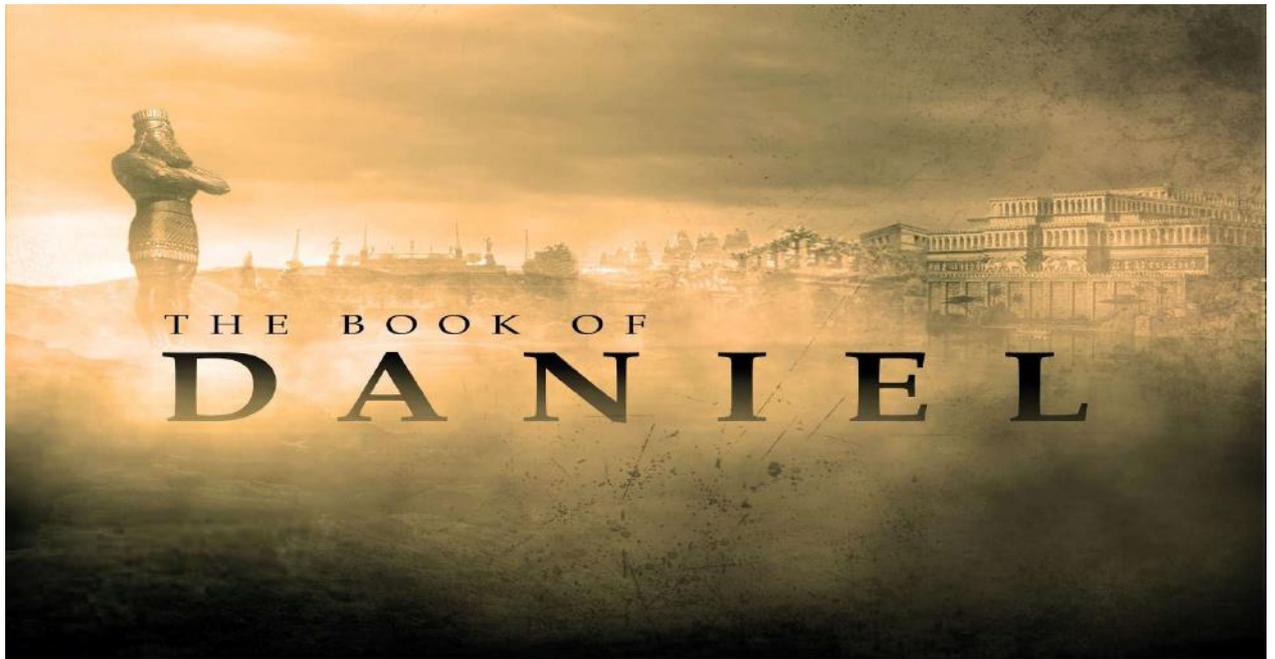


God is my Judge!



The Book of Daniel Introduction

The name of this book is taken from its main character and author, Daniel, which means, 'God is my judge.' We know very little about his early life or his parents. It seems evident that he was of royal or princely ancestry. He probably was born and reared in Jerusalem. He must have received outstanding training. It is estimated that he was carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar when very young about 15 or 16 years of age.

Daniel's life spanned a very interesting period of history. He saw his beloved nation overrun by the Babylonians. Carried to Babylon he saw this great kingdom fall to the Persians. He served during this time of the captivity under many of the kings of Babylon and Persia. He also lived to see a remnant of the Hebrews return to their native land after seventy years of captivity. His life then spanned the entire period of Babylonian captivity.

Upon the death of Solomon, the great kingdom built by David and Solomon divided into two parts. Ten northern tribes united to become known as the nation of Israel while the remaining two tribes of the south became known as Judah. Both would fall into idolatry. Israel fell first with Judah falling next. It is the fall and captivity of Judah that the book of Daniel centres around.

The fall of Judah is a sad time in the history of God's people. Their last good king was Josiah. Unfortunately, he was killed as he attempted to stop the advance of the Egyptian army as it was passing through the land to engage the Assyrians in battle. The battle took place near Megiddo when the young king was wounded. He was carried back to Jerusalem where he died. With the death of Josiah, we begin to see the downfall of Judah.

After Josiah's death, his son Jehoahaz was proclaimed king in 609 BC. His reign lasted three months when Pharaoh Necho deposed of him having him deported to Egypt where later he died. In his place Necho placed his brother Eliakim on the throne changing his name to Jehoiakim. He was nothing more than a puppet king ruling from 609 to 598. Heavy tribute was placed upon the people during his reign. In 605 Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho at the battle of Carchemish in northern Syria. The result was that Nebuchadnezzar came into control of Palestine.

The following year he moved into Palestine and suddenly Jehoiakim found it expedient to transfer his allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. Later on after a battle with the Egyptians Nebuchadnezzar would return home. During his absence Jehoiakim rebelled turning his allegiance to Egypt again. Nebuchadnezzar dispatched troops to Judah in December 598. Jehoiakim was bound in chains but before he could be carried to Babylon he either died or was killed.

Jehoiachin, the eighteen-year-old son of Jehoiakim took the throne. Three months later Jerusalem surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar. The king, his mother and leading citizens were taken to Babylon along with many of the vessels of the temple and other treasures. This king after taken to Babylon lived for 37 years.

Zedekiah, the last king of Judah and a brother to Jehoiachin next came to the throne and ruled from 597 to 587. He was a weak ruler. Many of the Judeans never considered him as their king but still considered the exiled Jehoiachin as the legitimate king. Jeremiah who was still in Judah at this time advised the king to use restraint and reject the advice of the Egyptians to come over to their side. Babylon and Egypt again fought with the victory going to the Babylonians.

In July 587, the Babylonians breached the walls of Jerusalem. Zedekiah tried to escape but was captured near Jericho and taken to Nebuchadnezzar's camp. He was forced to watch the execution of his sons. He was blinded and taken in chains to Babylon where he later died. A month later the Temple, palace and private houses of Jerusalem were burned. The walls of the city were broken down. Many people were executed and in 832 were carried captives to Babylon. This left only the poorest classes of people to remain behind.

The Babylonians appointed a man Gedaliah to serve as their governor with headquarters in Mizpah because Jerusalem was now in ruins. He sought to return things to normal but a group of extremists looked upon him as a collaborator and plotted to kill him. Those who were left fearing Nebuchadnezzar fled to Egypt. The prophet Jeremiah was forced to go with them.

In all Nebuchadnezzar was 20 years in taking and destroying Jerusalem. The reason for this lengthy period was that he would have preferred to receive tribute than to have to destroy the city and its people. Destroyed it was useless to him. If the kings and people had lived in subjection to him he could have received a great amount of tribute.

It was during the reign of Jehoiakim that Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego were taken captive to Babylon. Ezekiel the prophet was also to be taken a prisoner. He was sent to a work camp on the river Chebar.

The city of Babylon was one of the great cities of the ancient world. Nebuchadnezzar made it one of the most beautiful cities in history with its famous hanging gardens. Its outer walls were 60 miles around a 15-mile square. The walls were 300 feet high, 80 feet thick and 35 feet into the ground. There were 250 towers guarding the walls. One hundred brass gates made it accessible from every side.

The Euphrates River flowed under its walls and through the midst of the city. The famous hanging gardens were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Temple of Marduk (Bel) was the most famous in that part of the world. Its golden image and altar weighed 50,000 pounds. Today Babylon lies in ruins.

This was prophesied by **Jeremiah** in **51:37-43** ‘Babylon will be a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, an object of horror and scorn, a place where no one lives. Her people all roar like young lions, they growl like lion cubs. But while they are aroused, I will set out a feast for them and make them drunk, so that they shout with laughter—then sleep forever and not awake,’ declares the LORD. “I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams and goats. “How Sheshak will be captured, the boast of the whole earth seized! How desolate Babylon will be among the nations! The sea will rise over Babylon; its roaring waves will cover her. Her towns will be desolate, a dry and desert land, a land where no one lives, through which no one travels’.

It was also prophesied in **Isaiah 13:17-22** ‘See, I will stir up against them the Medes, who do not care for silver and have no delight in gold. Their bows will strike down the young men; they will have no mercy on infants, nor will they look with compassion on children. Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the pride and glory of the Babylonians, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations; there no nomads will pitch their tents, there no shepherds will rest their flocks. But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about. Hyenas will inhabit her strongholds, jackals her luxurious palaces. Her time is at hand, and her days will not be prolonged.’

Archaeologists have been able to locate where the city once existed.

The book of Daniel falls into two main parts. **Chapters 1–6** are historical, dealing with important events in Babylon. **Chapters 7–12** are prophetic, revealing the future of great world governments and the coming of the kingdom of Christ. An interesting aspect of the book is that it is written in two languages. **Daniel 1:1-2:4a** and **Daniel 8-12:13** are written in Hebrew. However, **Daniel 2:4b–7:28** are written in Aramaic. **Why is this?** Aramaic was the language of the world and is used in those portions which outline the future history of world empires. Hebrew is used in those portions which interpret for the Hebrews the meaning of the visions.

Its prophecy is of a style termed Apocalyptic which is similar to the book of Revelation. It uses bold, symbols and figures to describe the future of nations and the kingdom of God. It also has a very strong Messianic message, especially chapters **Revelation 2, 7 and 9**.

The purpose of this book is to show the superiority of the God of Israel over the idol gods of Babylon and other pagan nations. We see the humiliation of the idol gods and uselessness and on the other hand the glorious victories of Jehovah, God of the Hebrews. Jehovah met and solved every problem whereas the idols failed in every occasion.

The book also serves as a great comfort to the Hebrews in the hardships they were enduring. God will deliver them from their captivity and return them to their homes in Palestine. The wisdom of Daniel was found to be ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters of Babylon.

Daniel gave God the credit for his wisdom and understanding. He was rewarded for his counsel and rose to the highest civil posts in three governments. He was not only a prophet but an outstanding statesman. Yet, in all his high positions he was never afraid to declare God’s truth boldly. Ezekiel praised him as a righteous man of the same calibre as Noah and Job **Ezekiel 14:14**.

The first chapter is historical in nature. Its purpose seems to be to introduce us to Daniel and how he was able to reach such a distinguished place in Babylon. It is indeed remarkable that a young Jewish captive should be raised to such a high position of counsellor and ultimately, he would become the Prime-Minister.

‘In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.’
Daniel 1:1+2

The date of this event was around 606 B.C. and 369 years from the time the kingdom divided. After the death of Josiah (the last good king) his youngest son Jehoahaz began to rule. After three months, he was replaced by his elder brother Eliakim who was called Jehoiakim. He was one of the worst kings to rule over Judah. In the third year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon who had recently defeated the Egyptians marched to Jerusalem which was under the dominance of Egypt. After a short siege Jehoiakim surrendered but was permitted to continue as a puppet king.

Nebuchadnezzar took part of the furniture of the temple back to Babylon with him. He also took several young men, sons of prominent people among whom were Daniel and his three friends. Josephus says Daniel and his three friends were kin to King Zedekiah. The articles taken from the temple were placed in the house of Nebuchadnezzar’s god, the temple of Bel. The presence of these articles in Babylon figures later in a prominent way in the fall of Babylon.

‘Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king’s service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.’ Daniel 1:3+4

It seems that the object was to select those who were the most perfect in form and intelligence to be trained in the procedures of the Babylonian court. Daniel was one of these. They were all placed under the supervision of Ashpenaz the master of the eunuchs. The king no doubt felt that such young brilliant men would add to the splendours of his court. Their training seems to have included such things as astronomy, astrology, magic and the interpretation of dreams as well as the language of the Chaldeans.

‘The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king’s table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king’s service. Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.’ Daniel 1:5-7

The best of the king’s food and wine were assigned to those selected for this intensive training. They were to be on this diet for three years. This no doubt was the period of their training. Among those in training were Daniel and his three friends. The chief eunuch gave them new names. This may have been done so they would be severed from their Jewish names and background taking on names whereby they would now be identified with the Chaldeans.

Daniel is called Belteshazzar which is supposed to be compound of two words meaning Bel’s prince. Bel was one of the chief gods of the Chaldeans. This no doubt would have been considered a very flattering name. Knowing the charter of Daniel however we can imagine that he was not flattered at all.

‘But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.’ Daniel 1:8

Daniel decides he would not defile himself with the king’s food. It may be that this food in some way had been connected with idolatry such as the meats in the meat shops of Corinth. (See 1 Corinthians 8.) Also, no doubt some of the food would have been considered unclean under Jewish. The matter of temperance would also play a part. Whatever the reasons Daniel requested that they not be required to eat the king’s food.

‘Now God had caused the official to show favour and compassion to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, ‘I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.’ Daniel 1:9+10

In some way, Daniel, had impressed the eunuch who was over him. This was probably by his conduct and manner of life. However, it must be noticed that this was all by the providence of God. The eunuch was hesitant. He was afraid if Daniel appeared less healthy it would reflect upon the eunuch in that he was responsible. He felt this might show up in the countenance of Daniel and the king would notice the down cast look of one who had been fasting. Eunuchs were employed to positions of trust. They often rose to positions of great influence and power. This man did not want to endanger his rank or position.

‘Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ‘Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink.’ Daniel 1:11+12

Daniel proposes a trial test of ten days. If during this period, there were no indications that their condition was worsening then they could assume that the experiment would not harm their appearance in any way. The diet proposed by David was pulse and water. The king’s diet by contrast contained the best meats and wines from his table. The word rendered “pulse” would seem to indicate vegetables or anything that grows from seed.

That Daniel’s diet called for water instead of wine is interesting. It would prove that wine did nothing to produce a healthful condition during their training. Wine has some medicinal value when used in the proper way. Paul prescribed it for Timothy in little amounts for a stomach condition but he did not prescribe it as a beverage. Wine has always been a source of drunkenness and therefore condemned in both the old and new testaments. Daniel had good reasons for rejecting wine as a part of his diet. He was a very wise young man.

‘Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.’ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.’ Daniel 1:13+14

Daniel leaves the judgment of the matter to the Steward who was placed over them. If he looked upon them and found them less favourable, then he could deal with them as he pleased. Daniel seems to have no fear as to the outcome of this test. The eunuch consented as the time of trial was so short (just ten days) that he would run no risk in the matter.

‘At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So, the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.’ Daniel 1:15+16

The test proved successful. They appeared in better physical shape than the others. The steward was so impressed that he removed the king’s diet and let them remain on their vegetable diet and water.

‘To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.’ Daniel 1:17

As they continued their training God blesses their development so that they are especially gifted in matters of knowledge, intelligence, literature and wisdom. Daniel is additionally gifted in regard to dreams and visions. This will play a great part in his life around the court later on.

‘At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so, they entered the king’s service.’ Daniel 1:18+19

All who have been under the intensive period of training are brought before king Nebuchadnezzar. In his examination, he found Daniel and his three friends far superior to all the others who were being trained.

‘In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.’ Daniel 1:20

Their wisdom and knowledge is even much greater (ten times) than those of the magicians and astrologers who were called upon by the king. This included not only those in the court but all the wise men in other parts of the kingdom.

‘And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.’ Daniel 1:21

Daniel influence continued on into the reign of Cyrus. He resided in Babylon during the entire period of the Babylonian captivity. He served under both Chaldean and Persian kings. While there were changes on the throne and even the Babylonian government Daniel seems to retain his status among those who ruled. His influence is so great he is constantly called upon by those who ruled.

Upon the first reading of **Daniel 1:21** one might get the impression that his life was terminated with the first year of Cyrus. But from **Daniel 10:1** we are told Daniel received a vision in the third year of Cyrus. **Is this a contradiction?** No, the passage simply informs us that Daniel survived the changeover of power when the Persians took over and his life extended on into the new dynasty. In other words, when the kingdom changed hands Daniel was still there.

Conclusion

Daniel could have thrown himself into the luxurious living of the Babylonian court. Instead of indulgence he chose a life of temperance. He was a young man of great principles and served as an example for all young people today. Daniel and his three friends seem to be the exceptions as far as temperance is concerned. Because they wanted to do right God blessed them. God will always bless our efforts if they are right.

Daniel 2

‘In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.’

Daniel 2:1

Nebuchadnezzar, powerful king of Babylon, had deep concerns about the future. Falling asleep after these unhappy thoughts he was subjected to a dream from God in answer to his concern about **“what should come to pass hereafter”** **Daniel 2:29**. So, impressive was the dream his sleep is disturbed and he awakens.

‘So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, he said to them, ‘I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.’ Then the astrologers answered the king, ‘May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.’ The king replied to the astrologers, ‘This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honour. So, tell me the dream and interpret it for me.’ Daniel 2:2-6

The king immediately calls for his wise men. He demands that they give him an interpretation without his revealing what he had dreamed. It is not likely that he had forgotten what had made such an impression on him but rather if these men were good enough to interpret they could also tell what he had dreamed. The work of magicians, astrologers and sorcerers was based to a great extent on trickery and falsehood.

One wonders if Nebuchadnezzar didn't know this having dealt with them over a period of years. He does not want some old interpretation or fraudulent prediction, he wanted the truth. It remains a sad fact that many today think astrologers and fortune-tellers can predict their future. They were frauds as there have always been.

‘Once more they replied, ‘Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it.’ Then the king answered, ‘I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.’ The astrologers answered the king, ‘There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.’ This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.’ Daniel 2:7-12

These wise men asked a second time that he reveal the dream so they can interpret it for the king. The king knew they were stalling for time and so accuses them. **‘I know for certain that you would gain the time, because you see that my decision is firm.’** Under threat they spoke the truth that no man living had such power and that only divinity could do this. Furious with their inability to impart this knowledge **(it seems the king had his fill of deceit, trickery and fraudulent predictions)** a decree of execution was given against all the wise men in the kingdom. It was left to Arioch, captain of the guard to carry out the decree. In a sense, it was a decree against all the worldly wisdom and philosophy of his day.

‘So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death. When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. He asked the king’s officer, ‘Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?’ Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.’ Daniel 2:13-16

The decree included all wise men thus this involved Daniel and his three friends who were not even aware of the situation. When advised of the decree Daniel goes before the king requesting a delay in the execution of the sentence that he might have time and then he would give the king his demanded interpretation. Time was obviously granted for Daniel to provide the interpretation.

‘Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.’ Daniel 2:17+18

Daniel did not go to his book of Chaldeans wisdom and philosophy but rather he enlisted the aid of his friends in entreating God for the answer. It would have been a most impressive scene to have seen those four men praying that night.

‘During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven and said: ‘Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.’ Daniel 2:19-23

God answered these prayers and Daniel was given a vision in which the secret was revealed. This causes him to break out in a prayer of thanksgiving to God in which he speaks of the sovereignty, consistency, omniscience and reliability of God

‘Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, ‘Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.’ Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, ‘I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.’ The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), ‘Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?’ Daniel replied, ‘No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these: ‘As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.’ Daniel 2:24-30

Daniel requests that Arioch bring him before the king so that he might give the interpretation. With all haste, Daniel is brought before the king. He makes it clear that such a request made by the king could not come from man but can come only from the God of heaven who can reveal such secrets. Daniel takes no credit for himself but gives God the glory. He is merely an instrument to bring the interpretation to the king.

‘Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.’ Daniel 2:31-35

Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was that of a great and awesome image. Its head was of fine gold, its breast and arms were of silver, its belly and sides of brass and its legs of iron with feet part iron and part clay.

A stone ‘cut out without hands’ smote this image on its feet destroying it so thoroughly that its fragments were like the chaff of a summer threshing floor with the wind carrying the pieces away. The stone that smote the image became a great mountain filling the whole earth. It is no wonder that this dream had bothered the king. Dreams were considered as special signs and this being such an awesome sight would have concerned the king greatly.

‘This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands, he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold. ‘After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. ‘In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. ‘The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.’ Daniel 2:36-45

Daniel now proceeds to give the interpretation as given to him by God. The head of gold is Nebuchadnezzar and his great empire. After him a **second kingdom** would arise which would not be as powerful as Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom. This kingdom was represented by the breast and arms of silver of the image. This was the Medo-Persian Empire which followed the Babylonian kingdom.

A **third great empire** of brass would next arise. This was the great Greek Empire built by Alexander the Great who conquered the world as a young man. The **fourth power** whose legs were iron and feet part iron and part clay is the Roman Empire. There is no cohesiveness within this empire. All students of history know the difficulties experienced by Rome in trying to hold together her vast empire. In the days of the **fourth empire a fifth monarchy**, supernatural in origin would arise destroying the fourth empire. It would be different from the others. It would not be temporal but spiritual. It would also be universal and eternal.

There have been various interpretations placed upon this image. The above view must be the correct view since it is the only one that harmonizes with history. History testifies that Babylon was succeeded by Medo-Persia, and that Greece came next followed by Rome. The kingdoms represented by the image are successive. Also, we know that the kingdom of God was established during the period of the Roman Empire.

Mark 1:14-15 ‘After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’

Colossians 1:13 ‘For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.’

Luke 22:29+30 ‘And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’

Mark 9:1 ‘And he said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.’

Revelation 1:9 ‘I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.’

Premillennialist have made much over the 10 toes of the image. This is interesting in that while the toes are mentioned there is no effort by Daniel to single them out as representing ten kingdoms. By making a play on the toes Premillennialist are able to extend the Roman Empire to the present age by having 10 kingdoms to come out of the Roman Empire.

A popular chart shows this image with toes as long as its body. In order for the image to meet date and time requirements the toes have to be stretched out so as to reach up into our time. The fact remains that the stone smites the image on the feet where the toes are located. Thus, the entire image including its toes was destroyed. The kingdom came during the Roman Empire therefore the image does not extend to the present day.

‘Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honour and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, ‘Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.’ Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. Moreover, at Daniel’s request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.’ Daniel 2:46-49

It seems that Nebuchadnezzar is well satisfied with Daniel’s interpretation. Perhaps the fact that these things were far off in the future relieved his mind. Also, the fact that Daniel was able to tell what he had dreamed proved he would also be correct in the interpretation. The king then worships Daniel and commands sacrifices be made to him.

Knowing the character of Daniel, we know he would have no part in this exaltation. **Verse 47** does not mean that Nebuchadnezzar became a convert to God. The next chapter shows he believed in many gods. God at that moment was the greatest, but only one among many. Daniel is exalted and promoted to a position of high authority. He immediately requests the promotion of his three friends.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we clearly see the power and superiority of God over paganism and the kingdoms of the world. Here also is predicted the superiority of His kingdom over the kingdoms of the world. While all of the four great empires are past history the kingdom of God still stands today.

God’s kingdom does not conquer by sword or instruments of carnal warfare but by the word of God sown in the hearts of men changing their lives. This is how the Roman Empire was taken by the kingdom of God. The **Book of Revelation** assures the early Christians that God was in control and that he would give them the victory if they would overcome.

Daniel 3 Introduction

The king of Babylon proves in this chapter what we observed at the close of chapter two. He viewed the God of Daniel as only one among many gods. He still is very much a pagan. God’s power will be demonstrated again, but Nebuchadnezzar still will not learn his lesson.

‘King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.’ Daniel 3:1

This colossal image of gold was no doubt an outgrowth of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. **Had not Daniel said that the king was the head of gold? Were not all the kingdoms described by Daniel to proceed from the head?** Daniel had also said that God had given him a kingdom, power, strength and glory.

This great image then would set forth the majesty, glory and dominion of the king and his great kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar was probably puffed up with vain pride. It is doubtful that this image was solid gold but rather was overlaid with gold. Much of the furniture of the Tabernacle was not pure gold but wood overlaid with gold.

‘He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So, the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.’ Daniel 3:2+3

When the image was completed the king called for all the dignitaries of the kingdom to attend the dedication. It must have been a large and costly affair.

‘Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.’ Daniel 3:4-6

In the midst of all the festivities comes the command, ‘Fall down and worship the gold images that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.’ Everyone refusing to do so would be cast into a fiery furnace especially heated to a high temperature. His was a common method of execution among the Assyrians and Chaldeans. This threat would affect relatively few since almost everyone would think nothing of bowing to the king’s image. Even those opposed to paganism might think they could do so and no harm would be done.

‘Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, ‘May the king live forever! Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.’ Daniel 3:7-12

There were a few who would not bow however. These were the three friends of Daniel. **But what about Daniel? He does not seem to be involved in any way? Why was not Daniel involved?** He may have been in some other part of the kingdom at the time or else he occupied such a position of power and strength he could not be attacked.

In fact, he may have wanted to see this acted out to demonstrate who the true God was. Not only did these three Jews refuse to worship the golden image but it seems that it was a well-known fact that they did not worship any of the pagan gods. No doubt the reason why these three were reported to the king was resentment over the fact they did not honour any of the pagan gods of the Babylonians.

‘Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So, these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, ‘Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?’ Daniel 3:13-15

The reaction of Nebuchadnezzar was rage and fury. The three men are immediately brought before the king. However, he was willing to give them another chance. If they would change their minds and fall down and worship the image all would be well with them. If they continued to rebel and show insolence toward the king’s command they would immediately be placed in the furnace.

Surely, they would not dare to refuse him. He may have felt that in view of what Daniel had said about him, **Daniel 2:37-38**, to resist him would be to resist God since God had made him the head of gold. They should be subject to him because their God would not deliver them out of his hands.

‘Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.’ Daniel 3:16-18

We must admire the faith and courage of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Their answer was blunt and to the point. Regardless of God’s actions on their part whether he would choose to rescue them or permit them to die they would not serve any of the gods of Babylon nor worship the gold image. There is but one true God and he only would they worship.

‘Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. So these men, wearing

their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.' Daniel 3:19-22

The king is so enraged that he commands that the furnace be heated seven times as hot as what was normal. So hot was the furnace that when the three men were thrown into the furnace the men responsible for casting them in were killed by the flames and intense heat.

Since we do not know the shape or form of the furnace we do not know exactly how these men were consumed by the heat. Probably because of the urgency of the king's command in their haste they became careless. The fact that they perished served to illustrate the miraculous delivery of the three Jews.

'And these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, 'Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?' They replied, 'Certainly, Your Majesty.' He said, 'Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.' Daniel 3:23-25

The three 'fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.' The furnace was such that it permitted the king to see into it and when he looked he observed them walking about evidently no longer bound and unhurt. Also, a fourth man is observed with them. [Who was this person?](#) The rendering, 'Like the Son of God' by some versions is not a correct rendering.

A more correct rendering would be "like a son of the gods" or a supernatural being. [Who was this supernatural person?](#) In [verse 28](#) Nebuchadnezzar calls him an 'angel.' This is very likely the case. God has often sent his angels to minister to those in trouble. This would not be anything unusual.

'Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.' Daniel 3:26+27

The king calls out to the three men as 'servants of the most high God.' He calls for all of them to come out. Obviously, he was greatly shaken by this turn of events. They came forth unhurt, without a hair singed and not even the smell of fire upon them. No doubt a complete examination was made to determine their condition. It was indeed incredible to all who had come for the dedication and had bowed to the image.

'Then Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore, I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.' Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.' Daniel 3:28-30

Nebuchadnezzar again goes into one of his elaborate speeches of praise of the God of the Jews. Obviously, God was able to deliver them out the hand of the king and could have turned on the king for ordering the three to be executed. Such a god must not be antagonized in any way. He must be praised and honoured.

Nebuchadnezzar still is not converted but remains thoroughly pagan. To further offset any repercussions from his decree which backfired on him he has the three men promoted. A royal decree forbade any misrepresentation or speaking against the God of the Jews, 'because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.'

God had overruled the king's word. History is not in man's hands, and the government is not on man's shoulders. God is supreme and is in control of the fortunes and destiny of men and nations. Nor is the Calvinistic sense that man has no control over his destiny, but in the sense that God overrules to bring about His desires in His own way and in His own time.

Sometimes the Christian may feel that evil has the upper hand but God has not laid down His sceptre. He is still on His throne ruling the universe. **Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?** The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, **‘Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying, ‘Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.’ The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.’** Psalm 2:1-4.

‘Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.’ Psalm 2:11-12

Four observations

1. The example of these three Jews speaks loudly to Christians today. There is no place or set of circumstances in which it is too difficult to be faithful to God. We often invent excuses but every Christians can be faithful to God if they so will.
2. God is our refuge in time of trouble. He is our only and real deliverer. When man puts his trust in self he will always fail. Education, philosophy, wealth or fame cannot deliver us—only God. We have no other recourse but to surrender to His terms.
3. When acting by faith trials can drag the Christian from obscurity into fame and then chase him up to glory.
4. Compromise has always been man’s way of getting out of difficult situations. But with God it is either or. No man can serve two masters. He must make up his mind who he will serve. Man, is wise to put his trust in God and serve Him.

Daniel 4 Introduction

It would seem that Nebuchadnezzar is finally converted to a correct concept of God. He had to learn it the hard way. However, whether he remained loyal and faithful to this truth is not known.

‘King Nebuchadnezzar, To the nations and peoples of every language, who live in all the earth: May you prosper greatly! It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.’ Daniel 4:1+2

A decree is sent not only to all the people of the kingdom but to those not in his kingdom. It includes a wish that all might lead peaceful lives. Nebuchadnezzar felt that it was proper for him to make known to the world what God had done to him. We must admire him for wanting everyone to know of the one true God.

‘How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.’ Daniel 4:3

How great and wonderful are the things done by God. He had signified to Nebuchadnezzar that earthly thrones and kingdoms are not permanent. Only God’s throne was permanent. No one is so mighty that he can prevail forever. Earthly kingdoms however great will one day fall but the dominion of God is forever.

‘I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous.’ Daniel 4:4

At rest in his palace Nebuchadnezzar was at complete ease. His wars were now over, he had built one of the great cities of the world, he had developed a mighty kingdom, and he had gathered wealth and luxuries around him. He no doubt intended to spend the remainder of his life in ease and happiness. He probably felt he had now attained all his goals.

‘I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. So, I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me.’ Daniel 4:5-7

In the midst of this ease the king had a dream which brought fear to him. He probably sensed that it spoke of something that was about to happen to him. The wise men are called in as before. This time he did not threaten them with execution if they failed. However, they were unable to tell him the meaning of his dream.

‘Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.) I said, ‘Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me.’ Daniel 4:8+9

Finally, Daniel is brought in. Why Daniel was not called in at the beginning we do not know. He could have been about the king’s business somewhere else at the time. When Daniel arrived, Nebuchadnezzar related the dream with confidence that Daniel’s God would enable him to give the interpretation. Daniel is called ‘**master of the magicians**’ because he was considered superior to the other wise men.

‘These are the visions I saw while lying in bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the wild animals found shelter, and the birds lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.’ Daniel 4:10-12

Nebuchadnezzar now relates his dream. Occupying a central place on the earth was a mammoth tree, standing alone and reaching up into the heavens. Its branches extended out a great distance. Thus, it offered shade to the beasts of the field. The fowls found lodging in its boughs. It abounded in fruit providing food for all.

It was a strong tree indicating it was well proportioned. It could be seen in all parts of the earth. What could better describe the great powerful Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian kingdom. It seems that Nebuchadnezzar understood this vision had reference to him in some way.

‘In the visions I saw while lying in bed, I looked, and there before me was a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven. He called in a loud voice: ‘Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field. ‘Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth.’ Daniel 4:13-15

A ‘**holy one**’, one who had spiritual characteristics, probably an angel, comes down from heaven and cries for the tree to be cut down and then cut up into pieces thus utterly destroying its glory and beauty. The stump however was to be left. Thus, the tree would live again. It would retain its roots enabling it to shoot up again. It was to be protected by placing a metal railing around it much as we often protect trees today in public places. The dew falling on it would tend to preserve it and cause it to grow again.

‘Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him. ‘The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.’ Daniel 4:16+17

There is now a sudden change from the tree to something represented by the tree. Obviously, a man, (**Nebuchadnezzar**) is represented by the tree. There was to be a change within him. He now becomes like a beast during a fixed period of time.

We do not know how long ‘**seven times**’ was. Some feel it represented a year while others think seven represented perfection or completeness thus the time necessary to accomplish God’s purpose. The purpose of God is made clear in verse 17. ‘That the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.’ God gives dominion and authority to whomsoever He chooses.

‘This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.’ Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So, the king said, ‘Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.’ Belteshazzar answered, ‘My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its

top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the wild animals, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds—Your Majesty, you are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth. ‘Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live with the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.’ ‘This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.’

Daniel 4:18-27

Nebuchadnezzar now calls upon Daniel to interpret the dream for him. Daniel is reluctant to do this. The king senses this but tells him he had nothing to fear in revealing it. The dream was not one which pleased the king. The tree is the king. The tree which is the king will be brought low. The stump would be spared meaning that his kingdom would be kept safe though he is to be humbled and brought low.

Furthermore, he will be driven from his place among men and the palace. He would be in such a state so as to be treated like an animal rather than a man. He will even eat grass as the oxen do. Daniel recommends that the king repents assuming that the judgment of God might be averted if the king would change. Included in this call to reform was the suggestion he show mercy to the poor. Part of the king’s iniquities may have been mistreatment of the poor. This was often true of monarchs.

‘All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, ‘Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?’ Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, ‘This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.’ Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.’ Daniel 4:28-33

The judgment predicted, comes at the end of twelve months. A full year then was granted him to repent thus to avoid the calamity. Either he forgot the warning or else it was no longer pressing on his mind. It is very hard sometimes to convince a sinner he needs to repent. Most refuse.

About this time a sense of his own importance fills him and he gives vent to self-glorification as he surveys the great city he had built. While he was speaking a voice from heaven declares that the kingdom he has been bragging of which he had built, is now departing from him. One moment he is bragging and the next he is eating grass. What was done was done instantly. It is obvious that this was some form of mental derangement. His hair was neglected until it appeared to resemble the feathers of a bird. His nails became like the nails of a bird’s claws.

‘At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honoured and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: ‘What have you done?’ At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honour and splendour were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.’ Daniel 4:34-37

At the end of the designated time Nebuchadnezzar lifted up his eyes to heaven and blessed God. His sanity being restored his first act was to glorify God. The king admits that God rules supreme and has his own way.

Certainly, if God could preserve a kingdom with an ox as its leader then a leader is of little importance to God as he controls the universe. God can do without any of us regardless of how important we may think we are and how badly we think we are needed. The message now comes over clear and plain. God is the real ruler of this world. He had given Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom. It was not his genius that brought him to so great power but the will of God.

Furthermore, God could hold this kingdom together though its ruler be an ox. Nebuchadnezzar now feels called upon to acknowledge the true God he is now aware of for the first time. He says, **‘I make confession, and render praise to him who made the heaven and the earth.’**

This had to be a humiliating experience for Nebuchadnezzar. McGuiggan says, **‘It is almost humorous to envision a foreign ambassador seeking an audience with the king who is out in the field having his lunch!’** If the king had allowed his pride to get in the way, he could have resented what God did to him. However, to his credit he breaks forth in praise to the one true God and desires that this experience he has suffered through be made known throughout the world. This would indicate he was a changed man.

According to tradition he is supposed to have lived but about one year after this. It is hoped that he continued steadfast in his new faith of the one true God that he had been brought to acknowledge. While it was humiliating to the king to have to go through this experience yet it was the best thing that ever happened to him.

We Christians today may have to suffer through many difficulties which are humiliating but if we maintain the right attitude we will be made much better as a result. While chaos, wickedness, indignities and persecutions exist in the world it does not preclude the fact that God rules the world and not man. In the end the wicked will be punished but the righteous will be rewarded.

Daniel 5 Introduction

This chapter records a series of events which occurred on the night in which the mighty Babylonian Empire fell to the Medes and Persians. In **Chapter two** Daniel had told Nebuchadnezzar that his kingdom would be followed by a kingdom of silver. We now see the fulfilment of this part of the prophesy. Daniel not only lived in the days of the Babylonian Empire but was to live on into the days of the Medo-Persian Empire.

We have some difficulty in tracing the succession of rulers after Nebuchadnezzar but the kingdom seems to have passed through a succession of weak men. It is believed that Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. **“Father”** in the text is used in this sense. It seems he was placed on the throne by his father who was the son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar. Regardless of the connections Belshazzar was an evil king. The faith gained by Nebuchadnezzar in the later part of his life was not passed on to Belshazzar.

‘King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. So, they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.’ Daniel 5:1-4

This feast was typical of most pagan feasts. It was marked by much drinking and revelry. Belshazzar presided over this feast which included a thousand of his lords. The command to bring forth the sacred vessels that had been carried from the Temple in Jerusalem to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar was a deliberate act of sacrilege which brought insult to God.

It seems that Nebuchadnezzar may have had some respect for these vessels in that he had had them stored as trophies of victory. While on display, they were not used. Men under the influence of alcohol often do things they would not do when sober. Perhaps Belshazzar wished to make a display or do something unusually surprising. Thus, they were brought out so that the king, his princes, wives and concubines might drink from them. As they revelled they praised their pagan gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone.

‘Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became

weak and his knees were knocking. The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners. Then he said to these wise men of Babylon, 'Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.' Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant.' Daniel 5:5-8

Suddenly in the midst of their revelry there appeared part of a hand – fingers – that part of the hand we employ when writing. These fingers began to write upon the wall. Suddenly the revelry was silenced shocking everyone into soberness. The king is no longer laughing and drinking. Now his knees begin shaking and knocking against each other. He is suddenly terrified and under great fear.

Not knowing the meaning of the writing, he 'cries aloud' for the astrologers, soothsayers and wise men. In panic he wants an immediate interpretation. He offers an award to anyone who can read the strange writing and give an interpretation of it. The wise men now faced with a situation where they could not cheat or use deceit were a complete failure.

'So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled. The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. 'May the king live forever!' she said. 'Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale! There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. He did this because Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means.' Daniel 5:9-12

Their failure further troubles the king. Since no one can interpret he really is worried. At this moment, the queen, probably the queen mother since his wives were already in the banquet hall, enters. She says there is a man in his kingdom who could give the meaning. She remembered how Daniel had interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and how he was made chief of the wise men.

How is it that Belshazzar knew nothing of Daniel? Perhaps he did know of him but refused to be guided by one who refused to worship or recognize the gods of Babylon. In **verse 22** Daniel implies Belshazzar knew all about these things of the past. Since the death of Nebuchadnezzar Daniel probably had dropped into the background.

'So, Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, 'Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah? I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.' Then Daniel answered the king, 'You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.' Daniel 5:13-17

Daniel is called in and offered a third position in the empire. No doubt he was offered the same position he had occupied under Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel declined the gifts but offered to read and interpret the writing for the king. Daniel's motivation was not earthly things but a desire to make known God's will for man.

'Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendour. Because of the high position, he gave him, all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory.' Daniel 5:18-20

Daniel reminds the king that it was God who gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom and then disposed him from the throne for a reason. Probably because of his pride and arrogance. This was done so that he would know 'that the most high God ruled in the kingdoms of men, and that he appoints over them whomsoever He will.'

'He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is

sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and sets over them anyone he wishes. 'But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honour the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Therefore, he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.' Daniel 5:21-24

Daniel becomes very plain spoken now. He says that Belshazzar had not recognized this although he knew it. He had deliberately proceeded on a course of contempt for God. Belshazzar had acted in his previous conversation with Daniel that he did not know very much about him but only had heard some things. He knew much more than he pretended. He also knew what had happened to his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. He had set himself up against and in independence of 'the God in who holds your breath in His hands and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.' As a result, his defiance this writing on the wall occurred.

'This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN 'Here is what these words mean: Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.' Daniel 5:25-28

The writing was from God and its meaning was direct and clear-cut. **MENE, MENE TKEL UPHARSIN**. The meaning was that Belshazzar had been weighed in the balances of God's justice and had been found wanting. Thus, his kingdom would be taken away from him and given to the Medes and Persians. It is believed that the writing was in ancient Hebrew characters. It should be pointed out however that there have been many conjectures respecting the characters which were employed on this occasion. The main thing is that God made it possible for Daniel to know the meaning.

'Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.' Daniel 5:29

Though the interpretation was a fearful thing yet the king did not hesitate to fulfil his promises. Thus, he bestowed on Daniel all those things he promised if he were given the interpretation. He may have done this thinking this would appease Daniel's God.

'That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.' Daniel 5:30-31

Sometime during the night there was swift judgment. It seems that Daniel had hardly gotten the words out of his mouth until they were being fulfilled. Cyrus under the command of Darius the Mede diverted the waters of the Euphrates river which ran under the wall and through the city of Babylon. This left the channel dry for the army of Cyrus to move under the wall and inside the city during darkness.

It seems the great feast at the palace had attracted everyone's attention thus the enemy was able to move into the city unnoticed. Sometime during the night Belshazzar was killed. The great Babylonian Empire fell and was now in the hands of the Medes and Persians.

Who would ever have thought the mighty city of Babylon would fall in such an easy way. It seems there was very little resistance offered to the soldiers of Cyrus. Every great kingdom in history has fallen at one time or other. No one dreamed they would do this. Man, often boasts of his power and greatness not realizing how limited and small he is. God rules this world and he can dispose of kingdoms as quickly as overnight.

Conclusion

America can brag of her power and strength but when she forgets that our real strength is in God. then we too shall fall as a nation. Our strength has always been in recognition of the one true God and that 'In God We Trust.' Our greatness has been in our morality and not any military might. If we lose our morals we will lose our nation. Few seem to understand where our true greatness lies. There are those who would try to remove the very things that have made us great.

As Christians, our trust and faith is in God and His Son, Jesus. We love our country and are very proud of it. But we will not be led down the road of immorality and disrespect for God. We are all citizens of the kingdom of God which will never fall and cannot be destroyed.

Daniel 6 Introduction

In this chapter, we see Daniel now under a new ruler, Darius the Mede. There are four district rulers mentioned under whom Daniel served. There were other rulers but only these four are mentioned. Daniel may have dropped into the background under the other rulers.

‘It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.’ Daniel 6:1-3

Now that Darius had taken over the Babylonian Empire he would seek for someone whom he could have trust and have confidence in to help in the administration of affairs of the newly acquired territory. The experience, eminence and integrity of Daniel were no doubt well known. In all there were 120 selected to assist the king.

Daniel was given a very high position of being over all the others. In all probability, this was in reference only to the newly acquired land. Daniel made such a favourable impression on Darius that the king considered elevating him more so that he would be over the entire kingdom which would have included Media, Persia, Babylonia and all the other provinces which were in subjection to Darius.

‘At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally, these men said, ‘We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.’ So, these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: ‘May King Darius live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions’ den. Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.’ So, King Darius put the decree in writing.’ Daniel 6:4-9

The consideration of Daniel for such a high position occasioned no small amount of jealousy among the princes. Thus, the princes now become Daniel’s enemies. Daniel was a foreigner and was one of the despised people held in captivity. They sought to find something wrong with him that they might report it to the king, thus preventing the contemplated appointment.

Try as they did they could find nothing wrong with his character or administrative ability. His one vulnerable point they concluded was his religion. His religious habits had been observed and were well known. It was simply a matter of placing Daniel in the position of having to choose whether to obey the king or his God. Knowing of his devoutness and faithfulness to God they did not doubt which he would serve if presented a test. This is actually a great compliment to Daniel.

The princes and other dignitaries present themselves before the king asking that a royal statue be made and that for 30 days no petition could be made to anyone save the king. This would include all the gods worshipped by the people. If this decree were violated the guilty party would be thrown in the den of lions. Such a proposal would appeal to a vain king. It is evident the king did not suspect that he was being used so that Daniel might be trapped.

The king is urged to write and sign the decree. Once signed it could not under any circumstances be changed. The trap was now set. They knew it was only a matter of hours until Daniel would violate the king’s decree.

‘Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So, they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: ‘Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the

lions' den?' The king answered, 'The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.' Then they said to the king, 'Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.' Daniel 6:10-13

In all probability, a public proclamation of the decree was made. Daniel knew of it. As anticipated he made no change in his habits. He went as his custom to his open window and facing Jerusalem he would kneel and pray three times a day. This was probably morning, noon and evening.

Psalm 55:17 'Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.'

This would be a good practice for all Christians today. This does not mean that Daniel took specific pains to open the windows so he could be seen but that he took no precautions to close them. In a warm climate, such as Babylon had the windows probably were open most of the time.

There were those waiting to see and as soon as the deed was done the information is taken to the king. This charge is very forceful. One who is a foreigner and a captive had completely disregarded the solemn decree of the king. This had happened not just once but was taking place three times a day.

'When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, 'Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.'

Daniel 6:14+15

The king has been trapped. He realizes that he had been duped into a stupid thing. He had by giving the decree brought death upon his most admired and trusted administrator. It could not happen, surely something could be done to break the decree or deliver Daniel. In what way, he sought to deliver Daniel we do not know but he deliberated as long as time would allow.

This is a striking illustration of the difficulties which often rise in the administration of justice where the law is absolute and yet where there is a strong reason why the penalty should not be inflicted. This was true of the Law of Moses in many respects. The princes remind the king that the decree is unalterable. The law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed not even by the king who gave it.

'So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, 'May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!' A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.' Daniel 6:16-18

Most reluctantly the king had Daniel brought and cast into the den of lions. The den may have been a cave or underground pit. It was made with a narrow opening so that it could be covered with a stone. Some think it may have been a stall with rocks piled high on each side with a small opening for an entrance. Such a manner of execution was common among those in that day. Carvings and statues from remains of that era indicate that this was a common method of execution.

The king now makes a remarkable statement. He said, 'Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.' Since the high king of the Medo-Persian Empire could do nothing, yet, the God of Daniel could and would deliver him. How strongly he believed this we do not know for he spent a restless night where sleep ailed him. Neither did he eat or enjoy music before retiring. He was deeply disturbed and concerned for Daniel.

'At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?' Daniel answered, 'May the king live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.' The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.' Daniel 6:19-23

Very early the next morning the anxious king hastily went to the lion's den. It is said he cried with a lamentable voice (he was anxious and remorseful) to Daniel, if God had delivered him from the lion's jaws. Will there be an answer from the den? Suddenly there is the voice of Daniel from the den, 'O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him: and also, O King, I have done no wrong before you.'

Daniel was no doubt aware of the king's innocence in the matter and who the true source of his problem was. God in a miraculous way had kept him from harm. It is interesting the number of times angels are employed in behalf of men.

After an examination, it was found he had not been harmed in any way. This is attributed to his belief in God. Daniel probably never doubted for one moment about his safety. He may have had a good night's rest unperturbed by the lions. All that the law required had now been fulfilled. Thus, Daniel is released. The king did this with gladness in his heart.

'At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth: 'May you prosper greatly! I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.' So, Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.' Daniel 6:24-28

The king now aware that he had been used by the princes called for their execution by the same method as they called for Daniel's. He had been made a fool in subjecting his highest officer to the perils of death. The guilty are torn to pieces by the lions. Literally they did not come to the bottom of the den before the lions had mastery over them and break all their bones.

The king now sends a letter to all the people in the kingdom. It was to honour the God of Daniel. There is no evidence that he considered Jehovah the only God, but probably meant that He should be recognized as a God of great power and glory and worthy of universal reverence. Daniel is restored to his position of a ruler again. We would assume he was placed over the entire kingdom as originally planned by the king.

He prospered as a ruler under Darius and also later on under Cyrus. We do not know long Daniel lived into the reign of Cyrus. No doubt he was instrumental by his influence in securing permission for the return of his people to their home land in Palestine. Under God's providence he had no doubt been raised to his high position so that he would be able to work in behalf of the return from captivity.

Conclusion

With chapter six we conclude the historical section of the book. This section shows God's protection over His people in their difficult situations and demonstrated the wisdom to putting their trust in Him. The remainder of the book will become entirely prophetic.

Daniel 7 Introduction

The vision of this chapter is but an extension of the dream of chapter two. Its purpose seems to be to feature the barbaric character of the same kings and rulers of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Set forth is the fundamental concept that all the kingdoms of the world are ruled and overruled by God's divine providence so as to bring into existence the kingdom of Christ. That chapters 2 and 7 are parallel can be seen in the following comparison. (1) Both chapters speak of four kingdoms followed by a fifth, the Messianic Kingdom. (2) Both present the fifth arriving during the fourth.

'In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.' Daniel 7:1

Belshazzar was the last of the kings of Babylon. During his reign, Daniel had a dream in which he saw a series of events. He made a record of it at the time setting forth in summery form its meaning.

‘Daniel said: ‘In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.’ Daniel 7:2+3

He first saw the four winds of heaven bursting forth upon the sea throwing it into commotion. This would indicate the activity of God in stirring up the nations in accordance with His divine purpose. Four beasts (**nations**) now appear to come forth from this commotion. Each beast is different in appearance.

‘The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it. ‘And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up and eat your fill of flesh!’ ‘After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule. ‘After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.’

Daniel 7:4-7

The **first beast** is like a lion with eagle wings. This is Babylon. It is powerful and swift. This beast or kingdom suffers a setback. Its wings are plucked and the beast was made to stand on its hind legs further hampering it. It has a heart not its own. Thus, the Babylonian Empire would suffer a humiliating setback. After the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdom began to go down through a succession of weak rulers.

The **second beast** is a bear. It had three ribs in its mouth. The slow but powerful bear would well represent the Medo-Persian Empire. The three ribs have been taken to mean three countries which it devoured during its days of power. Commentaries are not in agreement always as to which three. It could be that the ribs signify further the viciousness of the beast which devoured other nations.

The **third beast** is described as being like a leopard with four heads and four wings. This represented the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great who in only eleven years conquered the world. The four heads may represent the four divisions of that kingdom after the death of Alexander when it was divided among four of his generals. More probably is the idea that it reached to the four corners of the world.

The **fourth beast** is different. Daniel does not attempt to give its appearance as being like some beast. It was such a dreadful and terrible beast that it could not be compared to any animal. It was strong, had iron teeth, and ten horns. This is a fierce monster capable of devouring all that was before it. This beast represented the Roman Empire. The ten horns represent the ten tributary kings and kingdoms which made up this great empire.

‘While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.’ Daniel 7:8

Daniel while looking at these horns saw a little horn coming from among the ten horns. This horn had the eyes of a man and a mouth which spoke great things. The horn here is a symbol of a king **but which king?** This is the most difficult part of the chapter. Some believe it best fits Nero who ruled the Roman Empire, others believe it's Domitian. The three horns plucked up before it presents no small difficulty also. Any effort to juggle various emperors around it fit this verse is most difficult.

‘As I looked, ‘thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. ‘Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)’ Daniel 7:9-12

In these verses, we see the judgment of heaven against these beast-kings. A stream of fire proceeded from God and their dominion was taken away. The books are opened and the beast is brought to trial. While their dominion was taken away their lives were prolonged.

How? They still existed, but were now subdued and quiet. These nations could still be recognized by their boundaries, customs and languages, but their power had all vanished.

‘In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.’ Daniel 7:13+14

Now the **fifth kingdom**, the kingdom of the Son of Man replaces these beast kingdoms. It is made up of people from all nations. He will reign over ‘**an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away.**’ It is spiritual in nature not having those carnal elements which cause other kingdoms to decay.

‘I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this. ‘So, he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ‘The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.’ Daniel 7:15-18

Daniel was grieved over not knowing the meaning of the dream just as was John grieved and cries when he felt there was no one worthy to open the seven seals in **Revelation 5:4** to reveal the message therein. Daniel inquired from one of those who ministered to God (**an angel**) the meaning and was told who the beasts represented. The saints of God would possess the fifth kingdom as kings and priests.

Luke 22:29 ‘And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me.’

Revelation 1:6 ‘and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.’

‘Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.’ Daniel 7:19-22

Daniel is particularly interested in the fourth beast. He sought for a further explanation. He further describes the fourth beast giving some additional things about him. The unusual horn that had eyes and a bragging mouth is observed making war with the saints, prevailing over them until the saints are given possession of the kingdom.

This speaks not only of the establishment of the kingdom but also of the victory over her enemies. Thus, it speaks of the conflict between the kingdom of God and the fourth beast, and the victory God gives to his people.

‘He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. ‘But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’ Daniel 7:23-27

Admittedly the most difficult problem of this chapter is identifying the horn that arose after the ten horns. He was different from the others and would subdue three kings. To find some Roman emperor who subdued three kings before him is difficult to find. That such happened is not denied.

It is simply that history does not afford us with this information. Some do believe however that the description given by Daniel best fits Nero who was emperor of the Roman Empire from 54 to 68 A.D.

Many believe this horn was Domitian, 81-96 A.D., who severely persecuted Christians. Others insist however it has to be Nero since the kingdom came to its full power with the death of Nero in 68 A.D. and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Notice closely **verse 27** of this chapter. It was to be given to the saints when the horn's dominion is taken away. The kingdom was established with power in A.D. 70 although it came into existence on Pentecost following the resurrection of the Lord.

In **Luke 21:31** where Jesus is in the middle of a discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem he says, 'Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.' Does this mean the kingdom was not to be established until Jerusalem's destruction? Certainly not! The Scriptures are clear that it happened on Pentecost, **Acts 1-2**.

What does the Lord mean then? He is speaking of it being near in possession and power. Under oppression as they were from both Jews and Rome it did not look at times like God was reigning but when these enemies were removed then all doubt is remove.

We see the vindication of God's people who had been undergoing persecution. They received the kingdom in the sense they had greater freedom to spread the Gospel without persecution. Nero seems to fit the description of **verse 25**. He was vain arrogant, vicious. He had many Christians committed to death.

'This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself.' Daniel 7:28

Daniel says this is the end of what he saw and heard. This is the sum of what was disclosed to the prophet. However, he is still concerned and meditated on these matters. His thoughts on the vision disturbed him greatly. It even affected his countenance in some way. He kept the matter to himself not communicating to anyone his feelings.

Daniel 8 Introduction

Chapter eight is an expansion of **chapter two** as was the case with chapter seven. However, in this chapter the emphasis is upon two of the four world empires. It is concerned with the second and third empires with emphasis on events to occur in Jerusalem toward the end of the third empire.

'In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. In my vision, I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision, I was beside the Ulai Canal.' Daniel 8:1-2

This vision occurs two years after the vision of **chapter seven**, during the third year of Belshazzar. The place of the vision is Shushan the capital city of the Persian kingdom during the days of its power. Daniel was there involved in some way in government business. He was by the river Ulai at the time the vision occurred.

'I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great.' Daniel 8:3-4

He first saw a ram with two horns. One of the horns was higher than the other. **Verse 20** makes it clear that this represents the Medo-Persian Empire. The ram denotes the united power of these two kingdoms yet the unequal horns show that one of the powers would be mightier than the other. Persia became the greater of the two and finally Media was dropped so that the empire was known as the Persian Empire.

The ram pushes toward the west, north and south. This denotes the expansion of the empire.

It made great conquests in the three directions mentioned whereas there was very little effort toward the east. One of the great advances of the kingdom was toward the west where it reaches Greece.

Toward the north, they reached around the Caspian Sea and on the south, they took in Ethiopia and Egypt. The Persian Empire extended over a great part of the then known world. It had little opposition to its advancement until the Greek Empire came into its own.

‘As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. It came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at it in great rage. I saw it attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering its two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it; the goat knocked it to the ground and trampled on it, and none could rescue the ram from its power.’ Daniel 8:5-7

While considering the ram, a he-goat, but later on called a rough goat, came from the west. **Verse 21** tells us this was Greece under its first king Alexander the Great. History records that in 334 B.C. Alexander invaded Persia and completed that conquest by 330 B.C. He finally reached the Ganges River in India in 328 B.C. Thus in a very short period of time Alexander the Great had overrun nearly the entire known world including the great Persian Empire.

The horn between the eyes of the goat represented Alexander. He was only 21 when he began his conquests. His fierceness and fury against Persia are represented in verses six and seven. The mighty Persian Empire was crushed beneath the power of Alexander as if trampled to the earth.

‘The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.’ Daniel 8:8

At the time of its greatest strength an event occurred which broke the horn in which was concentrated so much power. At no time was the empire as strong as at the death of Alexander. He died at the age of 33, the year 323 B.C. After his death his empire never regained its greatness and was never united. In a series of events the kingdom in twenty years became divided between **‘four notable ones’** who were four of his generals.

Lysimachus one general took Thrace and Bithynia, and possibly all Asia Minor. Cassander, another general, gained Macedonia and Greece. Ptolemy, a third general took Egypt and contiguous territories, and Seleucus a fourth general gained Syria, Babylon, and the Eastern countries as far as India. Thus, the kingdom instead of being one united nation stood divided into four sections each independent of the other.

‘Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land.’ Daniel 8:9

A little horn springs up from one of the notables. It seems to grow in strength and exerts its power toward the south, east and the pleasant land. There seems no doubt that this is the famous Antiochus Epiphanes who was a successor of Seleucius Nicator, one of Alexander’s generals had ruled over Syria, Babylon and Media. The capital was in Antioch.

This man was to rule from 175 to 164 B.C. Thus, we are dealing with the period between the Old and New Testaments. No sooner did he come to the throne than he hastened to extend his kingdom. In 171 B.C., he declared war on Egypt. In 170 B.C., he conquered Egypt and overrun Jerusalem. He also expanded eastward taking many of the eastern countries.

The pleasant land denotes Palestine. On his return from fighting the Egyptians he turned aside to invade Judea. Epiphanes called **‘Epimanes the Insane,’** ordered the adoption of the Greek religion. In December 168 B.C. he dedicated the Jewish Temple to the god Zeus, setting up his statue and sacrificing a pig in his honour.

It was these actions that precipitated the famous Maccabean revolt in Palestine where bands of devout Jews carried out a kind of strike and run war at night hiding out in the hills (**Guerrilla warfare**). The Maccabean family were leaders of this movement and became famous in Jewish history.

‘It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the LORD; it took away the daily sacrifice from the LORD, and his sanctuary was thrown down. Because of rebellion, the LORD’s people and the daily

sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, 'How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, the surrender of the sanctuary and the trampling underfoot of the LORD's people?' He said to me, 'It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.' Daniel 8:10-14

These verses describe his attacks on the Jews. He turned violently bitter against them making a determined effort to exterminate their religion. According to Josephus this lasted from 167 till 164 B.C. His ability to do this was not any power of his own but it was due to the 'transgressions' of the Jews. 'Holy ones' (probably angels) speak to one another about this tragedy and one of them asks how long it will continue. The answer is 2,300 days. This figure presents no small problem.

There have been various interpretations placed on it. In terms of years it would be about six years and four months. This would seem to be the most logical way to look at it. Counting from the time he first overrun Jerusalem (170 B.C.) until they were able to restore the sacrifices (164 B.C.) it would be about six years.

'While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, 'Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision.' As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. 'Son of man,' he said to me, 'understand that the vision concerns the time of the end.' While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet. He said: 'I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. 'In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.' Daniel 8:15-25

Daniel is perplexed and desires to know the meaning of the vision. There stood before him one who had the appearance of a man. He is called Gabriel by a voice. The vision is said to belong 'to the time of the end.' This was the time for the end of the Grecian kingdom. As far as God was concerned when Antioch Epiphanes appeared the kingdom was on its way out. After his death, his empire sank lower and lower. Antiochus Epiphanes was raised up by God to punish Israel and is also thrown down by God.

Verse 23 shows Antiochus as the visitation of God upon His people who had prior to His coming been sinking deeper into transgressions. There was a definite period marked out in the Divine purpose, and when that period arrives the end of all this will take place. Just as suddenly as Antiochus had appeared so would he disappear. 'He shall be broken without human hand.'

He was not overcome by any nation or carnal power but died while he was in Babylon. When Antiochus died, the opposition to the Jews ceased and their land again had peace and rest. The next power to take over Palestine would be Rome.

'The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.' I, Daniel, was worn out. I lay exhausted for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.' Daniel 8:26-27

Daniel is told that the vision he has seen is true and will certainly be accomplished. He was to 'seal it up,' that is to make a record of it that it might be preserved many days until the time of fulfilment. Many days will elapse before it will come to pass. When the events would happen, they could better bear it knowing the facts of how long and when their troubles would terminate.

Daniel's fainting was not what we think of as fainting, but rather he was made weak and lifeless, even sick, as a result of what he had seen and heard. He had been given a glimpse into the future and he had seen a terrible thing. The apostasy of his people pained him deeply.

Israel had been carried away into Babylonian captivity because of apostasy. Surely, they had learned their lesson. **Will they do it again?** We can understand that the vision left him deeply disturbed and physically ill. Oh that we had more like Daniel who upon hearing of the troubles and departures of their brethren would grieve instead of rejoice.

Daniel 9 Introduction

This chapter falls into **three parts**. (1) The inquiry of Daniel as to when the captivity of the Jews would end. (2) The prayer of Daniel. (3) The answer to his prayer.

‘In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So, I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.’ Daniel 9:1-3

During the reign of Darius, the Mede it seems Daniel made a study of Jeremiah and in particular **Jeremiah 25:12 and 29:10**. These passages clearly stated that the captivity was to last for seventy years. The only difficulty would be in determining the exact year punishment began. The captivity was carried out in three stages (**invasions**) over a period of years, thus **at what point did it begin?**

Knowing this it would be easy to tell when it would end. Daniel has evidently satisfied his mind on the matter and had decided on the time it would come to an end. Now the question is **how would the return of the people be accomplished?** Nothing about Darius indicated he would be favourable to the Jews and allow them to return to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.

Daniel turned his face toward Jerusalem as was his custom in prayer, **Daniel 6:10**. He would seek an answer by prayer. He accompanied his prayer with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes which represented the state of mind he was in at the time and also showed his deep humility.

‘I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: ‘Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. ‘Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, LORD, because we have sinned against you. The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you. ‘Therefore, the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favour of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him. ‘Now, Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us. ‘Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favour on your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.’

Daniel 9:4-19

Daniel’s prayer began with a frank confession that all of Israel both northern and southern kingdoms had sinned grievously. They had not listened to the prophets. God was righteous in his punishment of the people because shame and disgrace belonged to Israel

Daniel ascribes righteousness to God. He freely admits God has been right in His punishment of the Jews. Shame and disgrace belonged to Israel. The expression ‘**confusion of faces**’ is significant meaning ‘**shame of faces.**’ The rich, the poor, the rulers and the ruled were all guilty of sin thus they deserved the judgment that had come upon them. God had warned them and when they did not repent after many years of long suffering He allowed them to go into captivity.

Daniel now pleads that God will remove His judgment from His people. His prayer was that they might be allowed to return to their homeland and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple which were lying desolate. **Verse 19** shows the great earnestness with which Daniel prayed.

‘While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill—while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, ‘Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision: ‘Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place. ‘Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.’ Daniel 9:20-27

Daniel was greatly beloved by God and because of his earnest prayer God sends Gabriel to answer his prayer. God’s people were to be redeemed from Babylonian captivity but Gabriel tells Daniel of a more important redemption – the redemption from their sins.

Seventy weeks are going to be set aside by God to accomplish their redemption. Seventy weeks is 490 days. It has generally been accepted that in prophesy a day represents a year thus certain things are going to happen over the next 490 years. Six specific things are mentioned in **verse 24**.

1. To finish their transgressions. This was accomplished through the gospel (**Hebrews 10:12**).
2. To make an end of sins. The atonement is meant here (**Hebrews 9:22**).
3. To make reconciliation for iniquity. Men would be reconciled to God (**Romans 5:11 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-19**).
4. Everlasting righteousness would be introduced. According to **Romans 3:21-31** God’s righteousness would be introduced into the world.
5. Vision and prophecy would be sealed up (**completed**) on this matter.
6. The Most Holy would be anointed. Christ would be crowned king (**Hebrews 1:8+9**).

While Daniel is concerned with getting back to Jerusalem, God is telling him there will be many other things that will happen after their return. This period of seventy weeks (**490 years**) is divided into three periods by Gabriel. (1) Seven weeks, which is forty-nine years. (2) Sixty-two weeks, which is four hundred and thirty-four years. (3) One week, which is seven years.

The first period of 49 years would begin with the decree by Artaxerxes for the Jews to return to their homeland. Although restoration would be slow and ‘**in troublesome times**’ yet Jerusalem, its walls, its streets and the Temple were restored under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The second period is composed of sixty-two weeks or 434 years which brings us up to the time of Christ. This is the period between the Old and New Testaments. God through Gabriel revealed in chapter eight some of the things that would happen during this period.

The third period is the final week (**70th**) which is a seven years’ period. Gabriel said that Jehovah would make a firm covenant with many for one week and that in the midst of one week (**three and one-half years**) He would cause the sacrifices and offerings to cease.

Christ began His ministry at the age of thirty, and three and one-half years later he was put to death on the cross. This would remove the necessity of the Temple with its sacrifices for His blood shed on the cross would forevermore atone for sins. The remainder of the week would involve Pentecost and the establishment of the church.

Also, the gospel would be proclaimed to the Jews for the next three and one-half years. The ministry of Jesus was to the Jews and the apostles continued this ministry to the Jews only (**Matthew 10:6 and Matthew 15:24**). During this time the Jews were given ample opportunity to hear the gospel, believe it and obey it.

Preaching was often accompanied by miracles to prove that those preaching the gospel were being led by the Holy Spirit in their preaching and teaching. As the Jews began to reject the gospel it was then carried to the Gentiles. This would seem to complete the seven years' period or 70th week. Thus, Gabriel gave Daniel the assurance for which he prayed and much more than he had asked for. But there is more to come.

In **verse 26** Gabriel sounds a sad note. Jerusalem would be destroyed again. While Gabriel did not say when, he did say that **'the people of the prince shall come and shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.'** The **'prince'** here is Titus, a Roman general, and the son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian.

The **'people'** Gabriel speaks of is the Roman army. They overflowed the city like a flood, destroying it and the Temple in A.D. 70. From the death of Christ onward until the destruction of Jerusalem there were uprisings, wars, and insurrections by the Jews. This caused Nero the Roman Emperor to give orders to subdue and destroy the land of Palestine.

While Gabriel gave no date for this destruction he said, **'And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate.'** The **"wing of abominations"** indicates the swiftness with which the prince of the people would come. Jesus had the words of Daniel in mind when speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem in **Matthew 24:15-16**. He said, **'Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whosoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.'**

We conclude therefore that the meaning of Gabriel's words to Daniel is that a period of 490 years had been carved out of time by God and was set for a definite purpose. His purpose was not only to bring about the immediate future of rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, but the Jews' spiritual redemption which would be accomplished by the coming of the Messiah (**Jesus Christ**). This was followed by the sad information about the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.

Conclusion

Dispensationalist say that Daniel's prophetic clock of 70 weeks was stopped at the end of the 69th week and that we are now awaiting the 70th week to begin. Supposedly we are now in a gap period awaiting the establishment of the kingdom.

However, the evidence is overwhelmingly clear that the kingdom which is the church has already been established. In **Matthew 16:18-19** the words **'church'** and **'kingdom'** are used interchangeably. The simple fact is that the kingdom is already in existence and is not to come later on. (See also **Mark 9:1, Revelation 1:9, Colossians 1:13 and Hebrews 12:28.**)

The 70th year has already been fulfilled. Nowhere do the Scriptures indicate that the prophetic clock would suddenly stop. No mention is ever made of a gap period. All is fulfilled.

Daniel 10 Introduction

This chapter poses some problems and mysteries. It falls into **three parts**. (1) Daniel's state of mind as he reacts to this final vision of the book. (2) He has an awesome vision of a dreadful man. (3) Daniel is comforted.

This final vision of Daniel is extensive taking up three chapters. It is dated **'in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia.'** We learn from **verse 4** that it took place by the banks of the Tigris river. It was on the 24th day of month Nisan and two years after the decree of Cyrus for the Jews to return to Jerusalem.

‘In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. At that time, I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.’ Daniel 10:1-3

In Daniel 1:21 it is stated that ‘Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus.’ This does not imply he died at this time. It would seem that he retained his position of authority until then. He may have retired from the court after the accession of Cyrus.

The vision made known was a great truth that would certainly come to pass. There was no doubt in his mind that it would happen. It was evidently to be a great and long warfare. The expression, ‘But the time appointed was long,’ has been rendered and interpreted in a variety of ways. Some of the best scholarship seems to feel that it relates to a great warfare with many calamities to be endured. Many feel this is the warfare to come at the end of the seventy weeks related in Daniel 9:24-27 which would be the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

We also know that there were a series of wars during the period between and the Old and New Testaments. Also after the return from captivity the Jews encountered difficulties in rebuilding the walls of the city so that they had to arm themselves for protection as they engaged in their work. Whatever it was it had to do with Daniel’s people and it pertained to “the latter days” Daniel 10:14.

It was to be terminated when the ‘holy people’ had their power broken Daniel 12:7. It would seem the evidence is strongly in favour of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. While we do not know for certain the meaning Daniel did know. He was so upset by the vision he could not eat or anoint himself. He entered into three weeks of mourning and prayer.

‘On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So, I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless.’ Daniel 10:4-8

On the 24th of the month Nisan which would roughly correspond to our month April, Daniel was standing by the Tigris River. Why he was at this location we do not know. He saw an awe-inspiring vision of a man clothed in linen. As it turns out the man is an angel. In Revelation 15:6 linen is represented as the raiment of angels. He had a girdle of fine gold.

Beryl is a mineral that is green or bluish green. His face was brilliant like lightning. His eyes were like lamps of fire thus keen and penetrating. His arms and feet were like polished brass. His voice sounded a multitude of people, strong and loud.

Daniel was accompanied on this occasion by some men but they did not see the vision but something happened to cause them to run away in fear. Daniel is alone and sees the vision. He was completely overcome and became very weak. His countenance became pale. A similar thing happened to John on Patmos, Revelation 1:17.

‘Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, ‘Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.’ And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.’ Daniel 10:9-11

The angel speaks to Daniel and upon hearing his voice Daniel sinks prostrate and senseless upon the earth. The angel touches Daniel and caused him to be raised to his knees and hands. He still does not have the strength to stand erect. The angel speaks to Daniel and calls upon him to pay attention to what has been said. He commands Daniel to stand up. Daniel was greatly beloved in heaven and this is why the angel has been sent. Daniel now stands erect trembling.

‘Then he continued, ‘Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I

was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.' Daniel 10:12-14

Daniel is told not to be fearful. From the very day, he had started his prayer and fasting the angel had been dispatched to come to him to answer his prayers but had been detained from coming to Daniel. The reason for this delay was that the 'prince of the kingdom of Persia' had detained him. It is believed that this was an opposing or evil angel, one who was influential over the government of Persia trying to influence it toward an unfavourable attitude toward the Jews.

As this angel offered resistance to the angel sent to Daniel, Michael another angel of God came to his assistance. Why was this resistance offered by the evil angel? We know from the previous chapter Daniel was concerned about the return of his people from captivity. So much depended upon the attitude of the Persian government. It was important that they be favourable toward the Jews as they went about rebuilding the city and walls in Jerusalem and the raising of the temple.

If the prayer of Daniel on behalf of his people was to be answered some influence favouring the position of the Jews with the removal of any obstacles which might impede their progress had to be manifested. The dispatched angel had run into opposition. By the help of Michael this angel had been able to overcome the unfavourable influence of the evil angel and secure a favourable attitude on the part of the Persian government. After a delay of twenty-one days the angel arrives to inform Daniel of what would happen not only immediately but even down to the 'latter days' which was at that time a long way off.

'While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, 'I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe.' Daniel 10:15-17

It seems Daniel is overcome by all this and laid his face upon the ground becoming speechless and exhausted. It would also seem he was filled with grief.

'Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. 'Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed,' he said. 'Peace! Be strong now; be strong.' When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, 'Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength.' Daniel 10:18-19

Daniel is now encouraged to be comforted, yet to be strong. He has nothing to fear but must be strong so as to bear the message the angel brings to him.

'So he said, 'Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come.' Daniel 10:20

The angel tells Daniel that he has his own warfare to carry on. The conflict in Persia has not yet been completed. He must return to complete arrangements which had been commenced. It would seem that the difficulties were not yet completely overcome thus it was desirable for him to return to exert further influence at the Persian court so that the desired objectives might be accomplished.

After this there would be another conflict with the prince of the kingdom of Greece. Some think just the opposite is meant - that with the coming of the king of Greece things would be on a different footing and they would have the favour of Alexander the Great. History seems to indicate that Alexander was favourable toward the Jews.

'But first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.). Daniel 10:21

Michael was the supporter of the angel dispatched from God. Due to his help this angel was able to tell Daniel what was inscribed in 'the writing of truth.' This book of God contained all His plans, purposes and decrees regarding the future.

Conclusion

Angelology (the study of angels) is a most fascinating subject. We do not know all that we would like to know about angels. It is clear from what is stated in this chapter that in the spirit realm there are dominions and principalities just

as we have in our own realm here on earth. Paul refers to this wicked realm in **Ephesians 6:12** when he says, ‘**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places.**’

This spiritual host of wickedness is headed by the devil. Jesus calls him ‘**the prince of this world,**’ a title which shows he has unusual power and authority. Paul calls him ‘**the god of this world.**’ Wicked angels who sinned and were cast down to hell, **2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6** are subject to Satan their prince. They evidently have rank and authority among themselves. They seem to thrive on world rulers influencing them to a great degree. **Luke 4:6.**

The warfare between God’s angels and the angels of the devil is symbolically described in **Revelation 12:7.** John writes, ‘**And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought.**’

The Jews in Daniel’s time had powerful opponents, but they also had powerful allies in the angels dispatched by God. **Would not the same be true of God’s people today?** See **Hebrews 1:14.** Let us be careful that Satan does not overcome us. We must fight hard but at the same time it seems we will have the help of angels.

Daniel 11 Introduction

The events of **verses 2–35** are presented in such a clear and precise way that there is little doubt among scholars that it furnishes a description of history from the Persian Empire to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (A.D. 175). **Verses 36–45** have been the subject of much controversy. The vital question is, **who is the ‘king’ of verse 36ff?** We believe the evidence is strongly in favour of the Roman emperors.

Thus, the chapter embraces a large portion of history which would be of interest to the Jewish people of that time. This revelation is made evidently to prepare them for the dreadful events that were ahead. There are at least six distinct periods of history covered in this chapter. Space does not permit a detail study of each period therefore we will only be able to summarize each period.

‘**And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.) The Kings of the South and the North. ‘Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will arise in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.’ Daniel 11:1-2**

First Period. The succession of the kings of Persia (v. 2). ‘Yet’ three kings imply four kings are under consideration one of which was then ruling, Cyrus (**at the time the vision was received**), Cambyses, Darius 1 and Xerxes. This fourth king was well known for his riches. He attempted to invade Greece. The Persian Empire reached its peak at this time.

‘**Then a mighty king will arise, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases.’ Daniel 11:3**

Second Period – Alexander the Great (v. 3). After this succession of kings there would arise one who would rule ‘**with great dominion.**’ There is no doubt that this refers to Alexander the Great who conquered the world including the great Persian Empire.

‘**After he has arisen, his empire will be broken up and parcelled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.’ Daniel 3:4**

Third Period – The state of his empire after Alexander’s death (v. 4). The glory of Alexander was short lived for he died yet a young man – only 30 years old. Upon his death, his empire would be broken and divided into four parts. His son, Alexander IV, his wife Roxanna and mother Olympia, were slain thus the kingdom did not go to his posterity. Instead it was divided into four areas as follows: Greece, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. A different general ruled over each area

‘**The king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power. After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the**

South will go to the king of the North to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power, and he and his power will not last. In those days, she will be betrayed, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her. 'One from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the king of the North and enter his fortress; he will fight against them and be victorious. He will also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years, he will leave the king of the North alone. Then the king of the North will invade the realm of the king of the South but will retreat to his own country. His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress. 'Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated. When the army is carried off, the king of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands, yet he will not remain triumphant. For the king of the North will muster another army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped. 'In those times, many will rise against the king of the South. Those who are violent among your own people will rebel in fulfilment of the vision, but without success. Then the king of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. The invader will do as he pleases; no one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land and will have the power to destroy it. He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the South. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him. Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them, but a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back on him. After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more.' Daniel 11:5-19

Fourth Period – The King of the South and the King of the North (vs. 5–19). Prophetic history now zooms in on two of these portions of the empire – the Ptolemy kings of the south who ruled in Egypt and the Selucian kings who ruled in Syria. With Palestine situated as it was between Syria and Egypt it was inevitable that it would in some way become involved with the conflict between Syria and Egypt.

As an example of the Selucian kings, Antiochus III raised an army to fight Ptolemy V. The Jews joined in and aided Antiochus in his effort against the Egyptians. This aligning of themselves with the Seleucids would work out for their own hurt as it put Palestine into the hands of the Seleucid kings. Antiochus IV eventually came to rule over Palestine. His rule proved to be a terrible experience for the Jews. The reason the other two areas of the Greek empire were ignored is because they would have little bearing on the future history of the Jews.

There is a great amount of detail stated concerning these two kingdoms, so much so that the principal events could have been readily anticipated by those who were in possession of the writings of Daniel. The affairs of the other two portions of the empire did not have any particular effect upon the Jews. The history of Antiochus the Great is traced with great detail because his actions would have a special bearing on the Jews.

'His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendour. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle. "He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honour of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue. Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power. When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers. He will plot the overthrow of fortresses—but only for a time. "With a large army, he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him. Those who eat from the king's provisions will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in battle. The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country. 'At the appointed time, he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favour to those who forsake the holy covenant. 'His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. With flattery, he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him. 'Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. When they fall, they will receive

a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.’ Daniel 11:20-35

Period **Five** – **The contemptible Person (vs. 20–35)**. This is the notorious Antioch Epiphanes. There is no doubt that this section of the chapter refers to Antiochus Epiphanes and gives us many details of his character and deeds. The purpose of revealing him in such detail no doubt was to prepare the Jewish people for the terrible events to come upon them during his reign. His acts against the Jews are described in vs. 28, 30-35. Returning from failure in an Egyptian campaign he attacked Jerusalem, slew 80,000, took 40,000 and sold 40,000 into slavery.

Later on, he invaded the Temple, ended the daily sacrifices and set up a shrine to Zeus. A pig was sacrificed on the altar of the temple and the temple was then sprinkled with pig broth. Nothing worse could have happened in the eyes of the loyal Jews would have been more humiliating. There were many apostate Jews who aided Epiphanes in his overthrow of Jerusalem.

‘The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. He will show no regard for the gods of his ancestors or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. Instead of them, he will honour a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his ancestors he will honour with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honour those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price. ‘At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Cushite’s in submission. But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.’ Daniel 11:36-45

Part **Six** – **The Roman Empire (Vs. 36-45)**. These verses have been the subject of much controversy. The question is, **who is the king of verse 36?** There have been four major views advocated. (1) Antiochus Epiphanes, (2) Herod the Great, (3) The Antichrist, and (4) the Romans. In view that he is speaking of matters related to the ‘**latter days**’ and the power of the Jews being broken, it seems that events associated with the Roman Empire best fit the description given in these verses.

The historical scope of the Book of Daniel is to take us from Babylon to Rome. This is evident in **chapters 2 and 7**. We are being brought to a ‘**time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.**’ Daniel 12:1. Similar language in **Matthew 24:21** make it clear this is in the time of the Romans. The king of the North which has been the Selucian kings now become the Roman kings.

In 64 B.C. Pompey brought an end to the Seleucid Empire. An even fiercer persecutor who will bring an end to the power of the ‘**holy people**’ now appears. This king will exercise his will, exalt himself and even magnify himself above the gods speaking against the true God. All this will continue until God is finished with His purposes in the downfall of Judaism in A.D. 70.

He will worship, force and conquer. These will become his god. He will do anything including worshipping anything that suits his purposes. He will reward those who fall in line with him. Rome had many puppet kings ruling in the various provinces of the Empire.

This is the battle between Egypt and Rome with the Romans coming like a whirlwind overcoming all opposition. Next the king of the North would overrun Palestine. The lands of Edom, Moab and Ammon did not have any appeal to Caesar Augustus thus they were not taken. The whole Egyptian area came under his control. He would experience problems from the east and north never completely subduing these areas.

Rome gains authority over Palestine but when Rome has done its job, it will pass away and no one can do anything to help as it decays.

Conclusion

We might label Daniel as the prophet of world history. This chapter covers a period of around 560 years. The details of this period are given in such a precise way that one almost has to be a student of history to really appreciate the chapter. **How could Daniel lay out in such a vivid way the events of history for the 560 years?**

He could not on the basis of his own wisdom and knowledge. The answer is simply that he was provided divine help or else it would have been impossible. This chapter is just one of the many examples of internal evidence that the Bible is the inspired word of God.

Critics and unbelievers will say the book was written after the events recorded in the days of the Maccabees, 168 B.C. They say the book is historical fiction which the name of Daniel was forged. We agree with a statement by Halley: **‘We suspect that the real crux of the attempt to discredit the book of Daniel is the unwillingness of intellectual pride to accept the marvellous miracles and amazing prophecies recorded in the book.’**

Daniel 12 Introduction

Chapter 12 is a continuation of eleven. Actually this final vision begins in **Daniel 10:14**. The reference in these verses is to the vindication of God’s people by the angel Michael who seems to serve as a guardian over the people of God. This period is described as the worst time of trouble since Israel was a nation. Many feel that this refers to the troubles they suffered under Antiochus Epiphanes. A full description of this period is given in **Maccabees 1:10 and 1:20, 22, 39**. Also Josephus describes this awful period.

Premillennialist think it means the **‘great tribulation’** preceding the supposed thousand-year reign of Christ. We believe that the correct understanding is found in the fall of Jerusalem and the rejection of physical Israel as the chosen people of God with the complete eradication of Judaism as a system. This occurred in A.D. 70 when the Roman army under Titus marched against Jerusalem destroying his city and its temple.

‘At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.’ Daniel 12:1

‘And at that time’ is the time spoken of in the **last verse of chapter 11**. It was when Rome moved into Palestine establishing itself in complete control of the Jews. This entire vision relates to what would befall the Jewish people in the latter days, **Daniel 10:14**. It will be a time of great trouble such as had never been seen before.

This is exactly how Jesus described the fall of Jerusalem in **Matthew 24:21** when he said, **‘For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.’** There is consolation however in the fact that Michael will stand up for the people of God. This does not mean no child of God will be hurt in any way but rather God will take care of His people and His cause. We know that history reveals that the faithful were delivered from the awful destruction of Jerusalem by being directed to the land of Pella where they lived in exile for a time without their lives being endangered.

‘Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.’ Daniel 12:2

Since this is to occur **‘at that time’** and before the **‘power of the holy people is broken’ Daniel 12:7**, it must not be speaking of the final resurrection. It must refer to the coming of Christ which would offer spiritual resurrection to every Jew. By obedience to the gospel they could come forth from the grave of sin and its bondage.

To some Jews His coming would mean everlasting life while to others it would bring everlasting shame and contempt. The condition under which the Jews lived after 585 B.C. (**the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the people taken captive to Babylon**) is called by Ezekiel **‘a grave.’** Simeon said Jesus was set **‘for the rise and fall of many in Israel.’ Luke 2:34.**

‘Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.’ Daniel 12:3

The wise (those who would heed the words of Jesus and obey them (Matthew 7:24-25) would shine forth as lights in the sky. They will let their lights so shine that it will turn others to righteousness (Matthew 5:16). All of this will take place when Rome has established itself in Palestine thus it would be during the time when the kingdom had been established.

‘But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.’ Daniel 12:4

Daniel is commanded to preserve the entire book of Daniel until the visions have run their course. This book is the source of true knowledge in contrast to wisdom of men that cause men to run to and from to find knowledge. This pursuit of human knowledge while it may be earnest, is vain, in that God is by-passed.

Many have always gloried in human wisdom and pride has prevented him from bowing in submission to the wisdom that is from above. Intellectual pride keeps men from accepting the fact there is a God who is over them and requires their submission and obedience. This kind of wisdom keeps men from accepting at face value what God’s word says. They cannot conceive of divine inspiration.

Thus, many religious leaders who are called scholars will deny that the book of Daniel is inspired. Many would say it is a fraud and that Daniel is not its author. How unfortunate that human wisdom blinds men to the truth.

‘Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, ‘How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?’ The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, ‘It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.’ I heard, but I did not understand. So, I asked, ‘My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?’ He replied, ‘Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.’ Daniel 12:5-10

Daniel sees two people one on one side of the river bank and the other on the opposite side. One of these speaks to the angel in linen inquiring how long it would be until the end of the vision just given. The answer is ‘a time, times and a half’ and also when an end has been made of the power of the holy people. Judaism was brought to an end in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Daniel does not understand the answer and asks what is to be the outcome of all he has seen and heard in this unusual vision. The answer seems to be: drop the subject, and go no further. This matter is in the future and beyond your time. It will be understood by those who need it. He is told that the righteous will do righteously and the wicked will do wickedly. Each will be rewarded accordingly. In spite of the great signs and wonders of our Lord many rejected him.

‘From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.’ Daniel 12:11-12

This verse speaks of destruction and desecration of the temple by the Romans. After this historic event his power is said to continue for 1290 days (3 year and 7 months). A blessing is pronounced on those who will survive this period and live beyond it. They will see an end to that power. Those who wait through these trials and attain their victories in Christ will find the blessedness of the 1335 days, 45 days more than the earlier period. These two sums, 1290 + 1335 add up to more than seven years and are not intended to represent proportionate times in history. The first represents persecution; while the second represents victory and blessings.

‘As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.’ Daniel 11:13

Daniel is encouraged not to worry but go on his way till all these things be consummated. At that time, Daniel, would stand in his lot. His lot would be the place he is given by God – that of a true and great prophet. Jesus refers to this prophet in Matthew 24:15 thus Daniel witnessed concerning the will of God. Daniel is truly one of the great prophets of all times. Ezekiel praised him as a righteous man of the same calibre of Noah and Job (Ezekiel 14:14).

Daniel truly was an outstanding person. From his early years (**teens**) he was an example of religious consistency and firmness. While willing to serve his rulers, yet he was careful to preserve a conscience void of offense. His enemies could find no fault against him, except his integrity in keeping the law of God and his devotion to God in prayer. He was an example of honesty, humility, piety and courage. He would readily die for his faith.