing the Jews to return to their Land (Ezra 1:1-4). The reason these Persian administrators were even in power and existed was because of Daniel's praying and God honoring His Word!!!

Verse 10—*Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed*—Daniel intentionally broke the law. Peter said, "*We must obey God rather than men*" (Acts 5:29). But, as Peter experienced, when you disobey the government, you pay the consequences (as Peter went to jail). So both things are true. This can and does end in martyrdom.

—Daniel’s prayer principles: (1) *he entered his house* (2) *(now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem)*; (3) *and he continued kneeling on his knees* (4) *three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God*, (5) *as he had been doing previously*.

- Notice that Daniel was not making a public statement in his prayer. He was in his own house. But neither did he hide it—he could have closed his windows.
- Praying toward Jerusalem was a practice suggested by David and Solomon in Psalm 5:7 and 1 Kings 8:33-34, after the people repented of their sin.
- In later rabbinic thought, this verse was sometimes cited as a proof text for the notion that one should pray only in a house with windows!! (NET)
- Kneeling is just one position mentioned in the Bible. There is standing, laying down, sitting. However, praying this way was physical proof that he was, in fact, praying.
- This is the only place praying three times a day is mentioned in the Bible, but of course, there is no prescribed number of times a day you should pray.



APPLICATION—In our age, we are given some suggestions regarding prayer: Jesus said it should be done in secret, not as a show before men (Matthew 6:6), and it should not use meaningless repetition (6:7) or even think that God is more likely to hear you if you use many words (6:7). Paul added that we should be devoted to prayer and keep alert in it (Colossians 4:2). There are other instructions in the N.T., too, but these are a few that come to mind.

Verse 11—*Then these men came* (lit. “rushed”) ***by agreement and found Daniel***—they were waiting to catch him in the act of praying and therefore, breaking the law—as we knew he would be. —***making petition and supplication before his God***—We know from chapter 9 that Daniel was familiar with Jeremiah’s writings. Perhaps he knew this verse: *Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, “...Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare”* (Jeremiah 29:4-7).

Verse 12—*Then they approached and spoke before the king*, reminding him of his injunction and that it ***may not be revoked***—From verse 3, we know that *the king planned to appoint him* [Daniel] *over the entire kingdom*, so obviously, the king had respect and feelings toward Daniel (seen again in verse 14). So these commissioners reminded the king that, in spite of his favoritism toward Daniel, the injunction the king signed cannot be broken, no matter how much the king may wish to do so.

- This was a Persian law, not a law practiced by the Babylonians. It is inferred that Nebuchadnezzar had supreme authority by the fact that he was the head of gold in the statue of chapter 2. The silver arms and chest are the Persians and their law, not a particular king.

Verse 13—*Then they answered and spoke before the king, “Daniel, (1) who is one of the exiles from Judah, (2) pays no attention to you, O king, or (3) to the injunction which you signed, (4) but keeps making his petition three times a day.”*

- After 70 some years, they still call Daniel an *exile from Judah*. This was a familiar accusation about Daniel by Arioch (2:25) and Belshazzar (5:13). Maybe stressing this fact implied that Daniel could not really be trusted, that his religious practice was really a political act against the Persian laws and king, even an act of rebellion.

Verse 14—*as soon as the king heard...he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel...*

- Distressed... “perhaps with Daniel, for ignoring his injunction; perhaps with the ministers, for engineering his downfall; perhaps with himself, for being manipulated by them into becoming

the victim of his own power and authority; perhaps with the situation in general into which he is now cornered” (WBC–OT).

- It’s interesting that all three kings mentioned so far in the book of Daniel were distressed: Nebuchadnezzar in 2:1 and 3:13; Belshazzar in 5:6, 9; and now Darius.

Verse 15—Again, they remind the king that *no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed*—The law is more important than the dictator (even though it is the dictator who makes the law!). It prevents overthrow of the dictator because he’s not the one with the power, the law is. Also, he had no god that was greater than the law.

APPLICATION—God’s law shows you something about God, but God is much greater than the law!

Verse 16—v. 16—Darius couldn’t get beyond his law. So *Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions’ den*. The Persians had many inhumane punishments, but this one was specified in this law.

- But *the king...said to Daniel, “Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you.”* So Darius knows that Daniel serves his own God and he’s not offended by that. So why the law? It’s only guesses, but these pagan people, who worship idol gods, seem to let you worship your own particular god except in certain circumstances, where they want their god to be worshipped. But it’s temporary, so they don’t see it as a problem. Darius allows Daniel to worship his own God, except for 30 days, where Darius wants Daniel to worship him, too. But Daniel will only worship one God. The God of Israel.

APPLICATION—Most other religions and cults are not offended by Jesus as they define Him. But if He is defined by the Bible, as the ONLY way, the ONLY truth and the ONLY life (John 14:6), then He becomes offensive to them. Darius seemed to have no problem adding the God of Daniel to his life, but Daniel said, “He’s the ONLY God.” Now that’s causing problems for Darius.

Verse 17—*A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel.* “It will neither be possible for his friends to feed the lions or to engineer his survival in some other way, nor for his enemies to kill him if the lions do not” (WBC–OT).

- “The king has spoken of the possibility of God’s delivering Daniel, and the sealing will make it necessary for God to prove Himself in an extraordinary way if He is to act at all. In testing Daniel, the king knows...that he is testing God” (WBC–OT).

APPLICATION—It sounds so much like the extraordinary precautions the Pharisees and Romans made at Christ’s tomb to ensure that His body would not disappear. Didn’t work for them either!

Verse 18—*Then the king...spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him*—I get the idea that the king’s night was much more distressing than Daniel’s in the lions’ den!!



Verses 19-20—Whereas Nebuchadnezzar could look into the fire where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were, evidently this was like a closed cave. With the stone over the mouth, no one could see into it. *Then the king arose at dawn...and went in haste to the lions' den...he cried out with a troubled voice... "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"*



- Reminding us of what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego said: *"our God whom we serve is able to deliver us...and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king, But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.* The issue, of course, is not if God is *able*. We know He is able. The issue is what is in His plan, and are we trusting in Him no matter what He decides to do?
- The Babylonians had a custom that if the prisoner who was tortured survived overnight, that person would be then pardoned. Perhaps the Persians did this, too.

APPLICATION—This contrast is made many times in the Old Testament. We serve the *living God*, compared to the pagans who worship idols, who are *like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot walk! Do not fear them, for they can do no harm, nor can they do any good* (Jeremiah 10:1-10). Isaiah pictures it as a man who cuts down a tree. *Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he eats meat as he roasts a roast, and is satisfied...but the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for thou art my god." ...no one recalls, nor is there knowledge or understanding to say... 'I fall down before a block of wood!'"* (Isaiah 44:9-20).

Verses 21-24—*Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever!"*—a typical greeting of honor, also declaring that Daniel had no political agenda in his praying

- *My God sent His angel*—most feel this is the same one who walked in the fiery furnace. We don't know for sure. I tend to think it was the pre-incarnate Christ in the furnace because of His form, glowing brighter than the fire. Here, we don't know if the angel even appeared to Daniel. We just know that Daniel said an angel shut the lions' mouths.
- *and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me*—It's not that the lions were not hungry because a few moments later, *The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.* The wives and children were often killed with the husband/father because they were complicit with him (for example, see Haman in the book of Esther).
- *inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him*—Daniel was innocent before God because he did not bow down before Darius.
- *and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime*—He could also say he did no crime because his praying was not against Darius. He simply continued to practice what he already practiced before there was a law. Of course, once there was a law, he broke that law and paid the consequences.
- *Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God*—Again reminding us of the men who came out of the fiery furnace without even the smell of fire on them. Daniel was not only still alive, there was not a scratch on him.

Verses 25-27—Darius then made a new decree to his kingdom. *"I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel*—Notice that

Darius identified God as the God of Daniel, not the God of Israel. People will identify God as your God and see your faith, as they see God working in your life.

- Darius again calls God ***the living God and enduring forever***.
- Although the Babylonian Empire came to an end, and the Persian Empire will come to an end, God's ***kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and His dominion will be forever***
- And He is a miracle-working God, who ***delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders...who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions*** (and from the power of Darius, I might add!).

Verse 28—*So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.* This ends the chronological story of Daniel.

The Sovereignty of God Over the Nations

Chapters 7–12

Chapter 7

Daniel Saw a Vision of Four Beasts and the Ancient of Days

Verse 1—*In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon*, in 553 B.C., 14 years before the fall of Babylon described in chapter 5 and before the lions' den of chapter 6. Daniel is about 67 years old here, having been taken captive about 52 years earlier, in 605 B.C.

- *Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed*—This time, it is Daniel who saw the dream and visions.
- *Then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it.*

Verse 2—*I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea*—most likely, the Mediterranean.

Verse 3—*And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another.* Each beast conquers the one before it, so each kingdom conquers the kingdom before it. The beasts of chapter 7 parallel the statue of chapter 2.

Verse 4—*The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it*—The lion is Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.

Verse 5—*And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'*—The bear is the Medo-Persians (raised on one side because the Persians are more powerful than the Medes). Three ribs probably represent three conquests: (Babylon in 539, Egypt in 525, Lydia [Asia Minor] in 546).

Verse 6—*After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it*—The leopard with four heads and wings is Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire. The four wings indicate how fast his campaign was. The four heads represent the four generals who divided up his kingdom when he died. They are over Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria, and Macedonia (Greece itself).

Verses 7-8—*After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts*—A fourth, dreadful beast, devours, crushes, and tramples down. But it is “different” in that it had ten horns. It has a little horn that comes up among the ten horns. It has eyes like a man, and a mouth that utters great boasts. (In verse 24, it is expanded.) As an overview, this is the transition between the Roman Empire and the empire of the antichrist. The little horn represents the antichrist. It's different from the other kingdoms in that: (1) his kingdom is global, not just Mediterranean, (2) it's directly related to Satan,

(3) it includes a global religion—one of the other kingdoms did that, and (4) it focuses on destroying all the saints. There has been nothing in history like this little horn, so it is still a future kingdom.

Verses 9-10—*I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days* [lit. “the Eternal God”] ***took His seat***—This is God the Father, similar to the description in Revelation 4.

- ***His vesture was like white snow*** [holiness] ***and the hair of His head like pure wool*** [lit. “of a lamb”].
- ***His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire***, similar to Ezekiel’s description in Ezekiel 1:4-28.
- ***A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him***—“fire” in the Bible indicates judgment. Hell itself is called the lake of fire.
- ***Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him***—the angels, for sure. Possibly saints also.
- ***The court sat, And the books were opened***—God is keeping books on everyone (Revelation 20:12).

Verses 11-12—*Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire*—Implied is that the books of the Ancient of Days were opened and the little horn (antichrist) was judged by the Ancient of Days and cast into the burning fire (lake of fire). The other empires were destroyed by conquest (verse 12). However, this fourth empire (the beast—antichrist’s empire) will be destroyed by God Himself (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 11:15; 19:15).

Verses 13-14—*I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming*—Christ often used this name to refer to Himself (Mark 8:31; John 1:51).

- ***And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him—and I saw...a Lamb standing, as if slain...and He came, and He took it*** [the book with the seven seals] ***out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne*** (Revelation 5:5-7).
- ***And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom—Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing*** (5:12).
- ***That all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him—for Thou was slain, and did purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou has made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth*** (5:9-10).
- ***His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away—To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever*** (5:13).
- ***And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed***—in contrast to these other empires who were all destroyed. This is parallel to the statue in chapter 2, where Christ’s kingdom is the rock which destroyed the clay/iron feet so the whole statue toppled, and the rock grew into a mountain that is not destroyed.

Verses 15-16—*As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me*—As those previously who had dreams, Daniel’s dream distressed him. Although he could interpret previous dreams, he could not interpret this one or his next one (8:15).

- ***I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this***—This was later identified as the angel Gabriel (8:16; 9:21).
- ***So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things***—The dream and its interpretation came from heaven.

Verse 17—*These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth.*

Verse 18—*But the saints* [believing Jews—beginning with the 144,000] *of the Highest One will receive the kingdom* [Millennial Kingdom] *and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come*—when the four empires are destroyed, at the Second Coming of Christ. [I want to make the point that we know what some of the details of Daniel mean because we have history, which fulfilled some of the prophecies, and we have more revelation in the New Testament which helps us understand. For example, Jesus, in Matthew 24, explained what the “abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet” meant.]

Verse 19—*Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet*—this fourth beast is the rule of the antichrist during the tribulation

Verse 20—*and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates*—Daniel seems to understand the first 3 beasts, but this 4th one is a puzzle for him, and he is especially interested in the identity of the horn, which we know is the antichrist of the tribulation.

Verse 21—*I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them*—the antichrist wages war against the saints (those who do not take the mark of the beast) and overpowers them—the martyrs of Revelation 6:9-11 and 20:4. What we know so far:

1. The horn came after the ten horns (kings) were in existence and then was contemporaneous with them.
2. It uprooted three of the ten horns (kings)
3. It was intelligent (it had the eyes of a man)
4. It was arrogant and boastful.

Now we learn additional facts:

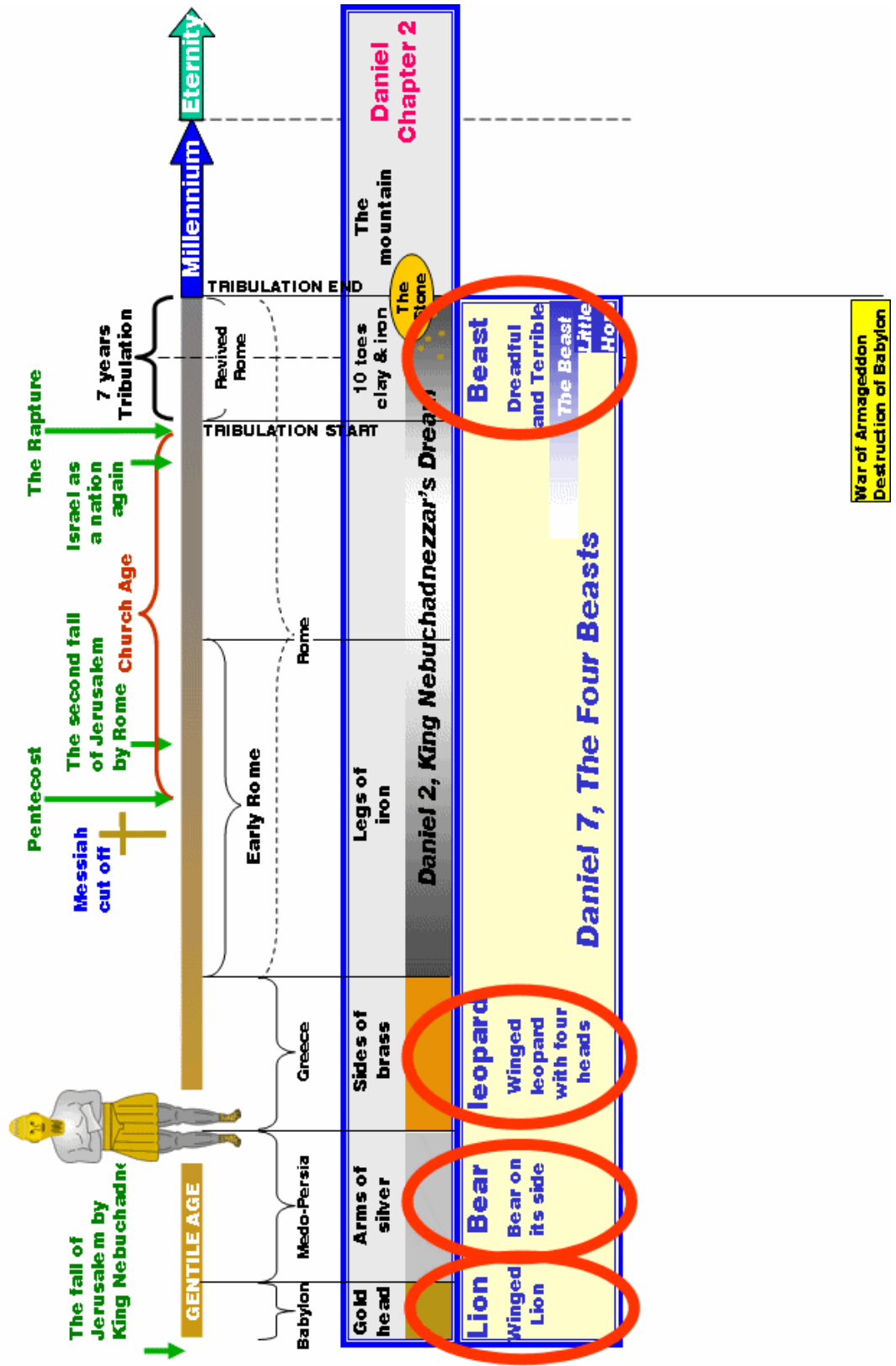
5. He will persecute the saints of the Most High (nation of Israel) during the tribulation.
6. He will overpower Israel and bring it under his authority

Verse 22—*until the Ancient of Days came*—the Second Coming of Jesus

- ***and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One***
 7. He will be judged by God
- ***and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.***
 8. And Israel, no longer under the rule of the little horn, will enter into her covenant blessings in the Millennial Kingdom

Verse 23—*Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it*—The three previous kingdoms were limited. But this fourth kingdom will be worldwide (Revelation 13:7). It will trample and crush those who oppose it. This will be the coming one-world government under a worldwide dictator.

Timeline of Daniel Chapter 7 (traditional view)



Verse 24—*As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise*—There will be ten kings (or countries) in this fourth empire. When the Roman Empire ceased to exist in the A.D. 400s, it was not conquered by another empire as the former three were. Instead, individual nations emerged. Some of those nations exist even today. This is why many Christians were excited when the European Union had 10 nations. But in 2013, there were 28 nations in the EU. Some are continually added and some drop out (like Brexit).

- ***and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings***—in his initial rise to power, this fourth king (antichrist) will bring 3 of the 10 nations under his authority.

Verse 25—(1) *He will speak out against the Most High and* (2) *wear down the saints* (the nation Israel—remember, those are the saints who Daniel knows in the OT. He’s never heard of the church and it will be Raptured before the tribulation) *of the Highest One, and* (3) *he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; (4) and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time* (3 ½ years, 1260 days in Revelation 12:6 and 42 months in Revelation 11:2; 13:5).

APPLICATION—One of the things I couldn’t imagine was making alterations in times and law—until now. Who would ever think we would not be able to say “Christmas” in our country?

Verse 26—*But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever*—at the Second Coming of Christ, the power and kingdom of the antichrist will be destroyed forever

Verse 27—*Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him*’—The kingdom of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings. His kingdom with His saints will continue forever. This kingdom will not be overthrown by anyone. It is an everlasting kingdom. And peoples and kings *will serve and obey Him*.

Verse 28—*At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself.*”

- Both Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the statue and Daniel’s dream of the four beasts cover the same span of the times of the Gentiles (when Israel has no king on the Davidic throne).
- Both dreams indicate that Israel and her land will be ruled over by four successive world empires.
 - The first was Babylonian Empire, the head of gold on the statue and the winged lion.
 - The second was the Medo-Persian Empire, the chest and arms of silver and the bear
 - The third was the Greek Empire, the belly and thighs of bronze and the four-headed leopard
 - The fourth was the Roman Empire, the legs of iron mixed with clay and the mongrel beast
- Sovereignty passed from Assyria to Babylon in 609 B.C., from Babylon to Persia in 539 B.C. and from Persia to Greece in 330 B.C., and from Greece to Rome in the first century B.C.
- The next Gentile empire will be the one of the antichrist. He will try to prevent Christ’s rule on earth by destroying God’s covenant people. He will only reign for 7 years. His reign will be stopped by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, who will destroy the antichrist and his kingdom, and Christ’s Millennial Kingdom on earth will be established and fulfill all the millennial promises made to Israel in the Old Testament.

Chapter 8

Daniel Saw a Vision of a Ram, a Goat, and a Small Horn

Starting with 8:1, the book switches from Aramaic (2:4b–7:28) back to Hebrew as the language (8:1–12:13) in which the book is written in its present form.

Verse 1—*In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king*—551 B.C., two years after the vision of chapter 7 and before the fall of Babylon in 539. Daniel is about 69 years old here.

- *a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously*—a new vision.

Verse 2—*looked in the vision, and while I was looking I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam; and I looked in the vision and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal*—Susa was one of the Persian royal cities, about 200 miles east of Babylon on the Ulai Canal (not a river but man made). About 100 years later, the Persian king Xerxes built a beautiful palace there, where the events of Esther took place (Esther 1:2). Also, Nehemiah was King Artaxerxes' cupbearer in the Susa palace (Nehemiah 1:1). Daniel is not actually there, but sees it in a vision.

Verses 3-4—*Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last*—A ram with two horns, one longer than the other, but the longer horn rose up after the shorter one. This would be the Medo-Persian Empire (two horns). The Medes were first, but the Persians, under King Cyrus, became more powerful. [This is similar to the bear (7:5) who was raised on one side. Persia was dominant over Medes.]

- *I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified himself*—This empire dominated everything in every direction it moved.

Verse 5—*While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground*—coming fast from the west—The Greek Empire

- *and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes*—Alexander the Great

Verses 6-7—*He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power.* Alexander the Great and the Greeks attacked the Medo-Persian Empire. The Greeks hurled the Persians to the ground, completely conquered them (334-331 B.C.). This goat parallels the belly and thighs of Nebuchadnezzar's statue (chapter 2) and the leopard with four wings of Daniel's first vision (7:6).

Verse 8—*Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven*—Alexander died in 323 at the age of 32. He had no children, so his empire was divided among his four generals. The areas were in Greece, in Asia Minor, the Seleucus in Syria and eastward, and the Ptolemys in Egypt—With Judah right in the middle between Syria and Egypt!

Verse 9—*Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land.*

- This is not the same as the horn in 7:8, which rises up out of the revived Roman Empire.
- This little horn comes out of Greece and refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who came to the throne in Syria in 175 B.C.
- He attacked *the Beautiful Land*, i.e., Judah

Verses 10-12—*It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper.*

- Often “host” refers to angels. But because Daniel refers to this event again in chapters 9 and 11, it seems that the *host of heaven* are the Jews in Judah, and they are trampled down by Antiochus. He magnified himself as god, equal to the God of the host. He desecrated the Temple by offering a pig on the altar.
- So the host (the Jews) and their sacrifice system in the Temple will be given over to Antiochus. He will fling the truth in God’s Word to the ground, and he will prosper.

Verse 13—*Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, “How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?”*—One of the angels asked another one of the angels how long it will take to fulfill the vision and the trampling of the Temple and the Jews.

Verse 14—*He said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored [lit. “cleansed” or “reconsecrated”]”*—From 171 B.C. when peaceful relations between Antiochus and the Jews ended (although we don’t know a specific time and event) until December 25, 165 B.C., when Judas Maccabeus restored the Temple for its proper worship, celebrated as Hanukkah by the Jews.

Verses 15-16—*When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, “Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.”*—Once again, though able to interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s two dreams (chapters 2, 4), Daniel could not interpret his own dream.

- As Michael and Gabriel are the only angels mentioned by name in the Bible and seem to be the top angels, the voice giving Gabriel instruction was most likely Jesus.
- Gabriel is sent to Daniel to give him the understanding of the dream.

Verses 17-19—*So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face—In fear and anguish Daniel fell to the ground.*

APPLICATION—The Apostle John also fell on his face in the presence of an angel (Revelation 19:10; 22:9). The angel was very clear to John—*“Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours...and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God.”*

- *but he said to me, “Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end”*—i.e., the time of the Greek Empire, events future from Daniel’s day.
- *Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright.*

- ***He said, “Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end—***not meaning the end times of the tribulation, but the end times of this particular vision—which is Antiochus.

Verse 20—*The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia.* So we are not guessing about that. The angel tells us the correct interpretation.

Verses 21-22—*The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece—*Remember when Daniel is living, near the beginning of the Persian Empire. Who is Greece? he must have wondered.

- ***and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king—***Alexander the Great. He died in Babylon, at the height of his power. Some say he died of malaria, others say alcoholism, others say gonorrhea.
- ***The broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power—***Alexander has no heirs to succeed him, so when he dies, his empire is divided between his four generals (see verse 8).

Verses 23-24—*In the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run their course, A king will arise, Insolent and skilled in intrigue. His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.*

“The king referred to here is known as Antiochus IV Epiphanes. After murdering his brother, who had inherited the throne in the Seleucid dynasty, he came to power in 175 B.C. In 170 B.C. Ptolemy VI of Egypt sought to recover territory then ruled over by Antiochus. So Antiochus invaded Egypt and defeated Ptolemy VI and proclaimed himself king in Egypt. This was his growth “in power to the south” (v. 9). On his return from this conquest, trouble broke out in Jerusalem so he decided to subdue Jerusalem (“the Beautiful Land,” v. 9; cf. 11:16, 41). The people were subjugated, the temple desecrated, and the temple treasury plundered.

From this conquest Antiochus returned to Egypt in 168 but was forced by Rome to evacuate Egypt. On his return he determined to make the land of Israel a buffer state between himself and Egypt. He attacked and burned Jerusalem, killing multitudes (cf. 8:10). The Jews were forbidden to follow the Mosaic Law in observing the Sabbath, their annual feasts, and traditional sacrifices, and circumcision of children (cf. v. 11). Altars to idols were set up in Jerusalem and on December 16, 167 B.C. the Jews were ordered to offer unclean sacrifices and to eat swine’s flesh or be penalized by death.” (BKC)

Verse 25—*And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify himself in his heart, And he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency—*Somewhere in the midst of this explanation, we seem to now be reading about the antichrist who will oppose Jesus but will come to an end by a word from the mouth of Christ, without any humans involved (Revelation 19:11-20). Jesus Himself said when talking about the Great Tribulation, *Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, ...* (Matthew 24:15). What Antiochus did to the Jews in offering the pig on the altar, is what the antichrist will do in the tribulation when *the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as God* (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

- This vision reveals Israel’s history under the Seleucids, and particularly under Antiochus during the time of Greek domination, but it also looks forward to Israel’s experiences under antichrist, whom Antiochus foreshadows.

Verse 26—*The vision of the evenings and mornings Which has been told is true*—So many dreams and visions are not true—but Daniel’s was the truth. Daniel’s prophecies are so accurate, that many liberals think they were written many years later as history.

- ***But keep the vision secret*** [lit. “concealed”], ***For it pertains to many days in the future***—Daniel is told a similar thing at the end of his book. “*Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time* (Daniel 12:9). Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Daniel wrote down exactly the truth God wanted us to know. Daniel’s prophecy was known at the time of Christ, for He quoted Daniel. So I understand this to mean that Daniel was not to tell the prophecy in his own days, but it would be for some 100 years later, when the Greeks invaded Persia.

Verse 27— *Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days*—He was completely overcome by the interpretation of this vision. He probably thought things were bad for the Jews in his time, exiled, etc. But now he knows it’s going to get much worse.

- ***Then I got up again and carried on the king’s business***—his work as a highranking office for the king of Persia
- ***but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it***—we know the abomination of desolation will be Antiochus offering a pig on the temple altar. Daniel has the big picture overview but not the details that explain it.

Chapter 9

As an Answer to Prayer Daniel Learned of the Future

Verse 1—*In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans in the first year of his reign*—This is the same Darius as in chapter 6. As mentioned at the beginning of chapter 6, there is no historical evidence outside the Bible for his reign. There are several possibilities: Darius may have been another name for Cyrus the Persian, or Darius was appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon, or Darius (another name for Gubaru) was appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon, or some think Darius is Cambyses, Cyrus’ son. No one knows for sure. This would be in about 538 B.C., about 67 years after Daniel was taken captive, so he would be approximately 82 years old.

- The Greek name is “Xerxes,” but the Hebrew name is “Ahasuerus.” Different English versions use either one of these names.

Verse 2—*I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years*—This was Jeremiah’s prophecy in Jeremiah 25:11-12. Interesting factoid, the Hebrew four letters YHWH for “Lord” appears 8 times in this chapter and nowhere else in Daniel.

- Most of Jeremiah was written before and at the captivity. It’s interesting that Daniel has a copy of that book, written about 67 or so years prior to this, coming up on 70 years.
- It seems that Daniel understood that the Persian victory over Babylon meant the end of the 70-year captivity was near.
- Notice that the whole point here is that Daniel is taking the 70 years literally.

Verse 3—*So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications*—

- ***with fasting, sackcloth and ashes***—evidence of mourning in grief or repentance (Genesis 37:34; Nehemiah 9:1; Esther 4:1, 3; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 49:3; Ezekiel 7:18; Joel 1:8; Matthew 11:21)

Verse 4—*I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, “Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God—awe inspiring but also fearful*

- ***who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments***—Daniel knows the Mosaic Covenant (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). Blessing for obedience, cursing for disobedience. They were in Babylon because they sinned.

APPLICATION—“There is an interplay between the words of Scripture and the words of prayer. Scripture stimulates prayer. Prayer constitutes the appropriate response to Scripture. Prayer naturally reflects Scripture” (WBC-OT)-

Verse 5—*we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances*—they have broken the Mosaic covenant

- Daniel associated himself with the sins of his people 32 times.

Verse 6—*Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land*—God had sent Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, but they didn’t listen.

Verse 7—*Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day — to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You*—In God’s righteousness, there must be punishment for the people’s rebellion and disobedience. God is faithful to His covenant (Mosaic).

APPLICATION—Something to think about—sin is a perversion of good. First the culture gets you to tolerate sin. Then it gets you to accept sin. Finally, it defines the sin as good, and the beginning good as sin. Think of the tribulation. With no good, the tribulation itself would implode. The antichrist keeps killing off God’s people. What would he do if there were no more God’s people? But Christ puts an end to the antichrist before that happens.

Verse 8—*Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You*—Sin is against God because He is the definition of righteousness. Sin cannot exist unless righteousness exists. Judah should have shame for what they did to God.

Verse 9—*To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him*—God’s discipline does not mean that He withholds mercy and forgiveness.

Verse 10—*nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets*—They can’t plead ignorance.

Verse 11—*Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside*—the idea of crossing a boundary, the boundary of God’s law in this case.

- ***not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him***—They knew the law and turned away from it

Verse 12—*Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity*—this captivity was a confirmation that God keeps His Word. This is the confidence Daniel could pray that after 70 years God would bring them back to the Land. Because God keeps His Word.

- ***for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem***—Jerusalem and God’s Temple were completely destroyed.

Verse 13—*As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our iniquity and*—Even though they are in captivity in Babylon, Jerusalem is destroyed, YET they still have not turned away from sin and back to God. They have gained no insight from what has happened.

- *giving attention to Your truth*, i.e., the Word of God in the Mosaic Law

Verse 14—*Therefore the Lord has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the Lord our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice*—God gave them the Law with the warning (Deuteronomy 28), and He sent His prophets to warn them. God is righteous in all that He has done to Judah.

Verse 15—*And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day — we have sinned, we have been wicked*—Daniel spoke of God’s great deliverance of His people from Egypt, making His name great because of what He had done—but the people God delivered have now sinned and acted wickedly against the very One who had delivered them.

Verse 16—*O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us*—When God delivered Israel from Egypt, Rahab said, “We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea...our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath” (Joshua 2:10-11). But now, because of what Judah has done, God’s people and Jerusalem have become a reproach [an offense, a disappointment].

Verse 17—*So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary*—Daniel had prayed for God to remove His wrath. Now he prayed for God’s favor, mercy, and forgiveness. That God would look with favor on His sanctuary, the Temple in Jerusalem.

Verse 18—*O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion*—Daniel did not have specifics that he asked of God, but that God would “see” the desolation for these 70 years.

- Notice, too, that Daniel did not appeal to God based on anything good the people did, because there was none. He completely relied on God’s compassion, on God’s character, not their own.

APPLICATION—Our salvation is the same way. *There is none righteous, not even one...There is none who seeks for God* (Romans 3:10-11). *Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:1). Our works are dead. It’s only by God’s grace, according to His character, that we are saved (Ephesians 2:1-9).

Verse 19—*O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay* [intensive—do not tarry], *because Your city and Your people are called by Your name*—Daniel asks that God act quickly. He can ask this because it’s according to God’s Word—70 years and God said He would bring them back. Daniel doesn’t want God to wait even one day more.

Verse 20—*Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God*—Daniel was probably identifying with the sins of the fathers. The whole nation was held accountable and sent into captivity.

Verse 21—*while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering*—The angel Gabriel had come to Daniel in 8:15-16 to interpret the vision of the ram and goat.

Verse 22—*He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding*—“understanding” is “meaning.” Jeremiah’s prophecy revealed God’s plan up to the end of the 70 years of Babylonian Captivity. But Daniel wants to know what will happen after that, according to the visions of Daniel 7 and 8.

Verse 23—*At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued*—Read Daniel’s prayer in verses 4-19. How long does it take to read it? Daniel started praying in verse 4, the command was issued from God to Gabriel, and by verse 19, Gabriel was there to give Daniel understanding. *—and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed*—i.e., “precious treasure” or “greatly beloved” in God’s view *—so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision*—lit. “to give serious consideration to the revelatory vision” (NET).

APPLICATION—We should heed it, too. Remember what Jesus told John, “*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near*” (Revelation 1:3).

We now come to four verses of prophecy that give us much information about the end times, and provide a timeline into which other prophecies fit. It’s very important to know and understand these four verses.

Verse 24—*Seventy weeks*—lit. “70 sevens” of years, or a total of 490 years. Years are meant because Daniel was just thinking and praying about the 70 years of captivity. The Jews thought in terms of sevens (“heptads,” groups of 7). Seven days in one week, every seventh year was a Sabbath year of rest for the land (Leviticus 25:1-7), seven “sevens” was the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-12).

- Israel and Judah had failed to keep the sabbatical years of resting the land for 490 years (the 70 years of captivity was one year for every 7th year of Sabbath rest of the land that they did not keep—Leviticus 26:34-35. Basically, it’s the whole time of the kings.). The angel has now been sent to Daniel to reveal that the start of a new era of God’s dealing with the Jews which would extend for the same number of years covered by the Jew’s violations of the Sabbatic year, namely, a cycle of 490 years [Pentecost, “Things to Come,” p. 242].
- *have been decreed for your people and your holy city*—the Jews and Jerusalem—contrary to what we’ve been reading in Daniel regarding the history of the world, this specific prophecy is about the Jews, not the empires of the world, and about Jerusalem, not other cities. Daniel’s prayer was about what will happen to *my people Israel* and *the holy mountain of My God* (Jerusalem) [v. 20].

The first three have to do with Christ’s death, at His first coming:

- (1) *to finish* [lit. “to bring to an end”] *the transgression*—“Israel’s sin of disobedience will be brought to an end at Christ’s Second Coming when she repents and turns to Him as her Messiah

and Savior. Then she will be restored to the land and blessed, in answer to Daniel's prayer" (BKC).

- (2) **to make an end** ["to seal up" with a view to punishment] **of sin**—Israel's sin had not been punished, but now it would be through Jesus, Israel's substitute, who would bear the sins of the world on the cross.
- (3) **to make atonement for iniquity**—Christ's payment for sins on the cross, the basis for Israel's future forgiveness (Romans 11:26-27).

The second three have to do with Christ's reign after His Second Coming, in the Millennium

- (4) **to bring in everlasting righteousness**—lit. "to bring in righteousness of ages," i.e. God will establish an age characterized by righteousness, which is the Millennial Kingdom.
- (5) **to seal up vision and prophecy**—the same verb is used "to finish transgression." Here it is to finish visions and prophecy concerning Israel
- (6) **to anoint the most holy place**—meaning the holy place of the Millennial Temple or it can be translated "most holy One" which would refer to Christ as the Anointed One (Daniel 7:25-27), as king of kings and Lord of lords in the Millennium.

Verse 25—So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem—There were four decrees by Persian rulers in reference to the Jews:

- (1) Cyrus' decree in 538 B.C. (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4; 5:13).
- (2) Darius I (522-486) in 520 B.C. (Ezra 6:1, 6-12).
- (3) Artaxerxes (464-424) in 458 B.C. (Ezra 7:11-26).

These first three decrees had to do with re-building the temple.

- (4) Artaxerxes, issued on March 5, 444 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1-8) when he granted the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem's city walls. This is the one referred to here (BKC).
- **until Messiah the Prince**—the appearing of the Messiah the Ruler, Jesus Christ, as King in the Millennial Kingdom
 - **there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks**—This 490-year period is divided into three segments: (a) 7 sevens (49 years), (b) 62 sevens (434 years), and (c) 1 seven (7 years).
 - **it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress**—This could be the 49 years of the actual re-building of Jerusalem after the Captivity, to build houses, etc.

Verse 26—Then after the sixty-two weeks—434 years (+ 49 years) = 483 years. This period ended on the day of the Triumphal Entry of Christ

- *the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing*, Jesus was cut off, i.e. crucified [chart from BKC].

The 483 Years in the Jewish and Gregorian Calendars

Jewish Calendar (360 days per year*)

$$(7 \times 7) + (62 \times 7) \text{ years} = 483 \text{ years}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 483 \text{ years} \\ \times 360 \text{ days} \\ \hline 173,880 \text{ days} \end{array}$$

Gregorian Calendar (365 days a year)

$$444 \text{ B.C. to A.D. 33} = 476 \text{ years}^\dagger$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 476 \text{ years} \\ \times 365 \text{ days} \\ \hline 173,740 \text{ days} \\ + 116 \text{ days in leap years}^\ddagger \\ + 24 \text{ days (March 5-March 30)} \\ \hline 173,880 \text{ days} \end{array}$$

*See comments on Daniel 9:27b for confirmation of this 360-day year.

†Since only one year expired between 1 B.C. and A.D. 1, the total is 476, not 477.

‡A total of 476 years divided by four (a leap year every four years) gives 119 additional days. But three days must be subtracted from 119 because centennial years are not leap years, though every 400th year is a leap year.

- There is no year “zero”, so 1 B.C. and A.D. 1 are the same year.
- Genesis 7:11 says the Flood began on the 17th day of the second month. The flood came to an end on the 17th day of the seventh month (8:4). This is exactly 5 months, said to be 150 days (7:24; 8:3), therefore, showing that there were 30 days to a month. So 12 such months would give us a 360-day Jewish year (remember, Genesis is written by Moses).
- The word for “cut off” is used of executing the death penalty on a criminal, so it clearly points to the crucifixion of Christ (BKC).
- There is a time space between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel. Daniel separates them. But we don’t know how long that time period is. Obviously, it’s at least 2017 years long!! But remember, this is prophecy about the Jews. We know the Jews are set aside, and there is a church age, but that is not revealed until the New Testament. Daniel just knows there is an unknown time space.
- *and the people*—the Romans
- *of the prince who is to come*—the antichrist, the yet-future ruler who will be the final head of the fourth empire (the little horn of the fourth beast, 7:8), the revived Roman Empire, called the *man of sin* in 2 Thessalonians 2, and the *beast out of the sea* in Revelation 13:1-10.
- *will destroy the city and the sanctuary*—This happened in A.D. 70, when the Romans completely destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem.
- *And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined*—thousands of Jews were killed, the rest were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire.

With the first 69 weeks of prophecy fulfilled literally, it establishes the method of literal interpretation of the 70th week. Also, we know from history that the whole church age will fit between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel. The church will be Raptured, then the antichrist will be revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). So the whole 70th week (7 years) fits between the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ, also in Revelation 6–19.

Now we move from the events at the first coming of Jesus to the time of the tribulation, the 7th period of 7 (week) of Daniel.

Verse 27—*And he [the prince to come] will make a firm covenant*—This begins the 70th week. The Rapture of the church has just occurred. Some think this covenant will guarantee Israel their land and the restoration of their religious and political autonomy. It will be a false fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. The Jews will be deceived into believing this covenant. The antichrist will be a false “prince of peace.”

- ***with the many***—the Jewish people
- ***for one week***—7 years
- ***but in the middle of the week***—after 3 ½ years, i.e. 1260 days (Revelation 11:3; 12:6), i.e. 42 months (Revelation 11:2; 13:5), he will break his covenant
- ***he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering***—The restored Levitical sacrifice system in the Temple is stopped, evidently breaking his covenant with the Jews. We know from 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5 and Revelation 11:1 that there is a real temple of God in Jerusalem at the time. This is the Third Temple, of which all the implements are already made and the priests trained.
- ***and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate***—Jesus said of this time, “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, ...then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall” (Matthew 24:15, 21). Paul wrote, ...the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-5). So when the antichrist takes his seat in the Temple, displaying himself as a god to be worshipped (Revelation 13:14-15), then that sign signifies the beginning of the second half of the tribulation, which is very, very terrible.
- ***even until a complete destruction***—At Christ’s Second Coming, the antichrist will be seized... and thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone (Revelation 19:20).
- ***one that is decreed***—Determined and planned by God, predicted in prophecy
- ***is poured out on the one who makes desolate***—not only is the antichrist and false prophet thrown into the lake of fire, but *the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse* (Revelation 19:21). So the tribulation ends, i.e., the whole period of the Seventy Week, with the antichrist, the false prophet, and all unbelievers gone from the earth. Only believers are left to go into the blessing of the Millennial Kingdom. It will be *a time of great and unparalleled blessings for the nation of Israel* (verse 24) [Pentecost, “Things to Come,” p. 241].

Chapter 10

Daniel Visited by an Angel Caught in Spiritual Warfare

Verse 1—*In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia* [536 B.C., Daniel is about 84 years old], *a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar* [Daniel's Aramaic name—1:6] Jewish exiles had begun to return to Judea and re-build the Temple. The nation seemed to be at peace. We're not told why Daniel did not return with them. Perhaps because of his age. Or perhaps because of his position in the government. Nehemiah had to ask permission to go to Judea because of his duties to the king (Nehemiah 2:1-6).

- *and the message was true and one of great conflict*—the future of the Jews—great conflict until the King of Kings comes and brings everlasting peace.
- *but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision*—This time, Daniel understands the message and vision.

Verses 2–3—It seems like now he's telling us the background. *In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks* [lit. "weeks of days"]. *I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed*—This statement ruins the view of the "Daniel Diet" people. Daniel did not only eat vegetables and drink water—they did that at a certain time and for a certain reason. Here we see that Daniel did eat tasty food, meat, and drink wine normally. But as a result of understanding this vision, he mourned and fasted, overcome with grief at what he now knows.

- "ointment" was used because of the severity of the sun (Psalm 121:6) and also associated with rejoicing (Proverbs 27:9), so it would not be used for a time of mourning.
- Notice also that the 3 weeks here means 21 days in his life, not the "periods of 7" of his visions. The context explains it. Why 21 days? That's explained in verse 13.

Verse 4—*On the twenty-fourth day of the first month* [a precise day], *while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris*—Memory aid—the names of the rivers spell JET (Jordan, Euphrates, Tigris). Helps remember which is which.
Jordan ⇒ Jews, Euphrates ⇒ Babylon, Tigris ⇒ Persia



Verses 5–6—*I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen*—Here's some observations about this angel: (1) He looked like a man and was called a man. (2) He had clothes on, dressed in linen, with a belt of pure gold around his waist. Very simple dress. But his body, not so simple.

- (3) *whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.*
- Some think this is the pre-incarnate Christ because of the similarity to the description of Jesus in Revelation 1:13-16. However, I don't think so. Jesus would not be fighting against the prince of Persia for 21 days, and He would not need the help of the angel Michael (verse 13). Rather, it seems like this was *one of the chief princes* (verse 13). Evidently, there are a number of chief angels, but the only names we know are Gabriel and Michael, and Michael is called the "archangel" (Jude 9).
- Others think this angel is Gabriel. However, Gabriel is mentioned other times in the Bible, like appearing to Mary, the mother of Jesus, but he is not described with these brilliant terms.
- This angel was bright, impressive, loud, shiny...the brilliance of a warrior from heaven.

Verses 7–8—Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision while the men who were with me did not see the vision—(4) Daniel, alone, saw the vision. The angels can restrict and choose who they appear to—even if the people are standing right next to each other.

- **nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves—**They did not see the angel, but they did see Daniel’s response.
- **So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength.** This was enough to cause fear and for them to run and hide. Daniel, too, had fear but was left there alone.

Verse 9—But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words,

- **I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.** (5) At the sound of angel’s words, Daniel fell asleep on the ground. Evidently, he was wide awake when the angel first appeared to him. It probably means more like he passed out.

Verse 10—Then behold, a hand touched me—Daniel saw the angel, heard the angel, and the angel touched him. The angel was real in our three-dimensional universe, yet he could choose who saw and heard him.

- **and set me trembling on my hands and knees—**

Verse 11—He said to me, “O Daniel, man of high esteem—God has high praise for Daniel. Nothing bad is said about him in the Bible. (6) Angels know the spiritual condition of people (see also 1 Corinthians 4:9; 11:10).

APPLICATION—Daniel spent his life working for the enemy of Judah. You would think God would have wanted Daniel to return to the land, but he stayed in the country of the enemies. He did his job according to God’s morals. He wasn’t afraid to demonstrate his faith, even if it cost him his life. It’s something to think about. We are each in a place and situation where we want God to say to us that He holds us in high esteem. It’s not a special place, it’s not a particular people. It’s how obedient you are to God where you are and who you are with.

- **understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you—**sent from God
- **And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.**

Verse 12—Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel—i.e., stop trembling

—for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God—which was 21 days ago. Fasting and no ointment showed he wasn’t spending time on his physical needs, but focused on praying.

—your words were heard—God immediately heard the words of Daniel’s prayer when he prayed
—and I have come in response to your words—(7) Angels are messengers from God. Hebrews 1:14 says, *are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*

Verse 13—But the prince of the kingdom of Persia—a demon of the Persian kingdom. Ephesians 6:12 describes these demons as...*rulers, ...powers...world forces of darkness...spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly realms*. Satan has ranking of authorities. Here is mentioned *the prince of the kingdom of Persia*, the main empire at that time. We tend to think of demons with respect to individual people, but here is a demon over a whole world empire.

- This reminds me of Revelation 9:13-21, about the *four demons bound at the great river Euphrates* who kill 1/3 of mankind during the 6th trumpet of the tribulation. This is the same area. Even today, we see much evil coming from that area of the world.

- *was withstanding me for twenty-one days*—This shows that the 3 weeks of verse 2 was 21 days (not years). (8) The demons of the kingdom of Persia were withstanding him for the 21 days Daniel was praying, so the angel couldn't get through. Angels can't sin, but they are not all-powerful. They're not omniscient or omnipotent. This angel wrestled for 21 days before he went back to get help to overcome them. He miscalculated his own and their power.
- *then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.* (9) There is different power among the angels. Michael had more power than the other angel. There was a hierarchal difference between the two. (10) "One of the chief princes," i.e., a plurality of leadership among the angels. (11) Angels watch out for and help each other. "Michael came to help me." (12) Some demons or combinations of demons are stronger than some angels or combinations of angels. But altogether, the angels are stronger than the demons because they are sent out from heaven.
- Notice the demons are now described as plural: *kings of Persia*. Shows many demons there. It seems like the demons called in reinforcements to fight this angel, who then called Michael. The two angels defeated the demons.

Verse 14—*"Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people [the Jews] in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future"*—Chapter 11 is the most detailed prophetic revelation in Daniel—maybe in the whole Bible.

Verses 15–17—*When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless*—when he learned of the future for the Jews

- *And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips* [because Daniel was speechless]; *then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me*
- *"O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength*—knowing the future suffering of the Jews
- *For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me."*

Verses 18-19—*Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. He said, "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!" Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, "May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me"*—(13) Angels are able to strengthen humans, using words of encouragement, as well as physical strength.

Verse 20—*Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come*—these are demons of these empires. The messenger is about to tell Daniel God's plans for Israel under Persia and Greece (11:2-35) and later in the tribulation (11:36-45) and on into the Millennium (12:1-4). At this point, Daniel doesn't even know about a Greek Empire.

Verse 21—*However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth*—"God's record of truth in general, of which the Bible is one expression" (Walvoord, "Daniel: the Key to Prophetic Revelation").

- *Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your [the Jews] prince.*

Chapter 11

Daniel Receives a Vision about Alexander the Great, Antiochus IV, and the Antichrist

Verse 1—*In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him*—This is still the angel talking from 10:21.

- Now is a detailed description of the whole inter-testament period.
- This prophecy is given in 536 B.C., and it is ***the truth*** (verse 2).

Persia

Verse 2—*three more kings are going to arise in Persia:*

- Cambyses (529-522 B.C.) Cyrus' son
- Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521)
- Darius I Hystaspes (521-486), also called Darius the Great (Ezra 5 and 6)
- ***Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece***
 - Xerxes I (485-465), see also Ezra 4:6 (had army of hundreds of thousands—may be the Ahasuerus of Esther 1, so his attack on Greece is the four years between Esther 1 and 2)
- Persian rule is covered in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

Greece

Verse 3—*And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases*—This is the rise of Alexander the Great in Greece. He was the bronze belly and thighs of Nebuchadnezzar's image (2:32, 39b) and the winged leopard (7:6) and the prominent horn of the goat (8:5-8).

- Between 334 and 330 B.C., Alexander conquered Asia Minor (Turkey), Syria, Egypt, and the Medo-Persian Empire before his death at the age of 32 in 323 B.C. from malaria and alcoholism, having no descendants.

Verse 4—*But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them.*

- His empire was divided among his 4 generals:
 - Cassander (Macedonia and Greece)
 - Lysimachus (most of Asia Minor, i.e., the Turkey area)
 - Seleucus (Syria, Babylon, and eastward)
 - Ptolemy (Egypt and Arabia)
- This division was the four heads of the leopard (7:6) and the four prominent horns on the goat (8:8). Because he had no heirs, his kingdom was divided and weak. The Greek language and culture had more impact.



Verse 5—*Then the king of the South will grow strong*—king of South=Ptolemy I Soter (323-285) in Egypt. He was a general under Alexander, who declared himself king of Egypt in 304.

- ***along with one of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his domain will be a great dominion indeed***—Prince=Seleucus I Nicator (312-281), another general under Alexander. When he came under attack by another general, he sought help from Ptolemy

in Egypt. Winning the war, Seleucus was greatly strengthened in Babylon and declared himself king in 305. He ruled much more territory than Ptolemy.

Verse 6— Ptolemy I Soter died in 285 B.C., and Ptolemy II Philadelphus, Ptolemy's son, ruled in Egypt (285-246).

- Meanwhile Seleucus was murdered in 281, and his son Antiochus I Soter ruled until 262. Then Seleucus' grandson Antiochus II Theos ruled in Syria (262-246).
- Ptolemy II and Seleucus Antiochus II were bitter enemies. But *After some years they will form an alliance*, in 250 when Ptolemy II's *daughter* [Berenice] *of the king of the South will come to the king of the North* [Antiochus II] *to carry out a peaceful arrangement* in marriage.
- *But she will not retain her position of power, nor will he remain with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in and the one who sired her as well as he who supported her in those times*—Laodice, whom Antiochus had divorced in order to marry Berenice, had Berenice and her infant son killed. Laodice then poisoned Antiochus II and made her son, Seleucus II Callinicus, king.

Verse 7— *But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against their army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display great strength*—Berenice's brother Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221) [Ptolemy II Philadelphus' son who assumed the throne in Egypt] set out to avenge the death of his sister Berenice and conquers Syria and kills Laodice.

Verse 8— *Also their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he on his part will refrain from attacking the king of the North for some years*—Ptolemy returned to Egypt with many spoils.

Verse 9—*Then the latter* [Seleucus Antiochus II] *will enter the realm of the king of the South* [Egypt], *but will return to his own land*—his invasion was unsuccessful, so he returns to Syria. He dies by a fall from his horse in 227.

Verse 10— *His sons*—the older son, Seleucus III (226-223) is killed by conspirators while on a military campaign in Asia Minor, so his younger brother Antiochus III the Great becomes the ruler in 223 at 18 years of age, and he reigned for 36 years (until 187 B.C.).

- *will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he may again wage war up to his very fortress*—Egypt had controlled all the territory north to the borders of Syria, including the land of Israel. Antiochus III drove the Egyptians back to the southern borders of Israel in 219-217.

Verses 11-14—*The king of the South will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter* [north] *will raise a great multitude, but that multitude will be given into the hand of the former* [south]. So Ptolemy IV came to meet Antiochus III at the southern borders of Israel. Ptolemy was successful at first, slaughtering many thousands.

- *When the multitude is carried away, his* [Ptolemy's] *heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail. For the king of the North* [Seleucid] *will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people* [Jews] *will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down.* But Antiochus returned with another much larger army, including Philip V of Macedonia and some of the Jews, and turned back the Ptolemy in the south. Ptolemy dies, and his infant son Ptolemy V reigns.

Verses 15-16—*Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege ramp and capture a well-fortified city*—Sidon (near Tyre), which Antiochus captured in 203 B.C. from the Ptolemys.

- ***and the forces of the South will not stand their ground, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand.***
- ***But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will be able to withstand him; he will also stay for a time in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand***—Antiochus captures Israel.

Verse 17—*“He will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand for him or be on his side*—Antiochus III sought peace by giving his daughter Cleopatra [Egypt’s first Cleopatra] in marriage to Ptolemy V [7 years old] of Egypt in 192. But she became perfectly loyal to her husband and new homeland and encouraged an Egyptian alliance with Rome against her father.

Verses 18-19—*Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many*—So Antiochus III invaded Asia Minor [modern day Turkey] in 197 B.C. and Greece in 192.

- ***But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn***—However, he did not succeed. A Greek **commander** came from Rome to turn Antiochus back in 190 B.C.
- ***So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more***—He returned to his own country and died in 188. His dream of reuniting Alexander’s empire under his authority was never realized.

Verse 20—*Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though not in anger nor in battle*—The Romans forced the Seleucids to pay them tribute, so Antiochus’ son, Seleucus IV Philopator (187-176 B.C.) heavily taxed his people and the people of Israel in order to pay Rome. He was poisoned by his treasurer Heliodorus shortly after removing treasures from the Jewish Temple to help pay the Roman tax.

Verse 21—*In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue*—Verses 21-35 describe Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid, **a despicable person**, who ruled from 175-164 B.C. He is given as much attention as all the others combined. He is the little horn of 8:9-14, 23-25. This long section is devoted to him not only because of the effects of his invasion on the land of Israel, but more so because he foreshadows the little horn (king) of 7:8, the antichrist who in a future day will desecrate and destroy the land of Israel (BKC).

Antiochus was the brother of Seleucus IV. When Seleucus died, Antiochus posed as guardian of Seleucus’ young son (Demetrius Soter) and comes in peace. He then has the son murdered and secures the throne for himself, **by intrigue**. He took the name “Epiphanes” which means “the illustrious One,” but he was nicknamed “Epimanes” which means “the Madman.”

Verses 22-23—*The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant*—Antiochus invades Egypt again, possibly deposing Onias, the high priest in Judah at the time.

- ***After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception***—Making a peace alliance with Ptolemy Philometor in Egypt

- *and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people*—because of the “peace” deception, he was able to invade with a small army

Verse 24—*In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty and possessions among them*—Antiochus’ prestige and power rose by distributing his wealth to his followers

- *and he will devise his schemes against strongholds*—other areas besides Egypt, *but only for a time*—Ptolemy in Egypt rebelled against Antiochus and the Seleucids

Verses 25-26—*He [Antiochus] will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South [Ptolemy] with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war*—This battle happened in 170 B.C.

- *but he [Ptolemy] will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him*—probably by friends Antiochus bought with money. *Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain.*

Verse 27—*As for both kings [Antiochus and Ptolemy], their hearts will be intent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table [saying they were friends]; but it will not succeed, for the end is still to come at the appointed time* (verses 29-30)

Verse 28—*Then he [Antiochus] will return to his land [Syria] with much plunder*—from Egypt

- *but his heart will be set against the holy covenant*—Antiochus dislikes Judah
- *and he will take action and then return to his own land*

Verses 29-30—*At the appointed time he [Antiochus] will return and come into the South [Egypt]*, Antiochus invaded Egypt again in 168 B.C., (because “peace” of verse 27 was a lie)

- *but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before*—Antiochus does not win
- *For ships of Kittim (Cyprus) will come against him*—At an urgent request from Ptolemy, the Roman fleet landed in Alexandria, Egypt to help Ptolemy fight Antiochus. The Romans warned Antiochus to leave, or he would have to fight Rome.
- *therefore he will be disheartened*—Very angry at his defeat and the Roman threat
- *and will return*—back to Syria, having to pass through Judah
- *and become enraged at the holy covenant*—the Jews in Judah
- *and take action*—for the second time (v. 28), he takes out his frustration on the Jews altogether over a period of 172 to 167 B.C.
- *so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant*—he protected those Jews who had forsaken their own people and accepted money to side with Antiochus

Verse 31—*“Forces from him will arise*—with overwhelming forces, he conducted a massacre in which 80,000 Jewish men, women, and children were put to the sword (2 Maccabees 5:11-14).

- *desecrate the sanctuary fortress*—he robbed the temple of its golden vessels and other sacred objects valued at 1800 talents (5:15-21).
- *and do away with the regular sacrifice*—He forbade the Jews to follow their religious practices, including their festivals and circumcision and commanded that copies of the Law be burned.
- *And they will set up the abomination of desolation*—A statue of the Greek god Zeus was installed in the Holy Place of the Temple and a pig was offered on the altar on December 16, 167 B.C. [the Jewish calendar]. The Jews were made to sacrifice a pig on the Zeus altar every month

on the 25th [our calendar] to celebrate the birthday of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. [Antiochus IV died insane in Persia in 163 B.C.]

- Jesus referred to this when He said, “*Therefore when you see the Abomination of Desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...*” (Matthew 24:15) to show it was a type of the antichrist who is to come in the tribulation.

Verse 32—*By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant*—Antiochus promised great reward for those Jews who would set aside the God of Israel and worship Zeus, the god of Greece. Some Jews, in order to be accepted by their Syrian-Greek overlords, built a Hellenic type of gymnasium in Jerusalem, where they exercised naked, as the Greeks did, and even attempted to conceal their circumcision by a surgical procedure (1 Macc 1:11-15).

- ***but the people who know their God will display strength and take action***—Some Jews, however, remained faithful to the God of Israel. A priest named Mattathias was the father of the valiant Maccabees: Judas, Jonathan, and Simon, who were victorious in the war of independence against the Seleucid government. Their commitment to the Mosaic Law resulted in the survival of the nation until the first coming of Jesus. Some of these later became the Pharisees, who were dedicated to obeying every regulation of the Law as well as every oral interpretation that had been handed down for generations. Later, a group called the Essenes, who made their headquarters at Qumran, broke off from the Pharisees.

Verses 33-35—*Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many*—those committed to the Mosaic Law would summon their people to trust in the promises and power of the Lord instead of bowing to the demands of the pagan tyrant who was commanding them to turn to idols and away from the Living God.

- ***yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days***—many of those who followed God and not Antiochus were put to death. The Jews joined the Maccabean Revolt to fight against Antiochus. At first, they were defeated because they refused to fight on the Sabbath, the day on which Antiochus would attack them. But then they realized they must fight on the Sabbath.
- ***Now when they fall they will be granted a little help*** [from those who joined the revolt], ***and many will join with them in hypocrisy*** [false motives]
- ***Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time***—Daniel was assured the persecution was for the end time, one that is appointed by God.
- Hannukah is the Jewish celebration of this inter-testament Maccabean revolt that resulted in the Jews winning and cleaning up their Temple and restoring the sacrificial system. It is celebrated even today by the Jewish holiday on December 25 (December 16 on the Jewish calendar).

Verses 36–45 describe the antichrist who is to come during the 70th week (tribulation period). [Although some think this is a continuation of a description of Antiochus, but the description seems to me to go way beyond Antiochus. But, of course, the same Satan who empowers Antiochus is the one who empowers the antichrist. So they should be similar.]

Verse 36—*Then the king will do as he pleases*—The antichrist will answer to no one. The ten kings who elected him will give him absolute political power.

- ***and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god***—He will have absolute religious power. *He exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship...displaying himself as being God* (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

- ***and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods***—his man, the false prophet, *opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven* (Revelation 13:6).
- ***and he will prosper***—*authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him* (Revelation 13:7).
- ***until the indignation is finished for that which is decreed will be done***—It has already been determined by God that the reign of the antichrist will be seven years long.

Verse 37—He—“he” occurs 7 times, “him” 4 times, “his” 3 times, always referring to the “king” of verse 36.

- ***will show no regard for the gods of his fathers***—whatever religion he was raised with, he will have no regard (care, thought, attention) for that.
- ***or for the desire of women***—it’s not “the desire for women,” rather, it’s “no regard for the desire of women.” It seems to say that he has no care or thought for anything women desire.
- ***nor will he show regard for any other god***—he has no care or thought about any god, of any religion, including the God of Israel. [This cannot apply to Antiochus because he placed a Zeus statue in the Temple and made a coin with his image on one side and Zeus’ on the other side.]
- ***for he will magnify himself above them all***—the supreme rule and authority in the whole world.

Verse 38—But instead he will honor a god of fortresses—military strength

- ***a god whom his fathers did not know***—Satan perhaps
- ***he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures***—will accumulate vast wealth—see Revelation 17–18.

Verse 39—He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god—

- ***he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him***—thus gaining him a following
- ***and will cause them to rule over the many***—all part of the antichrist’s government
- ***and will parcel out land for a price***—possibly a reduced price?

Verse 40—At the end time—the second half of the 7th year

- ***the king of the South will collide with him***—most likely, the king of Egypt (11:5-35)
- ***and the king of the North will storm against him***—could be Russia (Ezekiel 38:15—although this particular Gog and Magog battle is at the beginning of the Tribulation, but Russia could be in another battle, as they are to the north)
- ***with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships***—his huge army
- ***and he will enter countries***—solidifying his world reign
- ***overflow them and pass through***—victories through every country he invades, like a flood

Verse 41—He will also enter the Beautiful Land (in God’s eyes)—Israel (8:9)

- ***and many countries will fall***—in Europe and the Middle East
- ***but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon***—present-day country of Jordan, maybe because they collaborate with the antichrist

Verses 42-43—Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape—

- ***But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt;***
- ***and Libyans*** (west of Egypt) ***and Ethiopians*** (south of Egypt) ***will follow at his heels.***

Verse 44—*But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him*—Russia and Middle East?

- *and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many.*

Verse 45—*He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain*—possibly Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley, where his armies will assemble to march south to attack Jerusalem (Revelation 16:16).

- *yet he will come to his end*—after verses about the antichrist’s victory over so many countries, all at once, he comes to an end—at the Second Coming of Christ (Zechariah 14:3; Revelation 19:19-20).
- *and no one will help him*—“his” countries themselves will also come to an end, so they can’t help him.

Chapter 12

The Future of Israel and Daniel’s Own Future

Verse 1—*Now at that time*—continuing from 11:45, during the time of the antichrist’s reign—the tribulation

- *Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise*—Jude 9 describes Michael disputing with Satan over the body of Moses. In Daniel 10:13, he helped Gabriel fight against the “prince of the Persian kingdom.” Here we see he is a special guard over the Jews and will have a key part in fighting the attacks of Satan and the antichrist against the Jews (Revelation 17:6).
- *And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time*—severe persecution of the Jews by the antichrist will be more brutal than has happened to any nation up to that time. Jesus said, “*for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now*” (Matthew 24:21). Jesus went on to say, “*Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved*” (v. 22). This would be the time of the 7th seal and the 7th trumpet—the 7 bowls (Revelation 16).

APPLICATION—Satan, using his instrument the antichrist, tries to exterminate the Jews. How often we’ve seen him attempt to do this throughout history. Here Michael himself will come to the defense of the Jews. A remnant will survive

- *and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued*—The times of the Gentiles has come to an end. All Israel will be grafted back in (Romans 11:26), i.e., those whose names are written in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:12). It’s not that every single Jew is in the book of life and will be rescued. As we know from Revelation 6:9-11, many are martyred. But the ones who do survive will be believers whose names are in the Book of Life. This will include the 144,000 as well as any other believers. They will survive the tribulation and to go into the Millennial Kingdom.

Verse 2—*Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake*—resurrection of the dead, both of Old Testament saints and tribulation saints (Revelation 20:4). [Remember, church-age saints are resurrected at the Rapture.]

- *these to everlasting life*—believers, whose names are in the book of life, and *they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years* (Revelation 20:4).
- *but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt*—unbelievers, who will be resurrected to appear before the Great White Throne Judgment, after the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:5,

11-15).

Verse 3—*Those who have insight*—understanding, discernment, comprehension, judgment, i.e., they are not deceived by the antichrist. ...*those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand* (Revelation 20:4).

- ***will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven***—like the sun and moon and stars of the brightness of the expanse of heaven
- ***and those who lead the many to righteousness***—evangelism will be so risky during this time, so they are specially pointed out as those who will be rewarded
- ***like the stars forever and ever***—for eternity

APPLICATION—I don't know if this is stretching the meaning here, but some have pointed out that the stars all shine, but some shine brighter than others, but each star shines within its own capacity. In other words, some will have more rewards (shine) more than others, but there will not be an envy of other's glory (for one thing, there is no envy/sin in heaven) but each will be rewarded to their capacity. Of course, the rewards are glory we give to God. For example, the moon gives as much light as it has capacity. But its light is a reflection of the sun. So our rewards are a reflection of the glory of God.

Verse 4—*But as for you, Daniel*—he now knows much information about what will happen to the Jews in the future. Other visions were for Gentile empires, but this is for his own people.

- ***conceal these words and seal up the book***—make sure the prophecy is secure for those in the end times. This is the opposite of what John was told to do with Revelation (1:3 and 22:10).
- ***until the end of time***—the words are for the tribulation, for encouragement for the Jews
- ***many will go back and forth***—seeking for answers
- ***and knowledge will increase***—For example, we understand most of chapter 11 now because it is history. So those in the tribulation will look at Daniel's prophecies as history as the tribulation unfolds

Verse 5—*Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river*—it seems these are two angels, one on each bank of the Tigris River (10:4).

Verse 6—*And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders [astonishing things—of 11:36-45]?"*—One angel is asking the other angel how long it will be until the end. The other angel answers in verse 7.

Verse 7—*I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time—3 ½ years* (see 7:25), i.e., the last half of the tribulation, when it will be what Jesus called *the great tribulation* (Matthew 24:21).

- ***and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed***—the tribulation ends [with the coming of Jesus Christ]

Verse 8—*As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?"*—Now Daniel asks the angel a question. "What will be the outcome?" Daniel did know God's eternal kingdom will be established (2:44; 7:14, 22, 27), yet there was much he didn't know. Other prophets, like Isaiah, spent more time on the Millennial Kingdom. Daniel spent more time on the tribulation. We understand more because we have Matthew and Revelation, but there is still much we don't know or understand.

Verse 9—*He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the*

end time—repeat of verse 4. Daniel is not getting any more visions or understandings. They are not for him. They are for the end time (of the tribulation).

Verse 10—*Many will be purged, purified and refined*—The righteous will be purified, i.e., they will become more righteous. Testing and suffering refines believers, makes them more firm in their faith.

- ***but the wicked will act wickedly***—but the wicked will become more wicked
- ***and none of the wicked will understand***—the wicked have no spiritual discernment. *For the Word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness...the world through its wisdom did not come to know God* (1 Corinthians 1:18-21). During the tribulation, the angel flies *in the midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people...worship Him who made the heaven and the earth...* (Revelation 14:6-8), but instead *they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give him glory* (Revelation 16:9). No matter how good the testimony of God and the believers are, *evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived* (2 Timothy 3:13).
- ***but those who have insight will understand***—But those with understanding, discernment, comprehension, judgment, who were not deceived by the antichrist (v. 3).

Verse 11—*From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up*—the day the antichrist sets himself up in the Temple in Jerusalem to be worshipped as a god

- ***there will be 1,290 days***—“a time, times, and half a time” (7:25); 42 months (Revelation 11:2) or, 3 ½ years (half way through the 70th week).
- 42 months is 1260 days, but it could be that the regular sacrifice is abolished 30 days before the antichrist is set up there.

Verse 12—*How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!*—This is 45 days after the tribulation ends. There is the changing of the world from the disasters of the tribulation to the blessings of the Millennial Kingdom. For example, the tribulation temple is destroyed and Millennial Temple is built.

Verse 13—*But as for you, go your way to the end*—Live out the rest of his life—which at this point wasn't very long because he was in his 90s.

- ***then you will enter into rest***—as those *who sleep in the dust of the ground* (v. 2).
- ***and rise again***—his resurrection will be at the end of the tribulation
- ***for your allotted portion***—rewarded when *Daniel will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven like the stars forever and ever* (v. 3).
- ***at the end of the age***—i.e., the end of the tribulation and therefore, into the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.

Then the Son of Man Himself, the Son of God incarnate, will assume supreme control over the entire earth. *His dominion will be from sea to sea...to the ends of the earth* (Zechariah 9:10). *For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea* (Isaiah 11:9).