

God's Man
in
BABYLON



Lessons from the
Book of Daniel

Dr. James Rasbeary

Lessons from the Book of Daniel



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DEDICATION

This volume is dedicated to “retired” pastor

CHARLES CHANDLER

And his faithful and gracious wife,

MERLEY.

Thank you for your Christ-like spirit and
true servant’s heart!

Lessons from the Book of Daniel

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INTRODUCTION



As in almost all of my books, these chapters were originally lessons taught at the Lighthouse Baptist Church in Wylie, Texas. These particular lessons in Daniel were taught in my adult Victory Bible Class over a five-month time span.

Because they were prepared for a classroom of everyday Christians, and not for scholars, these lessons are very practical and down-to-earth. Scholars tend to talk a lot and do very little. I am far more interested in the faithful Sunday School teacher, bus worker, street preacher, soul-winner, usher, Christian parent, school teacher, and pastor than in those who do nothing but debate and criticize God's Word.

It is my hope that they will help Christians to understand and love the great Book of Daniel. It is also my hope that this study will spur us on to live a more dedicated and consecrated Christian life, while striving to win more souls to Jesus Christ. Surely, this is the need of the hour – truly, it has been the need of every hour!

Win souls, be true

Dr. James Rasbeary

Galatians 6:9

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SECTION ONE

HISTORY & PROPHECY

Daniel Chapters One through Six



Lessons from the Book of Daniel



Artistic depictions of ancient Babylon. Note the huge ziggurat temple to Marduk.



Chapter One

DANIEL'S PLACEMENT

(Dan 1:1-2) "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. {2} And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god."

I love studying the Book of Daniel! One reason I love Daniel is because the devil definitely hates it. He has done all he can to discredit it, even among so-called theologians and students of the Bible. These Bible critics have spent lifetimes trying to decide *who* really wrote Daniel, *when* this supposed person wrote it, and *why*. Great volumes of fanciful theories have been written by these worldly-minded false professors, who did not believe that the Bibles they were studying were, in fact, the Word of God.

I would like to start this study by saying that I believe that the Book of Daniel is a definite part of the inspired, preserved Word of God. I believe everything in it is part of God's revelation to us. I believe everything in Daniel is absolutely true and accurate. We might as well get that settled right at the beginning, because nothing else matters if this Book is not the Word of God.

The fact that every word of the Bible was given to us by the inspiration of God is vital, a truth that all Bible students must have engraved upon their souls:

- **(2 Tim 3:16-17) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: {17} That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."**

- **(2 Pet 1:21) "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."**

God gave the world this wonderful Book. It is His warning to the Gentile nations of the world. In Daniel, God has revealed human history, and His own providential dealings among kings and nations. In Daniel, He has revealed the progression of human kingdoms, and their sudden and catastrophic end. The world should sit up and pay attention to what Daniel had to say!

Any study of the Bible will be **"profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"** and will help us to be **"perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."** A study of Daniel will do five things for us:

1. It should build our faith in the sure Word of God. Nothing in Daniel has ever been disproved. Everything has happened exactly the way Daniel said that it would.
2. It should encourage us to stand tall, live right, and stay faithful despite the circumstances of our lives. Daniel was taken as a slave from his home and family and forced into another culture. He lived in a heathen society, held a secular job in a pagan government, and served at the pleasure of ungodly kings – yet Daniel was faithful to God, upright in his personal character, and successful in the will of God for his life.
3. It should strengthen our faith in God when we face opposition or persecution for our faith.
4. It should cause us to look up for our coming Saviour.
5. It should motivate us to win souls to Jesus Christ. Daniel was a soul-winner. As we look at prophecy, it should cause us to do all we can to turn people to righteousness. **(Dan 12:3) "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."**

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It is vital that we set the historical background of Daniel. Without this vital historical information, the Book will not make sense, and we will not fully appreciate all that this Book has for us.

The Book of Daniel involves the kingdom of Judah, the Babylonian Empire, and the Empire of the Medes and Persians. A study of these kingdoms and empires used to be considered a vital part of a well-rounded education, because people wanted their children to understand the Bible. These days, the world history textbooks largely skip over Babylon altogether, and barely mention the great empire of the Persians, which later gave way to the Grecian Empire and Alexander the Great.

In days gone by, a study of these ancient kingdoms was considered vitally important. Even the great scientist, Sir Isaac Newton, wrote a book entitled *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms*. In it, he discussed Egypt, the Assyrians, the Babylonians and Medes, and the Persians. He also gave a detailed description of the Temple of Solomon. Why did the great scientist write such a book? Because he loved the Bible. He said, "I have a fundamental belief in the Bible as the Word of God, written by those who were inspired. I study the Bible daily."¹ He understood that a basic understanding of those kingdoms which set the backdrop of Bible history would be a key in his understanding of the Bible.

Not only that, but these regions of the world are the hotspots in today's history. Ancient Babylon is modern Iraq. Ancient Persia was renamed Iran. Israel is right there in the midst of those ancient enemies. The Bible is more up-to-date than this morning's newspaper or tonight's newscast.

Consider three vital pieces of information that will help us as we get started in the Book of Daniel:

I. THE PROVIDENTIAL RISE OF BABYLON.

The Book of Daniel reveals that God is the **“Governor among the nations,”** raising up kings and nations and putting them down at

His will (Ps. 22:8). Consider how God's providence is displayed in Daniel:

- **(Dan 2:37)** "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory."
- **(Dan 4:25)** "That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."
- **(Dan 5:18-19)** "O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: {19} And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down."

The New Testament tells us, **(Rom 13:1)** "**Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.**" We do not have to agree with our government officials. We have the freedom in America to vote as we please and the freedom to speak against what we disagree with in the government. But we must always remember that God establishes those higher powers. I believe that He does so at times to bring judgment upon a nation, which should cause Americans to tremble, considering our current leadership.

God raised up Babylon for His own purpose. God said through His prophet Habakkuk that He was going to raise up the Chaldeans (Babylonians), **(Hab 1:5-6)** "**Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. {6} For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation,**

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which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces *that are not theirs.*"

In 612 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the great city of his day, Nineveh. Ninevah had stood since the days of Nimrod, shortly after the Flood (Gen. 10:11). Ninevah was a very wicked city. When Jonah preached there, they repented, and God spared them His wrath. However, not long after they returned to the ungodly ways. Exactly 100 years before Daniel, the prophet Nahum prophesied of Nineveh's destruction:

- **(Nahum 3:1) "Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not;"**
- **(Nahum 3:5) "Behold, I *am* against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame."**

No doubt, the proud Assyrians laughed at such an announcement. Nineveh had walls 100 feet high, wide enough to drive four chariots around the top. The walls were eight miles in circuit, and were protected by a system of canals and moats.² It seemed indestructible. But when God says, "**I am against thee,**" your days are numbered.

Nebuchadnezzar was only eighteen when he conquered Nineveh. He was not the king at this time. He was the commander-in-chief for his father's armies.³ He leveled Nineveh to the ground and then plowed up the ground. Its destruction was so complete that even its location was lost to history until 1845 A.D. Alexander the Great marched by it and did not even know that a city had been there.⁴ Nebuchadnezzar was certainly very thorough.

When Nebuchadnezzar was twenty years old, he took the Babylonian army and invaded Egypt. While there, his father died. The nobles of Babylon declared his younger brother to be the new king. When Nebuchadnezzar heard this, he made a temporary peace with Egypt and set off for Babylon.⁵ Instead of going the long way around, through Damascus, he marched non-stop through what was

called “the desert of death.” When the nobles saw him coming, they ran for the hills. He was quickly made the rightful king of Babylon. Then, he started subduing all his enemies, including Tyre and Egypt.⁶ Judah was just a little province compared to the greater kingdoms, but it was close to Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar wanted it. And what Nebuchadnezzar wanted, he got.

As we study Daniel, it will be good for us to understand the kind of man that Nebuchadnezzar was. He was king of a vast empire at age 20. He was a man of tremendous drive, courage, and strength. He was also brutal and at times without mercy. He was one of the youngest conquerors in world history.

II. THE PROVIDENTIAL FALL OF JERUSALEM.

Through Jeremiah, God told Judah to surrender to Babylon without fighting, but they refused. King Jehoiakim allied himself to Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar defeated him and captured Jerusalem. This was in **606 B.C.** Nebuchadnezzar did not destroy Jerusalem at this time. That did not happen until 20 years later. He conquered the city and put them under tribute, and took away the best and brightest of the land back to Babylon. This is where the Book of Daniel begins.

- **(Dan 1:1-2) "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. {2} And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god."**

Daniel and his friends were among the first group taken into captivity in 606 B.C. In **597 B.C.**, the king of Judah rebelled and Nebuchadnezzar came down and crushed them again. This was when Ezekiel was taken into captivity. In **586 B.C.**, the ungodly king Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon. *Three strikes, you're out!*

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This time, Nebuchadnezzar had had enough. He destroyed Jerusalem. He burned the Temple and the palaces. He tore down the walls. He leveled Jerusalem as he had leveled Ninevah. He deported most of the surviving Jews and imported Babylonians captives from other nations. He was determined to break their national identity and cause Judah to cease to exist forever.

The Jewish Encyclopedia records the Jewish traditions of Nebuchadnezzar's cruelty towards the conquered Jews:

“Nebuchadnezzar was most merciless toward the conquered people. By his command the exiles on their way to Babylon were not allowed to stop even for a moment, as the king feared that they would pray during the respite granted them and that God would be willing to help them as soon as they repented... Nebuchadnezzar did not feel safe until the exiles reached the Euphrates, the boundary-line of Babylon. Then he made a great feast on board his ship, while the princes of Judah lay chained and naked by the river. In order to increase their misery he had rolls of the Torah torn and made into sacks, which, filled with sand, he gave to the captive princes to carry.

On this occasion Nebuchadnezzar ordered the singers of the Temple to add their music to his feast; but they preferred to bite off their fingers, or even to be killed, rather than to play their sacred music in honor of the Babylonian idols... He heartlessly drove the captives before him, entirely without clothing, until the inhabitants of Bari induced him to clothe them... But even after the heavily burdened Jews finally reached Babylonia they had no rest from the tyrant, who massacred thousands of youths...”⁷

Why did God allow Judah to fall to Babylon? The Bible gives us a definite answer:

- **(2 Chr 36:14-20) "Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the**

abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. {15} And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: {16} But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was* no remedy. {17} Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave *them* all into his hand. {18} And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all *these* he brought to Babylon. {19} And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. {20} And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:"

God destroyed Judah because of their persistent rebellion and consistent unfaithfulness to His covenant. Though they were warned again and again by God's men, they hardened their necks. (Prov 29:1) "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." This truth applies to nations as well as individuals.

III. THE PROVIDENTIAL PLACEMENT OF DANIEL.

- (Dan 1:3-4) "And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; {4} Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well

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favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans."

Despite all of the destruction and desolation, God's will and purpose were not thwarted. God had a plan for His people, and Daniel was going to play an important part in that plan. The Providence of God caused Daniel to be chosen and sent back to Babylon, putting him in a place where he would have the opportunity to do great things for the Lord and for His people.

Daniel was taken back to the capital city of the greatest empire in the world. God was positioning him for a divine purpose. The process was painful, but the results glorified God.

We may not always like where providence leads us. We must learn to trust in the God of heaven. He is not only the **"Governor among the nations."** He is also **"my Shepherd; I shall not want"** (Ps. 23:1).

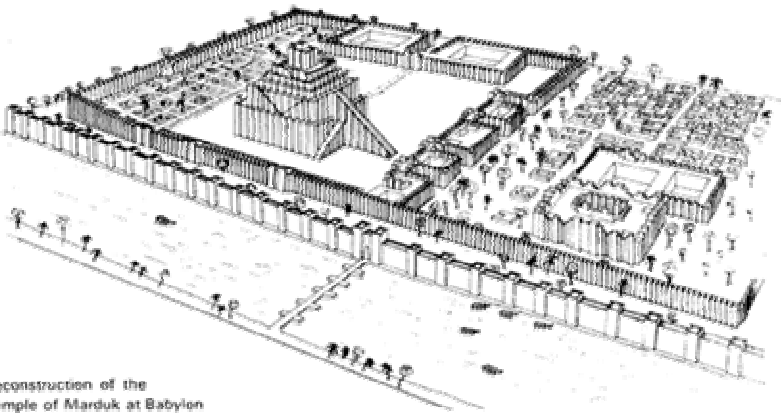
Below is a brief overview of the major events in Daniel chapter one:

1. Daniel and his three friends are chosen and taken to Babylon, where they are enrolled in a three-year course to prepare them for the king's service – verses 1-6.
2. Daniel and his friends purpose that they will not defile themselves with the king's meat or alcohol – vs. 7-8.
3. Daniel proposes a test, in which they will forgo the king's diet and eat only vegetables and water – vs. 9-17.
4. In the end, Daniel and his friends were found to be ten times better than all of the others, and were promoted to the presence of the king – vs. 18-21.

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Above: An artist's depiction of the famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The artist added the Tower of Babel in the background.
Below: Reconstruction of the Temple of Marduk in ancient Babylon.



Reconstruction of the
Temple of Marduk at Babylon

Chapter Two

DANIEL'S PREFERMENT

(Dan 1:3-4) "And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; {4} Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans."

(Prov 22:29) "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean *men*."

God said that the man who is diligent in his business will stand before kings. Daniel and his three friends are great examples of this truth. These four young men had the kind of character that God needed. They were vessels **"unto honour, sanctified, meet for the master's use" (2 Tim. 2:21)**. The character traits of these young men allowed them to be promoted by a secular king to high positions in his secular government.

Most Christians are going to work in secular environments, like Daniel did. I believe that all young preachers should have to work in the world before they enter into full-time service. I think we have too many "greenhouse preachers" who have never broken a sweat or tried to deal with a boss or had to compete for a sale or an account. Consequently, they do not understand their men or what their men are going through in their workplaces.

Daniel was a young man who spent his life serving in a government office, under kings. He lived for God, but he worked in the world. Not only that, but he was extremely successful. Why? He was diligent in his business.

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Whatever we do, we should do with diligence. Diligence is doing a job quickly but right. It is being careful *and* being efficient. Diligence is paying attention to all the details while trying to be as productive as possible. Diligence is going to be necessary to climb the ladder of success and to stay at the top when you get there. Whatever your business is, learn it and learn it well and then keep on learning it. Give attention to details, work hard, and be industrious. Sir William Osler said, “Work is the open sesame of every portal, the great equalizer in the world, the true philosopher's stone which transmutes all the base metal of humanity into gold.”⁸

When Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, he gave clear instructions to the master of his eunuchs to choose the very best of the king's family to be taken back to Babylon for the king's service. He wanted young people, “**children.**” He did not want older men that would be hard to train, or young men that would be full of pride and resentment. He wanted children that could be molded, trained and indoctrinated. I believe that Daniel and his friends would have been young teenagers. For the sake of our study, we are going to assume that they were fourteen.

All of these men were of the king's seed, which tells us that Daniel and his friends were of royal blood. Nebuchadnezzar chose such for two primary reasons:

1. To fuel his pride. He liked to see the children of kings as his servants.
2. To better his government. He believed that the children of kings would be the very best of men. He wanted the best men he could get for his work. It is the same way today in the world of business. All business leaders want the best that they can find.

Nebuchadnezzar the leader was looking for certain traits in the men he wanted around him in his government. The world is looking for many of these same characteristics, which is why we should strive in these areas personally and teach them to our children:

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I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS LOOKING FOR AN IMPRESSIVE APPEARANCE.

- **“Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured...”**

The king wanted to be surrounded by people with a certain appearance. In the world, appearance does count. We should not be totally wrapped up in our appearance, but we should give it careful consideration. If two men are applying for a job at a major corporation, all things being equal appearance may make the difference in who gets the job.

God looks on the heart, but man sees the outward appearance. There is something automatically impressive about a young man with clear eyes, an intelligent look, straight posture, a tidy appearance, and a manly walk. No doubt, this is what Ashpenaz saw in Daniel and his friends.

II. NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS LOOKING FOR A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION.

He wanted children that were **“skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science...”** He didn't want the dunces or the class clowns. He wanted the best students. It shows you what's wrong in our culture when the good students are called nerds and the athletes are worshipped.

He wanted young men that were known for their intelligence, for their study habits, for their educational accomplishments. He wanted young men that had skills in wisdom. Learning skills are important. He wanted young men that were well-taught in various forms of knowledge.

He wanted young men that understood science. Science is defined by Webster's 1828 Dictionary as “a collection of the general principles or leading truths relating to any subject.” It is a systematic study of a branch of knowledge. Nebuchadnezzar wanted

young men that were grounded in certain fields of knowledge. He was looking for a well-rounded education.

Our nation once had a very well-rounded educational system. The three R's – reading, writing, and 'rythmatic. Added to that was character-training at home and at church, where they learned the "fourth R" – righteousness. They also learned skills in a trade, through the family business or through apprenticeship. Students were taught history and citizenship. Nowadays, many high schools are graduating students who are functionally illiterate.

Colleges are complaining because they are having to waste money and time with remedial English and Math classes, teaching things that should have been covered in High School. Only 25% of public High School graduates are prepared for their first year of college or an entry-level job.⁹

As parents, we need to make sure that we give our children the best and most well-rounded education possible – and insist that our children make the best grades possible. It will open doors of opportunity for them in life.

III. NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS LOOKING FOR RESPONSIBLE, CAPABLE YOUNG MEN.

- **“...and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace...”**

He wanted young men that could be entrusted with important work, capable of taking care of the king's business in a first-class manner. He did not want sloppy, irresponsible men taking care of his business or representing his government to outsiders.

IV. NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS LOOKING FOR TEACHABILITY.

- **“...And whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.”**

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He wanted young men who would be able to acquire the learning and language of the Chaldeans. Let me say that it would be very good to lead our children to learn at least one language other than English. This could prove very profitable in the new global world of today. Business analyst Mark Hall wrote, "As you rise up your career ladder, it might be wise to learn another language or two. Multilingual skill are prized by high-level executives in global companies. CEOs who are native speakers of Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew or Japanese are running U.S. companies today. They also speak English, of course. But your being able to communicate in their mother tongues is a definite career plus."¹⁰

Such a skill greatly increases anyone's marketability, but it also increases our ability to serve the Lord. Spanish would be a great language for kids to learn these days. Once they learn that first language, others can come more easily. Think of the number of souls that could be reached for the Lord in your own community if you could speak another language effectively!

Most major businesses are looking for people that they can train to do their work their way. Many corporations look at colleges as a way of weeding out prospects and learning some basic skills. Then, they hire people with those basic skills and train them to do a job. Companies see a bachelor's degree as a basic requirement for an entry-level job. Teachability and humility are important. Attitude is very important.

Daniel and the others were teachable. They were able to learn. They were capable of adapting to their circumstances and the new jobs they had been enlisted for.

They had to be the best that they could be so that God could use them as He wanted to. God's providence was at work, but He needed usable vessels. When Daniel was diligently doing his homework for math class, he didn't know that this would allow God to put him in a place of prominence and power, but it did. We should always do our best so that God can use us as He chooses.

- (Prov 22:29) "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean *men*."



The "dragon of Marduk" adorns the famous Ishtar gate of Babylon. Many Creation scientists and proponents of the Genesis account of Creation consider this to be evidence that dragons or dinosaurs were known in ancient Babylon.

Below is the "striding lion" that also adorns the Ishtar gate:



Chapter Three

DANIEL'S PURPOSE

(Dan 1:8) "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

Daniel was taken by the Chaldeans to Babylon, the capital city of the Babylonian Empire. There, they were enrolled in a three-year program of indoctrination, designed to eradicate their Jewish identity and prepare them to serve in the king's government.

Daniel, however, determined in his heart that he would not defile himself in Babylon. Though he had made peace with his circumstances, he was determined that he would not be unfaithful to his God. This was the most important decision in his life, and is the key to everything following in this Book.

I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PROGRAMMING.

Nebuchadnezzar had the Hebrew captives taken back to Babylon. He had rebuilt this great city on a mud flat on the banks of the mighty Euphrates River. The city itself surrounded a great temple to the chief god of Babylon, Marduk. The spoils of Jerusalem, including the vessels of Solomon's Temple, were brought into the treasuries of this pagan god. **(Dan 1:2) "And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god."** Nebuchadnezzar did this to show that his god had conquered the God of Israel. What a shame to the name of the Lord – brought about by the failure of His own people!

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How shameful that treasures of God should adorn the devil's trophy case!

Nebuchadnezzar was a very religious man. He was not an atheist nor was he purely secular. He was very religious, as we will see many times throughout the Book of Daniel. He was devoted to his god, Marduk. Marduk was also known by the name "Bel," which means "lord." Bel was the primary god of Babylon.¹¹ (**Jer 50:2**) **"Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces."** In Canaan, Bel was worshipped under the name "Baal," of which we read a great deal in the Old Testament.

The Babylonians had their own extensive mythology, which was written down in the *Enûma Eliš*. This mythology explained creation and how Marduk created man from his own blood and became the chief of all the gods. It reads:

*"My blood will I take and bone will I fashion
I will make man...
I will create man who shall inhabit the earth,
That the service of the gods may be established, and that
their shrines may be built."¹²*

In Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar had built a ziggurat for the honor and worship of Bel, in the focal point of the city's life. He was a devoted worshipper. The city was very religious and filled with idolatry.

Babylon itself was a marvel. Nebuchadnezzar's father had begun many construction projects, which he finished and added to. He wanted to make Babylon a wonder to the world. Old temples were restored and many new, brilliant temples and shrines were built around the city. No expense was spared in the royal palace. The city itself was surrounded by a triple layer of walls, making it seem impenetrable. A stone bridge crossed the Euphrates to connect the two sides of the city. An underground passage went under the

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river as well.¹³ The famous Ishtar gate was beautifully decorated with tile work depicting lions, dragons, and oxen.

Of course, the city is best known for the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, which were considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Tradition has it that Nebuchadnezzar built the Gardens for his wife, who was homesick for the gardens and trees of her homeland, Persia. Greek historians record its appearance and dimensions. The Gardens did not hang, but were built in huge terraces. Water was continually pulled up from the Euphrates through an amazing irrigation system using screw pumps.¹⁴

We have to understand the environment in which Daniel and his friends found themselves. Can you imagine being taken from your home to a strange land, and being brought into the most amazing city on earth at the time? Nebuchadnezzar wanted to immerse them in his culture and indoctrinate them into his ways. He wanted to end their Jewish identity and turn them into Babylonians.

Notice the steps of this indoctrination:

1. He separated them from their parents.
2. He stripped them of their national heritage.
3. He changed their names.

➤ **(Dan 1:7) "Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego."**

Their Jewish names gave honor to the LORD God of Israel.

- Daniel – “God is my Judge.”
- Hananiah – “God has been gracious to me.”
- Mishael – “The powerful one of God.”
- Azariah – “The help of Jehovah.”

Lessons from the Book of Daniel

The Babylonian eunuch renamed them to give honor to the gods of Babylon:

- “Beltshazzar” – “the secret treasure of Bel.”
- “Shadrach” – “inspiration of the sun.” The Babylonians worshipped the sun.
- “Meshach” – “belongs to Shack,” the name of another pagan god.
- “Abednego” – “the servant of the shining light.”

He changed their names to conform them to their heathen culture. He wanted to strip them of their heritage.

4. He changed their language.
5. He changed their surroundings. He immersed them in a worldly environment.
6. He changed their food and dietary habits. This was especially important to the Jews because of their strict dietary laws.

Let’s make the spiritual application. The devil wants us to conform to the world. **(Rom 12:2) "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."** “Conformed” means “bearing the imprint of. To resemble.” The devil wants us to conform, to bear the imprint of the world, to resemble and blend in with everyone else.

Conform is the command of the entire world system. Fit in with us. Don’t be different. Do things our way. Worship our gods our way. Fit in with our society. Do not go against the flow of the majority. *We* decide what is right or wrong.

The pressure is really put on the young people – the ones who are of the same age that Daniel was when he was taken to Babylon. Young teenagers are very susceptible to such pressure to conform. This is why they dress certain ways and act in certain ways. They have been taught from an early age to follow the crowd.

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There is a great deal of indoctrination today among our young people. It is coming from many angles – from the entertainment industry, from many in the public school system, from older teenagers, and even from their parents.

What were the steps of this indoctrination again?

1. He separated them from their parents. The government tells us now, “When your children are six years old, we will start picking them up 5 days a week to teach them for you.” Many authorities in the public school system treat our children like they are really theirs – like they belong to the State. They look down upon the parents because the educators are the “professionals.” One school principle told a Christian father, “When the children are with you, they are yours. When they are with us, they are ours.” This is the philosophy of many in the public school power structure. In the school system, the parents are replaced by a peer culture. The parents lose their influence and the group takes priority.
2. He stripped them of their national heritage. Many of our young people do not realize the greatness of their national heritage as Americans. They have not been taught their history or the greatness of their country. There is a great lack of national pride today.
3. He changed their names. We see this in our churches. In order to get along with everyone in the culture, churches are removing the Baptist brand.
4. He changed their surroundings. He immersed them in a worldly environment. You and I cannot go anywhere without running head-on into the world’s philosophy. The church ought to be a safe haven from the world, but often the church is more worldly than anyplace the kids go! Shame on worldly churches and worldly youth departments!

II. DANIEL'S PURPOSE.

- **(Dan 1:8) "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."**

Daniel made a decision from the heart. "Purposed" means "resolved." This was the most important decision in his life. Everyone else went along with Nebuchadnezzar's program. They were all Jews. It would have been easy for Daniel and his three friends to make excuses as to why they should do as they were told. They could have said:

- "Everyone else is doing it."
- "I don't have a choice."
- "It's just meat. I'll drink the wine in moderation."

They were faced with tremendous temptation. But they did have a choice. And they made the right choice, knowing that it could cost them their lives. They purposed to do right, no matter what the consequences.

Daniel was determined not to defile himself. First, because the meat and drink was unclean to him as a Jew. The Jews had very strict dietary laws which I am sure the Babylonians did not observe. The Jews also were forbidden to drink alcoholic wine. To have partaken of either would have caused them to become unclean.

Secondly, because the king's meat and drink was associated with the worship of Marduk. Notice what Paul taught the Gentile Christians of Corinth concerning food offered to idols:

- **(1 Cor 10:19-21) "What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? {20} But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. {21} Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of**

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devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

Christians give thanks before they eat their meals – at least, they are supposed to (1 Tim. 4:4). This reminds me of a story about a country farmer who went to the city. He went into a restaurant to eat lunch, and sat across from some young men. After the old farmer bowed his head and gave thanks for his meal, one of the young men sneered, “Does everyone do that where you come from?” The old farmer calmly answered, “No, son, the *hogs* don’t.”

In Nebuchadnezzar’s court, they also gave thanks to their god before eating their meals.¹⁵ Partaking of the king’s meat, which was offered to idols, was considered worship of this false god. Paul said that to partake of such a table was to sit at the table of devils! Daniel was determined that he would not honor the pagan gods by sitting at their table, to eat their meat!

If we are going to live for God, we are going to have to be willing to take a stand for Jesus Christ and His Word against the corruption around us. It’s not going to be easy, but if Daniel could do it, we can do it.

Hymn writer Philip Bliss challenged us to “Dare to be a Daniel:”

*“Standing by a purpose true,
Heeding God’s command,
Honor them, the faithful few!
All hail to Daniel’s band!*

*Many giants, great and tall,
Stalking through the land,
Headlong to the earth would fall,
If met by Daniel’s band.*

*Hold the Gospel banner high!
On to vict’ry grand!
Satan and his hosts defy,
And shout for Daniel’s band.*

*Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose firm!
Dare to make it known.”¹⁶*

III. DANIEL’S PETITION.

- **(Dan 1:8) "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."**

Daniel approached his “boss” with the right attitude. He didn’t go in an demand a special diet. He **“requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”** He showed him a proper respect. There is a right way to do the right thing. There are also wrong ways to do the right thing. Too often, our fundamental Baptists are all bluster when a “soft answer” would do more good.

Daniel’s request was preceded by the working of God and his own good testimony. **(Dan 1:9) "Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs."** The head eunuch didn’t say, “Since when are you worried about defiling yourself?” He knew Daniel; he knew his purity and his earnest desire to do right. He also knew Daniel’s spirit. Daniel 6:3 says that Daniel had an **“excellent spirit.”** He had the right character and the right attitude, and the prince of the eunuchs favored him and loved him like a son.

However, the head eunuch was reluctant. **(Dan 1:10) "And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king."**

This verse shows us that the rest of Daniel’s **“sort”** – the other Jews – were compromising. The fact is that Daniel and his friends

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were a completely different “sort” than the rest of those compromisers – they were *“ten times better!”*

Daniel always has a plan and options to suggest. **(Dan 1:11-13)** **"Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, {12} Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. {13} Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants."**

Pulse refers primarily to beans or peas, but probably referred broadly to a vegetable diet. Daniel proposed that for ten days they would eat vegetables and drink only water, and then the prince could put them to the test. By the way, the largest animals in the world and in history are herbivores. The biggest dinosaurs ate plants; bulls and cattle, elephants, oxen, etc, all are herbivores.

- **(Dan 1:14-16)** **"So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. {15} And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. {16} Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse."**

Living clean and doing right will affect your countenance. A guilty conscience shows itself in the countenance and in the eyes. Daniel and his friends looked better than the compromisers. They had a glow, and strength, a vitality that the others did not have. Living right will always produce better results.

IV. DANIEL'S PROMOTION.

Because of his faithfulness, God began to bless Daniel and his friends. **(Dan 1:17)** **"As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had**

understanding in all visions and dreams." This would not have happened if they compromised with the rest of the crowd.

The day of testing came. **(Dan 1:18-21)** "Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. {19} And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. {20} And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm. {21} And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus." This was three years later.

Daniel had not wavered in those three years. He was still faithful to his God. When they stood before the king, they were the top of their class. Nebuchadnezzar found them "**ten times better**" than all of the pagan philosophers in his realm. The Bible is ten times better than anything the world has to offer. God's ways are ten times better than the world's ways.

These four Hebrew children had been faithful and diligent, and now they were in a position to glorify God in a very unique way.



A relief showing an Assyrian king hunting lions.

Chapter Four

DANIEL'S PROBLEM

(Dan 2:1-6) "And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. {2} Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. {3} And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. {4} Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation. {5} The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. {6} But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof."

When chapter two begins, Daniel has been in Babylon for a little over three years. He had graduated from Nebuchadnezzar's training course, and had done so without compromising his Bible convictions. He had purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself or be unfaithful to the Lord. Because of this, God had blessed Daniel and his three friends and had given them special wisdom and understanding. When they stood before the king on graduation day, they were found to be ten times better than all the rest. They stood out in the crowd. Therefore, they were given positions in Nebuchadnezzar's government, among the wise men.

Let me stop and say that the Book of Daniel can best be divided into two sections:

Lessons from the Book of Daniel

1. History and Prophecy – Chapters 1-6.
2. Prophecy and History – Chapters 7-12.

The first six chapters describe Daniel's history with some prophecy. The final six chapters describe the world's future history through prophecy.

Daniel chapter 2 is one of the most amazing and important chapters in all the Bible. Suppose that I came in this morning with an old, leather-bound volume, with yellow, tattered pages, and said, "Folks, this book will accurately forecast the history of the world for the next thousand years. It will tell us the rise and fall of world powers until the 31st century."

That would be amazing. You would not believe it. Surely, only God could accurately relate such facts about the future!

Yet, in Daniel chapter two and chapter seven, we have more than one thousand years of history laid out that has already come to pass. The prophecies in these passages described the rise and fall of the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires – from 600 B.C., Daniel's time, to around 400 A.D. More than that, they describe events yet to come, which will take place with the Second Coming of Christ.

Before we get to the prophetic part, we need to study the historical setting. Let me give you a brief synopsis of the chapter:

1. Nebuchadnezzar is given a dream by God, in which Nebuchadnezzar sees a terrible image made of various metals, which is crushed by a giant stone.
2. Nebuchadnezzar awoke, but could not remember the dream, only the terror that it inspired.
3. He called for his pagan wise men to explain the forgotten dream, which they could not do.
4. Nebuchadnezzar then ordered these wise men to be executed as frauds.

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5. When Daniel heard of this, he intervened and begged for time to ask God for the answer to the dream, which God granted.
6. Daniel then explained the dream to the king, and was promoted to become the chief man in the province of Babylon and the chief governor over the wise men of Babylon.

I. THE FORGOTTEN DREAM.

➤ **(Dan 2:1) "And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him."**

As Nebuchadnezzar was sleeping in his palace, God sent a dream to the mind of this unsaved ruler. I consider this God's introduction of Himself to Nebuchadnezzar. The king did get saved, but not until later. There were several steps that Nebuchadnezzar took before he was saved. Not everyone gets saved the first time they hear the gospel. Sometimes, hard men have to take some big steps in the right direction. We'll see those steps in the following chapters.

In these dreams, Nebuchadnezzar saw a great and terrible image of a man, glowing brightly, made of different metals. The terrible, menacing face and head was of gold; the broad chest and muscular arms were made of silver; the belly and thighs were of burnished brass; the long legs were made of cast iron; and the feet were made of a strange mixture of iron and clay. While he was looking up at this imposing image, he noticed behind it a high mountain. Suddenly, he heard a rumbling sound, and saw a great stone, a boulder, rolling down the side of that great mountain, and it smashed into the feet of that great image. The image crumbled to dust, which the wind blew away, so that there was nothing left of that great image. Then, before the king's amazed eyes, that stone grew into a mountain that filled the whole earth.

Suddenly, the king awoke, in a sweat, trembling, knowing that the dream had been of great importance, but unable to remember even one part of it.

II. THE FAILURE OF THE WORLDLY WISE MEN.

Nebuchadnezzar was a very religious man. He kept on his payroll and entire cabinet of religious and wise men, who served as his counselors and advisors. He immediately called the leaders of this religious cabinet in for a midnight meeting. **(Dan 2:2) "Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king."**

This cabinet was made up of four divisions or worldly wise men. They were:

1. The magicians.

These were the experts in the black arts, often involving mind-altering drugs. They used enchantments to try to bring things to pass. They were also illusionists, as modern magicians are. Pharaoh kept magicians in his court, that apparently had devilish power to perform limited miracles.

2. The astrologers.

Babylon had some tremendous astronomers, who charted the stars. They believed that the placement of the stars and planets influenced the world and human affairs. This false science is still practiced today, and many people cannot face the day without consulting their horoscopes to see what the stars have in store for them. Nebuchadnezzar also consulted the horoscope, through his astrologers.

3. The sorcerers.

These men claimed to be able to speak to spirits, the gods, and dead people, to find out the future or to gain

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special knowledge. Today, they are called spiritualists, necromancers, or psychics.

The Bible strongly condemns the use of sorcery. King Saul was condemned for visiting the witch of Endor so that he could try to communicate with Samuel, who had been dead for several years.

4. The Chaldeans.

These were the philosophers and thinkers of the day. They were the highest branch of this cabinet, and the most powerful. These men studied and contemplated all the great questions of life. Every age and culture has its philosophers, but without the knowledge of the Bible these men have never come to the right conclusions about the main questions of life and eternity.

Someone has defined philosophy as ***“the Whence, the Why, and the Whither of Life.”***

- Whence did man come from?
- Why is man here?
- Whither does man go when he dies?

Everyone wants to know the answer to those three questions. Nebuchadnezzar dearly wanted to know the answers to these three questions. The astrologers tried to figure it out by studying the stars. The magicians and sorcerers turned to the world of fallen spirits for their answers. The Chaldeans looked into their depraved and darkened minds for the answers.

The Bible, of course, gives us the right answers. **(Psa 119:130) "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."**

1. *Whence did man come from?* Man came from God. Man was created directly by God and in His image.
2. *Why is man here?* Man is here for God's glory and pleasure.

3. *Whither does man go when he dies?* If a man is saved, he goes to heaven to be with God. If he is lost, he will go to hell, eternally separated from God.

This is summed up by Paul in **Romans 11:36** - "**For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.**"

Nebuchadnezzar wanted these wise men around for answers. But on this night, they could not give an answer. The king demanded to know the meaning of a dream that he could not remember. These worldly wise men were dumbfounded. They had always taken whatever they were told and worked out a plausible explanation or interpretation. The king gave them nothing to work with, and it soon became obvious that they were frauds trying to buy some time.

- **(Dan 2:8-11)** "The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. {9} But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, *there is but one decree* for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof. {10} The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore *there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.* {11} And *it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.*"

Nebuchadnezzar went into a rage, and determined to destroy all of the wise men of Babylon. His faith in these men was shattered. They were frauds, and had been exposed. **(Dan 2:12-13)** "**For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. {13} And the decree went**

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forth that the wise *men* should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain."

III. THE FAITH OF DANIEL.

Daniel and his friends were new on the job, and not a part of the king's leadership cabinet that had been called in. After the decree was issued, Daniel learned of their great danger, for they would be slain with the rest of the wise men.

- **(Dan 2:14-16) "Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise *men* of Babylon: {15} He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, *Why is the decree so hasty from the king?* Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. {16} Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation."**

What a courageous young man! He was only around 17 years old, but he had courage and wisdom beyond his years. God said that Daniel **"answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain."** Through Daniel's wise intervention, he was able to halt the executions, and was even able to gain access to the king. Bravely, Daniel asked the king for an opportunity to give the sought-after answer. Daniel didn't know if God would tell him the answer or not. He just stepped out by faith.

Five facts about Daniel stand out:

1. Daniel had a trustworthy testimony with the captain and the king.

When a crisis comes, your reputation is going to be worth more than gold. **(Prov 22:1) "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."** Daniel's past faithfulness and exceptional behaviour was enough to earn him a special meeting and a special opportunity from the king.

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2. Daniel was no fatalist, ready to roll over under his circumstances. He jumped in and did something. Sometimes, Christians are fatalist when the Bible teaches us to be overcomers. The Bible teaches us to keep on going, keep on fighting, to never give up.
3. Daniel had prayer partners he could count on.

➤ **(Dan 2:17-18) "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: {18} That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."**

Do you have some prayer partners that you can count on when you need a quick answer to prayer, when you are facing an emergency NOW? Can anyone count on you to get through to God when the need is pressing?

4. Daniel could get a hold of God through prayer.

➤ **(Dan 2:19) "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven."**

If you were facing a crisis, would it take you six days to confess your sins and get right with everyone in your life before God could answer your prayers? Or could you get right through to the throne and make your petition, knowing you are right with God? You never know when the crisis will come. We need to stay on "praying ground!"

5. Daniel took the time to thank and praise God for His answer.

Time was short, but Daniel took the time to thank God. **(Dan 2:19-23) "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. {20} Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the**

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name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: {21} And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: {22} He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. {23} I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast *now* made known unto us the king's matter."

Daniel then moved boldly to return God's answer to the king. (Dan 2:24) "Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise *men* of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation." He had no doubt that the answer God had given him was the right one. He was confident in His God. His faith made him bold.

It is interesting to compare two statements made by the Babylonians. In verse ten, we have a statement by the worldly wise men, and in verse 25 we have a contradictory statement made by the captain of the guard:

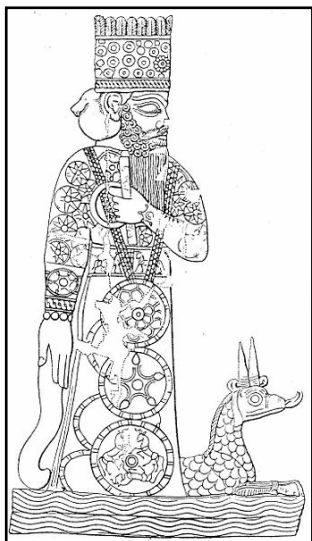
- (Dan 2:10) "The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore *there is* no king, lord, nor ruler, *that* asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean."
- (Dan 2:25) "Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation."

"There is not a man" – "I have found a man!" The worldly wisemen could not help the king, but the man of God, Daniel, could. The world today is looking for the answers to their deepest

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questions. They, too, want to understand the Whence, Why, and Whither of Life. The humanists, atheists, evolutionists, communists, socialists, agnostics, and other worldly-wise men cannot give a satisfactory answer. Neither can the world's religions. Many have said, "There is not a man on earth who can understand these things."

Those of us who know God need to point them to God's Word for the answers to all things *"pertaining to life and godliness"* (2 *Peter 1:3*)!



Above Left: The Babylonian god Marduk with his pet dragon. Right: another of the Babylonian gods. Nebuchadnezzar rejected them all when he believed in the LORD God of Daniel.

Chapter Five

DANIEL'S PROPHECY

(Dan 2:26-30) "The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? {27} Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; {28} But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; {29} As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. {30} But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart."

You will remember that Nebuchadnezzar had suffered from a terrible dream, which, upon awaking, he could not remember. He called in his worldly wisemen and demanded that they tell him his forgotten dream and the interpretation of it. Of course, these men were frauds who could not uncover the dream or come up with a satisfactory interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar went into a rage and determined that all of the wise men of Babylon should be slaughtered. This included Daniel and his three faithful friends.

When Daniel learned that their lives were on the line, he went in and asked the king for time to pray and discover the dream and its interpretation. Daniel had guts. **He didn't know the answer, but he knew God.** As Daniel and his friends were praying, God gave

Daniel the dream and the interpretation. Daniel then returned to the king to share with him what God had revealed.

This brings us to our text this morning. **(Dan 2:26-28)** "The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? {27} Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; {28} But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days..."

Notice that Daniel diverted Nebuchadnezzar from the worldly wise men to the LORD. He said, "These wise men cannot tell you the secret, but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." Daniel was a soul-winner! With his life on the line, he seized the opportunity to glorify God and point this pagan king to the God of heaven. Watch for your opportunities to glorify God!

Verse 28 gives a key to the dream – "what shall be in the latter days." The "latter days" refers to the "last days" which surround the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

- **(Dan 2:29-30)** "As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. {30} But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart."

Again, we see Daniel's humility. He wants no honor for himself. He wants all the glory to go to the Lord. How different from the average Christian today, who seeks only vainglory and gets offended if not consistently patted on the back!

God's Man in Babylon

In this chapter, we will break this passage down into three words:

I. REVELATION.

Daniel revealed the dream. **(Dan 2:31)** "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible." Twice, it is called a "great image." It was a colossus, huge and terrifying.

It was an image of a man, made of different metals. **(Dan 2:32-33)** "This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, {33} His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay."

It was destroyed by a great Stone. **(Dan 2:34-35)** "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. {35} Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Since most artwork and statues are named, I have given a name to the image in this dream. I call it "*The Vanity of Humanity*." This image represents the "times of the Gentiles." **(Luke 21:24)** "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

This time frame began when Judah was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold. It will continue all the way through the Tribulation period and the "toe jam kingdom" of the antichrist – the toes of iron and clay that Daniel revealed. It coincides with Daniel's later prophecy concerning Israel's seventy weeks. This image represents human history from the fall of

Jerusalem until the Second Coming of Christ and the permanent restoration of Jerusalem, when King Jesus rules the world from the throne of David.

Notice that the “Vanity of Humanity” is not an upward progression, but a downward devolution. In this great image, we do not see a steadily progressing, steadily improving humanity. We do not see an evolution from lower to higher. We see a devolution of humanity, heading towards a world-wide catastrophe.

Look at the Vanity of Humanity:

- Gold to silver.
- Silver to brass.
- Brass to iron.
- Iron to a mixture of iron and clay.

The entire colossus of humanity stands on feet of clay. When you boil mankind down, you just come up with clay – with dirt. The only good things in this world come from God and His Word.

Humanism’s goal is bring about progress *without* God.¹⁷ They are trying to build another Tower of Babel, built from the slime pits of human reasoning and human wisdom. In the Tribulation, they will unite the world under one superhuman man, but it will come to nought – as all things human eventually come to nought!

II. INTERPRETATION.

- **(Dan 2:36) "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king."**

I am sure that Nebuchadnezzar is “all ears” now. I am too. I want to know what this all means. Thankfully, God is going to reveal it to us.

1. **Babylon is the head of gold.**

- **(Dan 2:37-38) "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power,**

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and strength, and glory. {38} And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold."

This came about only because God willed it. God raised up Nebuchadnezzar and gave him his kingdom. The kingdom of Babylon lasted exactly 70 years, coinciding exactly with the Captivity of the Jews. God had previously announced that Babylon would fall after seventy years. (Jer 25:11-12) **"And this whole land shall be a desolation, *and* an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. {12} And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations."**

2. The Medes and Persians were the arms and chest of silver.

➤ (Dan 2:39) **"And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth."**

Two kingdoms were united by marriage – the Medes and the Persians. They were two strong arms, but united by one heart – Cyrus the Great.

In Daniel's time, when Belshazzar was king, the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon and added the Babylonian Empire to their own (we will see this in Daniel chapter five). It was this king Cyrus that allowed the Jews to return to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. However, God said that the Persian Empire was inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar. It was larger, but of a lesser quality.

3. The Macedonian or Greek Empire of Alexander the Great was the belly and thighs of brass.

Brass is an inferior metal, not typically used in jewelry or decoration. Alexander the Great and the Macedonians were

common men from the mountains, not the cultured people of southern Greece. Brass was used more for weaponry than for jewelry. The Greek soldiers were known for their brazen armor. Josephus, the historian, described them as “coming from the west coated in brass.”¹⁸

They conquered and set up an empire that, for a short time, included everything from Greece to India. However, it was an inferior kingdom that fell apart four ways after Alexander died in Babylon.

We will see Alexander the Great in much greater detail in chapter 8, where Alexander is accurately described as a he-goat flying over the earth, smashing the two-horned ram representing the Persian Empire. He is also described in chapter 7 as a winged leopard.

It was Alexander who boasted that he had conquered the world, and then sat down and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. He died at age 32, having never returned to Greece.

4. The Roman Empire was the two legs of cast iron.

- **(Dan 2:40) "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise."**

Iron is known for its strength and practical use; but it is nowhere considered as valuable or precious as gold or silver. The Roman armies broke the nations from Great Britain to Egypt, and encompassed the entire Mediterranean Sea. The Roman Empire was based on crushing strength, led by the iron general, Julius Caesar. The *Pax Romana* (“Roman Peace”) was enforced by Roman legions.

The two legs probably picture the division of the Empire into West and East in 285 A.D. The eastern half became known as the Byzantine Empire. The Western half eventually became the “Holy Roman Empire.”

5. The feet picture a kingdom yet to come.

I believe that this will be the kingdom of the Beast, the Antichrist, which will come out of the old Roman Empire. We know from the Book of Revelation that the Beast will rule the whole world, but that he will also have a particular kingdom where his “seat” is.

- **(Rev 16:10-11) "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, {11} And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."**

I believe that this will be in Europe, and that it will be a revival of the Roman Empire. I don't know how it will work, because it won't happen until after the Rapture.

This kingdom of the Beast is the “toe jam kingdom.” **(Dan 2:41-42) "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. {42} And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken."**

The Beast will rule the world during the Tribulation, but his kingdom cannot stand. Like clay dried around iron, it will begin to crack and fall apart at the end.

This world wants a utopia. They want a superman world leader, with a one-world government, a one-world religion, and a one-world economy. They want to bring in world-wide peace and spread the wealth around so that poverty is ended forever. The problem is that they want everything without God or the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Beast is going to have his opportunity to show what depraved man can do – but it will not stand. His kingdom will

fall apart at the end. **(Dan 2:43) "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."**

6. The Stone Kingdom is the Millennial Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **(Dan 2:44-45) "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. {45} Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."**

There is a coming Stone Age. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, and He is coming with overwhelming violence to set up His kingdom on this earth. All the Godless nations of this earth will be scattered to the winds like chaff off the threshing floor. God will set up an everlasting kingdom, with Jesus Christ as Lord of all. **(Zec 14:9) "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one."**

III. EXALTATION.

- **(Dan 2:46) "Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him."**

Nebuchadnezzar got saved later, but not yet. He worshipped Daniel. This shows how quickly the pagan man will worship another man instead of God. Today, millions of people worship dead saints or Mary instead of worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ.

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- **(Dan 2:47) "The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God *is* a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret."**

He recognized that Daniel's God was a God of gods, but he has not yet come to the realization that Daniel's God is the ONLY God. Nebuchadnezzar did not get saved here, but he took a step in the right direction.

- **(Dan 2:48) "Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon."**

See how God promoted Daniel! Now, he is the ruler over the capital province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over the wise men of Babylon. Just as with Joseph in Egypt, in one night Daniel was promoted to the right hand of a pagan king.

- **(Dan 2:49) "Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king."**

Daniel used his position to get promotions to his faithful friends. They were set over the affairs of the city of Babylon. Don't forget your friends! When you get to where you are going, don't forget the ones who helped you get there!

As we study this chapter, we find the encouraging fact that God knows what the future holds, and He holds the future. No matter how bad things get on this earth, let us remember that **"there is a God in heaven!"**

Lessons from the Book of Daniel



This clay tablet is a Babylonian chronicle recording events from 605-594BC. It was first translated in 1956 and is now in the British Museum. The cuneiform text on this clay tablet tells, among other things, 3 main events:

1. The Battle of Carchemish (famous battle for world supremacy where Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated Pharaoh Necho of Egypt);
2. The accession to the throne of Nebuchadnezzar II;
3. The capture of Jerusalem.

About the capture of Jerusalem the clay tablet reads:

"In the seventh month in the month Chislev the king of Babylon assembled his army, and after he had invaded the land of Hatti (Palestine) he laid seige to the city of Judah. On the second day of the month of Adara he conquered the city and took the king prisoner. He installed in his place a king (Zedekiah) of his own choice, and after he had received rich tribute, he sent (them) forth to Babylon."¹⁹

Chapter Six

DANIEL'S PROTÉGÉS

(Dan 3:1-3) "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. {2} Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. {3} Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up."

Nebuchadnezzar was a hard-headed king. In chapter 2, he had his great dream of a giant statue, which Daniel interpreted. The chapter ends with Nebuchadnezzar praising the God of Daniel. He promoted Daniel to be president over the province of Babylon, and made him the chief of the cabinet of wise men. Daniel used his position to promote his three faithful friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. However, in the very next chapter Nebuchadnezzar built a giant golden image and commanded people to worship it instead of the LORD!

This image was a tall, skinny statue. It was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide. It may have looked similar to an ancient obelisk. Nebuchadnezzar brought everyone to town for the dedication of his golden image. He further commanded that whenever they heard the rock band start to play, they were to fall down and worship the golden image that he had set up. Whoever was caught not

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worshipping the image during the rock concert would be thrown into the fiery furnace and destroyed.

When the rock concert started, everyone bowed down and worshipped the image – except for three Jewish men: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We do not know where Daniel was, but it is safe to assume that he was NOT bowing before this golden idol! He was likely away on some affair of state, and was not present at this idolatrous display. I have no doubt that if Daniel had been present he would have stood steadfastly on the side of the LORD with his three friends.

By the way, these three faithful Jews are often referred to as the “three Hebrew children.” However, these were not junior age kids facing the mighty king; they were grown men who held positions of authority in the king’s government. In fact, according to Ussher’s Chronology as used in the Scofield Reference Bible, this event took place in 580 B.C. – 26 years after they had been taken away from Jerusalem to Babylon. Therefore, they were probably in their forties! They were the “three Hebrew middle-aged men!”

The jealous Babylonians immediately accused these men before Nebuchadnezzar, who was filled with rage that anyone should dare defy his decree. He called the three Hebrew men in and decided to be nice. He gave them another opportunity. He said, “Next time you hear the rock music start to play, fall down like everyone else and worship my golden image. If you will do that, I’ll forget your indiscretion. If you won’t, I’ll have you cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”

You shouldn’t have said *that*, Nebuchadnezzar.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego responded, **(Dan 3:16) "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter."** In other words, we don’t need any time to confer about this. We have already made our decision, and we are not concerned about the outcome.

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They boldly added, **(Dan 3:17)** "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king." In other words, "Our God is able to deliver us. You may think that you are the biggest thing in this world, and you may think that you are omnipotent, and you may think that you own the world, but you are just a man. We serve the living God. Our God holds your breath in His hand. Our God makes your heart beat. Our God is in control, and if God so desires to deliver us from your hand, there won't be anything you can do to stop it."

But here is the best part: **(Dan 3:18)** "But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Now we are talking real convictions. Now we are talking real faithfulness. They said, "Our God can deliver us if He chooses. If He chooses not to, we will still refuse to bow before your image."

I am afraid that most Christians today do not have a "but if not" attitude towards the fiery furnaces of life. God is worthy of our love and faithfulness no matter what the circumstances of our life are. God does not just deserve our love and faithfulness when everything is well and good. God deserves our love and faithfulness during the darkest and ugliest times of life as well. He deserves our faithfulness even if He allows us to go into the fiery furnace!

Now, let me give you a few thoughts on being an "If Not" kind of Christian.

I. OUR GOD IS ABLE TO DELIVER US.

We must not forget what a big, wonderful, powerful God we serve. Man, like Nebuchadnezzar, likes to flex his muscles and show everyone how great and powerful he is. Man heats his furnace seven times and says, **(Dan 3:15)** "...and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" The kings, presidents, and dictators of this earth like to think that they are invincible and omnipotent. Company presidents, judges, and the supervisor on the

job tend to like to abuse their power, especially concerning Christians.

But our God is able. He delivered Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego from the midst of this fiery furnace. Later, he showed Nebuchadnezzar just Who really was the Boss (*Daniel 4:29-37*). Never forget that your God is able. Have faith and stand strong. God can deal with man.

II. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GOD WILL NOT DELIVER US FROM THE FIERY TRIAL.

Even though these three men were doing right, God still allowed them to be put in this position. Mark this. We want to do right and never suffer for it. We have the mistaken idea that we will never face any adverse circumstances if we just do what is right. However, doing right can often lead to suffering, loss, and hardship in this crooked and perverse world!

Peter reminds us that we should not consider a fiery trial of our faith to be a strange thing:

- **(1 Pet 4:12-16) "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: {13} But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. {14} If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. {15} But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. {16} Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."**

When placed in the position of making a decision, these men made the right decision. The right decision brought the wrath of the

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king and a death sentence in the fiery furnace. God does not always deliver us from the trial. God sometimes delivers us into a trial.

Joseph went through trials for 13 years, and all he did was right. God allowed him to be hurt, disappointed, and forgotten. David spent 7 years being hunted by King Saul as a fugitive. Daniel defied the decree against prayer and prayed anyway. For this, he was delivered into the den of lions. The apostles did right by preaching Christ in Jerusalem. For this, they were imprisoned and beaten. Paul was only preaching the Gospel and winning souls, but he went through suffering, abuse, prison sentences, and attempts to kill him. He was finally beheaded as a criminal by the Roman government.

We want to do God's will and never face a fiery trial for doing God's will. We shy away from any discomfort. We would rather bow before Nebuchadnezzar's image than face a fiery furnace. This is why a lot of saved people are unfaithful to church. This is why a lot of saved people are out of church. This is why a lot of saved people do not stand up for Christ. Why? To avoid the furnace. To avoid the scorn of the Nebuchadnezzar's of this world. To avoid the accusations of the ungodly.

It's time we had the convictions and the faith to say, "God can deliver me, BUT IF NOT, if God chooses NOT to deliver me from the furnace, I still will not bow down before your idol. I will not renounce my faith and I will not back down on my convictions!"

III. WHEN GOD DOES NOT DELIVER US FROM THE TRIAL, WE MUST TRUST HIS WILL.

Whatever God does or allows in the Christian's life will be for His glory and our good, in that order. Our good will never come before His glory. The glory of God and His purpose is always more important than what I think is good for me.

We have to get rid of the "stinkin' thinkin'" that God is our servant. God does not exist to serve us and make sure we are comfortable, and keep our tea glass full, and keep bad things from happening to us. God is not our servant - we are God's servants! We

exist to do His will. He is the King, we are the soldiers. He is the Lord and we are the servants. He is the Boss and we are the workers. He is the Father and we are the children.

In war, the General's primary concern is in winning the battle, not in the comfort of his soldiers. In God's great plans for mankind, His purpose is more important than our comfort. We need to realize that and deal with it accordingly.

When you have to do something uncomfortable, remember that Christ's cross was not comfortable, but He bore it and died on it anyway to do the Father's will.

If God does not deliver me from the trial, then I must trust that His purpose will be for His glory and my good. **(Rom 8:28) "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."**

Why does God allow the fiery furnace in our lives?

1. To deal with the unsaved.

God was going to use this fiery furnace episode to deal with the hardened heart of a pagan king. God tried to deal with him using the dream and Daniel's interpretation, but it didn't get through. God is going to prove that He is real with a miracle in the lives of these three Jewish men.

Through their trial, this lost man saw the Son of God. **(Dan 3:24-25) "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. {25} He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."**

God is more concerned about getting a lost person saved from hell than He is about our comfort zone. The worst I could suffer in this life is nothing compared to one

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second in hell. When you are in a trial, look for some way to be a witness for Christ. That may be the whole purpose for your trial. God may have to put us in a hospital bed to win a soul in the bed next to us.

2. To purify our faith.

➤ **(1 Pet 1:6-8) "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: {7} That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: {8} Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:"**

The trial of our faith, when we endure it patiently, will purify our faith. It will cause us to love Christ more, and increase our joy.

3. To bring us to our knees.

The only time some of us pray is when we are facing a fiery furnace. If we would walk with God like we should, He wouldn't have to stir our lives up as often to get us to spend time in prayer.

4. To make us more like Jesus.

➤ **(Phil 3:10) "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"**

We do not like what Paul said about the **"fellowship of His sufferings."** But before the crown came the cross. **(Phil 2:5-8) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: {6} Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: {7} But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the**

form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: {8} And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

5. To help other Christians.

I am sure that there were other Jews who saw what Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego did, and saw their courage and their faithfulness, and took courage themselves to do right. Their decision certainly helped others to serve God without fear. It led to a kingly proclamation: **(Dan 3:29) "Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."**

You never know how God can use your furnace to help other Christians. You may never know who is watching how you act and react to the problems and difficulties in your life. You may never know the far-reaching results of your victory over the fiery furnace!

IV. GOD DID NOT DELIVER THEM *FROM* THE TRIAL, BUT *THROUGH* THE TRIAL.

God made them fire-proof:

- **(Dan 3:23-25) "And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. {24} Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. {25} He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the**

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fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace, he got a glimpse of Jesus Christ! Somehow, God revealed to the pagan mind of the king that this was **"the Son of God."**

God brought them through the trial, and kept them from even getting singed. If we will be faithful through the trial, and not fight it, or argue with God about it, we can come through the trial and not even smell like smoke. It is when we fight against the furnace that we get burned.

God delivered Daniel through the lion's den. God delivered Joseph through his trials. God delivered David through his years of hardship. God may not deliver you from your trial, but He will go with you through the trial. The furnace isn't so bad if the Son of God is there with me.

People often look around at this world and wonder why God would allow such bad things to happen. The real question is why God didn't just destroy everything and send us all to hell. God did not deliver this world from sorrow, not yet. But the Son of God came into this world and became the **"man of sorrows, acquainted with grief" (Is. 53:3)**. God came into this furnace of a world and suffered everything than man can suffer.

God does not promise to deliver us from every trial, but if we are faithful, He will go through the trial with us!

V. THEY WERE READY FOR THE TRIAL BEFORE THE TRIAL BEGAN.

They had already settled their convictions. And these convictions had not changed over the previous twenty years. How many preachers can make such a claim? It is hard to find preachers these days who still hold to the same convictions they held to when they began their ministries. These men had settled some things and held fast to those decisions.

The furnace is no place for someone out of God's will. The servants of the king were not ready, and they were killed by the heat of the furnace after throwing the men in.

Most Christians are not spiritually prepared for the furnace when it comes. Christians who can't even get themselves to church three times a week are not going to handle the furnace. They might even bow down to the golden idol to avoid it. People who are not faithful to God before the furnace is heated will not be faithful when it is *seven times hotter* than usual.

You need to settle your convictions ahead of time. You need to be spiritually strengthened and Scripturally educated so that when the trial comes you recognize it and deal with it properly. We need to do so BEFORE the trial begins!

VI. GOD BLESSED THEIR FAITHFULNESS IN THE FURNACE.

It led to the conversion of a king. Not then, but if had a part in Nebuchadnezzar's eventual salvation. Had they bowed to the image, I doubt that the king would have ever been reached for Christ.

It led to a empire-wide witness by Nebuchadnezzar. **(Dan 4:1-3) "Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. {2} I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. {3} How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation."**

It led to the promotion of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. **(Dan 3:30) "Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon."**

God blesses those who are faithful in the furnace. God blessed Joseph. God blessed David. God blessed Daniel. God will bless you if you will be an "If Not" kind of Christian.

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Do you have enough strength behind your convictions that you would go through the fiery furnace before you would deny your God or deny your convictions?

Are you willing to change your thinking and realize that you are to serve God, and God is not your servant? Are you willing to trust that whatever God allows in your life is for His glory first, and then for your good?

Lessons from the Book of Daniel



The Nabonidus Stele

Nabonidus was known to be the king on the throne at the time of the Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon. However, in 1854 archaeologist Sir Henry Rawlinson found an inscription, while excavating at ancient Ur, which stated that Nabonidus associated with him on his throne his eldest son, "Bel-shar-usur", and allowed him the royal title.²⁰ This, of course, confirmed the Bible story in Daniel, which revealed that Belshazzar was the final Babylonian king who read "the writing on the wall."



The Cyrus Cylinder

"...I am Cyrus. King of the world. When I entered Babylon...I did not allow anyone to terrorize the land...I kept in view the needs of the people and all its sanctuaries to promote their well-being...I put an end to their misfortune. The Great God has delivered all the lands into my hand; the lands that I have made to dwell in a peaceful habitation..."²¹

Chapter Seven

DANIEL'S PRIZE

(Dan 4:1-5) "Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. {2} I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. {3} How great *are* his signs! and how mighty *are* his wonders! his kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion *is* from generation to generation. {4} I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: {5} I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me."

Chapter four is a letter sent by Nebuchadnezzar throughout his realm, shortly before his death. In this letter, he explains why he had been insane for seven years, and relates his conversion to a believer in the LORD God of Israel. He explains how he came to know **"the high God,"** the God of Daniel. He explains a dream that had been given him, Daniel's wise but rejected counsel, and his own humiliating experience which led to his salvation.

Some people have to be broken before they can be saved. Nebuchadnezzar is an example of God's judgment upon the hardened heart of a proud and obstinate man. He finishes his letter with the statement, **"Those that walk in pride he is able to abase."** This statement is the key to the chapter.

Nebuchadnezzar died shortly after chapter four, in 561 B.C. Daniel had been in Babylon for about 45 years. He was a man of around 60 years of age. Nebuchadnezzar was a grizzled old man of about 69-70 years of age.

How seldom do men of that age get saved! Most people get saved between the ages of 6 and 12. Statistics tell us that 85% of

those who do not get saved by age 18 never do. Rarely do those over 60 get converted. Usually, they are too set in their ways and their religious ideas, too hardened to the gospel, and too proud to repent and believe. Extremely rare is the conversion of an older man who has enjoyed great power or wealth throughout his life. Like Nebuchadnezzar, they are surrounded by high walls of pride.

However, here is a Bible example of a man who was saved shortly before his death. We must not forget, however, that this conversion was preceded by 42 years of faithful witnessing by Daniel.

I. THE KING'S PUZZLE (4:4-18).

This event happened eight years before, when he was 61 years old. He was enjoying the restful days of a quiet kingdom. **(Dan 4:4) "I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:"** For the second time, God sent him a dream, the difference being that he could remember the substance of the dream, but did not understand its meaning. This dream troubled him deeply. **(Dan 4:5) "I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me."**

Once again, the worldly wise-men of Babylon were consulted, but could not provide the answer. **(Dan 4:6-7) "Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. {7} Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof."**

Once again, Daniel stepped forward with God's Word. **(Dan 4:8-9) "But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying, {9} O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no**

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secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof."

Why did Daniel come in last? I believe Daniel, as their chief, told them all to go first. He wanted to show the king the foolishness of their worldly wisdom. Then, he stepped forward with God's wisdom.

Nebuchadnezzar could see the excellence of Daniel's character, but had not yet understood its source. He gave the credit to **"the spirit of the holy gods,"** not Jehovah God. It is important to note that Daniel's life was marked by true holiness, so that Nebuchadnezzar associated him with the **"spirit of the holy gods,"** not the dirty or filthy gods of the pagans. Would anyone associate your life with a *holy* God?

Nebuchadnezzar then told Daniel his dream:

- **(Dan 4:10-18) "Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof *was* great. {11} The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: {12} The leaves thereof *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. {13} I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; {14} He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: {15} Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth: {16} Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him: and let seven times pass over**

him. {17} This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. {18} This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou *art* able; for the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee."

II. THE KING'S PRIDE (4:18-30).

God had focused His attention on the great, swollen, obstinate pride in the heart of Nebuchadnezzar. Twice, Nebuchadnezzar had been introduced to the fact that God ruled over him and his kingdom, and had set him up in his place of power, and could remove him at His pleasure. He did so when Daniel interpreted his first dream, and then He showed His mighty power when He thwarted the king's attempt to burn Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. Still, Nebuchadnezzar persisted in his pride.

Let's see Daniel's interpretation, and then his courageous counsel to the king:

- (Dan 4:19-26) "Then Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. {20} The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; {21} Whose leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all; under which

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the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: {22} It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. {23} And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let his portion be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; {24} This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: {25} That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. {26} And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule."

The king did not ask for counsel, but Daniel was going to give it anyway. In this, we see his Christ like compassion for Nebuchadnezzar. He does not want to see this come to pass. He wants to see the king spared this great punishment. (Dan 4:27) **"Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."**

As Christians, we cannot make anyone trust Christ as Saviour, but we can warn them. (Col 1:28) **"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus..."** As a pastor, I

cannot make anyone listen to the good counsel of God's Word, or to me as their undershepherd, but I can give the warning:

- **(Ezek 3:17-21)** "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. {18} When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. {19} Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. {20} Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. {21} Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul."

Nebuchadnezzar, however, ignored the wise counsel of Daniel. Human nature is so hard to understand. Why didn't Nebuchadnezzar listen? After all that God had done in his life, and after these miraculous interventions and warnings on his behalf, yet he continued on his stubborn way. He was to learn the hard way the lesson of **Proverbs 29:1** - "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

III. THE KING'S PUNISHMENT (4:31-33).

- **(Dan 4:28-30)** "All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. {29} At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. {30}

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The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"

Can you see this great king standing atop the highest terrace in the Hanging Gardens, looking around at the incredible splendor of that ancient city, which he had built out of a mud flat on the Euphrates River? **"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"**

He was stuck on himself. He gave himself all the glory, ignoring God's revelation that He had raised up Nebuchadnezzar and given him all of these things.

We can get the same way. "Look at this beautiful home and these beautiful things that I have earned and bought! Look at my beautiful children that I have raised by my own wisdom and ability! Look at my great company that I built from the ground up! Look at my great ministry and the numbers of people that follow me!"

And we forget that without Jesus Christ we could do *nothing*!

God gives us a little success, and then we go around bragging on it, and the Spirit of God is grieved. That's the fast road to losing God's power in your life.

- **(Dan 4:31-33) "While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. {32} And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. {33} The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws*."**

Can you see the great king Nebuchadnezzar out in the field, his long gray hair like an animal's, eating grass like an ox? Is this the mighty king that conquered the Assyrian Empire, and Egypt, and Judah, and a host of kingdoms and nations?

If God needs to break someone, He can. Many never yield despite it, but God can get a hold of a man or a woman if He wants to.

I believe that many of the mental and emotional problems we see today are a result of persistent sin, especially pride, selfishness, and lust. Not only will these sins mess with your mind and heart, they will open doors to devilish influence in your life. The Maniac of Gadera didn't get in that condition helping little old ladies across the street. He got in that condition because he gave himself over to sin, and found the devil to be a harsh taskmaster. Saved people cannot be devil-possessed, but they can be oppressed, and they can **"give place to the devil"** in their lives. I have seen things in the lives of professing Christians that can only be described as devilish.

It may be that some are encircled by a band of iron and brass until they repent and get right with God about some area of stubborn sin. God might even take away their sanity until they repent.

IV. THE KING'S PRAISE (4:34-37).

- **(Dan 4:34-35)** "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: {35} And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

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When his sanity returned, Nebuchadnezzar looked up to heaven, and praised the God of Daniel! Then, his leaders returned to him, and again honored him as their great king. Nebuchadnezzar, however, only sought to **“praise and extol and honour the King of heaven!”**

- **(Dan 4:36-37) "At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. {37} Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."**

Nebuchadnezzar died about one year later. Nothing else is recorded about his life or even his death in the Bible. His last recorded words were words of praise and honor and glory to the King of heaven!

When we feel tempted to strut and brag, even just to ourselves, even just in our own minds, let us be mindful of the pride and fall of Nebuchadnezzar.

Lessons from the Book of Daniel



Above: representations from the Ishtar gate. Below: Rebuilt Ishtar Gate in Babylon.



Chapter Eight

DANIEL'S PROCLAMATION

(Dan 5:1-4) "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. {2} Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. {3} Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. {4} They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone."

Twenty-five years separate the end of Daniel chapter four and the beginning of chapter five. The great king Nebuchadnezzar has been dead for about twenty-four of those years. He died about one year after his letter of praise to the Lord was sent throughout the Empire, and this converted king went to heaven.

After his death, there were five more kings of Babylon. Belshazzar, of whom we read, was the last. He was actually co-regent with his father, Nabonidas. Until 1853, no other historical evidence had ever been found to show that Belshazzar had ever lived, much less served as king of Babylon. This was used by critics to attack the historical accuracy of Daniel. However, in 1853, a cornerstone of a temple was uncovered with the following inscription, made by Nabonidas: "May I, Nabonidas, king of Babylon, not sin against thee. And may reverence for thee dwell in the heart of Belshazzar, my first-born, favorite son."²² Of course, the Bible was right all along.

Daniel, at this time, was a very old man. He had been in Babylon for seventy years. Based on our assumption from the beginning of our study, he would have been 84 years old. Now, as an old man, he is going to be a witness to the fulfillment of his own prophecies, as God brings the great Empire of Babylon down to the dust.

I. THE KING AND HIS PARTY.

Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar's faith had not influenced future generations of his descendants for the Lord. Upon his death, they returned to their pagan ways, and the worship of their pagan god, Bel.

Belshazzar threw a great, drunken party. **(Dan 5:1) "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand."** Archaeologists have uncovered this great banquet hall in Babylon. Here, Belshazzar held a feast with a thousands of his lords, and their wives, concubines and consorts. You can imagine the boisterous crowd as they reveled in their drunkenness, enjoying the seemingly endless prosperity of their empire. Little did they know that before the night was over the Empire of Babylon would be gone, and their drunken king would be dead!

This banquet is an accurate picture of the unsaved world. They say, like the rich man with the bumper crop in the Lord's parable, **(Luke 12:19) "...Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."** But God told him, **(Luke 12:20) "...Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"** Paul summarized the world's philosophy - **(1 Cor 15:32) "...let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."**

They know that they are going to die – tomorrow! Never do they think that they could die TODAY! Because it is, in their minds, a far off event not to be worried about now, they do not prepare for eternity. Life is spent in the pursuit of selfish pleasure, power,

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ambition, and lust. Belshazzar the drunken king learned that “to morrow” might actually be TODAY. He died with liquor on his breath.

It was not enough to merely have a drunken party. Belshazzar proceeded to blaspheme the LORD God of Israel.

- **(Dan 5:2-4) "Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. {3} Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. {4} They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone."**

To mock the God that his grandfather had praised, Belshazzar had the vessels of Solomon's Temple brought in, and they used them to drink their filthy liquor from. These vessels were sacred, holy, to be touched and handled only by the priests and Levites in their sacred order. Belshazzar filled them with liquor, and passed them out so that even his concubines drank from them. Then, they toasted the senseless idols of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone. They praised each as being victorious over the God of the Jews.

He was trying to show the triumph of Bel over Jehovah. His actions were blasphemous. They were insulting the God of the universe by prostituting these sacred vessels, and touching them in wicked hands and wicked lips.

Why did Belshazzar do this on this day? I think that perhaps he was celebrating what he thought was a victory over Jewish prophecy. Everyone knew that Jeremiah had prophesied that Babylon would be overthrown seventy years after they had conquered Jerusalem:

- **(Jer 25:12-13) "And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. {13} And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, *even* all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations."**

This was the last day of that seventy year timeframe. Belshazzar was saying, "See, here it is the last night, and there is no way that my great kingdom will fall in one night! The Bible is not true! The Jewish prophets are false! Bel is greater than Jehovah!"

But when God says seventy years, He means seventy years! He is never early and never late, and He doesn't need much time to bring nations to their knees! He can even do it in one night!

II. THE HAND AND ITS MESSAGE.

- **(Dan 5:5) "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."**

No one but the king saw this hand. This hand was unattached to a visible arm. It just appeared over by the candlestick, in the light. This hand began writing on the plaster of the wall, while the king watched in shocked amazement. **(Dan 5:6) "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."** He is not quite so boastful now, is he?

Like Nebuchadnezzar had always done until the end, Belshazzar immediately called for his worldly wisemen. **(Dan 5:7) "The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a**

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chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Can you imagine the king rising from his seat, trembling, and crying aloud over the noise and din of the drunken party. Can you imagine one thousand lords and their wives and concubines stopping in mid-sentence, as the king began calling for his wise men?

No doubt, the wise men were confident in their ability to read the handwriting on the wall. However, none could do so. God hid its meaning from their minds. **(Dan 5:8) "Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof."**

In the same way, the wisdom of God's word is hidden to the mind of the natural man, no matter how educated or intelligent he might be. Paul said, **(1 Cor 2:14) "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."** A man might know the basic facts about the Bible, and memorize the theological terms, but unless he is Spirit-born and Spirit-led, he cannot understand the Word of God. This is why there are so many false churches and cults and false theologies. Worldly wisemen cannot read the writing on the wall.

The handwriting on the wall was a definite wet blanket on their party - **(Dan 5:9) "Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished."** They just sat there, like stone statues.

III. THE QUEEN AND HER COUNSEL.

- **(Dan 5:10) "Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:"**

The queen was not a part of the drunken, blasphemous feast. It is possible that she was a convert to faith in the LORD. As such, she separated herself from the wickedness of this palace event. She said, **(Dan 5:11) "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;"**

This reminds us of the words of Arioch the captain, **"I have found a man."** The queen said, **"There is a man in thy kingdom."** We need such men in our churches, neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and government positions. "There is a man who knows God here!"

Twenty-five years later, Daniel was still known for his holiness, and for his light and understanding and wisdom. In fact, they said that he had **"the wisdom of the gods."** She reminded Belshazzar that Nebuchadnezzar had made Daniel the master of his cabinet of spiritual advisers. **(Dan 5:12) "Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Beltshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation."**

Daniel was a man with **"an excellent spirit."** How we should strive to have an excellent spirit! Such an attitude glorifies God. **(1 Cor 6:20) "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."**

He was also known for his great knowledge and understanding, for his ability to interpret dreams and explain hard sentences, and for dissolving doubts. Where did this wisdom come from? It came from God. The Bible gives us wisdom.

She advised that Belshazzar call Daniel, believing that he could explain the handwriting on the wall.

IV. THE PROPHET AND HIS PROCLAMATION.

- (Dan 5:13) "Then was Daniel brought in before the king. *And* the king spake and said unto Daniel, *Art* thou that Daniel, which *art* of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?"

This shows us that Belshazzar did not even know Daniel by sight. He had wanted nothing to do with the Jews or their God.

- (Dan 5:14-16) "I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. {15} And now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not show the interpretation of the thing: {16} And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom."

"I have even heard of thee." Many have heard of Christ, but they do not know Him. They have heard rumors and claims, but they do not really know the truth about Him. It is up to us to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Try to imagine Daniel as he walked into the banquet hall. He is probably eighty-four years old. Men over eighty don't care what anyone thinks. Tough young men grow into really tough old men. He wasn't the least bit intimidated by this young whipper-snapper king.

Daniel looked around at the lewdness, the idolatry, and the lasciviousness in the room. He saw the golden vessels of Solomon's Temple filled with dirty alcohol, in the hands of wicked people. He looked at the wall and knew immediately what it said and what it meant. In my imagination, I see the little smile at the edge of

Daniel's mouth. Belshazzar is NOT going to like what Daniel has to say!

Daniel offered not a word of flattery, but coldly refused any benefit or gift from the king. He did not say, "Live forever." He knew that the king would be dead within a few hours.

- **(Dan 5:17) "Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation."**

Daniel was a free man – the Lord's freeman! (1 Cor 7:22) **"For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman..."** He could not be bought, intimidated, manipulated, or influenced – because there was nothing he wanted that the king could offer. His affections were on things above, not on things below.

He then reminded Belshazzar of how God had dealt with Nebuchadnezzar. He preached a real revival sermon, to more than 1000 people.

- **(Dan 5:18-21) "O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: {19} And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. {20} But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: {21} And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and *that* he appointeth over it whomsoever he will."**

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The old man then took Belshazzar to task:

- **(Dan 5:22-24) "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; {23} But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: {24} Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written."**

No one was saying anything. Everyone was on the edge of their seats. Daniel then interpreted the meaning of the handwriting: **(Dan 5:25) "And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN."**

1. **(Dan 5:26) "This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it."** The seventy years are up, right on time. We say now, "His days are numbered." Babylon's days were numbered, and finished. MENE was listed twice for emphasis. God's purpose was determined and would not change.
2. **(Dan 5:27) "TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."** Babylon didn't measure up. God was short-changed.

There is a lot of great preaching to be had in this verse. The great pastor, J. Frank Norris, was saved as a boy when an old Methodist preacher named Oswalt preached from this text at a brush arbor meeting on a warm Texas night. Norris said many years later: "There wasn't any homiletics about it at all, but when he gave the invitation, I hit the ground, and the other boys did too, and we went up to the old-fashioned altar, and there were a lot of sinners – real, hard, old-fashioned sinners, and the altar was filled, and a large number saved."²³

The whole world has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Every lost sinner is weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

3. **(Dan 5:28) "PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."** They were, even then, just outside the walls.

Belshazzar was so struck that he immediately, with resignation, fulfilled his promise. **(Dan 5:29) "Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom."**

Daniel didn't want it, but he was actually a king for a few hours. This may have helped position him in God's providence for the arrival of Cyrus.

V. THE KINGDOM AND ITS FALL.

- **(Dan 5:30-31) "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. {31} And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."**

Belshazzar threw his feast and mocked the Lord and His Word. "Seventy years are up! Nothing happened! Babylon still rules the world!" That same night, Babylon was taken and Belshazzar was killed.

How did this happen in a night? The Greek historian, Herodotus, tells us that Cyrus actually diverted the Euphrates River, which went through the walls of Babylon. With the river diverted, his army was able to enter the city walls, where they found the armies drunken and unable to fight.²⁴ Thus, the great city of Babylon fell without a fight into the hands of the Medes and Persians.

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The United States may seem invincible with our mighty armies and technology and economy. It may seem that no power in the universe could bring us to our knees. But if our nation does not see a revival of righteousness, there is a God in heaven that can put down this great nation, and He can do so overnight if He chooses!

Lessons from the Book of Daniel



Persian warriors.



Xerxes, the great king of Persia.

Lesson Nine

DANIEL'S PRESIDENCY

(Dan 6:1-5) "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; {2} And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. {3} Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. {4} Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. {5} Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God."

Chapter five ended with the fall of the Babylonian Empire, conquered in a night by the armies of the Medes and Persians. The scripture says that Darius the Median then took the kingdom at the age of sixty-two. **(Dan 5:31) "And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."**

We know that Cyrus the Great was the king that conquered Babylon. Who is this man called **"Darius the Median?"** He is **not** the king Darius mentioned in the Book of Ezra. The king mentioned by Ezra was Darius the Great, who was the grandson of Cyrus and whose reign began in 522 B.C.

Darius the Mede may have been the father-in-law and uncle of Cyrus, and the last king of the Median side of the Empire. He conquered Babylon for Cyrus, and ruled over it until Cyrus' arrival. Notice the careful wording of Daniel 9:1: **"In the first year of**

Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans..." The scripture is clear that Darius the Mede was made or appointed a provincial king under Cyrus. So, in these chapters you have Darius, an older man, setting up the organization of the province or kingdom of Babylon for his son-in-law, who returned about three years later.

The Empire of Persia was the largest ever in world history to that point. At its zenith, it extended from the gates of Europe to Egypt to India. It lasted for approximately two hundred years, before falling to Alexander the Great.

Here, again, we find the providential hand of God – for He already has Daniel in place, to take a prominent role in the governing of this great Empire. Three Jews were promoted to positions of world leadership:

1. Joseph, in Egypt.
2. Daniel, in Babylon and Persia.
3. Mordecai, in Persia.

Historians tell us that one week after the fall of Babylon, Cyrus visited the city before leaving again for the wars, leaving Darius the Mede in charge. I have a strong feeling that Daniel had a special message for the new king. I believe that he went in and showed Cyrus some very personal passages of scripture, written by Isaiah more than 170 years before:

- **(Isa 44:24-28) "Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; {25} That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise *men* backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; {26} That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: {27} That**

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saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: {28} That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

- (Isa 45:1-6) "Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; {2} I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: {3} And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. {4} For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. {5} I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: {6} That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else."

Can you imagine the impression that this 170-year-old prophecy had on Cyrus? In a moment, Cyrus was introduced to the God of Daniel, Who had named him before his birth.

We do know what happened next. Cyrus issued his decree that the Temple of Jerusalem be rebuilt:

- (Ezra 1:1-3) "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, {2} Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the

kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. {3} Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he *is* the God,) which *is* in Jerusalem."

I believe that Daniel was faithful as a soulwinner to present this witness to Cyrus, showing him God's special message for himself, and that this led Cyrus to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the Temple in the first year of his reign. May we always be faithful to witness to lost souls! Though their names are not in the Bible, the glorious word "whosoever" is – making God's promises personal for everyone in the world!

I. DANIEL'S PROMOTION.

- **(Dan 6:1-2) "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; {2} And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel *was* first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage."**

This was the policy of Cyrus the Great, who is considered one of the greatest organizational geniuses of history. Cyrus held together a vast empire, the largest the world had seen, through such great organization, combined with a policy of tolerance towards his conquered subjects.²⁵ He was known for his willingness to allow the nations and people groups to continue on in their religions and even allowed them a significant amount of self-government, so long as they respected his overruling authority and paid their tributes.

Darius, therefore, began setting up the kingdom of Babylon under this policy, dividing it into 120 provinces, each with its own prince or administrator. Over these 120 princes were three presidents. These presidents served directly under the king. The 120 princes had to report and give an account of their business to their

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respective president, who was charged with making absolutely sure that the king's business was being handled properly.

Daniel was chosen to be the first or chief of this board of three presidents. Darius was even considering promoting him to be over the entire kingdom, as a sort of Prime Minister. Why was Daniel promoted to such a prominent position? **(Dan 6:3) "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm."**

Daniel had an excellent spirit. As a young man, he had been found ten times better than the worldly crowd; now, as an old man in his eighties, he is still excelling all the others because of his spirit and character. Your *attitude* will determine your *altitude* in life.

Daniel also had integrity. **(Dan 6:4) "...he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."** He had rock-solid character. There were no errors or faults to be found in his personal life or professional life. He was above reproach. **(Prov 20:7) "The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him."**

Daniel was a faithful man, a man with an excellent spirit, and he just kept rising to his character level. So will you and I. If you are not where you want to be in life, begin working on the one person you can most easily influence and change – yourself.

II. THE PRINCE'S PLOT.

➤ **(Dan 6:4) "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."**

These politicians didn't want Daniel interfering with their business. They wanted to pad their invoices and pocket some bribes and pursue their special interests, and they knew that if Daniel was in charge they wouldn't get away with any graft or dishonesty.

Lessons from the Book of Daniel

Politics has always been a dirty business. These carnal men, when given power, used their positions to further their own selfish goals.

Daniel, because of his honesty and character, his diligence in overseeing the king's business, was a major threat to that power. I have no doubt that Daniel was a strict overseer. When someone was found to be dishonest, they were out. He didn't put up with any nonsense. He couldn't be touched by bribes or tempted by greed.

Besides that, these men didn't like the idea of Daniel being promoted over themselves. They were moved with envy. There are three ways to earn the envy of your coworkers, your neighbors, your relatives, your preacher friends, and even people within your own church:

1. Do more.
2. Know more.
3. Have more.

When you do more, know more, and/or have more than others, they will envy your position. They won't work harder to get there themselves; they are small and petty people who envy those are successful while excusing their own shortcomings. It is one thing to be *narrow*-minded, and another thing to be *small*-minded. People plagued by feelings of jealousy are by nature small-minded and narrow-hearted.

A truly bighearted person does not care if someone has a bigger house or a nicer car or a bigger business or a larger church. A true great heart is too busy being all he can be to worry too much about what someone else is or what they have or what they do.

If you are successful in your education, in your career, in your calling, in your work, or in any area of life, some are going to envy that success. And some will try to tear you down.

These princes and presidents started holding secret meetings, like deacons sometimes do when the pastor is out of town. They began looking for dirt on Daniel to use against him. They hired private detectives to comb through his past. Surely, a man can't live

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84 years without having some skeletons in the closet! **(Dan 6:4)** "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."

Politics is still a dirty business. The first thing they do when they start a campaign is look for dirt on the other candidate. They are all crooked one way or another.

They could not find one bone in Daniel's closet, much less a skeleton. No indiscretions. No illegitimate kids. No mistresses. No old photographs. No stolen money. There were no accounts that didn't match up. There was nothing! Why? Because "**he was faithful.**" Faithfulness solves a lot of problems. Unfaithfulness causes a lot of problems. Do what you are supposed to do, and you won't have to worry about things coming back to haunt you in the future!

These presidents and princes then decided to use Daniel's own faith against him. **(Dan 6:5)** "Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God." What a great testimony to the faith and faithfulness of Daniel! They were saying, "We are going to have to use his own faith against him, because there is no way that we are going to get him to go against his faith."

They then hatched a dishonest plot, and flattered the king into signing it into law. **(Dan 6:6-7)** "Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. {7} All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions."

They lied. They said, "All the presidents of the kingdom." Daniel didn't sign off on this. He was one of the three presidents,

but he had been kept out of the loop. They said, “We are all in this together.”

It reminds me of how people sometimes approach pastors about things in the church. One man said to me, “Pastor, a bunch of us were wondering about...” I said, “Who?” He said, “Well, me and this other man.” I didn’t know that two men constituted a bunch of anything.

They appealed to his pride. “No one can pray to anyone or anything or make any petitions except to you for thirty days.” They included their own gods to keep from showing their hand. Had Darius realized their intention, he would have never gone through with signing this law.

Unfortunately, the king made a pompous and rash decision. **(Dan 6:8-9) "Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. {9} Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree."**

Be careful what you sign! Don’t rush into important decisions. **(Prov 19:2) "Also, *that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.*"** Take the time to think it through. Darius did not.

III. THE KING’S PREDICAMENT.

You know the old question: What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object? That’s exactly what happened in Daniel 6!

- **(Dan 6:10) "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."**

He didn’t change his habits one bit. He knew the decree. But he went and prayed anyway, just as he had always done, three times a

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day, on his knees looking towards Jerusalem. Can you see his enemies gathered across the street, with binoculars, watching his window? **(Dan 6:11) "Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God."**

They immediately ran to the king, wringing their hands with glee. **(Dan 6:12-13) "Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask *a petition* of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. {13} Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which *is* of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day."**

The king immediately understood what he had done. The plot was laid bare. **(Dan 6:14) "Then the king, when he heard *these* words, was sore displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him."** He had buyers remorse. Darius then called his attorney general and his legal counsel in, and worked all day trying to find a loophole. But there was no way around the law of the Medes and Persians that the king's law could not be overthrown, not even by himself. **(Dan 6:15) "Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians *is*, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed."**

Daniel was then cast into the den of lions. **(Dan 6:16-17) "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast *him* into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. {17} And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel."**

Darius knew Daniel, and knew his God. **“Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.”** Daniel had been a faithful witness.

They put him in that cave with those starving, raving lions, and sealed the door with a great stone. **(Dan 6:18) "Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him."** How guilty he must have felt! What sorrow he must have suffered through the long dark night! What he didn't realize is that man's extremity is God's opportunity.

IV. THE LORD'S PROTECTION.

➤ **(Dan 6:19-20) "Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. {20} And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"**

I think maybe Daniel was a little irritated with the king for being so foolish. Maybe he made the king wait a few seconds before he answered. **(Dan 6:21-22) "Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. {22} My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."**

The angel of the LORD is often a reference to a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ in the Old Testament. I believe that just as Christ was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, he was with Daniel in the lion's den. The Lord Jesus is called **“the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.”** The lions probably started growling at Daniel, but the Lion of Judah showed up and silenced them. He told them to lay down and be still! I don't know but that Daniel didn't sleep with his head pillowed on the mane of a purring lion, with his feet propped up on another.

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- **(Dan 6:23) "Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God."**

Someone has said that the reason the lions didn't eat Daniel was because he was all backbone and gristle. I'll say amen to that. His faith **"subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions"** (Heb 11:33).

This was followed by two breakfasts. While Daniel and Darius are enjoying their breakfast, those lions were enjoying theirs. They were hungry. They'd been smelling that Jew all night, but the Lord wouldn't let them do anything but sniff. **(Dan 6:24) "And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den."** The king's servants started throwing those lying conspirators into the den, and those lions had a field day on them.

We need to get over our fear of man and lions. **(Prov 29:25) "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe."** In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian saw two great lions ahead, roaring fearfully. His path led directly between these two roaring lions, with no other way around. Not willing to return to the City of Destruction, Christian bravely marched forward. The closer he got, the more ferocious the lions seemed. Finally, when he was between them, he saw that they were both chained, and unable to reach him as long as he was on the path. Even so, the lions in our lives are on chains, as long as we are faithful to the will of God!

Darius then wrote a letter praising the God of Daniel, and warning men to fear before Him. **(Dan 6:25-27) "Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. {26} I make a**

decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he *is* the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion *shall be even* unto the end. {27} He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."

There is a vivid comparison to be appreciated between Daniel in the lions' den and the death, burial and resurrection of Christ:

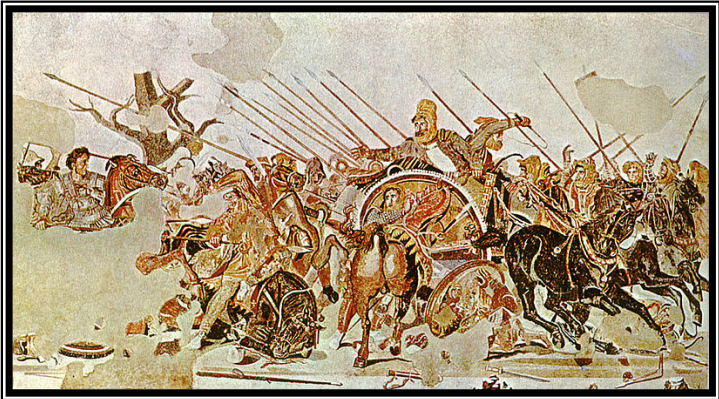
1. An unchangeable law sent Daniel into the lions' den. The unchangeable law of Moses sent Jesus to the cross for our sins.
2. Both were innocent.
3. Both were betrayed and sentenced by the religious priestcraft of their time.
4. Both were sealed in with a great stone.
5. Both the den and the grave were sealed with the mark of the government – Daniel was sealed in by Darius' ring, and Christ was sealed in the tomb by the Roman governor.
6. Both were brought forth by the mighty power of God.
7. Both had to be brought forth alive to prove their righteousness.
8. The law was satisfied in both cases. Daniel satisfied the requirements of Darius' law by being thrown into the lions' den. Christ is **“the end of the law”** for us (Rom. 10:4). The law was completely satisfied by His vicarious death, burial, and resurrection.
9. The enemies and conspirators against Daniel were destroyed by lions; the enemies of Christ will be destroyed at His Second Coming.
10. Daniel and Christ both prospered and reigned over the Gentiles.

This ends this section of our study called History and Prophecy. The next section involves Prophecy and History.

SECTION TWO

PROPHECY & HISTORY

Daniel Chapters Seven through Twelve

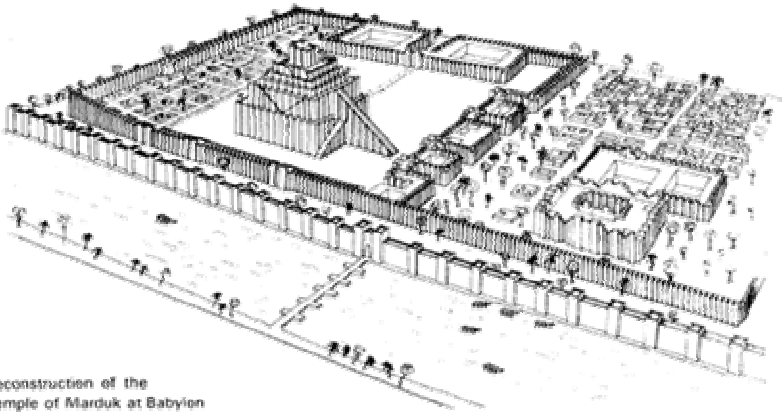


Lessons from the Book of Daniel



Above: An artist's depiction of the famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The artist added the Tower of Babel in the background.

Below: Reconstruction of the Temple of Marduk in ancient Babylon.



Reconstruction of the Temple of Marduk at Babylon

Chapter Ten

DANIEL'S PANORAMA

(Dan 7:1-3) "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, *and* told the sum of the matters. {2} Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. {3} And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another."

Chapter seven actually occurred eighteen years before chapter six, during the first year of Belshazzar's reign. At that time, Daniel had a vision in a dream, which he then wrote down. This dream, like that of Nebuchadnezzar many years before, concerned the rise of world empires and their eventual destruction, to be replaced by the eternal kingdom of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Daniel's dream was described in verses 3-14, and explained in verses 15-27.

Consider this chapter under three headings:

I. THE DEVIL'S MENAGERIE.

His vision began with a raging sea, from which came four dreadful beasts. **(Dan 7:2-3) "Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. {3} And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another."**

The troubled sea is a picture of the unsaved world. **(Isa 57:20) "But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."** It represents a world in commotion and distress, driven by winds from the four corners of the earth. Satan is the prince of the power of the air, as well as the dragon in the sea. He is the one that is constantly stirring up

revolution, war, upheaval, and distress among the nations of sinful men. Make no mistake: Satan wants everyone dead and in hell. He is the one leading humanity towards this abyss of eternal destruction.

“**The great sea**” refers to the Mediterranean Sea throughout the Scriptures. The world of much of the Bible surrounds this Sea, with Israel as the focal point.²⁶ The empires that Daniel will see, especially the last two, will be Mediterranean in nature.

Out of that mass of humanity came four beasts in succession. These beasts correspond to the “Vanity of Humanity” image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in chapter two. They represent empires over the world, led by selfish, ambitious men who conquered and destroyed everything in their paths.

Notice that these empires and their leaders are described as “**beasts.**” No nation has as its symbol or coat of arms the dove, a symbol of peace. They are all lions, bears, dragons, or birds of prey – carnivorous beasts. Thus, behind their magnificent architecture and their mighty, marching armies, is seen their true character – vicious, cruel, tyrannical in nature, destroying for selfish gain. This was the true character of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. It was the true character of Genghis Khan, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Saddam Hussein. Beasts, conquering, devouring, destroying.

These four beasts came out of the sea, diverse from one another. Each was different and distinct from the other, but each had the following in common:

- The same source – the troubled sea.
- The same nature – beasts.
- The same purpose – to devour and destroy.

Comparing this passage with chapter two, and using the explanation given to Daniel at the end of the chapter, it is easy to decipher who these beasts represent:

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1. **The winged lion represented Babylon, which at that time was still in power.** Nebuchadnezzar was the one whose wings were plucked, returning him painfully to earth, until his sanity was returned and his “**man’s heart**” was given back to him. **(Dan 7:4) "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it."**

2. **The bear represented the kingdom of the Medes and Persians.** It was raised up on one side, picturing the prominence of the Persians over the Medes. The three ribs represented the three great kingdoms they consumed in extending their empire: Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt. Countless died in these wars. **(Dan 7:5) "And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh."**

3. **The winged leopard represented the empire of Alexander the Great.** The leopard is a beast that strikes hard and fast; it is the swiftest of the kings mentioned. The wings are that of a fowl, as compared to the eagle’s wings on the Babylonian lion. This leopard could fly but not soar. Alexander conquered the known world in roughly ten years, but he never truly reigned as Nebuchadnezzar had done. One of his generals remarked to Alexander, “You have learned to conquer, but you have not learned how to rule.”²⁷

This beast also had four heads, representing the four generals who divided the Grecian Empire after Alexander’s death at age 32. **(Dan 7:6) "After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it."**

4. **The fourth beast was a monstrosity.** It is described as “**dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth.**” This monster corresponds to the cast-iron

legs in the “Vanity of Humanity” vision. It represents the mighty Roman Empire. The ten horns correspond to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. **(Dan 7:7) "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it; and it had ten horns."**

What a dreadful menagerie! Secular men praise these great empires for their so-called advancements, but this is how God saw them – as a succession of wild, vicious beasts turned loose on humanity!

II. THE DEVIL’S MAN.

- **(Dan 7:8) "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."**

This beast corresponds with a beast described in Revelation.

- **(Rev 13:1-4) "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. {2} And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. {3} And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. {4} And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"**

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This beast incorporated the first three beasts – the lion, the leopard, and the bear. It is the fruition of the spirit of antichrist. This beast is more than a kingdom, it is a man – the Beast, the Antichrist.

The Roman monster had ten horns. Daniel said, “I considered the horns.” They drew his attention. “Horns” refer to power throughout the Bible. As Daniel considered the horns, a little horn suddenly sprouted. **(Dan 7:8) "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."**

This little horn boasting great things is the blaspheming Beast of Revelation 13. I find it humorous that the mighty Beast of the future is described as a “little horn” with a big mouth. This is how God sees the world’s superman. When our infinite God looks down on the designs of men, and their proud boastings, as they shake their feeble little fists at the heavens – He only sees them as little horns with big mouths, and He laughs.

- **(Psa 2:1-5) "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? {2} The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, {3} Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. {4} He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. {5} Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."**

Daniel was deeply troubled by what he saw, and asked an angel for the meaning of it:

- **(Dan 7:15-22) "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me. {16} I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. {17} These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings, *which* shall**

arise out of the earth. {18} But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. {19} Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth *were of* iron, and his nails *of* brass; *which* devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; {20} And of the ten horns that *were* in his head, and *of* the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows. {21} I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; {22} Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

The angel then revealed the identity of the little horn:

- (Dan 7:23-25) "Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. {24} And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. {25} And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

These ten kings will come up in a revived Roman Empire. I do not believe that this has happened yet. I believe it will happen in the Tribulation, after the Rapture. Consider what John saw:

- (Rev 17:3) "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet

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coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."

This is the same Beast that Daniel saw. This beast is the Antichrist, ridden by the World Religious System, Mystery Babylon. Consider the ten kings mentioned by John:

- **(Rev 17:12-14) "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. {13} These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. {14} These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful."**

These verses indicate that during the Tribulation, the Beast will be the last king of a revived Roman Empire. There will be ten kings, which will give their power to the Beast, and combine their efforts against the Lord, Who will destroy them all. These things are not crystal clear – no prophesy is until *after* it comes to pass. However, for these kings to give their power to the beast, they must be alive at the time, and therefore cannot correspond to kings or nations in the past.

What is clear is that there is going to be a man named the Beast or the Antichrist, and he is going to be the devil's superman. He is going to rule the world during the Tribulation period, after the saved have been raptured out. He is going to blaspheme the name of God, and persecute those who are saved in the Tribulation period. He is going to "**wear out the saints of the most High.**" This refers to the Tribulation saints – those who will be saved *after* the Rapture.

Paul told us that he would come, after the Rapture. **(2 Th 2:6-12) "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. {7} For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. {8} And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: {9} *Even him*, whose**

coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, {10} And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. {11} And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: {12} That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

This last world ruler will be the consummation of Satan's world conquerors. He will be everything that the unsaved man wants in a leader. He will be a Superman to the secular and a Messiah to the religious. He will be what the world thinks that Jesus should have been. But he is just a Beast, a monster.

The Book of Daniel has a lot more to say about this "Man of sin," so we will suffice to introduce him in this chapter, and talk about him in more detail later. It does distress me, however, to find that many Christians are more interested in learning about the *Antichrist* than in learning about *Christ*. They seem more interested in the "Man of sin" than in the "Man of sorrows." May God forgive us for our lack of love for Christ!

III. THE DEVIL'S MAKER.

➤ (Dan 7:9-11) "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire. {10} A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. {11} I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."

The "Ancient of days" seen here is God the Father. He is sitting as the Judge of all the earth. His throne was like a flame of

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fire, and a fiery stream of brimstone came out before Him. This is a picture of God's judgment of unbelievers. You do not want to stand before that burning, fiery throne of judgment.

Two groups are mentioned:

1. **"Thousand thousands ministered unto him."** A thousand thousand is a million. Millions of people are serving the Father. These are the saved, the redeemed.
2. **"...And ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him..."** Ten thousand times ten thousand is one hundred million. I fear that this vast crowd represents the unsaved standing at the Great White Throne Judgment. They are standing and waiting for judgment.

"The judgment was set, and the books were opened." This refers to the most terrifying judgment of all – the Great White Throne Judgment. This will be the judgment of the unsaved:

- **(Rev 20:11-15) "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. {12} And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. {13} And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. {14} And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. {15} And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."**

At that day, God's library will be opened. In these books are written the deeds and sins of every person in history. The Word of God, the law, will be opened. But the most important book of all as far as these souls are concerned is the Lamb's Book of Life.

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Whoever is not found written in that Book will be cast into the lake of fire, to burn forever with the devil and his crowd!

In the final analysis, people do not go to heaven or hell because of their deeds. Those who go to heaven will go because their names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. They have been born again. They have been saved. They are forgiven on the basis of their faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Those who go to the lake of fire will do so, not because they were worse than others, but because their names are NOT found in the Book of Life. The only difference between those in heaven and those in hell is the LAMB. Reader, make sure your name is in that Book!

"I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." Thus, Daniel saw the utter destruction and perdition of that last, terrible beast. He saw the destruction of the Antichrist. John saw this as well: **(Rev 19:19-20)** **"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. {20} And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."**

Daniel then got to see the best part of all – the kingdom of the Son of God! **(Dan 7:13-14)** **"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. {14} And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."**

Here we see the Lord Jesus Christ coming in the clouds of heaven, coming to the Heavenly Father on the throne. **(1 Cor 15:24-28)** **"Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put**

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down all rule and all authority and power. {25} For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. {26} The last enemy *that shall be destroyed is death.* {27} For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.* {28} And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

This matches perfectly with: (Dan 2:44) "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*"

I'm glad I'm on the winning side! I'm glad I have the entirety of Scripture to instruct me and comfort me concerning these great truths. Daniel did not, and what he saw troubled him deeply. (Dan 7:28) "Hitherto *is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.*"

Oh, how this should challenge us to live right for God, and to make heroic efforts to carry the gospel around the world, and to be faithful soulwinners! We are on the winning side! It does not matter if this world is dominated by lions, bears, leopards, or monsters – our God is still on the throne! We are still on the winning side!

But how horrible is the fate of those who will stand before that burning throne when the books will be opened!

Lessons from the Book of Daniel



Above: A coin depicting Alexander the Great wearing an elephant skull helmet in his Persian campaigns. Below: This depiction of Alexander is considered his truest likeness.



Chapter Eleven

DANIEL'S PERPLEXITY

(Dan 8:27) "And I Daniel fainted, and was sick *certain* days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood *it*."

In chapter eight, God sent a vision which had such an impact on Daniel that he fainted and was physically sick for several days. Even after overcoming the sickness brought about by this experience, he continue to be astonished by it. He shared it with some trusted associates, but they were also at a loss to understand what he had seen.

Fortunately, we have the entirety of scripture to guide us in understanding Daniel chapter eight. We also have the privilege of looking back on history and the prophesies that have already been fulfilled. I believe that, with God's help, we can come to some clear conclusions about what he saw. However, parts of this chapter are considered among the most difficult in prophecy. Do not be discouraged if you do not understand some things – Daniel didn't. He was "**astonished.**"

In this vision, Daniel received more detailed information concerning three of the future kingdoms revealed in the preceding visions: Persia, Greece, and the kingdom of the Antichrist. God's revelation to Daniel was progressive and unfolding. He did not reveal everything at once.

The first 2 verses give us the backdrop of the chapter: **(Dan 8:1-2) "In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, *even unto* me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. {2} And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I *was* at Shushan *in* the palace,**

which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai."

This took place 2 years after chapter seven, in the third year of Belshazzar. Daniel was not actually in Shushan, but was transported there in his vision. Shushan was the capital of the Persian Empire. Esther, Mordecai, and Nehemiah would later live in that great city.

In his vision, he stood on the banks of the river of Ulai. He saw a tremendous vision of a ram being defeated by a goat. I call this chapter the **"Barnyard Brawl."**

Now, let's study the vision itself, as well as the divine interpretation:

I. THE VISION. (8:3-12)

➤ This vision had four aspects:

1. First, a two-horned ram.

➤ **(Dan 8:3-4) "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had *two* horns: and the *two* horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. {4} I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great."**

We are not left to wonder about this ram: this ram represents the Persian Empire. The two horns represent the Medes and the Persians – the Persians were the horn that "was higher than the other." **(Dan 8:20) "The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns are the kings of Media and Persia."**

The Persian Empire pushed north, south, and west – but not east. It conquered a great empire, and no one could stand against it for many years.

2. Second, a rough he-goat.

- **(Dan 8:5) "And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes."**

This goat represents Alexander the Great and the Grecian Empire. **(Dan 8:21) "And the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia: and the great horn that *is* between his eyes *is* the first king."**

The goat was symbolic of the Macedonians²⁸. In fact, the term Aegean as in Aegean Sea means "goat." This goat moved so quickly that his feet did not even touch the ground. This represents the lightning-like domination of Alexander over the world.

He came from west to east. Persia had come west from the east. Thus, there was to be *a clash of civilizations* - eastern and western. This great collision was illustrated in the third aspect of the vision.

3. Third, a collision of the goat and the ram in Persia.

- **(Dan 8:7) "And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand."**

This goat hated the ram. "Choler" means an intense anger or wrath. The goat was coming after the ram, and he was driven by a fierce, unrelenting anger towards it.

From an early age, Alexander had one goal – he wanted to conquer and crush the Persian Empire. For centuries, the Persians had tried to invade Greece and had failed. There were three great battles fought in this time frame, that determined world history:

- 1) **The Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C.**²⁹ Darius the Great led an army of 100,000 men against 10,000 Athenians. The Athenians held out and finally defeated the Persians and sent them back to Asia. A swift messenger named Philippides was sent running back to Athens with the news. He ran the twenty-six miles to Athens, and when he arrived he raised a hand and said, “Victory.” He then fell dead from exhaustion.
- 2) **The Battle of Thermopylae 10 years later in 480 B.C.**³⁰ This time it was Darius’ son Xerxes who led the invasion to avenge his father and his country’s pride. Xerxes is the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther – after these invasions he married Esther and made her his queen.

Xerxes invaded with an army of *two million men*, determined to conquer all of Greece through overwhelming force. The Greeks determined to block their advance in the pass at Thermopylae. King Leonidas of Sparta held the pass for seven days with 7000 men. When an ambassador ordered Leonidas to lay down his arms, the Spartan said, “Come and get them.”

A traitor revealed a secret path to the Persians, who began to flank the Greeks. Leonidas saw this and dismissed the bulk of his troops, retaining his famous 300 Spartans, along with 1100 Thespians and Thebans. In the end, all of the Greeks were killed in the battle.

- 3) **The Battle of Salamis.**³¹ This was a naval battle which occurred shortly after the Battle of Thermopylae. In that battle, the swift Greek ships defeated the Persians, destroying or capturing at least 200 Persian ships. Xerxes then returned to Asia, his conquests over. He never again returned to Greece.

However, the anger towards the Persians was deep within the heart of Alexander. After bringing Greece under his sway, he marched against Persia. This can be seen in Daniel 8:

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- **(Dan 8:7) "And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand."**

He came flying against Persia, and met the forces of Darius III in 333 B.C. at Issus.³² **The Battle of Issus** is another of the great battles of history. There, Alexander crossed the Pinarus River with 40,000 men against a Persian army of 600,000. Alexander won, too, with superior tactics and training. Darius ran for his life. All of this was perfectly pictured in Daniel's vision.

Alexander eventually caught Darius and brought the entire Empire under his control. In those days, wars were not fought in extended campaigns on many fronts as they are fought today. King A got all the men together that he could, and marched against King B, who got together all the men that he could. They would have a great pitched battle, and the winner took all. Thus, Alexander won a few great battles and became the conqueror of the vast Persian Empire. There was no one left to fight.

- **(Dan 8:8) "Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven."**

At Alexander's death, he was asked whom he wanted to take over his empire. His last words were, "The best..."³³ No one knows who, if anyone, Alexander had in mind. Four of his generals took over and divided the vast empire four ways: Egypt, Greece, Syria, and Asia. Only two of these are important to our study:

- 1) Syria, controlled by Seleucus.

- 2) Egypt, controlled by Ptolemy. Cleopatra was the last of the Ptolemys to rule Egypt before Rome took over.

These two are important because they controlled, at different times, **“the pleasant land”** of Israel.

4. The fourth aspect of the vision is a **“little horn.”**

- **(Dan 8:9) "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land."**

This little horn came out of one of the four horns on the goat. He would arise out of one of the four sections of Alexander's Empire. This little horn would move into **“the pleasant land”** and persecute Israel.

This little horn had a partial historical fulfillment, and will have a total historical fulfillment in the Tribulation. The partial fulfillment was in a man named **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**, who became the Seleucid king in control of Israel in 180 B.C.³⁴

Antiochus was exceedingly wicked, and severely anti-Semitic. He wanted to utterly destroy the Jewish people. He devastated Jerusalem in 168 B.C. He defiled the Temple, offered a sow on its altar, erected an altar to Jupiter, prohibited Temple worship, forbade circumcision on pain of death, sold thousands of Jewish families into slavery, destroyed all copies of the Scripture that could be found, slaughtered the Jews, and used torture to force Jews to renounce their religion. In December of 167 B.C., Antiochus set up what was considered the **“abomination of desolation”** in the Temple – a statue of Zeus. He made laws to force the Jews into sacrificing to Zeus and other pagan gods. Altars were set up throughout Judea at which everyone must offer sacrifice. He was a terrible persecutor of the Jews, a forerunner of the true **“little horn,”** the Antichrist himself.

II. THE VISITATION (8:13-26)

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1. First, Daniel overheard two “saints.”

- (Dan 8:13-14) "Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain *saint* which spake, **How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? {14}** And he said unto me, **Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."**

The first saint asked how long the “little horn” would defile the Temple, before it would be cleansed. This is a question the saints have always asked – “**How long?**”

- (Psa 6:3-4) "My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long? {4} Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake."
- (Psa 94:3-4) "LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? {4} How long shall they utter *and* speak hard things? *and* all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?"
- (Rev 6:9-10) "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: {10} And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

The answer given by the second saint was 2300 days. With a 360-day calendar, that is approximately 6 ½ years. This may fit in somehow with the seven-year Tribulation period.

2. Then, David was met by the angel Gabriel.

- (Dan 8:15-18) "And it came to pass, when I, *even* I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of

a man. {16} And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of Ulai*, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this *man* to understand the vision. {17} So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision. {18} Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright."

Angels always have the appearance of a man. They never appear as women or chubby toddlers. Gabriel is one of four angelic beings named in the Bible:

- 1) Gabriel.
- 2) Michael.
- 3) Satan or Lucifer.
- 4) Abaddon or Apollyon.

Gabriel later appeared as a messenger in the Gospels, announcing the births of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ. He is named four times – twice in Daniel and twice in Luke. We do not need angelic messengers today – we have the complete Word of God (1 Cor. 13:10).

Gabriel was told to make Daniel understand the vision. When Daniel saw Gabriel, he fell down in fear, so impressive must have been Gabriel's appearance. Gabriel said, **"Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision."** Ezekiel and Daniel are the only prophets called "son of man." The Lord Jesus is distinguished in that He is referred to as THE Son of man (Dan. 7:13).

Gabriel told Daniel that this vision concerned **"the time of the end."** This tells us that though the vision of the little horn may have had a partial fulfillment in Antiochus Epiphanes, he was not the total fulfillment. The total fulfillment will be at **"the**

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time of the end" – the Tribulation period preceding the Lord's return.

- **(Dan 8:18-19) "Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. {19} And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be."**

This vision will be totally fulfilled **"in the last end of the indignation."** This refers to what Jeremiah called **"the time of Jacob's trouble"** (Jer. 30:7). In the Tribulation, the Jews are going to be dealt with once again. Right now, they are on the back burner. This is the "Church Age." God is working through His churches. One day, the saved will be raptured out, and Israel will be moved from the back burner to the front burner. God is going to deal with them again, so that He can fulfill all of His promises made to the fathers. They are going to suffer at the hands of the nations, but God will deliver them out at the end:

- **(Jer 30:7-9) "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. {8} For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: {9} But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.*"**

Notice that God has an appointed time for all of these things to take place. **(Dan 8:19) "...for at the time appointed the end shall be."** It would be foolish for us to try to figure out exactly when these things will take place. Some fools have tried and have been proven to be false prophets. No man knows the appointed time – but God the Father does. When that appointed time comes **"the end shall be,"** and the whole world will not be able to stop it.

“The Little Horn” – “The Beast” – “Antichrist.”

The end of chapter eight gives us some important information concerning the coming Antichrist. **(Dan 8:22-25) "Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. {23} And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. {24} And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. {25} And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."**

Notice ten characteristics of the Antichrist in this passage:

1. He will be a king of fierce countenance. He is hungry for power and dominion. He is not a career politician looking to live easy. He is a conqueror. He is a hungry beast looking to conquer.
 - **(Rev 6:2-4) "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. {3} And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. {4} And there went out another horse *that was red*: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."**
2. He will have great devilish wisdom. He will understand “**dark sentences**” that others cannot fathom.
3. He will be very powerful, but his power will not be his own. His power will come from the devil. **(Rev 13:2) "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the**

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dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."

4. He will destroy in a **"wonderful"** way – not a *good* way, but in a way which will inspire awe and wonder among the nations. He will be a military genius, like Alexander was in his time, or Cyrus, or Caesar. The nations will not be able to stand before him.
5. He will unite the world through secret treaties. **"Practice"** means "to transact or negotiate secretly." He will promise the Muslims one thing, and then go and promise the Jews something else. He will promise the Chinese communists one thing, and the European socialists another, and the warlords of Africa something else entirely.
6. He will persecute God's people. He **"shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."** This could refer to the Tribulation saints, the Jews, or both.
7. He will be considered, at first, a financial and commercial genius. **"And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand."**
8. He will magnify himself in his heart, to the point that he will declare himself to be God. (2 Th 2:3-4) **"Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; {4} Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*"**
9. He will use peace to destroy many. In other words, he will use peace as his excuse for slaughtering millions. The Nazis blamed the Jews for WWII, and considered the genocide of the Jewish race to be the "Final Solution" to the problem. Today, people are blaming religious people for the divisions and problems in mankind; some would just as soon get rid of all of us to bring in "peace."

10. In the end, he will stand up against **“the Prince of princes,”** the Lord Jesus Christ. But **“he shall be broken without hand.”** (Rev 19:19-20) **“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. {20} And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”**

There will not be any shots fired at Armageddon. The Lord is not coming to fight. He is coming to slaughter His enemies. The Beast will not be able to stand against him. The assembled armies of the heathen world will be like kindling for the fire. They will be broken without hand – by the spoken word of Christ.

Isn't it amazing how true and accurate the Word of God is! Isn't it amazing how clearly world history could be seen in the “Barnyard Brawl” of Daniel chapter eight! And if the Bible is true concerning things that are past, shouldn't be sure that it is true concerning things still yet to come?

Chapter Twelve

DANIEL'S PRAYERS

(Dan 9:1-3) "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; {2} In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. {3} And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:"

Daniel chapter nine is a mountain peak chapter in the Bible for three reasons:

1. It records one of the greatest prayers in the Bible, from one of the greatest prayer warriors of all time.
2. It reveals to us God's plan for the nation of Israel, in the seventy weeks prophecy.
3. It is the only chapter in the Old Testament to mention the name "**Messiah**." In doing so, it gives us vital information about the coming Saviour, Who would be "**cut off, but not for himself**" (vs. 26).

The timing of the chapter is given in the first verse. **(Dan 9:1) "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;"** This puts chapter nine in the same general time frame as chapter six, when Belshazzar read the handwriting on the wall and Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians. This event happened in the first year of Darius' reign over Babylon, while Cyrus was extending his Empire. Remember that Darius was appointed by Cyrus as a regional king until his return.

We are going to study this chapter under three main headings:

I. DANIEL'S STUDY.

- **(Dan 9:2) "In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem."**

Daniel was a faithful student of God's Word, even as an old man. As busy as he was, he made the time to read and study God's Books – the Books of the Old Testament. How often do Christians blame "busy-ness" for their lack of time to study the Bible? How many older Christians say, "I have already read that four times! I do not need to read it anymore." Yet Daniel made the time to diligently study God's Word.

In particular, he studied the one Book that many Christians today do not read – the Book of Jeremiah. I have no doubt that Daniel heard Jeremiah preach in Jerusalem as a young man, before his captivity. No doubt, Jeremiah's message and ministry had a great impact on young Daniel.

Jeremiah foretold that the Babylonian Captivity would last seventy years. **(Jer 25:11-12) "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. {12} And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations."**

Daniel came to an understanding of these seventy years as he studied the Bible, and as he saw the scriptures fulfilled before his very eyes. Even though the Babylonian Captivity had ended, the Jews were still scattered among the heathen. So Daniel set himself to pray for the people of Israel and the land of Israel, and that God would allow His people to return to the land of their fathers.

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If we would spend more time studying God's Word, it would lead us to a greater burden for the work of God, and into a greater life of prayer. This is exactly what happened when Daniel studied and understood God's Word.

II. DANIEL'S SUPPLICATIONS.

➤ **(Dan 9:3) "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:"**

In this chapter, you have one of the greatest and grandest prayers in the Bible. Also, it is one of the longest. It is a great pattern for intercessory prayer and supplication. This was not bedtime praying. This was business praying. This was the **"effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man"** that **"availeth much"** (James 5:16). Daniel was in his Gethsemane. He was praying for his nation.

Bedtime praying is not going to save America. Saying "God bless America" is not going to bring revival. A brief prayer over the dinner table is not going to turn a nation back to God. We need the kind of business praying that Daniel practiced – a deep prayer life and some effectual prayer time. Notice the depths of this kind of praying:

1. **"I set my face unto the Lord God."** This is a picture of determination. He is not going to stop praying until he has gotten a hold of the Lord.
2. **"To seek by prayer"** – he was already a prayer warrior, praying three times a day towards Jerusalem. He set aside a special time to seek God through prayer.
3. **"And supplications"** – this is intercessory prayer – praying for others. It is begging God on behalf of someone else.
4. **"With fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes"** – Total denial of comfort that he might afflict his soul before the Lord.

Lessons from the Book of Daniel

Fasting is a forgotten art in our churches. This is why we do not have more power from God.

His prayer had three aspects that all of our praying should have: Praise, penitence, and petitions.

1. Praise.

- **(Dan 9:4) "And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments..."**

The great prayer warriors of the Bible knew how to worship, praise, and extol the Lord in their prayers.

2. Penitence.

- **(Dan 9:5-10) "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: {6} Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. {7} O Lord, righteousness *belongeth* unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, *that are near*, and *that are far off*, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. {8} O Lord, to us *belongeth* confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. {9} To the Lord our God *belong* mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; {10} Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets."**

He did not say, "We messed up a little; we are not perfect." Nor did he say, "Lord, forgive THEM for THEY have sinned."

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He included himself: **“We have sinned.”** He named their sins. He threw himself and his nation on the great mercy of God.

- **(Dan 9:11-15)** "Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that *is* written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. {12} And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. {13} As *it is* written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. {14} Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. {15} And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly."

He also recognized that God was righteous in all that He had done to Israel because of their sins. Daniel's confession was, "We have sinned, You have done righteously. We are wrong, and You are right."

3. Petitions – **(Dan 9:16-19)** "O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become* a reproach to all *that are* about us. {17} Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. {18} O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and

behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. {19} O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

If you want to see great prayers answered, follow that formula: praise, penitence, and then your petitions!

III. DANIEL'S SAVIOUR.

God sent Gabriel in answer to Daniel's prayers:

- **(Dan 9:20-23) "And whiles I *was* speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; {21} Yea, whiles I *was* speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. {22} And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. {23} At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show *thee*; for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."**

As soon as Daniel started praying, Gabriel was sent to give him understanding. I think that it is interesting that the angel could not just appear there, but had to fly from where he was to where Daniel was. Only God is omnipresent.

God might be waiting for us to start praying, and as soon as we do so, He will begin to send the answer. Sometimes, God even answers before we start praying. **(Isa 65:24) "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."**

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Notice also that Daniel was **“greatly beloved.”** Wow. Beloved means “very dear to the heart.” Daniel was close to the heart of God. What a testimony! He was God’s man in Babylon.

Gabriel then gave to Daniel what we call the seventy week’s prophecy. **(Dan 9:24) "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."**

Seventy weeks refers to seventy weeks of years. Webster’s 1828 Dictionary gives the second definition of “week” as “In Scripture, a prophetic week, is a week of years, or seven years. Daniel 9.” Seven years for each week, for a total of 490 years.

In this 490-year time span, God is going to accomplish the following THROUGH THE MESSIAH:

1. “To finish the transgression.”

This statement comprehends all of God’s work of redemption. The scripture doesn’t say, “transgressions,” plural, but “the transgression.” Transgression refers to the violation of the law of God. I believe that this refers to the universal guilt of mankind, to all of man’s sins from Adam to the end of sinful humanity.

- **(Rom 5:12) "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"**
- **(Rom 5:17-19) "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) {18} Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. {19} For as by one man's**

disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

The Messiah came to **"finish the transgression."** Because of His sacrifice and salvation, the payment is finished, and one day redemption will finish all transgressions.

2. "And to make an end of sins."

Jesus didn't just pay for *some* sins by *some* people. **(1 John 2:2) "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."** He didn't just die for transgression as a whole, but for the individual sins of individual sinners.

Thank God, He made an end of sin's power, and one day there will be an end of sin altogether. There is coming a time when there will be no more sin.

3. "And to make reconciliation for iniquity."

The redemptive work of Christ allows us to be reconciled to God. **(Rom 5:8-10) "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. {9} Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. {10} For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."**

4. "To bring in everlasting righteousness."

Everlasting righteousness is what we get because of the sacrifice of Christ and His reconciliation. We receive perfect, everlasting righteousness – the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. His perfect robe of righteousness covers our tattered, sin-stained rags. **(Rom 10:4) "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."**

5. "And to seal up the vision and the prophecy."

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To “**seal up**” means to finish or complete. All prophecy is not yet complete, but salvation is. When Jesus said “**It is finished,**” it was finished.

When the seventy weeks are up, God’s promises concerning Israel and Jerusalem will be fulfilled – and there are still some promises to be fulfilled!

6. “**And to anoint the most Holy.**”

Jesus was anointed, not with oil, but by the Holy Spirit:

- (Luke 4:18-19) **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, {19} To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."**
- (Acts 4:27) **"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,"**
- (Acts 10:38) **"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."**

All of these things will be accomplished by the Messiah, and no one else. The world has tried and will continue to try to bring these things about on their own – and they have always and will always fail. Only the Prince of peace can fulfill the promises of God concerning redemption and salvation!

The timing of the seventy-weeks prophecy was established. (Dan 9:25-26) **"Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. {26} And after threescore and**

two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

A lot of smart men have worked on figuring out the time frame for this prophecy, by looking at different calendars and working it different ways. I'm going to give you a simple synopsis: from the time of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, which was during the time of Cyrus, to the coming of the Messiah and His public ministry, would be 69 of the 70 weeks. That is 483 years. Without being complicated, that puts the 69th week right about the time of the Lord's death on the cross of Calvary.

That was 2000 years ago. If Jesus was not the Messiah, there never will be a Messiah, and Daniel is not true. No one today could be the Messiah. No one in the future could be the Messiah. The time frame of Daniel's prophecy has expired. Either Jesus is Christ or their never will be a Saviour.

Notice what the Bible says about the Messiah, which the Jews have missed for all these centuries because of their blinded hearts: **"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself:"** There is the cross of Calvary. There is His substitutionary, vicarious death – not for Himself, but for the whole world.

69 of the 70 weeks have already passed. That timeframe, covering the Lord's first coming, has passed. What about the 70th week? It is yet to come. This is why Daniel separated the last week from the first 69. We are somewhere between the 69th and 70th week of years. Right now, Israel is on pause during the Church Age. The final week will be the Tribulation, which will last seven years.

The last half of verse 26 and verse 27 refers not to Christ, but to Antichrist. **(Dan 9:26-27) "...and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. {27} And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week**

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he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

This “**prince**” is the “**little horn**” of Daniel 7:8. This is the “little horn” of Daniel 8:9. This Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel for half of the remaining week of years – or for 3 ½ years. In the middle of that time he will turn against the Jews and destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. He will fill it with abominations and declare himself to be God.

The Tribulation is when God will once again deal with Israel. It is called the “**time of Jacob’s trouble.**” They will be sifted by the great providential hands of God. If only they would recognize that their Messiah has already come, and been cut off, not for Himself, but for them!

Lessons from the Book of Daniel



Median (left) and Persian (right) soldiers, from a relief in Persepolis.

Chapter Thirteen

DANIEL'S PRINCE

(Dan 10:1-3) "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. {2} In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. {3} I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

The last three chapters of Daniel go together as they all involve the same vision. God's revelation to Daniel has been progressive. First, it started with the Vanity of Humanity image that showed the great empires of the world leading to the kingdom of Christ. Then, the vision of the four beasts and the introduction of the little horn. Then, it focused on Greece and Persia and gave more information about the little horn. Finally, in this last and longest vision, God gave Daniel many fine details concerning the land of Israel.

The first verse sets the backdrop for the chapter: **(Dan 10:1) "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision."**

This vision was given at the end of Daniel's long life – in the third year of Cyrus the king of Persia. If Daniel was 14 when he was taken captive by Babylon, he was now around 87 years of age. 73 years had passed. He was retired from public service, having served until the first year of Cyrus (1:21).

"The thing was true, but the time appointed was long." The events of this chapter were in the far, distant future. However, no

matter how long it takes, God's Word is true and will always come to pass in His appointed time.

God has His appointed times:

1. An appointed time to die. **(Heb 9:27) "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"**
2. An appointed time for Christ to return. **(Mark 13:32-33) "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. {33} Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."**
3. An appointed time of judgment of the world by Jesus Christ. **(Acts 17:31) "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."**

Daniel was in a time of mourning. **(Dan 10:2-3) "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. {3} I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."**

He was fasting and praying and sorrowing before the Lord. He was fasting from pleasant food. This time of fast might have been bread and water. He carried this out for 21 days. Why was he mourning? By this time, Cyrus had given his decree allowing the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. We do not know why Daniel did not return; many of the Jews did not. I *do* believe that Daniel was in the will of God.

It may be that Daniel was mourning because of the lack of interest shown by the Jews throughout Persia. When Zerubbabel returned, he led less than 45,000 people. Most of the Jews were comfortable in exile. They had been born in Babylon or Persia, and had turned away from the land of their fathers. They were content to

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stay among the Gentiles rather than return to the promised land. I believe that Daniel was mourning and fasting for his nation. He may well have been deeply discouraged by the apathy and worldliness of his people in exile. They had made this world their home.

Are the preachers of today as concerned for our own nation? Are we concerned about the rampant apathy, lukewarmness, worldliness, and carnality that has become so obvious among professing Christians? Are we concerned enough to spend time in mourning, fasting and praying for a true spiritual revival?

Because of this 21 day fast, he received a very special visit and a very specific revelation of truth, which he clearly understood. **(Dan 10:1) "...and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision."**

I. DANIEL RECEIVED A LOOK AT THE SOVEREIGN PRINCE (10:1-9).

- **(Dan 10:4-6) "And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; {5} Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: {6} His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude."**

Would you like to know Who this is? He is the same Person that John would see six hundred years later:

- **(Rev 1:12-16) "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; {13} And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. {14} His head and *his* hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of**

fire; {15} And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. {16} And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

Daniel was looking at the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Both Daniel and John saw Him as the KING OF GLORY. Daniel saw Him as the Son of God before His resurrection, and John saw Him after. (Psa 24:9-10) **"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. {10} Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah."**

Daniel saw Him as the **"Prince of princes" (Dan 8:25)** and **"Messiah the Prince" (Dan. 9:25)**. We are going to see many princes in Daniel. "Prince" is defined as: 1. In a general sense, a sovereign; the chief and independent ruler of a nation or state. Thus when we speak of the princes of Europe, we include emperors and kings. Hence, a chief in general; as a prince of the celestial host. 2. A sovereign in a certain territory; one who has the government of a particular state or territory, but holds of a superior to whom he owes certain services; as the princes of the German states."

The first definition applies to the "Prince of princes," the Lord Jesus Christ. He is **"Lord of all" (Acts 10:36)**. All principalities are created by Him and for Him; He is to have the preeminence. (Col 1:16-18) **"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: {17} And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. {18} And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."**

In Daniel, we will also find angelic princes, who fit the second definition: "A sovereign in a certain territory; one who has the government of a particular state or territory." As we study these principalities and powers in the spiritual realm, we might feel

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discouraged – unless we get our eyes on the “**Prince of princes**” – the Sovereign Prince over all the universe!

In Daniel's vision of Christ, seven characteristics stood out:

1. He was robed in linen. This was the garment of the High Priest. Thank God, we have a High Priest, Jesus the Son of God - **(Heb 4:14-16)** "**Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. {15} For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. {16} Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**"
2. He was girdled with fine gold. This speaks of His royalty. He is our High Priest, and He is also the King of kings and Lord of lords.
3. His body was like the beryl stone, which is a pleasant translucent stone of various colors. The resurrected, glorified Saviour transcends racial color. He is not black, white, brown, red, or yellow. He is the Light.
4. His face had the appearance of lightning. Lightning not only illuminates the darkness, it inspires awe and fear by its sheer power. When you think of lightning, you think of incredible power. Lightning can reach temperatures of 54,000 degrees. There is awesome power in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it can be a fearful thing for those who will stand before that face in judgment. John saw His countenance as the sun shining in its strength – illuminating, bright, warm, life-giving. Here, Daniel sees the face of the Lord as awe-inspiring and fearsome.
5. His eyes were like lamps of fire. John saw them as “**a flame of fire.**” The eyes of the Lord pierce through the darkness and see the hidden things in a man's heart. **(Prov 15:3)**

"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

6. His arms and feet were like polished brass. Brass throughout the Bible pictures the judgment of God.
 - His arms of brass will bear the sword of the Lord upon the nations in judgment. **(Isa 52:10) "The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."**
 - His brazen feet will tread the winepress of the wrath of God. **(Rev 19:15) "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."**
7. His voice was like that of a multitude. That is the voice of God. **(Psa 29:4) "The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty."**

What Daniel saw in Christ changed what he thought about himself. **(Dan 10:8) "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength."**

He had no strength to stand before the Lord. He said, **"My comeliness was turned in me into corruption."** What he had thought was good about himself was suddenly seen to be corrupted by his sinful nature. This is what Isaiah said many years before: **(Isa 64:6) "But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags..."** Even the best things about us are unclean and corrupt. Those things that we consider to be "comely" are actually **"filthy rags"** because of the sinfulness that is present in our fallen natures.

The same thing happened to Isaiah when he saw the Lord high and lifted up. **(Isa 6:1-5) "In the year that king Uzziah died I**

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saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. {2} Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. {3} And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. {4} And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. {5} Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

Before chapter six, Isaiah was preaching against everyone else! Then, he saw the Lord high and lifted up, and realized that his own lips were "unclean." He cried out, "Woe is me!"

The same thing will happen to us when we really get a good look at the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Word of God. What we see as comeliness will turn into corruption before our very eyes. And we will realize that the only hope we have for heaven is "Christ in you, the hope of glory;" and the only good thing about us is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27)!

II. DANIEL RECEIVED A LOOK AT THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPALITIES (10:10-21).

Notice first that in verse 10 Daniel was approached by an angel, not Christ. The angel is going to be speaking to Daniel through most of this prophecy, until the last verses, in which Christ Himself will speak to Daniel. (Dan 10:10-11) "And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. {11} And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling."

Daniel is again called "a man greatly beloved" – close to the heart of God!

- **(Dan 10:12-14)** "Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. {13} But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. {14} Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for *many* days."

We know that this is an angel, and not Christ, because no angelic being or host of devils could have withstood Jesus for 21 days. No devil could withstand the omnipotence of the Lord! He would just smite them with a little word from the sword of His mouth. Therefore, this is an angel, as the rest of the passage will clearly show.

Notice that this angel was sent as an answer to Daniel's prayer on the first day of his 21 day period of mourning. Sometimes the answer to our prayers can be hindered by satanic forces! The answer had been on its way, but it was hindered. What if Daniel had stopped praying after 7 days, or 14? It is likely that he would not have received this answer and revelation. We must be persistent in our praying. We cannot give up after a few days or weeks. We must continue to pray until God answers.

- **(Dan 10:14)** "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for *many* days."

This is the key to chapters 11 and 12. This prophecy will be concerning events that will befall the Jews in the last days. It will deal with the Tribulation period, the "**time of Jacob's trouble.**"

Three princes are mentioned: **(Dan 10:20-21)** "Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. {21} But I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and *there is*

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none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince."

1. The prince of Persia.
2. The prince of Grecia.
3. Michael, the prince of Daniel and the Jews.

These verses teach us some great truths concerning angels and devils and the spiritual warfare that goes on among principalities and powers in the unseen world. Does this matter to us? Absolutely. **(Eph 6:11-12) "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. {12} For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."**

In our spiritual warfare, we have to deal with these fallen creatures that are under Satan's overlordship. We don't just deal with one devil. In the world today there are millions of devils, all serving under the "prince of the power of the air," Satan himself.

How many devils are there? We cannot give an exact number, but the Bible does give us some rough numbers to work with. We know how many angels followed Lucifer in his fall – one-third of the heavenly host. **(Rev 12:3-4) "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. {4} And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."** These angels instantly and permanently became devils.

How many *unfallen* angels are there? At least a hundred million. **(Rev 5:11) "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands..."**

Lessons from the Book of Daniel

Therefore, it is no stretch to think that there are more than 30 million devils in Satan's government (not counting those that are bound in the bottomless pit awaiting judgment). That means that there is approximately one devil for every 215 people on earth today!

God's angels are organized, and Satan is the great imitator. His hellish government is run more efficiently than any human organization in this world. He has the world divided up amongst various principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness. He has forces in "high places."

"Principality" is defined as, "the territory of a prince." In Daniel, we find some of these powers at work. **(Dan 10:13) "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia."**

The great empire of Persia was dominated by an evil spirit called "**the prince of Persia.**" The Persians were ungodly people, and Satan held sway through this powerful devil that he had put in charge.

God also has His princes, the chief of whom (under Christ) is Michael. Michael came and helped this unnamed angel to overcome the prince of Persia. Michael is also called "**your prince,**" which means that his principality primarily concerns the Jews. Michael is apparently the only angel that can contend with the devil. For example, they contended over the body of Moses. **(Jude 1:9) "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."**

Revelation 12 tells us of a battle in the heavens, in which Michael led his angels against Satan and won by God's power. **(Rev 12:7-8) "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, {8} And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven."**

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Other Scriptures give us more insight into how Satan leads the kingdoms of the ungodly through their human kings:

1. Satan was the real king of Babylon - (Isa 14:4) **"That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!"** (Isa 14:12) **"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"**

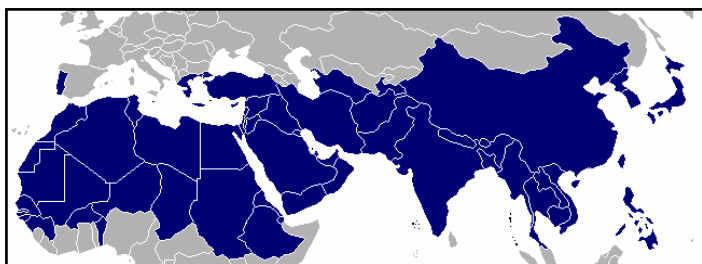
2. He was also the real king of Tyrus. This king was no mere human; he was a fallen cherub that had been in Eden. (Ezek 28:12-14) **"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. {13} Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. {14} Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire."**

3. In the Tribulation period, it will be easy to see how the devil has manipulated the kingdoms of this world. (Rev 16:13-14) **"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.* {14} For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*"**

These principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places are still active today, and we still have to

deal with them. Persia still has a prince, and he is active in Iran. The **“prince of Grecia”** is still active throughout Europe.

A great example of how satanic principalities hinder the work of the gospel is seen in what is now called **“the 10/40 Window.”** Much of this Window falls under the **“prince of Persia”** and **“the prince of Grecia.”** The 10/40 Window is considered the hardest to reach with the gospel. 2/3 of the world’s population is inside that Window, and Satan has a firm grip on it through principalities and powers. The 10/40 Window is populated by people who are predominantly Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Animist, Jewish or Atheist. Many governments in the 10/40 Window are formally or informally opposed to Christian work of any kind within their borders.³⁵



Missionaries hoping to reach souls in that area had better be ready to wrestle with **“the prince of Persia,” “the prince of Grecia,”** and many other principalities that have a religious or social stranglehold on those people.

I further believe that every nation has its own principalities. I believe each State in our nation has spiritual wickedness in high places. I believe that the city of Wylie has devils assigned to it. The less Bible influence there is, the stronger these devils are. I believe that much of what we are seeing today is caused by devilish power in **“high places.”**

If we are going to be victorious, we need the power of God and the armor of God. I find three levels of power as related to the Christian and devilish forces:

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1. Some have no spiritual power.
 - **(Acts 19:13-16)** "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. {14} And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so. {15} And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? {16} And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

These unsaved “**vagabond Jews**” tried to deal with the devil with a second-hand spirituality. They were not even born again. They thought that the name of Jesus was merely a magic name that anyone could use. The devil said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” And that devil then ran them out of the house.

You can’t deal with the devil with a second-hand spirituality. You cannot say, “We adjure you by Jesus whom Dr. Hyles preacheth.” Or, “We adjure you by Jesus whom Dr. Trieber preacheth.” You’ve got to have God’s power on *your own life*.
2. Some have enough spiritual power to win some victories. **(Luke 10:17)** "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."
3. Some have some power, but not enough for “**this kind.**”
 - **(Mark 9:17-18)** "And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; {18} And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I

spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not." (Mark 9:28-29) "And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? {29} And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

These disciples had some power – enough to see some victories in the past. They had seen devils cast out before. But they had never run into “**this kind**” of devil in their ministry – and they did not have enough power to cast him out. This devil was stronger than the others; he must have laughed at the frustrated disciples.

The Lord told them why they could not cast the devil out. It wasn't that the father didn't have enough faith. The problem was that the disciples didn't have enough power. They had not spent enough time fasting and in prayer.

There is a definite connection of spiritual power to genuine fasting and prayer. If you are dealing with a Satanic stronghold that will not budge, spend more time praying. Spend time fasting. It may be that some souls will not get saved unless you do. Some areas of the world may remain closed to the gospel unless we are willing to pay a price and get more of God's power!

Chapter Fourteen

DANIEL'S PEOPLE

(Dan 10:14) "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for *many* days."

(Dan 11:1-4) "Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, *even* I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. {2} And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than *they* all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. {3} And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. {4} And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those."

Remember that these last three chapters in Daniel go together. They form one vision or prophecy. This final vision deals specifically with Daniel's people, the Jews, in the "**latter days.**"

Chapter 11 is the most difficult chapter in the Book of Daniel. Remember that everything Daniel saw was in the future, while from our perspective much of it is now in the past. It is history. Much of chapter 11 is history. It has already happened. Unfortunately, most people have learned about the history of such kingdoms as the Seleucid kingdom in Syria, the Hasmonean kingdom of Israel, or the reign of the Ptolemies in Egypt. This is the history that much of chapter eleven forecasted.

Let's take an eagle-eye look at the chapter first:

Lessons from the Book of Daniel

1. The angel reveals more information about the empires of Persia and Greece (vs. 1-4).
2. He then revealed the future history of two kingdoms, which we know to be Seleucia and Egypt - two of the breakaway parts of Alexander's Empire (vs. 5-20).
3. He describes the vicious reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV (vs. 21-35), which lead to the Maccabean Revolt in Israel.
4. The reign of Antiochus is overshadowed by the future reign of the Antichrist (vs. 30-45). The last two sections blend and overshadow each other, so that much of what is said of Antiochus will also be fulfilled in the Beast.

We are going to break this lesson down and look at the reigns of three kings: the mighty king, the vile king, and the beastly king.

I. THE REIGN OF THE MIGHTY KING (11:1-4).

The angel began by telling Daniel, **(Dan 11:1) "Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, *even I*, stood to confirm and to strengthen him."** This shows again the influence that angels and devils have in the kingdoms of men. This angel was sent to "confirm and strengthen" Darius the Mede in the first year of his kingdom. The need for this implies that Satan was also active to try to sway the new king of Babylon, but God had other plans.

The angel went on to say, **(Dan 11:2) "And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than *they* all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia."**

These three Persian kings were Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius I. Each of these kings influenced Israel:

1. Cyrus allowed the Jews to return and begin rebuilding the Temple.
2. Cambyses stopped the Temple reconstruction for 20 years.

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3. Darius I allowed the Temple reconstruction to resume, and it was finished in his reign.

There were other kings, but these went unnoticed because they did not influence or affect Israel. God's viewpoint of history always begins with Israel. This is why great empires in history are totally overlooked in Scripture.

Of the fourth king, the scripture says – **“the fourth shall be far richer than *they* all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.”** The fourth, richest king was Xerxes, known in the Bible by his royal title, Ahasuerus, the husband of Esther. Before he married Esther, however, he threw that great, extravagant party that lasted 180 days. He used his riches to stir up his realm for his invasions of Greece, which failed. He returned home in shame. However, he married a Jewess (Esther) and promoted a Jew (Mordecai) to be his Prime Minister, and had a great influence among the Jews.

The angel then told of a **“mighty king:” (Dan 11:3-4) “And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. {4} And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.”**

This was Alexander the Great, whom we have discussed at length. He is the “mighty king.” He conquered Persia, but even as he seemed to just be standing up and getting ready to rule the world, he died, and his kingdom was divided north, south, east and west among his generals (known as the Diodachi³⁶), not his posterity. The empire was put under the authority of a regent in the person of Perdiccas in 323 BC, and the territories were divided at the Partition of Babylon.³⁷

It is important that we understand a couple of basic historical facts in relation to this chapter. Alexander's Empire split four ways. We are not concerned with the eastern or western kingdoms.

Chapter eleven goes on to describe the wars, conflicts and alliances between the northern and southern kingdoms.

- The southern kingdom was Egypt, controlled by a man named Ptolemy. Ptolemy had originally been one of Alexander's seven bodyguards.³⁸ He declared himself King Ptolemy I, and called himself Soter or "Saviour." He also adopted the ancient title of Pharaoh. The Ptolemies reigned in Egypt until they were conquered by Rome in 30 B.C.
- The northern kingdom was Syria, with its capital in Damascus. It was controlled by a man named Seleucus I Nicator, and his kingdom was called the Seulicid kingdom. This was the largest of the divisions and included Syria, Media, Persia, and Babylon. He had to fight several wars to solidify his reign over the region.³⁹ The life of this man would fill a volume.

Much of the chapter deals with the political intrigue and wars between Syria and Egypt. The only reason why God records this is because between Egypt and Syria is a little strip of land that is dear to God's heart – the land of Israel.

II. THE REIGN OF THE VILE KING.

- **(Dan 11:21) "And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries."**

This "estate" was the kingdom of the north, Syria, the Seleucid kingdom. This "vile person" was Antiochus Epiphanes IV, whose name alone was a blasphemous insult to God. The name Epiphanes means "Manifest God."⁴⁰ He "obtained the kingdom by flatteries" while promising peace.

The rise of Antiochus is strikingly portrayed in Daniel: **(Dan 11:25-28) "And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of**

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the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. {26} Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. {27} And both these kings' hearts *shall be* to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end *shall be* at the time appointed. {28} Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart *shall be* against the holy covenant; and he shall do *exploits*, and return to his own land."

Antiochus invaded Egypt and conquered it, partly through the deceitfulness of Ptolemy's own servants: "yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him." Antiochus and Ptolemy tried to outdo each other in lies and treachery, "at one table." Antiochus returned to Syria with great victory, but Egypt rebelled and he determined to reinvade. However, the Roman fleet intervened and Antiochus took out his rage on Jerusalem.

- (Dan 11:29-30) "At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. {30} For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant."
- (Dan 11:31-32) "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. {32} And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*."

It was at this time that Antiochus determined to destroy the Jews and their religion. He turned the Temple into a temple to Jupiter, and raise an idol in the most holy place. He offered a sow on the great altar, and forced the Jews to eat swine's flesh. He

murdered the Jews by the tens of thousands. 40,000 were sold into slavery, 40,000 others were kept by the Syrians as slaves.

It was here that a small family of Jews had enough. This family was clearly portrayed in verse 32: **(Dan 11:32) "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries; but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."**

A priest named **Mattathias** started a revolt against the Syrians when he killed a Syrian officer. This priest had five heroic sons, whose names became very popular in the New Testament period: Judas, Jonathan, Simon, John, and Eleazar. This family sparked a revolution which briefly threw off Gentile rule and established a free Jewish state.⁴¹

After Mattathias died, the mantle fell to his eldest son, Judas. Judas was called the Maccabee, or "the Hammer." Judas Maccabeus had some stunning victories over the Syrians and won their freedom. They rededicated the Temple, which is celebrated today with the Feast of Hanukah. According to tradition, the candlestick in the Temple only had enough fuel for one day, but miraculously burned for eight days. This is why the Jews use the menorah as one of their national symbols to this day – it is a symbol of national patriotism and independence.

The Maccabees started the Hasmonean kingdom in Israel, which was beset with problems.⁴² They violated God's plan for Israel by trying to combine the priesthood with the royalty. Their kings were not the descendents of King David nor of the Tribe of Judah. After many years of internal strife, they appealed to Rome to come in and arbitrate their problems. And Rome did. Rome sent Pompey the Great, and in 63 B.C. Pompey settled their problems – he overthrew the Hasmonean kingdom and annexed Israel into the Roman Empire. This set the stage for the New Testament.

The brave Maccabees, who did "**exploits,**" are a picture of another group of Jews in the future, the 144,000, who will "**know their God**" and "**do exploits**" on a world-wide scale! These true "Jehovah's Witnesses" (not to be confused with the Russellite cult

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that bears this name now) are described in Revelation 7 and 14. They are all young, Jewish men, unmarried and undefiled by women. They will all get saved after the Rapture and become fervent evangelists. It will be like having 144,000 Apostle Pauls turned loose on the world at one time! Under the shadow of the Beast, they will **“do exploits,”** bringing millions of people to Jesus Christ! They will finally be killed by the Beast, but even their deaths will be a triumph in the end.

III. THE REIGN OF THE BEASTLY KING.

The passages dealing with Antiochus blend into or merge into a prophecy concerning the coming Antichrist, the Beast that will rule the world in the days of the Tribulation.

There are Thirteen Characteristics of the Antichrist found in Daniel 11:

1. He will be a **“vile person” (11:21).**

The Antichrist will be like Antiochus, only magnified to the totality of evil and wickedness – he is **“the man of sin,”** the **“wicked one,”** and **“that Wicked.”** There is no righteousness in this man. He is evil personified, Satan incarnate.

2. He will take the kingdom by flatteries and false promises of peace.

The beginning of the Antichrist's reign is seen in the first of the Five Horsemen - **(Rev 6:2) "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."** He will have a bow without arrows. He is on a white horse, a parade animal. He will conquer by promises of peace. The world, led by the devil, will turn their power over to the beast.

The world is ready for this now. Look at who our own country elected in the last election – a man with a paper-thin resume, with almost no experience, on the promise of “hope”

and “change.” If a superhuman man arose now, with devilish genius, and promised to bring about world peace and prosperity, this old world would elect him dictator tomorrow. That is what is going to happen after the Rapture.

3. He will do according to his own will. **(Dan 11:36) "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself..."** He will not answer to any authority other than his own.
4. He will exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god.
 - **(Dan 11:36) "...and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god..."**
 - **(2 Th 2:3-4) "Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; {4} Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."**
5. He will speak blasphemously against the God of Israel. **(Dan 11:36) "...and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods..."**
 - **(Rev 13:3-6) "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. {4} And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? {5} And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months. {6} And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."**

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Men are certainly blasphemous today. The Lord's precious name is a cuss word or an exclamation today, used by careless or blasphemous people. Like the coming Beast, they blaspheme His name, His church, and His people.

6. He will prosper in the beginning, but not at the end. **(Dan 11:36) "And the king... shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done."**

The "indignation" to "be accomplished" refers to the Tribulation period and the Jews in particular. This is the "time of Jacob's trouble." The Antichrist will be allowed to prosper only until God is done dealing with Israel. Then, it will all be over.

7. He will be an apostate from the God of his fathers. **(Dan 11:37) "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers..."**

The King James Bible never uses a capital "G" for God's name unless it is referring to the true and living God. False gods are always identified by a little "g." Therefore, the Antichrist will come from either a Christian or a Jewish heritage, probably Jewish.

8. He will not regard the "desire of women," the most natural desire in a man. **(Dan 11:37) "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women..."**

This could mean that the Antichrist will either be a homosexual or asexual. I believe that the Antichrist will be a deviant like the world has never seen. I believe that he will fulfill every sort of perversion – but he will not be interested in the "natural use of the woman" (Rom. 1:27).

9. In his kingdom, as a matter of politics, he will honor the God of forces, while truly serving the devil. **(Dan 11:38) "But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things."**

Notice again that this is “**God**” with a capital “G.” That always refers to the Lord in the Bible. Here, the man who regards no God will honor the “**God of forces.**” I believe that the Antichrist will give some lipservice to the God of Israel as the LORD of hosts. He will do this to pacify the Jews, for a time, until he declares himself to be God.

10. He will magnify the devil. **(Dan 11:39) "Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."**

He will give lipservice to the “God of forces,” while in actuality honoring a “god whom his fathers knew not.” Who is this little “g” god? **(2 Cor 4:4) "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."** This strange god will be the Satan. During the Tribulation, the Antichrist will lead men to worship the devil. **(Rev 13:3-4) "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. {4} And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"**

11. He will divide the land of Israel for gain. **(Dan 11:39) "...and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."**

In the Old Testament, “**the land**” almost always refers to the land of Israel, the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for an everlasting inheritance. The Antichrist will do what many are trying to do now – divide up the land of Israel and give it away to the Palestinians or the Arabs. The Beast will fulfill “the Road Map to Peace in the Middle East.”

For this, God will bring the nations to judgment - **(Joel 3:2) "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there**

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for my people and *for* my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

Oh, how America's leaders need to remember that "the land" is the permanent possession of the Jews!

12. His kingdom will begin to crumble at the end. **(Dan 11:40-44)** "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. {41} He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. {42} He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. {43} But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians *shall be* at his steps. {44} But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many."

In Nebuchadnezzar's vision, the Vanity of Humanity, the "toe jam kingdom" of the Antichrist was made of iron and clay. This showed how the kingdom would begin to crumble at the end, because it could not properly mix. Ezekiel 37 describes how Russia will invade Israel, with Persia (modern Iran), Libya, and Ethiopia. God Himself will overthrow Magog in the mountains of Israel.

But the Antichrist will be infuriated, and like Antiochus Epiphanes of old, will take it out on the Jews. He will begin to destroy the Jews of Israel – the devil's final attempt to stop God's plan from coming to pass. There are many passages in the Old Testament describing this time, especially in the Book of Zechariah.

13. The Antichrist will determine to set up his throne in Jerusalem, after the slaughter of the Jews, but will not be able to. At that

time, the Lord will return and destroy the Beast with the brightness of His coming. **(Dan 11:45) "And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."**

The Beast will besiege Jerusalem, and determine to exterminate the Jews and place his place his palace "in the glorious holy mountain," which is Zion or Jerusalem. Perhaps he will determine to destroy the Tribulation Temple. This is not clear.

What is clear is that things are going to really heat up at the end of the Tribulation. Devilish activity will be at an all-time high, as devils bring the kings, nations, and armies towards Armageddon. God's angels will also be involved: **(Dan 12:1) "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."**

What an amazing time that will be – an awful, terrible, amazing time! Everything will come to a crescendo when the Lord Himself returns!

- **(2 Th 2:8) "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:"**
- **(Rev 19:19-21) "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. {20} And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive**

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into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. {21} And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

Lessons from the Book of Daniel



Coin featuring Seleucus I Nicator (above), and his bust (below).



Below: Bust of Ptolemy I Soter.



Chapter Fifteen

DANIEL'S PROMISE

(Dan 12:1-3) "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. {2} And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. {3} And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

When Daniel was taken captive to Babylon, he was perhaps fourteen years old. Seventy-three years passed between chapter one and chapter twelve. Those seventy-three years were packed full of faithful service and fervent witnessing. He saw Nebuchadnezzar and Darius come to faith in his God, and probably Cyrus as well.

Hindsight is 20/20 when it comes to God's providential care. When Daniel was taken captive to a strange and foreign land, he had no idea of God's great purpose for his life; when he purposed in his heart that he would defile himself with the king's meat, he had no idea of how that decision would shape his future and destiny in God's plan. This study should encourage us to trust God's perfect will, no matter the immediate circumstances. It is enough that God is in control. This is the lesson in the lives of Joseph and Daniel.

As stated before, the last three chapters go together. They began with a vision, in which Daniel saw the Lord Jesus Christ, and then was given a revelation by an angel concerning the people of Israel in the latter days. Chapter twelve finishes that revelation from the

angel, and ends with a message from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to Daniel.

Let's finish this study by looking at four great promises made to Daniel:

I. DANIEL'S PROMISE OF FINAL VICTORY (12:1).

- (Dan 12:1) "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Time is the key word in this verse. Notice two particular times herein described:

1. A Time of Distress.

What time is referred to by "that time?" It is the time described in chapter eleven – the Tribulation period, during which the Antichrist will set himself up as God in the Temple. He will literally become the "abomination that maketh desolate." This will be a terrible time for the Jewish people, "the children of thy people."

The angel said, "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time..." This is referring to the "Great Tribulation." The Lord Jesus described this time, and referenced the Book of Daniel:

- (Mat 24:15-22) "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) {16} Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: {17} Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: {18} Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. {19} And woe

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unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! {20} But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: {21} For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. {22} And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

The Lord was speaking of the Jews of the Tribulation period, particularly those at the very end. They will recognize at the end that the Beast was not the Messiah after all when he sets himself up as God in the Temple. This will mark the beginning of a time of sorrow the likes of which the world has never seen.

This is also called the "time of Jacob's Trouble" - **(Jer 30:7) "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."** God's focus will be on the Jewish remnant at the end of the Tribulation.

You can read in Revelation chapter sixteen about the awful judgments of God that will be poured out at the end of the Tribulation period. Jesus said that **"except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved."** This will end with a terrible earthquake, like the world has never experienced.

- **(Rev 16:17-21) "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. {18} And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. {19} And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. {20} And every island fled away, and the mountains were not**

found. {21} And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

The sufferings of Jerusalem shall also be great, as the Jews realize that the Beast is a false Christ. The Beast will then turn on them with a fury. One-third of the Jews will be slaughtered, and Jerusalem will be sacked:

- **(Zec 13:8-9) "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. {9} And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."**

God will gather the nations to the valley of slaughter, known as Armageddon, to deal with them once and for all, for Jerusalem's sake:

- **(Zec 14:2) "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."**

It will be a time of unbelievable distress and anguish – the Great Tribulation! Still, it has a promise attached – “**he shall be saved out of it.**”

2. A Time of Deliverance.

- **(Dan 12:1) "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same**

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time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Many Bible scholars believe that Michael is Jesus. I do not believe so, and I do not believe that there are any strong Biblical reasons to believe that Michael is Christ anymore than to claim that Gabriel is Christ. Michael and Gabriel are the only two holy angels mentioned by name, but they are just angels.

What does the Bible tell us about Michael?

- 1) In Daniel, he is mentioned three times as the prince of the children of Israel (10:13,21; 12:1). He is their "guardian angel."
- 2) He is called the archangel in Jude 1:9. This means that he is over all of God's angels. There are no other angels called archangels. There is no Biblical reason to say that Gabriel is an archangel; he is never called such in God's Word.
- 3) He contended with the devil for the body of Moses, and succeeded (Jude 1:9). Can you image seeing Satan and Michael wrestling over Moses' corpse? But they did – and Michael won.
- 4) He defeated (or will defeat) Satan in war and cast him out of heaven (Rev. 12:7).
- 5) At the Rapture, his voice will be heard (1 Thess. 4:16).
- 6) He may be the angel that binds the devil and casts him into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3). Michael would certainly deserve the honor of dealing with his arch-enemy.
- 7) Every recorded time that Michael and Satan meet in conflict, Michael is victorious.

Michael is NOT Jesus, but the leader of God's angelic armies. Scripture places him on an equal basis as Satan. Both lead angelic armies – Michael leads God's angels, and Satan

leads his own devils. Satan wants you to believe that he is equal to Jesus. This is often how we think of it – as Satan against Jesus! In fact, Jesus Christ is as far above the devil as I am above an earthworm. Michael the archangel is the one who contends with Satan – and wins every time. Michael is the *archangel*; Satan is the *archenemy*.

Michael will stand up for the people of Israel. I do not know all that this involves, but he and his angels will certainly be active as the great spiritual forces come to a head in the place called Armageddon. What an amazing time that will be!

In the end, God Himself will come roaring out of Zion to defeat His enemies at Armageddon:

- **(Zec 14:3-4) "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. {4} And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."**
- **(Zec 12:8-10) "In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David *shall be* as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. {9} And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. {10} And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn."**

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At that time, the remaining Jews will “**look upon me whom they have pierced.**” They will look to Jesus Christ, their true Messiah. They will see Him as the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for their sins. They “**shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.**” They will be saved, and God will pour out His Holy Spirit upon them as He did on Pentecost: “**And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications...**”

Joel spoke of this national and spiritual deliverance at the Lord's Second Coming: (Joel 2:30-32) “**And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. {31} The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. {32} And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.**”

He also spoke of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon these newly converted Jews: (Joel 2:27-29) “**And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that I am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. {28} And it shall come to pass afterward, *that I* will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: {29} And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.**”

In that day, a fountain will be opened for sin and uncleanness. (Zec 13:1) “**In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.**” The Jews will not simply be delivered from physical harm and danger. They will be delivered spiritually as well. They will get born again. Paul

spoke of this: **(Rom 11:26-27)** **"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: {27} For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."**

This is the deliverance that Jews and Gentiles need today. Many want deliverance from financial problems, marriage problems, career problems, job problems, school problems, family problems, and health problems. The greatest problem that a lost person has, however, is the problem of sin. If you are not saved, you need God to take away your sins. You need a fountain where sins and uncleanness can be washed away.

Thank God, *"There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins; and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains!"*

No matter what your past or the name of your sins, the blood of Jesus Christ can wash them away. **(Isa 1:18)** **"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."**

Dr. J. Frank Norris was in Damascus many years ago, and a textile merchant showed him some pure white wool. He gave him a magnifying glass and challenged him to find a single spot or blemish. Dr. Norris was unable to find any spot or blemish.⁴³ It was perfectly white. That is what God does when He saves us. Our sins were like scarlet – which was a double dye and impossible to get out. We are double-dyed sinners: we are sinners by birth and sinners by choice. Yet the blood of Jesus Christ can make as white as pure wool, as white as snow!

Those who are delivered are found written in the book! **(Dan 12:1)** **"...and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."** What book is this? It is God's heavenly record of the redeemed. The names of the saved are written in heaven. **(Luke 10:20)** **"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are**

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subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

This is the Lamb's Book of Life:

- **(Heb 12:22-23) "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, {23} To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"**
- **(Rev 13:8) "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."**
- **(Rev 17:8) "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."**

In the final analysis, it is the Lamb's Book of Life that will identify those who will live forever in heaven:

- **(Rev 20:12-15) "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. {13} And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. {14} And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. {15} And whosoever was not found**

written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

God has a library of books that record our every deed, thought and motive. What a fearful thought! Can you imagine how you will feel when you stand before the all-seeing eyes of God, and your book is opened? How will you feel when your secrets are brought out in all of their wicked details, in **"the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom 2:16)?** Do you really want to trust in your works for your heavenly standing, when the Bible says that He will judge men according to their works?

In the final analysis, the books of deeds will only shut our mouths and leave us condemned before a thrice holy God. **(Rom 3:19-20) "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. {20} Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."**

Those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life have been forgiven of all their sins. They are under the blood! Their works are blotted out and replaced by the righteousness of Christ. Dear reader, if your name is not now in that Book, I earnestly charge you to turn to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Trust in Him with all your heart. Do not trust in your works, your church, your goodness, or your religion. Like the hymn writer said, *"Nothing in my hands I bring; simply to thy cross I cling!"*

Daniel was promised final victory! No matter how dark things get, no matter how ugly things are – and they are going to get uglier than we can imagine – God is still on the throne. His plans and purposes will not be thwarted or changed by sinful man. Thank God, I'm on the winning side! Thank God, my name is in that Book!

II. DANIEL'S PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE (12:2)

- **(Dan 12:2) "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt."**

This verse speaks of the resurrection of the dead. When a person dies, it is the physical body that dies. The soul lives forever. The body is just clay. We are made from the dust of the earth, and when we die the flesh returns back to the dust.

There is no such thing as soul-sleep. This is a false doctrine. The soul does not sleep in the grave, awaiting the resurrection of the body. When a person dies, their soul goes somewhere else. This is clearly seen in the story (not a parable) of the rich man and Lazarus:

- **(Luke 16:22-23) "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; {23} And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."**

When a person dies, he goes to one of two places in eternity, heaven or hell. There is no middle ground.

So when Daniel speaks of them "**that sleep in the dust,**" he is referring on to their physical bodies. Paul referred to the bodies of the saved as "asleep." **(1 Th 4:14) "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."** But he also said that the saved are with the Lord at death - **(2 Cor 5:6,8) "Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord...{8} We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."** If I die as a saved person, my body will sleep in the ground, while my soul is with Jesus in heaven.

There is coming a time when those dead bodies will be resurrected from their graves in the land and the sea. However, we should understand that there are two resurrections, which Daniel 2:3 reveals:

- 1) There is a resurrection to everlasting life.
- 2) There is also a resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt.

These two resurrections correspond to the two destinations in eternity. **(Mat 25:46) "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."** Eternal life or everlasting punishment. Those are the only two options. Jesus called these two separate resurrections the **"resurrection of life"** and the **"resurrection of damnation"** in John 5:29.

The first resurrection is for the saved. **(Rev 20:4-6) "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. {5} But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. {6} Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."**

Those resurrected here will be **"blessed and holy"** and will not suffer "the second death" in hell or the lake of fire. They will live with and serve Christ forever. Obviously, this refers to the saved.

The second resurrection leads to the lake of fire. These verses are worth considering again: **(Rev 20:12-15) "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. {13} And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. {14} And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. {15} And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."**

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The second resurrection will be of the unsaved dead. They will stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment, where they will be judged according to their deeds and proven eternally guilty. Their names are not in the Lamb's Book of Life. They are not saved. They are part of the **"resurrection of damnation."** They will ALL be cast into the lake of fire with the devil and his angels.

If you died today, which resurrection would you be destined for? Is your name in the Lamb's Book of Life?

Daniel prophesied of the rise of empires and nations, and their fall; he forecast the history of the world, culminating with the Stone Kingdom of the Son of God. But we must not forget that human history will lead to the throne of God, and judgment. For the unsaved millions, this judgment will end in fiery perdition in the lake of fire. Oh, how important is it that we make sure that we are saved! How vital is it that we earnestly and compassionately take the gospel to the lost souls around the world!

III. DANIEL'S PROMISE OF HEAVENLY REWARD (12:3).

➤ **(Dan 12:3) "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."**

This corresponds to the saved in verse two – those that awake to everlasting life. Those that are **"wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."** We should first identify who are the "wise."

The world has its own version of **"they that be wise."** The world says that the man who makes vast fortunes, who achieves success in his business, who achieves great military victories – this is the wise man. The world says that the great educator, the brilliant scientist, the progressive philosopher – this is the wise man. The world says that the one who is famous, who is highly esteemed by men – this is the wise man. The world says that the one who

conquers nations, that leads great armies, that enslaved and destroys – this is the wise man.

God has a different perspective on who is the “wise man.” Consider the Lord’s parable of the Fool with the Bigger Barns:

- **(Luke 12:16-21)** "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: {17} And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? {18} And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. {19} And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. {20} But God said unto him, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? {21} So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*"

This man would be considered a wise businessman today, a success! But God said that he was a fool. He was bankrupt with God. Even if he had gained the whole world and squeezed it into his barn, it would have profited him nothing when he lost his own soul.

- **(1 Cor 1:20)** "Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

Who are the wise? Daniel said, “**They that turn many to righteousness.**” The soul-winner is wise. (Prov 11:30) “**The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.**” Daniel 12:3 is a promise to the soul-winner.

Was Daniel a soul-winner? Did he win souls? I’ll say he did. No one else in the Bible won three heathen kings to the Lord. We do not know how many others were saved through the long ministry of Daniel. Certainly, many were turned to righteousness!

We must never forget that this world is not our home. We are not here to build bigger barns and lay aside for ourselves. We are

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here to carry out God's Great Commission - **(Mark 16:15)** "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

We are to strive to turn people to righteousness – both lost and saved. Consider the watchman's responsibility as given to Ezekiel:

- **(Ezek 3:17-21)** "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. {18} When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. {19} Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. {20} Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. {21} Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul."

Paul said that we have a responsibility to warn every man, and to try to turn them to Jesus Christ for salvation: **(Col 1:28-29)** "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: {29} Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

James said that we are responsible to turn people to righteousness and convert them from the error of their way: **(James 5:20)** "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from

the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Do you want to claim this promise? Be wise and get busy turning people to righteousness! It does not say to "try." It is a promise for those who succeed at it! It does not say, "He that trieth to win souls is wise." It says, "**He that winneth souls is wise.**" Yes, God gives the increase, but too often we make excuses for ourselves when what we ought to do is try harder, pray harder, and work harder!

Notice the two parts of the soul-winner's promise:

- 1) They will "**shine as the brightness of the firmament**" – like the sunshine on a bright day. **(Mat 13:43) "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."**
- 2) They will also shine "**as the stars for ever and ever.**"
What a wonderful promise!

IV. DANIEL'S PROMISE OF REST AND RESURRECTION (12:4-13).

Daniel is told to seal up the Book, as it will not be fully understood until "the time of the end." To this day, the vision is sealed to the Jews. Their minds are still blinded until they turn to the Lord.

A sign of the times is revealed here as well - **(Dan 12:4) "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."**

People are running to and fro; airplanes are constantly crisscrossing the skies, and men are being carried further and faster than anytime in human history. Knowledge is increasing at a rate that cannot be measured. Can you understand nano-technology? How can we create machines so small that they cannot be seen? Can you explain the marvellous advances in the field of medicine? We

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are seeing knowledge increase as never before in the history of the world.

The attention turns to Christ as the Book comes to an end.

- **(Dan 12:5-7) "Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. {6} And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, How long *shall it be* to the end of these wonders? {7} And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished."**

The “man clothed in linen” is Christ, as we discussed in chapter 10. “*How long?*” – the question of the saints of all ages. Christ lifted both hands and proclaimed that it would be 3 ½ years – “**a time, times, and an half.**” This refers to the last half of the Tribulation, the last half of the final seven years in the Seventy-week Prophecy – “**...and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished.**”

Daniel wanted further information, but this was denied. **(Dan 12:8-9) "And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*? {9} And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end."**

We should be content to know that there is a “finish line.” God has a time in which “**all these things shall be finished.**” And when the smoke is all cleared and the dust has settled, Christ will have set up a kingdom which shall never be removed! We are on the winning side!

However, a little further light is given concerning the Tribulation period: **(Dan 12:10) "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."**

This is a reference to those who will be saved during the Tribulation – the 144,000 and their converts, who **“shall be purified, and made white, and tried”** because **“the wise shall understand.”** The following passages describe the true “Jehovah’s Witnesses” and the real “Latter Day Saints:”

- **(Rev 6:9-11) "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: {10} And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? {11} And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled."**
- **(Rev 7:9-10) "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; {10} And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."**
- **(Rev 7:13-17) "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? {14} And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. {15} Therefore are they before the throne of God,**

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and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. {16} They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. {17} For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Christ then announced another timetable, which Bible scholars have debated without a satisfactory conclusion: **(Dan 12:11-12) "And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days. {12} Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."**

1290 days is roughly 3 ½ years, and may refer to the same time frame as verse 7. Christ pronounces a blessing upon those who wait and come to the 1335th day – 45 days later. I do not claim to understand this promise, but I believe that it must have something to do with the salvation of the Jews and His Second Coming. This promise may not be understood until it takes place. I have no problem with that, as I will be watching safely from the battlements of heaven!

Daniel's Promise of Rest and Resurrection.

- **(Dan 12:13) "But go thou thy way till the end *be*: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."**

God's revelation to Daniel must have seemed like a great burden to the weary old warrior; but with it came a promise of rest. In essence, God was saying, "Daniel, do not trouble yourself too deeply about these things; they are a long way off. You have born the burden of the heat of the day all these many years; your time of rest has come."

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God was referring, of course, to Daniel's physical death. It is a rest for the child of God. Daniel died soon after, and went to his place of rest. However, death was not the end for Daniel. God promised that he would stand again in his lot at the end of days. What is "his lot?" It refers to his place among the saved, the children of God.

God revealed this truth of the resurrection to Job as well, as he lay in the ashes: (**Job 19:25-27**) "**For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: {26} And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: {27} Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me."**

Death is a fearful thing to the unsaved; it leads straight to hell. But for the saved, and especially those who have worked and labored for the Lord for many years, death is but a time to lay aside the heavy burdens of this life and "rest" in heaven. Consider these verses:

- (**2 Cor 5:1-4**) "**For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. {2} For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: {3} If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. {4} For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."**

The tabernacle Paul referred to is our earthly body with all of its infirmities. In this tabernacle we "**do groan, being burdened.**" The longer we live and the more we serve, the more soul-weary we can become. Thank God for the time of rest awaiting those who do their best, who give all to the great cause of Jesus Christ!

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As we finish this study of Daniel, I want to challenge you to live wholeheartedly for God. Dare to be a Daniel. Be a soul-winner. Turn many to righteousness. Give your heart, your life, your strength, your talents, your wealth, your intelligence, your skills, your bodies, your time – give all to the great cause of Jesus Christ.

Time is short. It is time to wake up and get busy. It is time for those of us who know our God to be strong and do exploits. It is time for us to get busy turning people to righteousness! It is time for God's people to purpose in their hearts that they are going to be faithful to Him, no matter what!

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Above: From the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great.
Below: Bust of Julius Caesar.



ENDNOTES

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