



THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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INTRODUCTION

Many people are familiar with a few of the stories we find in the Book of Daniel, young people especially, have been taught about Daniel in the lion's den and his three friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who survived the fiery furnace.

The background to the book is set right after Babylon's first attack on Jerusalem, 2 Kings 24. The Babylonians came and plundered the city and the temple, and they took a host of Israelites into exile, 605-536 B.C.

The book 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.

Everything described within the book covers at least the full length of the seventy-year exile in Babylon, from the first deportation of Hebrew captives, 2 Chronicles 36:5-8 / Daniel 1:1-2, to their return to Palestine, Ezra 1-2.

DANIEL

Apart from the book, which has his name as a title, we don't know much about Daniel himself or his family. His name means, 'God is my judge,' and we know that he was a prophet because Jesus calls him a prophet, Matthew 24:15 / Mark 13:14 / Luke 21:20-24.

We also know he had royal parents, Daniel 1:3 / Daniel 1:6, and we do know he was known for his righteousness, Ezekiel 14:14 / Ezekiel 14:20, and his wisdom, Ezekiel 28:3.

The wisdom of Daniel was found to be ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters of Babylon, Daniel 1:20. It is estimated that he was carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar when very young, about fifteen or sixteen years of age.

DATE

Although the date is widely disputed, the date of writing is generally accepted as around, 606-536 B.C. or later, Daniel 1:1 / Daniel 10:1. Daniel 1-6 deals with events as early as the 6th century BC, Daniel 7-12, deals with events in the future, the succession of empires after the Babylonian exile and specifically the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, 175-164 BC. The book covers many years, including the end of Persian rule and the rise of Alexander the Great's rule.

AUTHOR

Although widely disputed as to the author of the book, traditionally it is attributed to Daniel, a Jewish exile, who lived during the reigns of the Babylonian kings named in the book as Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar and the Median and Persian kings named as Cyrus and Darius.

Nelson's Bible Dictionary says the following.

'Daniel claimed to write this book, Daniel 12:4, and he used the autobiographical first person from Daniel 7:2 onward. The Jewish Talmud agrees with this testimony, and Christ attributed a quote from Daniel 9:27 to 'Daniel the prophet', Matthew 24:15.'

THE BOOK

The book of Daniel falls into two main parts. Daniel 1-6 are historical, dealing with important events in Babylon. Daniel 7-12 are prophetic, revealing the future of great world governments and the coming of the kingdom of Christ.

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 was 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 in chapters Revelation 2 / Revelation 7 and Revelation 9.

PURPOSE

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 on every occasion.

OUTLINE

Prologue. Daniel 1:1-21
Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great statue. Daniel 2:1-49
Nebuchadnezzar builds a great statue. Daniel 3:1-30
Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a toppled tree. Daniel 4:1-37
Belshazzar's feast. Daniel 5:1-31
Daniel in the lions' den. Daniel 6:1-28
The vision of four great beasts and the heavenly court. Daniel 7:1-28
The vision of the ram, the goat, and the little horn. Daniel 8:1-27
Daniel's prayer and its answer. Daniel 9:1-27
Daniel's vision of the final conflict. Daniel 10:1-12:13

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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.

DANIEL'S TRAINING IN BABYLON

‘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 three hundred and sixty-six years from the time the kingdom was 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, Daniel 1:1. 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, Daniel 1:2, but was permitted to continue as a puppet king, 2 Chronicles 36:6 / 2 Kings 24:1-2. Nebuchadnezzar took part of the furniture of the temple back to Babylon with him, 2 Chronicles 36:7. He also took several young men, sons of prominent people, among whom were Daniel and his three friends.

The KJV uses the word ‘Sinar’, instead of Babylon, Daniel 1:2, which is a region within Babylon, Genesis 10:10 / Genesis 11:2 / Genesis 14:1 / Genesis 14:9 / Joshua 7:21 / Isaiah 11:11 / Daniel 1:2 / Zechariah 5:11. Josephus says the following, concerning the articles Nebuchadnezzar took.

‘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.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following about the temple.

‘This was a temple of great magnificence, and the worship of Bel was celebrated there with great splendour, Isaiah 46:1. These vessels were subsequently brought out at the command of Belshazzar, at his celebrated feast, and employed in the conviviality and revelry of that occasion, Daniel 5:3.’

‘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

We know nothing about Ashpenaz, except that he was a eunuch and a chief official, Daniel 1:3. 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 1:4. Daniel was one of these and so, they were all placed under the supervision of Ashpenaz the master of the eunuchs.

Culver, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There is a great possibility that Daniel and his friends may have been emasculated, 2 Kings 20:16-18.’

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, Daniel 1:5. They were to be on this diet for three years, Daniel 1:5. This no doubt was the period of their training. Among those in training were Daniel and his three friends, Daniel 1:6.

The chief eunuch gave them new names, Daniel 1:7. 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 means ‘God is my judge.’ Belteshazzar means ‘Bel (a pagan god) protects his life.’ The name Belteshazzar, no doubt, would have been considered a very flattering name for Daniel. Knowing the character of Daniel, however, we can imagine that he was not flattered at all.

Hananiah means ‘Yahweh hath been gracious.’ Mishael means ‘Who is what is?’ Azariah means ‘Yahweh has helped.’ Shadrach means ‘The command of Aku’ (the moon god). Meshach means ‘Who is this?’ and Abednego means ‘Servant of the god Nabu.’ Later, they will become defiant by refusing to worship Nebuchadnezzar’s image, Daniel 3:12.

‘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, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.

Also, no doubt some of the food would have been considered unclean under Jewish law. 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.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The course which he took saved him from the trial, for the prince of the eunuchs was willing to allow him to make the experiment, Daniel 1:14. It is always better, even where there is decided principle, and a settled purpose in a matter, to obtain an object by a peaceful request, than to attempt to secure it by violence.’

‘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 due to his conduct and manner of life. However, it must be noted that this was all by the providence of God, Daniel 1:9 / Genesis 39:21 / Proverbs 16:7.

The eunuch was hesitant; he was afraid that if Daniel appeared less healthy, it would reflect upon him, as he was responsible. He felt this might show up in the countenance of Daniel, and the king would notice the downcast look of one who had been fasting, Daniel 1:10.

Eunuchs were employed in positions of trust, and 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 Danial was pulses and water. The king's diet, by contrast, contained the best meats and wines from his table. The word rendered 'pulse' in the KJV would seem to indicate vegetables or anything that grows from seed, Daniel 1:16.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'It has often been pointed out that there is no mandate here for vegetarianism. There would in all probability have been no scruples whatever on the part of the four young men against eating meat, except for the great likelihood of any meats which the king would have provided for them having been sacrificed to idols, or, at any rate, not kosher.'

Daniel's diet called for water instead of wine. 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, 1 Timothy 5:23, but he did not prescribe it as a beverage.

Wine has always been a source of drunkenness, and therefore, drunkenness is condemned in both the Old and New Testaments: Genesis 9:21 / Isaiah 5:11 / Proverbs 20:1 / Ephesians 5:18 / Galatians 5:21. 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 of 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.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'The experiment was such, since it was to be for so short a time, that he ran little risk in the matter, as at the end of the ten days he supposed that it would be easy to change their mode of diet if the trial was unsuccessful.'

'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 blessed their development so that they are especially gifted in matters of knowledge, intelligence, literature and wisdom, Daniel 1:9. 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, Daniel 1:5. In his examination, he found Daniel and his three friends far superior to all the others who were being trained.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'Daniel and his three friends had pursued a course of strict temperance; they had come to their daily task with clear heads and pure hearts – free from the oppression and lethargy of surfeit, and the excitement of wine; they had

prosecuted their studies in the enjoyment of fine health, and with the buoyousness and elasticity of spirit produced by temperance, and they now showed the result of such a course of training.’

‘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 are much greater, ten times greater, 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, [Exodus 7:11](#) / [Exodus 7:22](#) / [Exodus 8:7](#) / [Exodus 9:11](#) / [Daniel 2:2](#).

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

Daniel’s influence continued into the reign of Cyrus, [Ezra 1:1](#). 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 in the Babylonian government, Daniel seems to retain his status among those who ruled. His influence is so great that he is constantly called upon by those who rule.

Upon the first reading of [Daniel 1:21](#), one might get the impression that his life was terminated in the first year of Cyrus. But from [Daniel 10:1](#), we are told that 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.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

‘In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled, and he could not sleep.’ Daniel 2:1

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S DREAM

Nebuchadnezzar, the powerful king of Babylon, had deep concerns about the future. Nebuchadnezzar had more than one dream, but one of them appears to be a recurring dream, [Daniel 2:3](#).

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 was disturbed, and he awoke.

In the ancient world, there was a belief that dreams were the way the will of heaven was revealed to men, [Genesis 20:3](#) / [Genesis 20:6](#) / [Genesis 31:11](#) / [Genesis 37:5-6](#) / [Genesis 40:5](#) / [Genesis 41:7](#) / [Genesis 41:25](#) / [Numbers 12:6](#) / [1 Kings 3:5](#) / [Joel 2:28](#) / [Job 33:14-16](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In accordance with the common belief among the ancients, he regarded this as a Divine message. The dream, too, was of such a character as to make a deep impression on his mind, though its distinct features and details had gone from him.’

‘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, [Daniel 2:2](#). He demands that they give him an interpretation without his revealing what he had dreamed, [Daniel 2:3](#).

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘They seem to be regarded in their day as the very elite of Babylonian society. The ‘Chaldeans’ of Daniel’s time, therefore, were probably men of great learning who could trace their ancestry back to families of the original conquerors of Babylon.’

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Evidently, it was customary for the Babylonian kings to tell their dreams to their advisers, who would then provide a politically correct interpretation that would satisfy the monarch. However, Nebuchadnezzar wanted his wise men not only to give him an interpretation but also to tell him what he had dreamed.’

It is not likely that the king had forgotten what had made such an impression on him, but rather that if these men were good enough to interpret, they could also tell what he had dreamed. The magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers probably spoke Aramaic. The Aramaic language was widely used throughout the empire.

Young, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Aramaic was called Chaldean until the latter half of the nineteenth century.’

The magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers are confident they can interpret the dream, [Daniel 2:4](#) / [Daniel 1:20](#), but notice how the king puts a spanner in the works.

He refuses to tell them the dream and gives them a warning. If these so-called wise men can’t tell him what his dream was and how to interpret it, they will be murdered and have their houses destroyed, [Daniel 2:5](#).

Driver, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The violence and peremptoriness of the threatened punishment is in accordance with what might be expected at the hands of an Eastern despot; the Assyrians and Persians, especially, were notorious for the barbarity of their punishments.’

However, if they tell him what his dream was and interpret it, they would be blessed with gifts, rewards and great honour, [Daniel 2:6](#). And so the king has set out the terms and conditions and demands to be told his dream and the interpretation of it, [Daniel 2:6](#).

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 wants the truth.

It remains a sad fact that many today think astrologers and fortune-tellers can predict their future. They are frauds today as they have always been, and Christians must stay away from such people, [Deuteronomy 18:10-13](#) / [Revelation 21:8](#).

'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 realise 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](#)

It appears the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers are in panic mode, they know they are fraudsters and so once again they ask the king for something, anything to go on concerning his dream, [Daniel 2:7](#) / [Genesis 41:32](#). The king knew they were stalling for time since the king had already laid down the terms and conditions, [Daniel 2:8](#) / [Daniel 2:5-6](#).

Once again, the king threatens them to interpret the dream, the death penalty, and he appears to be fully aware of what they are up to. They have conspired, they have misled in the hope that the situation would have changed, [Daniel 2:9](#). Once again, the king demands that they tell him his dream and what it means, [Daniel 2:9](#).

As with all fraudsters, they always have a get-out clause when they are put on the spot. Here it is the astrologers, who say, no one on earth can tell the king what his dream was and what it means. No king has ever asked such a thing from any magician or enchanter or astrologer, [Daniel 2:10](#).

Notice the second get-out clause the astrologers give, it's too difficult because only the gods can tell people what their dreams are and what they mean, and they don't live among humans, [Daniel 2:11](#). Under threat, they spoke the truth that no man living had such power and that only divinity could do this.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

'They spoke more truth than they knew. They are our witnesses that astrology and the like are fraudulent! If these people have any power at all, why must they have crystal balls? Why can't they perform with an onion or a hot dog? If the power is in the ball, let's go straight to the factory where they are made and cut out the middleman or woman!'

The king has had enough; he sees through them and their lies. He's so angry and so furious, he orders the execution of all of the so-called wise men of Babylon, [Daniel 2:12](#). Just as Pharaoh had anger issues, [Genesis 40:2](#) / [Genesis 41:10](#), the king certainly has anger issues too, [Daniel 3:13](#) / [Daniel 3:19](#).

'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](#)

Furious with their inability to impart this knowledge, it seems the king has had his fill of deceit, trickery and fraudulent predictions; a decree of execution was given against all the wise men in the kingdom, [Daniel 2:13](#).

It was left to Arioch, captain of the guard, to carry out the decree, [Daniel 2:14](#). In a sense, it was a decree against all the worldly wisdom and philosophy of his day. The decree included all wise men; thus, this involved Daniel and his three friends, who were not even aware of the situation, [Daniel 2:14-15](#).

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, [Daniel 2:16](#). Time was obviously granted for Daniel to provide the interpretation, which also shows how much respect Daniel had among them.

Archer, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The stage was now set to show the reality, wisdom, and power of the one true God-Yahweh-as over against the inarticulate and impotent imaginary gods the magicians worshipped. It is the same general theme that dominates the remainder of the book and serves to remind the Hebrew nation that despite their own failure, collapse, and banishment into exile, the God of Israel remains as omnipotent as he ever was in the days of Moses and that his covenantal love remains as steadfast toward the seed of Abraham as it ever had been.’

‘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 Chaldean wisdom and philosophy, but rather he enlisted the help of his friends in entreating God for the answer, [Daniel 2:17](#) / [James 5:16-17](#).

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following concerning them praying and seeking wisdom.

‘There is no doubt about this being more effective than peering into an ox’s liver or mumbling over a glass ball or worrying!’

He urged Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to pray for mercy from God concerning the dream so that they themselves wouldn’t be killed, [Daniel 2:18](#). It would have been a most impressive scene to have seen those four men praying that night, [Philippians 4:6-7](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This title for God appears five times in this chapter, [Daniel 2:18-19](#) / [Daniel 2:28](#) / [Daniel 2:37](#) / [Daniel 2:44](#), plus elsewhere, particularly in books that have pagan Babylon as their setting. It appears in [Daniel 5:23](#); nine times in Ezra; four times in Nehemiah; and in [Genesis 24:3](#) / [Genesis 24:7](#) / [Psalms 136:26](#) / and [Jonah 1:9](#). The Babylonians worshipped the heavens, but Yahweh is the God over all ‘the heavens,’ not just the God of heaven. He is sovereign over all.’

‘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 their prayers, and Daniel was given a vision in which the mystery of the dream was revealed, [Daniel 2:19](#). 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, [Daniel 2:20-23](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Daniel identified two evidences of God’s wisdom. First, He gives wisdom to the wise; He is the source of all wisdom. Second, He reveals things that would be unknown to humans otherwise. He can do this because He knows what is unknown to people, and the light of knowledge dwells with Him.’

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘No one believing in Him has ever been put to shame. So, when we tell the story of God, we’d do well to tell of Him as an old God, old in victories, judgment, forgiveness, and tender mercies. Tell of Him as a personal God who relates to families; to fathers and sons; mothers and daughters.’

DANIEL INTERPRETS THE DREAM

‘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, Daniel 2:24-28

Daniel requests that Arioch bring him before the king so that he might give the interpretation, [Daniel 2:24](#). With all haste, Daniel is brought before the king and tells the king he has found someone from among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dreams mean, [Daniel 2:25](#).

Notice the king asked if Daniel could tell him his dream and interpret the dream, [Daniel 2:26](#). Notice Daniel’s reply, he says no wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain the mystery of the king’s dream, [Daniel 2:27](#), but Daniel knows Someone who can, the God of heaven, [Daniel 2:28](#). He tells the king that the God of heaven has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come, [Daniel 2:28](#).

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following concerning things to come, [Daniel 2:28](#).

‘This is referring to the days following the reign of Nebuchadnezzar up to the time when Jesus will come and build His church. Both Isaiah, [Isaiah 2:2-4](#), and Peter, [Acts 2:16-17](#), speak of God’s kingdom being established in the last days.’

‘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.

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 2:28-35

Just as Joseph had a dream about his brothers and interpreted Pharaoh’s dream, [Genesis 37:5-6](#) / [Genesis 41:7](#) / [Genesis 41:25](#) / [Genesis 40:5](#), Daniel now goes ahead and begins to tell the king what his dream was, [Daniel 2:28](#). God was dealing with the king in a direct and personal way.

Daniel tells the king that it was God, the revealer of mysterious who had shown the king what was going to happen, [Daniel 2:29](#). Notice how Daniel takes no credit for himself, he hasn’t got greater wisdom than anyone else alive, [1 Corinthians 2:6](#), but gives God the glory, [Daniel 2:30](#). He is merely an instrument to bring the interpretation to the king.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream was that of a great and awesome image, [Daniel 2:31](#). Its head was of fine gold, its breast and arms were of silver, its belly and sides of bronze, [Daniel 2:32](#), and its legs of iron with feet part iron and part clay, [Daniel 2:33](#).

While the king was watching, a stone 'cut out without hands' struck this image on its feet, destroying it, [Daniel 2:34](#), so thoroughly that its fragments were like the chaff of a summer threshing floor with the wind carrying the pieces away, [Daniel 2:35](#). The stone that struck the image became a great mountain filling the whole earth, [Daniel 2:35](#). It is no wonder that this dream had bothered the king. Dreams were considered special signs, and this being such an awesome sight would have concerned the king greatly. Who or what was this stone? Some suggest it is Christ himself, [Psalms 118:22-23](#) / [Matthew 21:42-44](#) / [Acts 4:10-11](#).

'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.' Daniel 2:36-38

Daniel now proceeds to give the interpretation as given to him by God, [Daniel 2:36](#). He tells the king that he is the king of kings, [Ezekiel 26:7](#) and that the only reason he has power and dominion, power, might and glory is because God gave it to him, [Daniel 2:37](#) / [Romans 13:1](#) / [1 Peter 2:13-17](#).

McGuigan, in his commentary, says the following.

'Given can be written over all areas of human endeavour. The nations may strive and sweat and groan in exertion, but the kingdom is 'given'.

God gave him the right to rule over all of mankind, all of the animals and birds in his hands, [Daniel 2:38](#) / [Jeremiah 29:23](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'Earlier, Jeremiah had warned the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon: that God had given Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty over the entire earth, including the animals, [Jeremiah 27:6-7](#) / [Jeremiah 27:14](#). While the extent of his empire was not as great as those that followed him, he exercised absolute control as no one after him did.'

Daniel then tells him that the head of gold is Nebuchadnezzar and his great empire, [Daniel 2:38](#).

Talbot, in his commentary, says the following.

'Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was likened unto gold because it was an absolute monarchy, God's ideal government. Nebuchadnezzar was not, however, God's ideal monarch!'

"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 2:39-45

Daniel tells the king that after him, a second kingdom would arise, which would not be as powerful as Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, Daniel 2:39. This kingdom was represented by the breast and arms of silver of the image, Daniel 2:32.

This was the Medo-Persian Empire, which followed the Babylonian kingdom, Daniel 8:20-21. Darius the Mede was a close confederate of Cyrus, who appointed him as his first governor over Babylon after it was taken from the Chaldeans.

The Medo-Persian Empire was formed under Cyrus the Great, who took over the empire of the Medes and conquered much of the Middle East, including the territories of the Babylonians, Assyrians, the Phoenicians, and the Lydians. Remember that Cyrus had been prophesied in Isaiah 44:28, one hundred years earlier.

The Babylonian empire came to an end in 539 B.C. when the Persian army stormed the city under the leadership of Cyrus, who was a respected ruler who showed kindness to the Jews and allowed those who desired to return to Judah and even provided funds for the rebuilding of the temple. Remember that Cyrus had been prophesied in Isaiah 44:28 one hundred years earlier.

A third great empire of bronze would next arise, Daniel 2:39. This was the great Greek Empire built by Alexander the Great, who conquered the world as a young man.

Alexander started out as the king of Macedon, and he went on to extend Macedonian power not only over the central Greek city-states but also to the Persian empire, including Egypt and lands as far east as the fringes of India.

His conquests included Anatolia, Syria, Phoenicia, Judea, Gaza, Egypt, Bactria, and Mesopotamia, and he extended the boundaries of his own empire as far as Punjab, India.

The fourth power whose legs were iron, and feet were part iron and part clay, Daniel 2:40-43 / Daniel 2:33, is the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was well known for its use of iron in weaponry.

There is no cohesiveness within this empire. The iron weaponry of the Roman soldiers helped to secure their dominance in warfare, and they used it to subdue their enemies and to become the great Roman world empire that was represented by legs of iron in the figure in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

'The Roman Empire was as strong as iron, for it swallowed up lands and peoples who had been part of the previous three empires, but the empire was also fragile and divided, just like iron and clay cannot be mixed. Though Rome succeeded in conquering the territories that came under its influence, it never could unite the peoples to form a united empire.'

All students of history know the difficulties experienced by Rome in trying to hold together her vast empire. Though Rome succeeded in conquering the territories that came under its influence, it never could unite the peoples to form a united empire.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

'The Roman Empire was as strong as iron, for it swallowed up lands and peoples who had been part of the previous three empires, but the empire was also fragile and divided, just like iron and clay cannot be mixed. Though Rome succeeded in conquering the territories that came under its influence, it never could unite the peoples to form a united empire.'

In the days of the fourth empire, the Roman Empire, a fifth kingdom, one of supernatural origin would arise, destroying the fourth empire, Daniel 2:44-45. It would be different from the others.

It would not be temporal but spiritual; it would also be universal and eternal. This is clearly the kingdom of God, and His kingdom will consume all other kingdoms and stand forever.

Daniel once again gives God the glory. It was God who had shown the king what was going to happen in the future, and because it was revealed by God, the king would know his dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy, [Daniel 2:45](#).

There have been various interpretations placed upon this image. The above view must be the correct view since it is the only one that harmonises 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, [Matthew 3:1](#) / [Mark 1:14-15](#) / [Luke 3:1-3](#) / [Colossians 1:13](#) / [Luke 22:29-30](#) / [Mark 9:1](#) / [Revelation 1:9](#) / [Mark 9:1](#) / [Acts 2:47](#) / [Colossians 1:12-14](#).

Premillennialists have made much of the ten 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 the ten kingdoms.

By making a play on the toes, Premillennialists are able to extend the Roman Empire to the present age by having ten kingdoms 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 strikes 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 appears that Nebuchadnezzar is well satisfied with Daniel’s interpretation. So satisfied that he actually falls before Daniel and pays him honour, and orders that an offering and incense be presented to him, [Daniel 2:46](#).

It appears that the king thinks Daniel may be a god, hence why he worships him. Why? Perhaps the fact that these things were far off in the future relieved the king’s mind.

Also, the fact that Daniel was able to tell what he had dreamed proved he would also be correct in the interpretation. Knowing the character of Daniel, we know he would have no part in this exaltation.

[Daniel 2:47](#) 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.

Notice that Daniel is exalted, lavished with gifts and promoted to a position of high authority, [Daniel 2:48](#). It appears that the king was true to his earlier words, [Daniel 2:6](#).

Daniel immediately requests the promotion of his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to become administrators over the province of Babylon, but Daniel remained at the royal court, [Daniel 2:49](#).

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 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 will overcome.

CHAPTER 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.

THE IMAGE OF GOLD

‘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. Didn't Daniel say that the king was the head of gold? [Daniel 2:38](#). Didn't Daniel say that all the kingdoms described were to proceed from the head? Daniel had also said that God had given him a kingdom, power, strength and glory, [Daniel 2:38](#). This great image then would set forth the majesty, glory and dominion of the king and his great kingdom.

This statue was about ninety feet tall and nine feet wide at the base. The text says the statue was made of gold. It was most likely either stone or wooden in construction and overlaid with gold, [Isaiah 40:19](#). 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. These officials probably made the journey from all over Babylonia to be there for this event. It must have been a large and costly affair.

Nebuchadnezzar had already demonstrated his capacity for executing those who did not obey him, [Daniel 2:12](#), so, I'm sure these dignitaries would be thinking about this.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Eight classes of officials are summoned to the dedication of this image. Satraps were chief representatives to the king, that is, ‘kingdom-guardians’, or men who ruled large provinces. Prefects were military commanders. Governors were civil administrators. Advisors were counsellors to those in governmental authority. The Treasurers administered the funds of the kingdom. The Judges were administrators of the law. And the Magistrates passed judgment in keeping the law. All of this may suggest that the image was intended to symbolise the empire and its unity under the king.’

Keil, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A refusal to yield homage to the gods of the kingdom, they regarded as an act of hostility against the kingdom and its monarch, while everyone might at the same time honour his own national god. This acknowledgement, that the gods of the kingdom were the more powerful, every heathen could grant; and thus, Nebuchadnezzar demanded nothing in a religious point of view which every one of his subjects could not yield. To him, therefore, the refusal of the Jews could not but appear as opposition to the greatness of his kingdom.’

‘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. 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 worshipped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.’ Daniel 3:4-7

The announcement is made to all nations and peoples of every language, [Daniel 3:4](#). Amid all the festivities comes the command, ‘fall down and worship the gold images that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up, [Daniel 3:5](#). The noise from the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all the other music must have been very loud, [Daniel 3:5](#). Everyone refusing to do so would be cast into a fiery furnace, especially heated to a high temperature, [Daniel 3:6](#). This 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.

In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the statue looked forward to the fourth empire under which God set up his eternal kingdom, with the stone not cut by human hands crushing all the parts of the image, [Daniel 2:40-45](#). This fourth kingdom, being the Roman Empire, also forced its citizenry to worship its emperors, who had statues erected in their honour, just like Nebuchadnezzar did.

The consequences for both the Babylonians and the citizens of Rome who refused to bow down and worship the statues of the kings were death, [Daniel 3:6](#) / [Revelation 13:15](#).

When everyone heard all the noise from the various instruments, they fell down and worshipped the image, [Daniel 3:7](#) / [Exodus 23:1](#) / [Ezekiel 23:37](#) / [Romans 12:1-2](#) / [Revelation 17:1-2](#).

‘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 3:8-12

Notice that some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews, [Daniel 3:8](#). They tell Nebuchadnezzar, may he live forever, [Daniel 3:9](#). There’s nothing like lowering yourself to the king to get what you want. They remind the king of his decree, [Daniel 3:10-11](#) / [Daniel 3:4-6](#).

These astrologers then go ahead and report to the king that some Jews didn't bow down to his image, [Daniel 3:12](#). There were a few who would not bow; however, these were the three friends of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, [Daniel 3:12](#).

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, [Daniel 3:12](#). No doubt the reason why these three were reported to the king was resentment over the fact that they did not honour any of the pagan gods of the Babylonians.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Many Israelites worshipped idols in Palestine, and Moses had predicted that they would worship them in exile, [Deuteronomy 4:27-28](#), but these young men were as scrupulous about their observance of the Mosaic Law as Daniel. For them, death was preferable to disobedience. Nebuchadnezzar's gods were responsible for his success, according to Mesopotamian thinking, and to disregard them was tantamount to repudiating Nebuchadnezzar.’ 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.

THE BLAZING FURNACE

‘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, [Daniel 3:13](#) / [Daniel 2:12](#) / [Daniel 3:19](#). The Babylonians knew Nebuchadnezzar was prone to outbursts of fury and so, they figured it was his fit of rage that got them into a situation where a former Jewish slave was set in authority over them, [Daniel 2:28](#), and now it will be a fit of rage that will get them out from under at least three Jews.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are immediately brought before the king, [Daniel 3:13](#). After asking the three if it was true that they refused to worship his gods and bow down to his image, [Daniel 3:14](#), the king was willing to give them another chance.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It would seem that Nebuchadnezzar had already seen sufficient evidence of the power of God so that he would have spoken with some restraint, but it is easy to forget if one does not believe with all the heart in the first place.’

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, [Daniel 3:15](#).

Surely, they would not dare to refuse him. The king 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, [Daniel 2:38](#). They should be subject to him because their God would not deliver them out of his hands, [Daniel 3:15](#).

‘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, [Acts 5:29](#) / [Matthew 22:21](#). 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, [Exodus 20:3-5](#). There is but one true God, and He only would they worship, [Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#). McGuigan, in his commentary, says the following.

'How they might have excused themselves: 1. We are only three. What can we do? 2. We are young. What can the young do? 3. We are away from home. How can this be expected of us? 4. Everyone is doing it. Why should we dissent? 5. If we do not, we will die, but if we do, we can live long and useful lives to God. 6. We know it is only an idol, so why shouldn't we just go through the motions! All the Devil's lies! All nobly repudiated!'

Campbell, in his commentary, says the following.

'Those who believe the saying, 'Every man has his price!' should consider well the response of these men in this crisis when their lives were at stake. They could not be bought for any price!'

'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. And these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.' [Daniel 3:19-23](#)

Once again, the king is furious, [Daniel 3:13](#) / [Daniel 2:12](#) / [Daniel 3:19](#), so enraged that it changes his attitude towards them and then commands that the furnace be heated seven times as hot as what was normal, [Daniel 3:19](#). He also commands his strongest soldiers to tie Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego up and throw them into the furnace, [Daniel 3:20](#).

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were wearing robes, trousers, turbans, and other clothes. These clothes were probably their articles of official attire, and they were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace, [Daniel 3:21](#). The furnace was so hot that when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into the furnace, the men responsible for casting them in were killed by the flames and intense heat, [Daniel 3:22](#). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were firmly tied, fell into the fiery furnace.

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, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

'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 3:24-25](#)

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, [Daniel 3:24](#) / [Exodus 3:12](#) / [Psalms 23:4-5](#) / [Isaiah 7:14](#) / [Isaiah 43:1-3](#) / [Isaiah 63:9](#) / [Matthew 28:20](#).

Also, a fourth man is observed with them, [Daniel 3:25](#). 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 [Daniel 3:28](#), Nebuchadnezzar calls him an 'angel.' God has often sent His angels to minister to those in trouble, [Psalm 91:11](#) / [Hebrews 1:14](#). This would not be anything unusual, [Daniel 6:22](#) / [Daniel 7:10](#) / [Daniel 9:21](#). Some believe that it was the pre-incarnate form of Jesus Christ, [Genesis 16:13](#).

‘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 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and calls them ‘servants of the Most High God, [Daniel 3:26](#) / [Daniel 3:29](#). He calls for all of them to come out, [Daniel 3:26](#). 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, [Daniel 3:27](#) / [Isaiah 43:2](#) / [Hebrews 11:34](#). 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, [Daniel 2:47](#). He acknowledges that it was God who rescued them through the means of an angel, [Daniel 3:28](#).

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego put their faith in God and defied the king’s command and were willing to die serving the true God rather than worship any other god, [Daniel 3:28](#).

Obviously, God was able to deliver them out of the hands of the king, and God could have turned on the king for ordering the three to be executed. Such a god must not be antagonised in any way. He must be praised and honoured.

Nebuchadnezzar still is not converted but remains thoroughly pagan. Nebuchadnezzar made it official that the Israelites could serve their God without danger of retribution.

A royal decree forbade any misrepresentation or speaking against the God of the Jews, ‘because there is no other God that can save in this way’, [Daniel 3:29](#). To further offset any repercussions from his decree, which backfired on him, he has the three men promoted, [Daniel 3:30](#).

Goldingay, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Nebuchadnezzar’s ability to cancel one of his laws and replace it with another is evidence of the might of his personal power. Rulers of the Medo-Persian Empire, which replaced the Babylonian Empire, [Daniel 2:38-39](#), could not do this; it was impossible for them to override a previously written law, [Daniel 6:8](#) / [Daniel 6:12](#) / [Daniel 6:15](#) / [Esther 1:19](#). Nebuchadnezzar made Judaism a recognised religion with rights to toleration and respect.’

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, [Psalm 2:1-4](#) / [Psalm 2:11-12](#).

FOUR OBSERVATIONS

1. The example of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego 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 Christian can be faithful to God if they so will.

2. God is our refuge in times of trouble, Psalm 46.

He is our only and real deliverer. When a man puts his trust in himself, he will always fail. Education, philosophy, wealth, or fame cannot deliver us; only God can. 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, Matthew 6:24. He must make up his mind about who he will serve. Man is wise to put his trust in God and serve Him.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

It would seem that Nebuchadnezzar has 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.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM OF A TREE

‘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

Nebuchadnezzar reigned for forty-three years, 605-562 B.C. It appears that this event takes place later in his reign, after he has completed a number of building projects, Daniel 4:30. 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, Daniel 4:1. Nebuchadnezzar felt that it was proper for him to make known to the world what God had done to him, Daniel 4:2. 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

Signs and wonders are common biblical words used to describe miracles, Deuteronomy 6:22 / Deuteronomy 7:19 / Deuteronomy 13:1-2 / Deuteronomy 26:8 / Nehemiah 9:10 / Isaiah 8:18.

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.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘He had built a magnificent city, gathered about him the wealth and luxuries of the world, and now he was preparing to while away the remainder of his life enjoying it all.’

‘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

Amid this ease, the king had a dream which brought fear to him, Daniel 4:5. He probably sensed that it spoke of something that was about to happen to him.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘How easily is the mightiest of mortals made afraid. For all his mighty armies, he could not keep dreams from successfully invading his bedroom.’

It appears the king hasn’t learned his lesson, and he has retained and continued to rely upon counsellors who could not profit him. The magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and diviners are called in as before, Daniel 4:6 / Daniel 2:10-12. This time, he did not threaten them with execution if they failed. However, they were unable to tell him the meaning of his dream, Daniel 4:7.

‘Finally, Daniel came into my presence, and I told him about 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, Daniel 4:8. 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, he was called the ‘master of the magicians’ because he was considered superior to the other wise men, Daniel 4:9.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Nebuchadnezzar addressed Daniel as the chief of the magicians. By this, he probably meant that Daniel was his chief interpreter of the future, not that he was the head of a group of magicians.’

Nebuchadnezzar related the dream with confidence that Daniel’s God would enable him to give the interpretation, Daniel 4:9 / Ezekiel 28:3.

‘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, Daniel 4:10. Occupying a central place on the earth was a mammoth tree, standing alone and reaching up into the heavens, Daniel 4:10.

Its branches extended out a great distance, Daniel 4:11. 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, Daniel 4:12.

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.

Young, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The king described what he had seen in poetic language. His words, therefore, appear as a prophetic oracle. The ancients frequently used trees to describe rulers of nations, [Isaiah 2:12-13](#) / [Isaiah 10:34](#) / [Ezekiel 31:3-17](#).’

‘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 ‘messenger’, one who had spiritual characteristics, probably an angel, comes down from heaven, [Daniel 4:13](#). The messenger cries for the tree to be cut down and then cut up into pieces, thus utterly destroying its glory and beauty, [Daniel 4:14](#).

The stump, however, was to be left, [Daniel 4:15](#), meaning the tree would live again. It would retain its roots, enabling it to shoot up again. It was to be protected by placing an iron and bronze railing around it, [Daniel 4:15](#), 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, [Daniel 4:15](#).

‘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, [Daniel 4:16](#). 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, [Daniel 4:16](#). Some feel it represented a year, while others think seven represented perfection or completeness, thus the time necessary to accomplish God’s purpose.

The seven times probably refer to seven years because seven days or seven months would have been inadequate for his hair to have grown to the length of feathers, [Daniel 4:33](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Daniel 4:17](#).

‘God also revealed the purpose of the judgment of this ‘tree.’ It was to teach all people that the Most High God, [Daniel 3:26](#), is sovereign over the affairs of humankind, [Daniel 4:17](#) / [Daniel 2:21](#) / [1 Samuel 2:7-8](#) / [Job 5:11](#). He can, has, and will set up whom He will, even people of humble origin, to rule nations (e.g., Joseph, Israel’s judges, Saul, David, et al.). God does not need the mighty to do His work. Therefore, it is foolish to become proud over one’s accomplishments and importance, as Nebuchadnezzar was.’

The Jehovah’s Witnesses here argue that the seven years stand for 2,520 years, and the kingdom that was bound with iron is the Lord’s kingdom that was finally established in 1914 A.D.

Yet the kingdom under consideration is clearly Babylon, ‘your kingdom’, [Daniel 4:26](#). The purpose of God is made clear in [Daniel 4:17](#). God gives dominion and authority to whomsoever he chooses.

DANIEL INTERPRETS THE DREAM

‘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 4:18. Daniel has bad news for the king, Daniel 4:19.

Feinberg, in his commentary, says the following concerning Daniel’s actions.

‘This verse reveals the heart of Daniel as well as any in the entire book of Daniel. He knew the meaning of this dream and how well Nebuchadnezzar deserved what was to come upon him. Nevertheless, Daniel’s heart was concerned for the king and grieved over what he had to tell him. This was the distinctive feature of the true prophets of God: though they often had to predict judgments, they were nevertheless grieved when any of God’s creatures were chastised.’

The king senses that what Daniel is about to say is bad news, but tells him he had nothing to fear in revealing it, Daniel 4:19. The dream was not one which pleased the king. The tree which is the king will be brought low. The tree is the king, Daniel 4:20-22.

As mentioned above, the seven times, Daniel 4:23, probably refer to seven years because seven days or seven months would have been inadequate for his hair to have grown to the length of feathers, Daniel 4:33.

Furthermore, he will be driven from his place among men and the palace, Daniel 4:24. 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 4:25. The stump would be spared meaning that his kingdom would be kept safe though he is to be humbled and brought low, Daniel 4:26.

Daniel recommends that the king repent, assuming that the judgment of God might be averted if the king would change, Daniel 4:27. Included in this call for reform was the suggestion that he show mercy to the poor, Daniel 4:27. Part of the king’s iniquities may have been the mistreatment of the poor. This was often true of monarchs. God holds all rulers, pagan and godly, responsible for violating His moral standards. This also reveals that the king was guilty of injustice, cruelty, oppression, and sin.

‘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, Daniel 4:28-29. The twelve months may be a period of grace where God endured the pride of the king and waited for him to repent.

A full year was then granted to the king 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, Daniel 4:30. While he was speaking, a voice from heaven declared that the kingdom he had been bragging about, which he had built, is now departing from him, Daniel 4:31-32. One moment he is bragging, and the next he is eating grass.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It is almost humorous to envision a foreign ambassador seeking an audience with the king who is out in the field having his lunch!’

What was done was done instantly, Daniel 4:33. 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, Daniel 4:33.

‘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, Daniel 4:34. The raising of the eyes toward heaven indicates a return to human consciousness. His sanity being restored, his first act was to glorify God, Daniel 4:34.

The king is convinced that Daniel’s God is all-powerful and the true ruler of the kingdoms of the earth. The king admits that God rules supreme and has his own way, Daniel 4:34. 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.

Earthly kings and empires come and go, but God is always in charge. The king has been removed from the national stage for seven years, and God has continued to rule without him!

God can do without any of us, regardless of how important we may think we are and how badly we think we are needed, Daniel 4:35. God is not answerable to any man; rather, man is answerable to God. No man has a right to question God.

The message now comes over clear and plain. God is the real ruler of this world, Daniel 4:35. 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. This had to be a humiliating experience for Nebuchadnezzar as his advisers and nobles sought him out, Daniel 4:36.

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, Daniel 4:37 / Job 42:12. This would indicate he was a changed man; he humbled himself, Daniel 4:37 / James 4:6 / Luke 18:14.

According to tradition, he is supposed to have lived for about one year after this. It is hoped that he continued steadfastly in his new faith in 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, 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.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

This chapter records a series of events which occurred on the night 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 prophecy. 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. The word '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 latter part of his life was not passed on to Belshazzar.

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

'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

Babylon, at this time, was also under attack by the Persian army, and it's possible that the feast was given to show Belshazzar's contempt for the Persians and to allay his people's fears. This feast was typical of most pagan feasts, and it was marked by much drinking and revelry, [Daniel 5:1](#).

Belshazzar presided over this feast, which included a thousand of his lords, [Daniel 5:1](#). 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, [Daniel 5:2](#).

These vessels had been taken at the same time that Daniel and his friends had been taken, Daniel 1:1-3, about 605 B.C. The term 'father' here is used in the sense of ancestor or forefather, Daniel 5:2.

Pusey, in his commentary, says the following.

'Neither in Hebrew, nor in Chaldee, is there any word for 'grandfather,' 'grandson.' Forefathers are called 'fathers' or 'fathers' fathers.' But a single grandfather, or forefather, is never called 'father's father' but always 'father' only.'

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, Daniel 5:3. As they revelled, they praised their pagan gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone, Daniel 5:4.

'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, Daniel 5:5. These fingers began to write upon the wall, Daniel 5:5.

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 in great fear, Daniel 5:6. Not knowing the meaning of the writing, he 'cries aloud' for the astrologers, soothsayers and wise men, Daniel 5:7. In a panic, he wants an immediate interpretation. He offers an award to anyone who can read the strange writing and give an interpretation of it, Daniel 5:7.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following concerning Daniel 5:7.

'More helpless and useless advisors. It appears that each generation of unbelievers must learn the hard way, for myths that may have been dealt with by one generation reappear to tempt the next generation, Judges 2:10-11. 'Third ruler of the kingdom': That is, after Nabonidus, and himself.'

The wise men, now faced with a situation where they could not cheat or use deceit, were a complete failure, Daniel 5:8.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'The writing appears to have been in the Aramaic language. Therefore, it seems that the wise men's difficulty in understanding it may have been due to its interpretation, rather than just the meaning of the words, Daniel 5:14-16 / Daniel 5:25.'

'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 that he really is worried, Daniel 5:9. At this moment, the queen, probably the queen's mother, since his wives were already in the banquet hall, enters, Daniel 5:10.

She says there is a man in his kingdom who could give the meaning, Daniel 5:11. She remembered how Daniel had interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and how he was made chief of the wise men, Daniel 5:12 / Daniel 4:8-9 / Daniel 4:18.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

'The queen here might have been the queen mother, seeing that all the wives of Belshazzar were already at the banquet. The woman speaks with remarkable dignity and self-possession; in addition, she shows an intimate knowledge of the abilities of Daniel. For these reasons, this queen may have been the widow of Nebuchadnezzar.'

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 recognise the gods of Babylon.

In Daniel 5:22, Daniel implies Belshazzar knew all about these things of the past. Since the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel had probably 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 to stand before the king and asks if he is the Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar brought into exile, Daniel 5:13. He claims he's heard about what Daniel can do, but claims he has the spirit of the gods in him, Daniel 5:14. The king explains that his so-called wise men couldn't interpret the writing, Daniel 5:15.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

'Belshazzar may even have heard of Daniel long before this, but indulging himself in sinful activities, he may have never taken the trouble to consult him. Yet Belshazzar remembered his Babylonian military history, the very God he had been mocking. Now one of God's servants stands before him, being the only man who can help him.'

Daniel is offered purple clothes, a gold chain and a third position in the empire, Daniel 5:16. 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 5:17. 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. '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.' Daniel 5:18-21

Daniel reminds the king that it was God, the Most High God, who gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom and then disposed of him from the throne for a reason, Daniel 5:18-19. Probably because of his pride and arrogance, Daniel 5:20.

Daniel proceeds to give Belshazzar the rest of the history of God's dealings with the great Nebuchadnezzar, which once again emphasises the truth that 'the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind, and that He sets over it whomever He wishes,' [Daniel 5:21](#) / [Daniel 4:17](#).

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

'Belshazzar is doubly condemned, seeing that he knew all about how God had humbled Nebuchadnezzar, yet he had proceeded to act even more foolishly and arrogantly than the former king. Note, though the facts of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity may have been hidden from the populace, they were known by the royal family. It is one thing to sin; it is another thing to see others face the consequences and then go on ahead and sin.'

'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 5:22-24](#)

Daniel becomes very plain-spoken now. He says that Belshazzar had not recognised this, although he knew it, [Daniel 5:22](#). The king is condemned for insulting God by abusing the vessels associated with His temple, worshipping false gods, and being arrogant, [Daniel 5:23](#).

Notice Daniel tells the kings that his gods cannot see, hear or understand, [Daniel 5:23](#). He had set himself up against and in the independence of 'the God in who, holds your breath in His hands and owns all your ways, you have not glorified,' [Daniel 5:23](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

'Nothing is more absolute than the power which God holds over the breath of men, yet there is nothing which is less recognised than that power, and nothing which men are less disposed to acknowledge than their dependence on Him for it.'

Belshazzar had acted in his previous conversation with Daniel, that he did not know very much about him, but had only heard some things. He knew much more than he pretended.

He also knew what had happened to his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. Because he didn't honour God, the holder of life and all of our ways, God sent His hand to write the inscription, [Daniel 5:24](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'Nebuchadnezzar had heard a voice from heaven while he was outdoors, [Daniel 4:31](#), but Belshazzar saw a hand from heaven indoors. Both forms of revelation have been extremely rare throughout history, but these occasions in the Book of Daniel involved leaders of the greatest nation on earth.'

'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](#)

As a result of his defiance, writing appeared on the wall. It is believed that the writing was in ancient Hebrew characters. The writing was from God, and its meaning was direct and clear-cut. The term 'mene' means to number, and 'tekel' means to weigh and 'upharsin' means torn or divided.

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.

His kingdom would be torn apart by the Medes and the Persians, who are even now approaching the gate under the leadership of Cyrus, [Isaiah 44:24-28](#) / [Isaiah 45:1](#).

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, Daniel 5:16. 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, Daniel 5:30. It seems that Daniel had hardly gotten the words out of his mouth until they were being fulfilled, Daniel 5:31.

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 the darkness.

It seems the great feast at the palace had attracted everyone’s attention, and 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.

Campbell, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The record of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel is the story of an overbearing king who experienced temporary judgment, but the story of Belshazzar is one of a sacrilegious king who suffered permanent judgment. Xenophon also recorded Belshazzar’s death. The night of revelry that had become a night of revelation now turned into a night of retribution.’

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The city had been under assault by Cyrus; in anticipation of a long siege, the city had stored supplies to last for 20 years. The Euphrates River ran through the city from north to south, so the residents had an ample water supply. The Persians captured the city by building a canal to divert the River Euphrates into a nearby lake, with the water diverted, its level receded, and the Persian soldiers were able to enter the city under the sluice gate. Since the walls were unguarded, the Persians, once inside the city, were able to conquer it without a fight. The overthrow of Babylon took place on October 12th, 539 B.C.’

CONCLUSION

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 another.

No one dreamed they would do this. People often boast of their power and greatness, not realising how limited and small they are. God rules this world, and He can dispose of kingdoms as quickly as overnight.

The UK can brag about its power and strength, but when it 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,” as the Americans say.

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 are 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, Philippians 3:20-21.

CHAPTER 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.

DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS

‘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 someone whom he could 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 6:1. Darius divided his realm into 120 satrapies or provinces, and set a satrap, a protector of the realm, in charge of each one, Esther 1:1 / Esther 8:9. Daniel was given a very high position of being over all the others, Daniel 6:2. 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, Daniel 6:3. The KJV says that Daniel possessed an extraordinary spirit, Daniel 6:3. Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Some view this as a spiritual gift, but others view this statement as meaning that in Daniel, the spirit was predominant, was uppermost, was enthroned. Excellent is something that excels, goes beyond, predominates. We might translate literally, ‘A spirit that excelled was in him’. The spiritual was the chief thing, not the flesh. This excellent spirit was a spirit of self-control, a spirit of genuine piety, a spirit of unshaken faith in God.’

‘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, Daniel 6:4. Thus, the princes now became 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, Daniel 6:4.

Try as they did, they could find nothing wrong with his character or administrative ability, Daniel 6:4 / Romans 12:1-2 / Philippians 2:15 / 1 Peter 2:11-12. 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, Daniel 6:5. 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 with flattery before the king, Daniel 6:6, asking that a royal statue be made, Daniel 6:7, and that for thirty days no petition could be made to anyone save the king, Daniel 6:7.

This would include all the gods worshipped by the people. If this decree were violated, the guilty party would be thrown into the den of lions, Daniel 6:7.

Olmstead, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Babylonians burned criminals alive, Daniel 4, but the Persians, who worshipped fire, threw them to the lions.’ Such a proposal would appeal to a vain king. It is evident that 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, Daniel 6:8-9.

Once signed, it could not under any circumstances be changed, Daniel 6:8 / Daniel 6:12 / Daniel 6:15 / Esther 1:19 / Esther 8:8. The trap was now set. They knew it was only a matter of hours until Daniel would violate the king’s decree.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The accusers’ plan was similar to that of the Babylonian officials who had tried to topple Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel 3. They knew that Daniel was a God-fearing man who did not worship pagan idols. So they set a trap for him, believing that he would remain faithful to his faith. When Daniel had to choose between obeying his God or his government, his God came first, Daniel 6:10 / Acts 5:29.’

‘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, and Daniel learned of it, Daniel 6:10. 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, Daniel 6:10 / Philippians 4:6. This was probably morning, noon and evening, Psalms 55:17.

McGuigan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Here is the man’s devotion, for he did not serve in ignorance. This was no act of bravado; it was his holy custom. Daniel spoke to God. Position, reputation, and all that goes with those were placed in the open window.’

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 were probably open most of the time.

There were those waiting to see, and as soon as the deed was done, the information was taken to the king, Daniel 6:11-12. This charge is very forceful. One who is a foreigner, and a captive had completely disregarded the solemn decree of the king, Daniel 6:13. This had happened not just once but was taking place three times a day, Daniel 6:13.

‘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 was greatly distressed because he had been trapped, and he realised that he had been duped into a stupid thing. He had 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, Daniel 6:14. In what way, he sought to deliver Daniel, we do not know, but he deliberated as long as time would allow.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following concerning Daniel 6:14.

‘This verse speaks volumes for the relationship that existed between Darius and Daniel. Darius is not angered by Daniel’s failure to comply with this law, rather he immediately seeks to save Daniel. The law that he signed is of no consequence to Darius at this point; his consuming desire is to save Daniel. Darius is now trapped like a wild animal, trying to free itself. He may have consulted his lawyers, argued with his opponents, poured over past legal decisions, all to no avail.’

This is a striking illustration of the difficulties which often arise 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, Daniel 6:15 / 2 Corinthians 1:8-9.

‘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, Daniel 6:16. The king now makes a remarkable statement. He said to Daniel, ‘May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you! Daniel 6:16. Since the high king of the Medo-Persian Empire could do nothing, yet the God of Daniel could and would deliver him.

In order to prevent Daniel’s situation from changing, a stone was placed over the den, it was sealed by the king with his own signet ring and with the rings of the nobles, Daniel 6:17.

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 of that day. Carvings and statues from remains of that era indicate that this was a common method of execution.

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, [Daniel 6:18](#). He was deeply disturbed and concerned for Daniel.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘He no doubt remonstrated with himself over and over at being tricked by his own pride and by evil and envious men, all of whom put together were not worth this trustworthy administrator.’

‘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, [Daniel 6:19](#). The king cried out with an anxious and remorseful voice to Daniel to see if God had delivered him from the lion’s jaws, [Daniel 6:20](#). Notice the king calls Daniel a servant of the living God, his God, whom he continually serves, [Daniel 6:20](#) / [Daniel 3:17](#).

Will there be an answer from the den? Suddenly, there is the voice of Daniel from the den, after the customary address to the king, [Daniel 6:21](#), he declares that God sent His angel to shut the lion’s mouth in order to protect him. He declares that he is innocent in God’s eyes and has done no harm to the king, [Daniel 6:22](#).

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, [Hebrews 11:33](#) / [Daniel 3:28](#). It is interesting the number of times angels are employed on behalf of men.

Daniel probably never doubted for one moment concerning 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 was released, and the king did this with gladness in his heart, [Daniel 6:23](#). After an examination, it was found he had not been harmed in any way. This is attributed to his belief in God, [Daniel 6:23](#).

‘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 is now aware that he had been used by the princes, who called for their execution along with their wives and children by the same method as they called for Daniel, [Daniel 6:24](#) / [Genesis 12:3](#) / [Esther 7:9-10](#) / [Galatians 6:7](#). 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, [Daniel 6:24](#). Literally, they did not come to the bottom of the den before the lions had mastery over them and broke all their bones.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The reason for this severe punishment is that they had used the king as a pawn for their own selfish purposes against an innocent man. In addition, they are also attempting to use God’s laws against one of God’s people. It is clear that the lions were very active and very hungry, for they did not even wait to get their victims to the bottom of the den. The only reason why they did not touch Daniel must be what the text says, that God miraculously delivered Daniel.

The children and wives of such men were cast in besides, which was a common punishment in Persia. It does remind us that sins affect far more people than just the person who sinned. How many families today are being destroyed because of the foolishness of only one of the family members?’

The king now sends a letter to all the people in the kingdom, [Daniel 6:25](#). 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 recognised as a God of great power and glory and worthy of universal reverence, [Daniel 6:26-27](#).

Daniel is restored to his position as a ruler again, [Daniel 6:28](#). We would assume he was placed over the entire kingdom as originally planned by the king. Notice that Cyrus is called ‘the Persian’, [Daniel 6:28](#); the kingdom was one and the same, but Darius and Cyrus were from different ethnic backgrounds. He prospered as a ruler under Darius and also later on under Cyrus.

We do not know how long Daniel lived during the reign of Cyrus. No doubt he was instrumental in his influence in securing permission for the return of his people to their homeland in Palestine. Under God’s providence, he had no doubt been raised to his high position so that he would be able to work on behalf of the return from captivity.

CONCLUSION

Chapter six concludes the historical section of the book. This section shows God’s protection over His people in their difficult situations and demonstrates the wisdom of putting their trust in Him. The remainder of the book will become entirely prophetic.

CHAPTER 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.

[Daniel 2](#) and [Daniel 7](#) are parallel and 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.

Four world kingdoms are described, [Daniel 2:31-45](#) / [Daniel 7:1-8](#). God gives dominion to these kingdoms, [Daniel 2:36-38](#) / [Daniel 7:6](#) / [Daniel 7:12](#) / [Daniel 7:26](#).

There is a focus on the fourth kingdom, [Daniel 2:40-43](#) / [Daniel 7:7-8](#) / [Daniel 7:26-28](#). God established an everlasting kingdom. [Daniel 2:44](#) / [Daniel 7:13-14](#) / [Daniel 7:27](#).

DANIEL'S DREAM OF FOUR BEASTS

‘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, 2 Peter 1:20-21. He made a record of it at the time set forth, in summary, of its meaning.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This vision recorded by Daniel was revealed to him in the first year of Belshazzar’s reign, 553 B.C., when Belshazzar was made co-regent with Nabonidus. This dream took place 14 years before Daniel’s experience in the lions’ den, Daniel 6. When this dream came, Daniel was probably about 68 years of age. At this time, he had been in captivity for 52 years.’

‘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

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Daniel referred to himself in the third person in the first six chapters, but in the last six, he used the first person. He may have made this change to make his visions more impressive and persuasive to the reader.’

He first saw the four winds of heaven bursting forth upon the sea, throwing it into commotion, Daniel 7:2.

Figuratively speaking, wind is often used to depict the action of God. This would indicate the activity of God in stirring up the nations in accordance with His divine purpose.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘As the wind is invisible but it clearly affects things, so it is of God who is invisible but affects things in the universe.’

The ‘sea’ is often used to speak of other nations in their restless state, Isaiah 17:12-13 / Isaiah 57:20 / Revelation 13:1.

Expositor’s Bible Dictionary says the following.

‘Is symbolic of polluted, turbulent humanity as they try to exploit and govern in their own wisdom and strength, it stood for the ever-changing Gentile world, Revelation 13:1.’

The four beasts, which represent four nations, Isaiah 27:1 / Isaiah 51:9, now appear to come forth from this commotion. Each beast is different in appearance, Daniel 7:3. In Daniel 7:17, we see that they come from the earth, that is, they are human in origin.

Young, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Their diversity is mentioned, in order to call attention to the importance of the symbolism by which each individual kingdom is represented.’

THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

‘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, [Daniel 7:4](#). It is powerful and swift. This beast would represent Babylon, which is characterised as both a lion, [Jeremiah 4:7](#) / [Jeremiah 49:19](#), and an eagle, [Jeremiah 49:22](#).

The symbol of the winged lion is appropriate, for the peoples of that day were familiar with such figures as the winged lions that guarded the gates of royal places among the Babylonians. 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, [Daniel 7:4](#).

It had the mind of a human, [Daniel 7:4](#). This is likely an allusion to the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar in [Daniel 4](#). In that chapter, a man was made like a beast; in this vision, a beast is made like a man. This is clearly speaking about the Babylonian empire, [Daniel 2:38](#).

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The empire was given the heart of a man, that is humanised, humanised. This probably refers to the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar and his turning to God in [Daniel 4](#). The first beast is 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 MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE

The second beast is described as a bear, [Daniel 7:5](#).

Driver, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Old Testament writers spoke of the bear as the most formidable beast of prey in Palestine after the lion, [1 Samuel 17:34](#) / [Amos 5:19](#) / [2 Kings 2:24](#) / [Hosea 13:8](#).’

It had three ribs in its mouth, [Daniel 7:5](#). The three ribs have been taken to mean three countries that the Medo-Persian Empire devoured during its days of power, the Lydian Kingdom, the Babylonians and the Egyptians. Others see the three ribs as simply part of the picture of voracity and greed.

Commentaries are not always in agreement as to which three. It could be that the ribs further signify the viciousness of the beast which devoured other nations.

The second beast is hungry for more victories, and it’s told to eat as much as it likes, [Daniel 7:5](#). This beast will devour the first empire, [Daniel 2:39](#) / [Daniel 5:30-31](#). The slow but powerful bear would well represent the Medo-Persian Empire.

THE GREEK EMPIRE

The third beast is described as being like a leopard with four heads and four wings, [Daniel 7:6](#). The great speed of the leopard would be an apt symbol for the rapid expansion of the Greek empire under Alexander.

This represented the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great, who in only eleven years conquered the world, [Daniel 2:39](#). 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.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It has four heads because, following the death of Alexander the Great, the kingdom was divided up into four sections, which were ruled by his chief generals. These four minor kingdoms continued as prominent factors in world politics until the next empire appeared on the scene and gathered the parts in a whole.’

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The fourth beast is different. Daniel does not attempt to give the appearance of 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, Daniel 7:7. This is a fierce monster capable of devouring all that was before it. This beast represented the Roman Empire, Daniel 2:40-42 / Revelation 13:1.

Walvoord, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Roman empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilisations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands and selling them into slavery by the hundreds of thousands.’

The ten horns represent the ten tributary kings and kingdoms which made up this great empire. Many feel that the ten Roman rulers are Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian and Titus, that is the first ten recognised emperors of Rome.

‘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 three horns plucked up before it present no small difficulty also. The first three horns pulled up by the roots might be the three barracks emperors, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, who were not of the Julian line of succession to the throne but declared emperor by their troops. We will learn more about this little horn in Daniel 7:20-26.

The horn here is a symbol of a king, but which king? Many commentators suggest it best fits Domitian, who ruled the Roman Empire. History tells us that Domitian was full of himself and claimed to be a deity, Daniel 11:36-37 / Revelation 13:5-8.

‘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. Notice Daniel sees the thrones were set in place and the Ancient of Days taking his seat, Daniel 7:9. Note that ‘thrones’ is plural; this is important, and I’ll say more about this later in this chapter.

This is one who has lived ever since anyone can remember, and longer than anyone can remember. The ancient of Days implies God’s eternal nature, Psalms 90:1-2 / Isaiah 57:15 / Micah 5:2.

The white garments speak of God's purity and holiness and the white hair of His wisdom, [Daniel 7:9](#) / [Isaiah 1:18](#). The fire represents the power to destroy and also His majesty and splendour, [Daniel 7:9](#). The wheels under His throne stand for the omnipresence of God, [Daniel 7:9](#) / [Ezekiel 1:15-21](#).

A stream of fire proceeded from God, and thousands upon thousands of angels stood before Him, [Deuteronomy 33:2](#) / [Hebrews 1:14](#), and their dominion was taken away, [Daniel 7:10](#).

The books are opened, [Exodus 32:32](#) / [Luke 10:20](#) / [Revelation 3:5](#) / [Revelation 20:12](#) / [Revelation 20:15](#), and the beast is brought to trial, [Daniel 7:10](#) / [Isaiah 66:15-16](#).

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

'Millions of innocent victims have suffered excruciating tortures at the hands of beastly men. Most of these atrocities will never be known to the world, but the Eternal One knows every name and every detail.'

Daniel watched and listened to the horn boasting, [Revelation 13:5-6](#), until it was destroyed, [Daniel 7:11](#) / [Revelation 19:20](#) / [Revelation 20:10](#). While their dominion was taken away, their lives were prolonged, [Daniel 7:12](#) / [Revelation 20:7-10](#). How?

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

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

'It appears that the lives of the first three empires were preserved in the final empire, that is, the Roman Empire absorbed all the previous empires. The essence of the first three beasts was prolonged in the ferocity and inhumaneness of the fourth beast.'

'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 worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away.' [Daniel 7:13-14](#)

Now the fifth kingdom, the kingdom of the Son of Man, replaces these beast kingdoms. Notice Daniel sees one like a son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven, [Daniel 7:13](#). The son of man is clearly a reference to Jesus, [Matthew 8:20](#) / [Matthew 9:6](#) / [Matthew 16:27-28](#) / [Matthew 26:64](#) / [Revelation 14:14](#).

Whitcomb, in his commentary, says the following.

'Although Messiah had already been named as God's 'Son' in previous prophetic utterances, [2 Samuel 7:14](#) / [Psalms 2:7](#) / [Psalms 2:12](#) / [Proverbs 30:4](#), He is now given a name that emphasises His true and total identification with mankind.'

Christ's kingdom is made up of people from all nations, [Acts 2:38-39](#) / [Mark 16:16](#) / [Hebrews 12:28](#) / [Revelation 1:5-6](#). He will reign over an everlasting dominion, [Matthew 28:18](#), which shall not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

This clearly speaks about the kingdom of God, [Daniel 2:44](#) / [Mark 14:60-64](#) / [Mark 16:19](#) / [Acts 1:9-11](#) / [Acts 2:32-36](#). It is spiritual in nature, not having those carnal elements which cause other kingdoms to decay.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

'The stress here is 'a son of man' as opposed to 'a beast'. One in the image of God as opposed to a savage, mindless animal. He comes on "clouds of heaven", which speaks of the non-human, the divine. The beasts came up out of the earth; they are the kingdoms of the earth. This is the kingdom of heaven.'

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM

‘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, [Daniel 7:15](#), just as John was grieved and cried 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, [Daniel 7:16](#), and was told who the beasts represented, [Daniel 7:17](#) / [Revelation 13:11](#).

Ungodly kingdoms would arise and rule, but God’s people would not be forgotten. The saints of God would possess the fifth kingdom as kings and priests, [Daniel 7:18](#) / [Luke 22:29](#) / [Revelation 1:6](#).

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It didn’t matter that the saints had at one time Jewish opponents and then (as in this section) Roman opponents. And it didn’t matter that it sometimes looked as though the sovereignty (kingdom) wasn’t theirs-it was!’

‘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 a further explanation, [Daniel 7:19](#). He further describes the fourth beast, giving some additional things about him, [Daniel 7:19](#).

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, [Daniel 7:20](#). The ten horns are clearly ten kings that arise out of this kingdom, [Daniel 7:24](#) / [Revelation 13:5-6](#).

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Daniel 7:21](#).

‘Nero was the first to set himself against the Christians (only as a personal expedient). Tertullian, in his famous “Apology”, said: “Consult your annals, and there you will find Nero, the first emperor who dyed his sword in Christian blood”. In the same place, he goes on to speak of Domitian as a “limb of the bloody Nero”. Eusebius has this to say of Domitian: “He finally shows himself the successor of Nero’s campaign of hostility to God. He was the second to promote persecution against us, though his father, Vespasian, has planned no evil against us.”

The little horn prevails only until God comes in judgment, [Daniel 7:22](#). The judgment appears to be the judgment upon this fourth empire. 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 a Roman emperor who subdued three kings before him is difficult to find.

The fourth beast is clearly a fourth kingdom, [Daniel 7:23](#), and the ten horns are clearly ten kings that arise out of this kingdom, [Daniel 7:24](#). How this king subdues the three other kings isn't mentioned.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Domitian did execute three conspirators who tried to seize his throne and did quell three uprisings.’

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The uprooting of three kings is not literal, but rather is given to establish Domitian as number eight, which some feel infers a new beginning in active power.’

Notice this king will speak against the Most High, oppress God's people and try to change the set times and the laws, [Daniel 7:25](#) / [Revelation 13:7](#).

Barclay, in his commentary, says the following.

‘With the coming of Domitian (A.D. 81-96), there came a complete change. Domitian was a devil. He was the worst of all things, a cold-blooded persecutor. With the exception of the mad Caligula, he was the first Emperor to take his divinity seriously and to demand Caesar worship. He enacted that he himself was a god.’

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘He demanded that anyone addressing him say, ‘Lord and God’. He renamed September and October, the months of his accession and birth. Finally, he paid no attention to the policies of the Senate at all, but insisted on the finality of his own decisions.’

Notice that God's will be delivered into his hands for a time, times, and half a time, [Daniel 7:25](#). History tells us that Domitian was full of himself and claimed to be a deity, [Daniel 11:36-37](#).

He was given authority to exercise his authority for forty-two months, [Revelation 13:5](#). The forty-two months represent a period of time for persecution, [Daniel 7:25](#) / [Revelation 11:1-3](#) / [Revelation 12:6](#) / [Revelation 12:14](#) / [Revelation 13:5](#).

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Here are some of the passages in which the phrase appears. It's the period the ‘little horn’ Domitian, who persecutes the saints, [Daniel 7:25](#). It's the period of the holy city being trodden underfoot, [Revelation 11:2](#). It's the period during which the witnesses prophecy, [Revelation 11:3](#). It's the period the woman is nourished in the wilderness, [Revelation 12:6](#) / [Revelation 12:14](#). It's the period of the beast's authority, [Revelation 13:5](#).’

Notice this king's kingdom will be completely destroyed, and it was to be given to the saints when the horn's dominion is taken away, [Daniel 7:26-27](#).

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Domitian was actually assassinated by one of his wife's servants. Following his death, the Roman Senate thronged to denounce Domitian. Sending for ladders, they had his images, and the votive shields engraved with his likeness brought smashing down; and ended by decreeing that all inscriptions referring to him must be effaced and all records of his reign obliterated. Following the death of Domitian, Christianity had immense freedom to spread rapidly throughout the Roman Empire. The gospel was to be preached to all nations, [Isaiah 2:2-4](#) / [Matthew 28:19](#).’

Constable, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Daniel 7:27](#).

‘Notice that the titles ‘Highest One’ (God the Father) and ‘His (the Son of Man’s)’ are interchangeable, pointing to the deity of the Son of Man. This verse also clarifies that the saints are not the same as the Son of Man, ‘saints’ being plural and ‘His’ and ‘Him’ singular. The kingdom is not just the rule of the saints; it is the rule of the Son of Man in which the saints participate.’

I mentioned earlier I would write a little more concerning the plurality of thrones, which we read of in [Daniel 7:9](#). Cornerstone Verses says the following.

‘According to [Daniel 7:27](#), the everlasting kingdom and dominion are given to the Most High, but in [Daniel 7:14](#), they are given to the Son of Man. The Son of Man is the Most High yet distinct from the Ancient of Days.’

‘The term Most High in Aramaic is ‘elyonin’, and it is plural, meaning that the literal translation is ‘the Most Highs.’ You can also see the same in [Daniel 7:22](#). This makes sense since in [Daniel 7:9](#), thrones (plural) were placed, and two divine figures, the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man, possess the everlasting kingdom.

In the passage, only the Son of Man has the kingdom, but you can’t argue that the Ancient of Days also doesn’t rule since He sits on a throne. He is clearly a divine King.’

‘In [Daniel 7:26](#), Daniel uses singular and plural forms when discussing ‘the Most High.’ In ‘And he shall speak great words against the Most High,’ he uses the singular form, and in ‘and shall wear out the saints of the Most High,’ he uses the plural form.

Daniel could have used the singular form in both of these times, but he chose to use both singular and plural. This is compelling evidence that Daniel was aware of God’s multi-personal nature.’

‘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 meditates 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 his feelings to anyone.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘To comprehend the meaning of this vision, we should note how the imagery of this chapter is used in Revelation.

1. Beasts coming from the sea, [Daniel 7:3](#) / [Revelation 13:1](#).
2. Lion, bear and leopard, [Daniel 7:4-6](#) / [Revelation 13:2](#).
3. Ten horns, [Daniel 7:7](#) / [Revelation 13:1](#).
4. Boasting, blaspheming, [Daniel 7:8](#) / [Daniel 7:11](#) / [Daniel 7:20](#) / [Daniel 7:25](#) / [Revelation 13:5-6](#).
5. Beasts arise from the earth, [Daniel 7:17](#) / [Revelation 13:11](#).
6. The fourth beast wages war with saints, [Daniel 7:21](#) / [Daniel 7:25](#) / [Revelation 13:7](#).
7. The fourth beast would seem to overpower the saints, [Daniel 7:21](#) / [Revelation 13:7](#).
8. The fourth beast oppresses the saints for time, times and half a time, [Daniel 7:25](#) / [Revelation 13:5](#) / [Revelation 12:6](#) / [Revelation 12:14](#).
9. Books opened, [Daniel 7:10](#) / [Revelation 20:12](#) / [Revelation 20:15](#).
10. Beast utterly destroyed, [Daniel 7:11](#) / [Revelation 19:20](#) / [Revelation 20:10](#).
11. Extension of the life of the beasts, [Daniel 7:12](#) / [Revelation 20:7-10](#).
12. Son of man on the clouds of heaven, [Daniel 7:13](#) / [Revelation 14:14](#).

I'm sure there are other parallels, but these suffice to show that the vision of Daniel 7 foretold the very matter at the heart of Revelation. In the case of Revelation, John was writing about things "which must soon take place", Revelation 1.1.

At that time, Rome, under the rule of Domitian (the 11th horn?), was persecuting God's people. It seemed as if Rome would triumph, but the letter revealed that God would triumph over the kingdoms of the world and over Satan, who was using these kingdoms to persecute God's people.

God knew that all of these things would take place six hundred years before they occurred! Daniel was shown the future suffering of the saints, but also the surety of their victory and of the everlasting rule of God.

And if God knew then what His saints would undergo, He also knows every trial and tribulation we face. We too can be assured that God will prove victorious and we will continue to reign with Him!

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION

Chapter eight is an expansion of chapter two, as was the case with chapter seven. However, in this chapter, the emphasis is on 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.

DANIEL'S VISION OF A RAM AND A GOAT

'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, Daniel 7:1, during the third year of Belshazzar, 550 B.C. Daniel 8:1. The place of the vision is Susa, the capital city of the Persian kingdom during the days of its power, Ezekiel 8:3 / Ezekiel 37:1 / Revelation 17:3 / Esther 1:2 / Nehemiah 1:1.

Daniel was involved in some way in government business. He was by the river Ulai at the time the vision occurred, Daniel 8:2.

'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, Daniel 8:3 / Ezekiel 34:17 / Ezekiel 34:24 / Ezekiel 39:18. Horns represent strength, Ezekiel 34:21. One of the horns was higher than the other, Daniel 8:3. Daniel 8:20 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.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The higher horn speaks of the supremacy of the Persian element. The Medes and the Persians had been associated for a long time. The Medes were the much more prominent kingdom until Cyrus the Great came along, at which time the Persian star arose.’

The ram pushes toward the west, north and south, Daniel 8:4. 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 reached Greece.

Toward the north, they reached around the Caspian Sea and to 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, Daniel 8:4.

‘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, Daniel 8:5. Daniel 8:21 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, Daniel 8:5. He was only twenty-one when he began his conquests. His fierceness and fury against Persia are represented in Daniel 8:6-7.

The ‘great rage’, Daniel 8:6, points to the cry for vengeance from the Greek city-states after years of assaults across the Aegean Sea by the Persian armies between 490 and 480 B.C. The mighty Persian Empire was crushed beneath the power of Alexander as if trampled to the earth, Daniel 8:7.

‘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 that broke the horn in which was concentrated so much power, Proverbs 16:18. At no time was the empire as strong as at the death of Alexander. He died at the age of thirty-three, in 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 of 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 others.

‘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; horns often represent kings, Revelation 7:7-8 / Revelation 17:7 / Revelation 17:12.

Luck, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The ‘little horn’ of Daniel 8:9 is different from that of Daniel 7:8. The latter arose from the Roman Empire, and that in the ‘last days’; the former from a part of the Greek Empire shortly before the Roman conquest, ‘in the latter time of their kingdom’, Daniel 8:23.’

It seems to grow in strength and exerts its power toward the south, east and the pleasant land. There seems to be no doubt that this is the famous Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a successor of Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander’s generals who 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 overran Jerusalem. He also expanded eastward, taking many of the eastern countries.

The pleasant land denotes Palestine, Isaiah 19:23-25 / Jeremiah 3:19 / Ezekiel 20:6 / Ezekiel 20:15. On his return from fighting the Egyptians, he turned aside to invade Judea.

Antiochus 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.

Josephus, in his writings, says the following.

‘And there would arise from their number a certain king who would make war on the Jewish nation and their laws, deprive them of the form of government based on these laws, spoil the temple, and prevent the sacrifices from being offered for three years. And these misfortunes our nation did in fact come to experience under Antiochus Epiphanes, just as Daniel many years before saw and wrote that they would happen.’

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, in 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 hosts 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.

Young, in his commentary, says the following concerning Daniel 8:10.

‘In certain contexts, stars falling represent God’s casting down of evil powers and kings, Isaiah 13:10-11 / Isaiah 14:4 / Isaiah 14:12-15 / Ezekiel 32:1-10; but at other times, the stars represent the righteous, Daniel 12:3 / Matthew 13:43. This is not the only time an evil power has cast the stars to the earth, Revelation 12:3. This type of cataclysmic visionary event occurs often and pictures a judgment of God against transgressors, Daniel 8:12 / Daniel 8:23 / Matthew 23:38-39. 2 Maccabees 9:10 speaks of Antiochus as ‘the man that a short while before thought himself to touch the stars of heaven.’ A possible allusion to Daniel 8.’

Notice that Antiochus resumes the place of God and equality with God, Daniel 8:11. Antiochus blasphemed God again and again. He actually considered himself equal to God and commanded that likenesses of himself to be placed in the temple of the Jews and worshipped as God.

Antiochus banned the Jews from offering their regular sacrifices, [Daniel 8:11](#) / [Exodus 29:38-42](#) / [Daniel 11:31](#) / [Daniel 12:11](#) / [1 Maccabees 1:44-47](#). He even desecrated the temple, commanding that a pig be slain on the temple altar.

McGuigan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The story of Antiochus’ desecration of the temple and his persecution of the people is told to us in detail in Josephus and the Books of Maccabees. On December 168-7 B.C., the temple was desecrated, and an idol was set up in the sanctuary. The altars were laden with all kinds of abominations. The grossest kinds of immorality were carried out in the holy places, and the drunken god, Dionysius, was given pride of place.’

[Daniel 8:12](#) tells us the reason why God will allow this to happen because of the rebellion, the KJV uses the word ‘transgression’. In [Daniel 8:23](#), we learn that Antiochus does not come to power until ‘transgressors have run their course’.

Antiochus turned violently bitter against them, making a determined effort to exterminate their religion. According to Josephus, this lasted from 167 to 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.

Notice it mentions the rebellion, which causes desolation, [Daniel 8:13](#). Daniel mentions three different desolations.

1. One was previously caused by Nebuchadnezzar, [Daniel 9:17](#).
2. One was eventually caused by Antiochus Epiphanes, [Daniel 8:13](#) / [Daniel 12:11](#).
3. The series of desolations that would occur at the time of the Roman siege, from AD 68 to AD 70, [Daniel 9:26-27](#) [Matthew 24:15](#) / [Mark 13:14](#) / [Luke 21:20](#).

The ‘holy ones’, [Daniel 8:13](#), probably angels, [Daniel 4:13](#) / [Daniel 4:23](#) / [Revelation 14:6-9](#) / [Revelation 22:6](#), speak to one another about this tragedy, and one of them asks how long it will continue. The answer is 2,300 days, [Daniel 8:13](#).

There have been various interpretations of the 2,300 days. 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 overran Jerusalem, 170 B.C., until they were able to restore the sacrifices, 164 B.C., it would be about six years.

Leupold, in his commentary, says the following concerning the 2,300 days, [Daniel 8:14](#).

‘A time period short of a complete divine judgment, 7 years, [Judges 6:1](#).’

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The reign of Antiochus began in 171 B.C. and terminated at his death in 164 B.C. The above number might be symbolic, yet it is very close to the length of time between 171 and 164 B.C., that is, six years and about 4 months.’

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION

‘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, [Daniel 8:15](#). There stood before him one who had the appearance of a man, [Daniel 8:15](#). He is called Gabriel by a voice, [Daniel 8:16](#) / [Daniel 9:21](#) / [Luke 1:19](#) / [Luke 1:26](#).

No wonder Daniel is terrified, [Revelation 22:8-9](#), as the vision is said to belong ‘to the time of the end,’ [Daniel 8:17-19](#). This was the time for the end of the Greek 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.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Daniel 8:19](#).

‘This part of the vision applies to the final period of God’s wrath upon the rebellious nation of Israel. God had punished Israel through Babylon, and He would continue to chastise them with the Medes and the Persians, Antiochus being the last major persecutor before the Messiah arrived. In other words, when the abominations of Antiochus occur, it will be evidence to the Jewish people that the last period of wrath has appeared.’

In [Daniel 8:18-22](#), Daniel receives the interpretation of his vision, and it is self-explanatory. The ram represents the ‘kings of Media and Persia’, [Daniel 8:20](#), and the male goat, rough or shaggy, is Alexander the Great, [Daniel 8:21](#). Josephus, in his writings, says the following.

‘Alexander the Great marched on Jerusalem to punish the Jews for their loyalty to Darius, but Jaddua the high priest met him at the head of a procession of priests all dressed in white. Alexander claimed this was related to a vision he had received from God. Jaddua showed him a copy of the book of Daniel, which foretold that a Grecian king would overthrow Persia.’

The broken horn, [Daniel 8:22](#), represents Alexander, who died in 323 BC, at age thirty-two, in Babylon. The four horns represent four kingdoms, [Daniel 8:22](#) / [Daniel 11:3-4](#). These will arise from the Greek empire, but these kings will not have as much power as the first.

[Daniel 8:23](#) shows there was a definite period marked out by God, and when that period arrives, the end of all this will take place. Just as suddenly as Antiochus had appeared, so would he disappear.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Daniel 8:24](#).

‘The four kings that succeeded Alexander, while enjoying a measure of success in no way succeeded as did Alexander, [Daniel 8:22](#), ‘although not with his power’. The kingdom of the Seleucids lasted until 64 B.C., and that of the Ptolemies until 31 B.C. When Antiochus arose to power, the kingdom of the Seleucids was already in decline.’

McGuigan, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Daniel 8:24](#).

‘This king’s power becomes surprisingly great, but is limited, but not by his own will, [Daniel 4:17](#), even the lowliest of men. The power of Antiochus IV was limited by the Lord and the Romans.’

Notice, ‘he shall be broken without human hand’, [Daniel 8:25](#).

Butler, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Daniel 8:25](#).

‘It indicates plainly that only because God providentially allowed it did he become so great.’

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.

When anyone opposes God’s will and His people, they need to remember they are opposing God Himself, [Matthew 25:40](#). 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, Daniel 8:26. He was to ‘seal it up,’ Daniel 8:26, that is, to make a record of it that it might be preserved many days until the time of fulfilment. McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘John is given the opposite command in Revelation 22:10. In Daniel 8:26, we are told the reason for shutting up the vision is that ‘it pertains to many days in the future.’ The vision was received in 550 BC and was completed by 164 BC. That is less than four hundred years. We invite you to compare Daniel 8:26 with Revelation 1:3, and Revelation 22:6 / Revelation 22:10.’

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Obviously, the events described in the book of Revelation cannot be things still yet future, but applied to events which would happen shortly after the book was written. It does not make any sense for the many days of Daniel to be less than 400 years, and the time is near of Revelation to be 2000 years.’

Many days will elapse before it will come to pass, Daniel 8:27. When the events would happen, they could better bear it knowing the facts of how long and when their troubles would terminate.

Daniel’s exhaustion, Daniel 8:27, or ‘fainting’ KJV, 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, Daniel 8:27 / 1 Peter 1:10-12. 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.

CHAPTER 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.

DANIEL’S 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, Daniel 9:1-2, it seems Daniel made a study of Jeremiah, Daniel 9:2, and in particular Jeremiah 25:11-12 and Jeremiah 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.

Jackson, in his commentary, says the following concerning the reason for the seventy-year captivity.

‘The law of Moses had commanded the Israelites to acknowledge every seventh year as a sabbatical year. The ground was to lie at rest, Leviticus 25:1-7. Apparently, across the centuries, Israel had ignored that divinely imposed regulation. In their pre-captivity history, there seems to be no example of their ever having honoured the Sabbath-year law. Thus, according to the testimony of one biblical writer, the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity were assigned ‘until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths’, 2 Chronicles 36:21. If each of the seventy captivity-years represented a violation of the sabbatical-year requirement (every seventh year), this would indicate that Israel had neglected the divine injunction for approximately 490 years. The captivity era, therefore, looked backward upon five centuries of sinful neglect.’

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 made up his mind on the matter and has 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, Daniel 9:3. He accompanied his prayer with fasting, sackcloth, Isaiah 3:24 / Job 16:15, and ashes, Daniel 9:3, which represented the state of mind he was in at the time and also showed his deep humility.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning fasting.

‘In view of the desolations of the city and temple, the calamities that had come upon the people, their sins, etc., and in order also that the mind might be prepared for earnest and fervent prayer. The occasion was one of great importance, and it was proper that the mind should be prepared for it by fasting. It was the purpose of Daniel to humble himself before God, and to recall the sins of the nation for which they now suffered, and fasting was an appropriate means of doing that.’

‘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, [Daniel 9:4-5](#) / [Psalms 51:4](#). They had not listened to the prophets, [Daniel 9:6](#) / [Jeremiah 8:11](#). Daniel ascribes righteousness to God, [Daniel 9:7](#).

The expression ‘confusion of faces’, KJV, [Daniel 9:7](#), is significant, meaning ‘shame of faces.’ It’s the kind of shame which we have when we feel that we are guilty, and people can see it on our faces.

God was righteous in his punishment of the people because shame and disgrace belonged to Israel, [Daniel 9:7](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:48-57](#) / [Deuteronomy 28:64-68](#). He freely admits God has been right in His punishment of the Jews, [Daniel 9:8](#). Shame and disgrace belonged to Israel, [Daniel 9:8](#) / [1 Timothy 5:24](#).

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘For the Jews, the ‘open shame’ was in the fact that they had been removed from their land and their centre of worship destroyed. Imagine all the questions that the Jewish people kept fielding from unbelievers concerning ‘why’ such had happened to them? Imagine all the ridicule they faced for seventy years! “If you serve the true God, then why is His temple destroyed?”

Everyone knows that God is merciful, God, [Daniel 9:9](#), but receiving His mercy means we must obey His commandments, [Daniel 9:10](#), and repent, when necessary, [Daniel 9:11](#) / [Luke 3:8](#) / [Acts 26:20](#).

The rich, the poor, the rulers and the ruled were all guilty of sin; they deserved the judgment that had come upon them, [Daniel 9:11](#) / [Leviticus 25:1-7](#) / [2 Chronicles 36:21](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the curse, [Daniel 9:11](#).

‘The ‘curse’ here refers to what was so solemnly threatened by Moses in case the nation did not obey God, [Deuteronomy 28:15-68](#).’

Because God is a God who keeps His promises, He warned them, and when they did not repent after many years of long-suffering, He allowed them to go into captivity, [Daniel 9:12](#).

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Daniel 9:13](#).

‘Here is a prophet of God putting the stamp of divine authority on the law. He further makes it clear that in the 6th century B.C., the Jews understood Moses to be the author (under God) of the law bearing his name. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was only attached after organic evolution had made headway into the other disciplines of life, particularly literature.’

Daniel once again declares that God is righteous and admits Israel’s disobedience towards Him, [Daniel 9:14](#) / [Job 36:3](#). Daniel declares that it was God who brought them out of Egypt to make a name for Himself, but His people had sinned, [Daniel 9:15](#) / [Exodus 6:6](#) / [Exodus 20:2](#) / [2 Samuel 7:23](#).

We can understand why Daniel wanted God to turn His wrath away, and it’s clear that Daniel is concerned about God’s reputation, because Jerusalem lay in ruins, it was generating ridicule for God and His people, [Daniel 9:16](#).

He is also concerned about God’s sanctuary, hence why he prays that God will show favour concerning His sanctuary, which also lay in ruins, [Daniel 9:17](#). Daniel knows that God’s people don’t deserve forgiveness, hence why he pleads with God to be merciful, [Daniel 9:18](#). He now pleads that God will remove His judgment from His people, [Daniel 9:19](#).

His prayer was that they might be allowed to return to their homeland and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, which were lying desolate. [Daniel 9:19](#) shows the great earnestness with which Daniel prayed.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Daniel is not concerned that the people be delivered in order to enjoy physical ease and comfort. Daniel is not interested that the people be delivered in order that their wounded pride be avenged. His only interest is that God’s holiness and faithfulness be vindicated. After all, sinning man deserves only judgment.’

THE SEVENTY ‘SEVENS’

‘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 confesses his sin and the sin of the people to God, [Daniel 9:20](#). Because of his earnest prayer, and while he was still praying, God sends Gabriel to answer his prayer, [Daniel 9:21](#) / [Daniel 8:15-16](#). The ‘evening sacrifice’, [Daniel 9:21](#), was one of two daily sacrifices required in the Law, [Numbers 28:3-4](#).

God takes the time to praise Daniel for his faithfulness, [Daniel 9:22](#). Daniel was greatly loved by God, [Daniel 9:23](#) / [Daniel 10:11](#) / [Daniel 10:19](#). 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, [Daniel 9:24](#). Seventy weeks is 490 days. It has generally been accepted that in prophecy a day represents a year; certain things are going to happen over the next 490 years.

Six specific things are mentioned in [Daniel 9:24](#).

1. To finish their transgressions.

This was accomplished through the gospel, [Hebrews 10:12](#).

2. To make an end to sins.

The atonement is meant here, [Hebrews 9:22](#).

3. To make reconciliation for iniquity.

Men would be reconciled to God, [Romans 5:11](#) / [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, that is 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, [Ezra 1:1-4](#) / [Ezra 7:13-14](#), and Nehemiah, [Nehemiah 2:1-8](#).

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 the seven-year 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, [Daniel 9:27](#).

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 bloodshed on the cross would forever 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](#) / [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-year period or 70th week. Thus, Gabriel gave Daniel the assurance for which he prayed and much more than he had asked for, [Daniel 9:25](#). But there is more to come.

In [Daniel 9:26](#), Gabriel sounds a sad note. Jerusalem would be destroyed again. While Gabriel did not say when, he did say that ‘the people of the ruler shall come and shall destroy the city and the sanctuary,’ [Daniel 9:26](#). The ‘ruler’ here is Titus, a Roman general and the son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian. The ‘people’ Gabriel speaks of are the Roman army.

While Gabriel gave no date for this destruction, he does mention ‘an abomination that causes desolation,’ [Daniel 9:27](#). The KJV uses the words ‘wing of abominations’, indicating the swiftness with which the ruler of the people would come.

Daniel mentions three different desolations.

1. One was previously caused by Nebuchadnezzar, [Daniel 9:17](#).
2. One was eventually caused by Antiochus Epiphanes, [Daniel 8:13](#) / [Daniel 12:11](#).
3. The series of desolations that would occur at the time of the Roman siege, from AD 68 to AD 70, [Daniel 9:26-27](#) [Matthew 24:15](#) / [Mark 13:14](#) / [Luke 21:20](#).

Jesus had the words of Daniel in mind when speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem in [Matthew 24:15-16](#) / [Mark 13:14](#) / [Luke 21:20](#). 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.

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 the temple and the city of Jerusalem, but also 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

Dispensationalists 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, Mark 9:1 / Revelation 1:9 / Colossians 1:13 / 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.

CHAPTER 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.

DANIEL'S VISION OF A MAN

'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

This final vision of Daniel, who is called Belteshazzar, Daniel 1:7, is extensive, taking up three chapters. It is dated 'in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia', Daniel 10:1 / Ezra 1:14 / Ezra 3:1 / Ezra 3:8.

We learn from Daniel 10:4 that it took place by the banks of the Tigris River. It was on the 24th day of the month Nisan, two years after the decree of Cyrus for the Jews to return to Jerusalem.

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 expression, ‘but the time appointed was long,’ Daniel 10:1, has been rendered and interpreted in a variety of ways. Some of the best scholarships seem 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.

The vision made known was a great truth that would certainly come to pass, Daniel 10:2. There was no doubt in his mind that it would happen. It was evidently to be a great and long warfare, Daniel 10:2.

We also know that there was a series of wars during the period between the Old and New Testaments. Also, after their return from captivity, the Jews encountered difficulties in rebuilding the walls of the city, so 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 that he could not eat or anoint himself. He entered into three weeks of mourning and prayer, Daniel 10:3.

‘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

After three weeks, on the 24th of the month Nisan, which would roughly correspond to our month April, Daniel was standing by the Tigris River, Daniel 10:4. Why he was at this location we do not know.

He saw an awe-inspiring vision of a man clothed in linen, Daniel 10:5 / Acts 1:10. 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, Daniel 10:5. The term Uphaz is an unknown place from which gold was brought, Daniel 10:5.

Beryl is a mineral that is green or bluish-green, Daniel 10:6 / Revelation 1:13-16. His face was brilliant like lightning, Revelation 1:16. His eyes were like lamps of fire, thus keen and penetrating, Revelation 1:14.

His arms and feet were like polished brass, Revelation 1:15. His voice sounded like a multitude of people, strong and loud, Revelation 1:15. Some believe that this is Jesus, but Daniel 10:13 makes it clear that he is one of the angels.

Daniel was accompanied on this occasion by some men, but they did not see the vision; something happened to cause them to run away in fear, Daniel 10:7. Daniel is alone and sees the vision.

He was completely overcome and became very weak; his countenance became pale, Daniel 10:8 / Isaiah 6:1-3 / Jeremiah 1:4-19. A similar thing happened to John on Patmos, Revelation 1:17.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The directness of this revelation literally drained every bit of physical strength from Daniel. Whatever appearance of health and strength Daniel had disappeared. It would be good for those who treat visions from the Lord and visits from angels lightly, claiming many such visions indiscriminately, to note how severely even a saint like Daniel was affected.’

‘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, [Daniel 10:9](#) / [Daniel 8:18](#). The angel touches Daniel and causes 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 10:11](#). Daniel was greatly loved in heaven, [Daniel 10:11](#) / [Daniel 9:23](#) / [Daniel 10:19](#), and this is why the angel has been sent. Daniel now stands erect, trembling, [Daniel 10:11](#).

‘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

God hears and answers Daniel’s prayer, [James 1:5](#), and Daniel is told not to be fearful, [Daniel 10:12](#). 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, [Daniel 10:12](#).

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘God ultimately rules in the kingdoms of men, that is, He has final control over their rise and fall, [Daniel 5:21](#) / [Jeremiah 18](#). What is also true is that nations, just like individuals, can embark on a course that moves away from God and thus end up in the hands of Satan. This is one reason why Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would fall down and worship him, [Luke 4:6](#). This is also why Satan is called by Jesus ‘the prince of this world,’ [John 12:31](#) / [John 14:30](#) / [John 16:11](#).’

Dunagan, in his commentary, continues and says the following.

‘From the standpoint that Paul exhorts us to put on the whole armor of God, because we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of wickedness, it would appear that Satan still seeks to deceive nations and use them to persecute God’s people, [Ephesians 6:11-12](#) / [1 John 5:19](#). No wonder that John, in the Revelation letter, speaks of Satan as the one who ‘deceives the whole world’, [Revelation 12:9](#). In every nation, Satan and his angels seek to influence decisions that will hinder the preaching of the gospel and hinder the spread of God’s truth.’

The reason for this delay was that the ‘prince of the kingdom of Persia’, [Daniel 12:13](#), 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, [Ezra 4:1-24](#).

We know from the previous chapter that 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.

Leupold, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Daniel 10:13](#).

‘Bad angels, called demons in the New Testament, are, without a doubt, referred to here. In the course of time, these demonic powers gained a very strong influence over certain nations and the governments of these nations. They became the controlling power. They used whatever resources they could muster to hamper God’s work and to thwart His purposes.’

Michael, another angel of God, came to Daniel’s assistance, [Daniel 12:13](#). Michael intervenes to help this heavenly messenger, and this enabled him to finally come to Daniel. Michael is mentioned again in [Daniel 12:1](#), [Jude 9](#), and [Revelation 12:7](#).

Notice that the text actually says that Michael is ONE of the chief princes; it doesn't say Michael is the ONLY one or THE one. The New World Translation has a footnote for Daniel 10:13 for the phrase 'one of the chief princes,' and the alternate translation which is given is 'a prince of the first rank.'

Remember, the footnotes aren't inspired by God, but ask yourself, even if this footnote were true, could it not imply that Michael is ONE of a number of princes of first rank, just like any modern-day army can have a number of generals?

Notice in Jude 9, what the text says, it says that Michael wouldn't dare to condemn the devil; instead, Michael said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' The very fact that we see that Michael the Archangel said, 'The Lord rebuke you,' demonstrates he can't be Jesus.

In other words, if Michael were the Lord Jesus, why would He refer to someone else as Lord? Also, if Jesus was Michael and wouldn't dare to condemn or rebuke Satan, then why did Jesus rebuke Satan on at least two occasions? Matthew 4:10 / Mark 8:33.

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. With 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, Daniel 10:13, 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, Daniel 10:14. In Daniel 10:20, the latter days covers the era when Persia and Greece will rule over God's people, and Daniel 11 deals with that era in detail.

'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 lays his face on the ground, becoming speechless and exhausted, Daniel 10:15. One who looked like a man touched his lips in order for him to speak, Daniel 10:16.

The phrase 'touching my lips' may refer to the angel giving Daniel divine assistance to find boldness to address the supernatural. It would appear that Daniel was filled with grief; he felt weak, couldn't speak, had no strength and could hardly breathe, Daniel 10:17.

'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

The one who looked like a man is filled with compassion towards Daniel as he 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 resolved. He must return to complete arrangements which had been commenced.

It would seem that the difficulties were not yet completely overcome; 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 Book of Truth.’ This book of God contained all His plans, purposes, and decrees regarding the future.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following concerning the Book of Truth.

‘It is a phrase to inform Daniel that the history which is about to be revealed (chapter 11) contains events of which God’s wisdom alone bears record, and as always, is infallibly accurate.’

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. 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 / 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.

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? 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.

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION

The events of Daniel 11:2-35 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.

Daniel 11:36-45 has been the subject of much controversy. The vital question is, who is the ‘king’ of Daniel 11:36-45? I 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.

‘And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.’ Daniel 11:1

The person talking in here appears to be the angelic messenger who had come to Daniel, [Daniel 11:10](#), and the person he is encouraging is Darius, [Daniel 5:31](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It would seem that the mind of Darius was not wholly decided; that there were adverse influences bearing on it: that there were probably counsellors of his realm who advised against the proposed measures, and the angel here says that he stood by him, and confirmed him in his purpose, and secured the execution of his benevolent plan.’

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 11:2

Here we find the first period, the succession of the kings of Persia. Daniel is told the truth, [John 17:17](#). 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, [Esther 1:3-4](#). Under Xerxes, the Persians attempted to conquer Greece in 480 B.C. but were defeated at Salamis. He attempted to invade Greece, and 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

Here we find the second period, Alexander the Great. 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. From the time of the failed attempt to conquer Greece, the Persian Empire began to decline, and Alexander the Great finally overwhelmed it.

‘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

Here we find the third period, the state of his empire after Alexander’s death. The glory of Alexander was short-lived, for he died yet a young man, only thirty years old. Upon his death, his empire would be broken and divided into four parts.

His son, Alexander IV, his wife Roxanna, and his 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 fulfillment 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

Here we find the fourth period, the king of the south and the king of the north. 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 Seleucid 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 in the conflict between Syria and Egypt.

Warfel, in his summary of this section, says the following concerning Daniel 11:5-19.

‘Ptolemy I, the king of the south and Seleucus I, king of the north, fight. Ptolemy wins. Judah is sort of kicked back and forth between these two kingdoms, Daniel 11:5. A daughter of Ptolemy II is sent to the king of the north (Antiochus I) to help form an alliance, but this fails, and all concerned lose. Bernice, daughter of Ptolemy II, is sent to Antiochus I to marry his son in order to form an alliance, but fails because Laodice (the first wife of Antiochus II) plots the death of the king, Bernice, and her son; she has them poisoned, Daniel 11:6.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘Her family member will attack the king of the north and carry off much plunder. Then, it reigns in peace for some time. Then the king of the north will attack the king of the south and be defeated. Bernice’s brother (Ptolemy III) attacks the north (Seleucus II, son of Laodice) and is successful in bringing back much plunder and many captives. He does not attack the king of the north, but then Seleucus II attacks him and returns home with nothing, Daniel 11:7-9.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘The king of the north’s sons will make war with the south but fail. Seleucus II has three sons (Seleucus III, Antiochus II, and Seleucus IV) who war with Ptolemy III; they are beaten off, and many are taken captive. Antiochus III will make war with the king of the south, Daniel 11:10.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘The king of the south will war against the north, and a great multitude is given to him. Ptolemy IV will fight with Antiochus III, and many will be given to him, Daniel 11:11. When the king of the south carries off many, his heart is lifted up, but it will be short-lived. Ptolemy IV and the army are proud, but it will not last, Daniel 11:12.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘The king of the north will build a larger army, better supplied, and defeat the south. Antiochus III will raise a larger army and defeat the king of the south (Ptolemy IV), Daniel 11:13. Jews will ally with Syria against Egypt. Though

many Jews ally with Antiochus III, it will be their undoing because this will allow Antiochus IV to rule Palestine, Daniel 11:14.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘King of Syria defeats Egypt. Antiochus III takes Sidon, where Scopas (Ptolemy’s general) took refuge after being defeated at Panium, Daniel 11:15. Syria is undefeatable at this point, and he takes Palestine. Now Judah is in the hands of the Seleucids (Antiochus III), Daniel 11:16.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘Syria tries to make an alliance with Egypt by giving a daughter as wife to Ptolemy. Antiochus III makes an alliance with Ptolemy V by giving him his daughter (Cleopatra) as a wife, but this fails because she does not stay loyal to her father but to her husband, Daniel 11:17.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘Syria turns its attention to the coast but is defeated by the Romans and dies at home. Antiochus III turns his attention to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea (Asia Minor, Thracia, Greece). A Roman general stops his attacks on their dominion. He was defeated at Thermopylae and Magnesium. The Romans placed heavy taxes on Antiochus III, so he lost all the property he held west and north of the Taurus Mountains. He turns his attention to his own territory while trying to raise money to pay the Roman taxes. He is killed (while robbing temples to raise money), Daniel 11:18-19.’

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It very nearly overwhelms the finite mind of man to realise that Daniel is being told 200 years of history before it happens. Details such as partitioning of kingdoms, wars, victories and defeats, treaties, marriages, deaths, taxations, all before the people are born and the battles are fought, all predicted centuries in advance! The Bible is the Word of God! And this word reveals that God not only knows history before it happens, but He is also active in and directs history to serve His glorious purpose to redeem all from iniquity and purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good works. His immediate purpose was to reveal to Daniel, and subsequently to the Jews, all that they must endure as a purifying process preparing them for their presentation of the Messiah.’

‘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

Here we find period five, the contemptible person.

Warfel, in his summary of this section, says the following concerning Daniel 11:20-27.

‘Seleucus IV comes to power but is killed by his own prime minister. He is killed by Heliodorus after he returned from raising taxes for the Romans, Daniel 11:20. The despicable person comes to power by flattery and intrigue. Antiochus Epiphanes, the little horn of Daniel 8:9-12, was not in line to be king (Demetrius I is the son of Seleucus IV), but by flattery and intrigue, he gained support and took the throne, Daniel 11:21.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘Antiochus plunders the Temple. Antiochus Epiphanes replaces Onias III, the High Priest, with Jason, 2 Maccabees 4:7, and plunders the Temple, Daniel 11:22. He makes alliances with many but later, for his own gain, breaks them, Daniel 11:23. The despicable person comes to power by flattery and intrigue. By subduing small groups at a time, he gets stronger, though the Syrian people are not great in number. He even conquers Egypt this way, something his father could not do. Antiochus Epiphanes is successful against the armies of Ptolemy VI in part by sedition and men deserting the army. Ptolemy’s friends even help in his defeat, Daniel 11:24-26.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘Both kings are intent on doing evil and speak lies to each other at the peace table. Ptolemy VI and Antiochus IV speak lies to each other at the peace table, but God is in control and has set the time of their kingdoms’ ends, Daniel 11:27.’

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘All the apparent candour and joint projects discussed will mask only evil intentions. Neither of these kings will ultimately benefit anything since their end is appointed by God; both kingdoms will fall.’

Warfel, in his summary of this section, says the following concerning Daniel 11:28-31.

‘He returns home with much plunder, but his heart is set against the holy covenant. Antiochus IV returns to Syria with much booty and, on the way, stops at Jerusalem and tries to Hellenize Israel, Daniel 11:28. His acts against the Jews are described in Daniel 11:28 / Daniel 11:30-35. At the time God appoints, he returns to fight Egypt but fails. On God’s time schedule, Antiochus returns to fight with Egypt but fails, Daniel 11:29.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘Ships of Kittim are in Egypt. They order him out. On the way home, he desecrates the Temple. The Romans are in Egypt and order him to leave. On the way home, he is enraged, turns on God’s people, stops the daily sacrifices and offerings, sacrifices pigs on the altar, and places an idol in the Temple. He also forbids circumcision, observing the Sabbath, and no one can possess a copy of the Law, Daniel 11:30-31.’

Daniel mentions three different desolations.

1. One was previously caused by Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 9:17.
2. One was eventually caused by Antiochus Epiphanes, Daniel 8:13 / Daniel 12:11.
3. The series of desolations that would occur at the time of the Roman siege, from AD 68 to AD 70, Daniel 9:26-27 / Matthew 24:15 / Mark 13:14 / Luke 21:20.

Warfel, in his summary of this section, says the following concerning Daniel 11:32-35.

‘Some will be deceived, but others will be strong and faithful. Weak-willed Jews by smooth words will be deceived, but faithful Jews will resist. This may refer to the Maccabees (Mattathias, an elderly priest and his 5 sons), Daniel 11:32.’

Warfel continues and says the following.

‘Severe persecution will come on the faithful, but God has appointed a time when the Seleucid kingdom will end. Strong Jews will teach what is right, but will suffer great persecution. Some help will be given (Maccabees), but they

will be hypocrites among them. Some will suffer, but they will be refined (it will work for their good) for the end (when God brings the Seleucids to an end because it is appointed), Daniel 11:33-35.’

THE KING WHO EXALTS HIMSELF

‘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 Cushites 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

Here we read part six, the Roman Empire. These verses have been the subject of much controversy. The question is, who is the king of Daniel 11:36? There have been four major views advocated.

1. Antiochus Epiphanes.

Kercheville, in his commentary, says the following.

Here are four reasons this king is not Antiochus. One. In Daniel 11:40, the king of the South moved against this king. However, the king of the South never moved against Antiochus. Two. Antiochus never fought a war against Egypt successfully after the events we have read in Daniel 11:21-35. Therefore, these verses cannot refer to him. Three. Antiochus never conquered the nations listed in Daniel 11:40-45. Four. Antiochus never gained control of all the riches listed in Daniel 11:43.’

2. Herod the Great.

Kercheville, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This view is rather easy to dismiss for the same reasons. One. Egypt never came against Herod the Great, as seen in Daniel 11:40. Two. Herod did not go and attack Egypt, nor did he conquer Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia, Daniel 11:41-44.’

3. The Antichrist.

This cannot be the antichrist because John mentions there are many antichrists, not just one, 1 John 2:18.

Interestingly, John is the only writer in the New Testament who uses the term ‘antichrist’; in fact, he uses the term five times. He uses it twice in 1 John 2:18, he uses the term again in 1 John 2:22, he uses it again in 1 John 4:2-3, and finally he uses it again in 2 John 7.

In John’s day, not sometime in the future, but in John’s day, ‘the antichrists’ not ‘one antichrist’ but ‘many antichrists’ were individuals who had associated themselves with the apostles and other Christians, 1 John 2:19. But what these people did was that they had gone out on their own and were no longer in fellowship with the apostles.

4. The Romans.

Kercheville, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The logical understanding of this king is to see him as the Roman emperors. This seems to fit the chronology of what we have been reading. During the latter days, it was the Roman Empire that was the world’s power. Daniel 11:36 easily fits the description of the emperors who deified themselves and blasphemed God. Daniel 11:36-39 sounds very familiar to the description given to the Roman empire in Revelation 13:1-7. Finally, it was the Roman armies that surrounded Jerusalem and destroyed it, just as this vision depicts. Therefore, Rome fits this king the best.’ 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 Daniel 2 and Daniel 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 makes it clear this is in the time of the Romans. The king of the North, who has been the Seleucid king, has now become the Roman king.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following concerning Daniel 11:37.

‘There are numerous basic elements which move men. Family, religion, tradition, female companionship, home, etc. None of these things matters to this king in comparison to success and power.’

Butler, in his commentary, says the following concerning Daniel 11:38.

‘All strong fortresses and stratagems of war shall receive his adoration and worship. All who worship warfare and fortification will receive his support.’

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following concerning Daniel 11:39-41.

‘His worship is only a political expediency. Whatever is necessary for gaining or holding on to power, he will do it. He will offer up sacrifices to the gods of anyone if it will gain his end, Daniel 11:39. ‘Not the end of the world, Daniel 11:40, such a time is pictured as being one of normal conditions, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3. Rather, the end time is the period leading up to the Messiah, the time of the last empire of Daniel 2:44. Here, we might have a prophecy concerning when the last of the Ptolemies moves against the Romans. Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemy line, aided by Mark Antony, begins the push against Rome, which will move Rome to declare war on Egypt.’

Dunagan, in his commentary, continues says the following

‘After a few successful land engagements against the Romans, Mark Antony is urged by Cleopatra to execute the war as a predominantly naval affair. This was a grave mistake; the Romans finally overwhelmed Cleopatra at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C., and this ended the Ptolemy kingdom, the last vestige of the Greek empire. Following the above battle, Octavian will appoint Herod as ruler over Palestine,’ Daniel 11:41.’

The lands of Edom, Moab and Ammon did not have any appeal to Caesar Augustus; thus, they were not taken, Daniel 11:41. The Romans will conquer other countries, and Egypt doesn’t escape, Daniel 11:42. The whole Egyptian area came under his control, and there are plenty of goods taken along with captives from Libya and Ethiopia.

He would experience problems from the east and north, never completely subduing these areas, Daniel 11:43-44.

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, Daniel 11:45, her end has been set by God. All this will continue until God is finished with His purposes in the downfall of Judaism in A.D. 70.

CONCLUSION

We might label Daniel as the prophet of world history. This chapter covers a period of around five hundred and sixty 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 five hundred and sixty 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 a historical fiction in which the name of Daniel was forged.

Halley, in his commentary, says the following.

‘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.’

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 12 is a continuation of Chapter 11. 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 became 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 / Maccabees 1:20 / Maccabees 1:22 / Maccabees 1:39. Also, Josephus describes this awful period.

Premillennialists 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 the city and its temple.

THE END TIMES

‘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

‘At that time’ is the time spoken of in Daniel 11:36-45, when it describes the events and powers of the emperors of the Roman Empire. Michael is described as a protector, and he will rise. Michael is an angel of God who came to Daniel’s assistance, Daniel 10:13 / Daniel 12:13 / Jude 9.

Michael intervenes to help this heavenly messenger, and this enabled him to finally come to Daniel. Michael is mentioned again in Daniel 12:1, Jude 9, and Revelation 12:7.

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, Ezekiel 5:9.

This is exactly how Jesus described the fall of Jerusalem in Matthew 24:21. There is consolation, however, in the fact that Michael will stand up for the people of God.

This does not mean that no child of God will be hurt in any way, but rather that 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.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the ‘book’.

‘The ‘book’ referred to here is God’s book of life, Malachi 3:16 / Isaiah 4:3. The rescue under consideration is not necessarily a physical deliverance from suffering, for such suffering does arrive, but rather they would be saved. If this is the destruction of Jerusalem, then the faithful will be delivered because they had listened to Jesus’ forewarning and left at the proper time, Matthew 24:15-16.’

‘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’, Daniel 12:1, and before the ‘power of the holy people is broken’, Daniel 12:7, it must not be speaking of the final resurrection, John 5:28-29.

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’, Ezekiel 37:12. 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, that is, those who would heed the words of Jesus and obey them, Psalms 111:10 / 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 / Mark 16:15-16. All of this will take place when Rome has established itself in Palestine, it would be during the time when the kingdom had been established, Matthew 24:10-15.

‘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.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In contrast, John, the writer of the book of Revelation, was told, ‘Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near’, Revelation 22:10. Therefore, the book of Revelation is not talking about things that would happen centuries from when it was written. Again, the ‘end time’ of Daniel is not the end of the world, but rather the end of the Jewish age, the same period of time referred to as the ‘last days’ in the New Testament, Acts 2:16-17 / Hebrews 1:1-2.’

This book is the source of true knowledge in contrast to the wisdom of men, which causes 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 glorified human wisdom, and pride has prevented them from bowing in submission to the wisdom that is from above. Intellectual pride keeps men from accepting the fact that 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 riverbank and the other on the opposite side, Daniel 12:5. The river is probably the Tigris. One of these speaks to the angel in linen, inquiring how long it would be until the end of the vision just given, Daniel 12:6.

The answer is 'a time, times and a half' and also when an end has been made of the power of the holy people, Daniel 12:7.

'Time' represents one year.

'Times (or two times)' equals two years.

'Half a time' represents six months.

This gives a total of three and a half years. In the book of Revelation, Rome persecutes the church for the same period of time, Revelation 12:4 / Revelation 11:4 / Revelation 12:6 / Revelation 11:2 / Revelation 13:5.

In the Book of Revelation they represent, as in the book of Daniel, a period of opposition and persecution endured by the church, the 'true Israel of God', Galatians 6:16, but which lasts for only a limited time because God has determined both the final deliverance and victory of His people and the destruction of the evil one responsible for their oppression.

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, Daniel 12:8.

The answer seems to be, drop the subject, and go no further. This matter is in the future and beyond your time, Daniel 12:9. It will be understood by those who need it. He is told many will be purified, made spotless and refined, Daniel 10:10 / Daniel 10:3 / Romans 5:3-5 / 1 Peter 1:6-8.

He is told that the righteous will live righteously, and the wicked will live wickedly, Daniel 12:10. Each will be rewarded accordingly. Despite the great signs and wonders of our Lord, many rejected him.

McGuigan, in his commentary, says the following concerning Daniel 12:10.

'Here, he is told that trouble means purification for many. Daniel is being told: 'It's all going to work out right. You know the good will be blessed, and you know the wicked will be punished. That's all you need to know.'

'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

Daniel 12:11 speaks of the destruction and desecration of the temple by the Romans. After this historic event, his power is said to continue for 1290 days, 3 years and 7 months.

A blessing is pronounced on those who will survive this period of time for persecution, Daniel 7:25 / Revelation 11:1-3, and live beyond it, Daniel 12:12. 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.

Dunagan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In the book of Revelation, Rome will persecute the church for 1260 days, Revelation 13:5. In both instances, the faithful are being told that the oppressor who might appear to be unconquerable (after all, he is able to stop the sacrifices), has only as much power as the Lord allows. As to why Daniel mentioned 1290 days instead of 1260, in the Old Testament, the Jewish people did add 30 additional days every three years to the calendar to bring it in line with the solar year.’

‘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 to go on his way till all these things are 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 the will of God.

McGuiggan, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Daniel was a prophet, and one day, when the time was right, he would be called to take that place. Jesus, in making mention of Daniel, began the awakening. When Jerusalem fell, Daniel stood up and was acknowledged! Jesus warned that that is what would happen, even as Daniel had said.’

Daniel is truly one of the great prophets of all time. Ezekiel praised him as a righteous man of the same calibre as Noah and Job, Ezekiel 14:14. Daniel truly was an outstanding person. From his early years, his teens, he was an example of religious consistency and firmness.

While willing to serve his rulers, he was careful to preserve a conscience void of offence. His enemies could find no fault against him, except for 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.