

Daniel

Introduction:

Daniel is one of the more famous characters in the Old Testament. Daniel and the lions den have captured the hearts of many children. The “*handwriting on the wall*” is also recorded in his book. His faithful service to God, his interpretation of Nechadnezzar’s dream, his friends Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego being cast into the fiery furnace all make Daniel riveting. On the other hand, his dreams of the future have been interpreted and misinterpreted for centuries. Perhaps most important for God’s people is how God felt about him.

*At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for **you are greatly beloved**; Dan 9:23*

*And he said to me, “O Daniel, **man greatly beloved**, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.”*

*And he said, “O **man greatly beloved**, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!” Dan 10:19*

Yet he is never mentioned in the NT and His writings are mentioned twice, both about the same event. There he is noted as Daniel the prophet.

*“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ **spoken of by Daniel the prophet**, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Mt. 24:15-16*

*“So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ **spoken of by Daniel the prophet**, standing where it ought not” (let the reader understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Mk. 13:14-15*

Daniel Taken Captive

Like Jeremiah and some of the other prophets, the date of the book is given in terms of the king who was reigning at the time of captivity. Daniel was taken in the very first captivity which is dated 606 BC.

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god. ... 6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Dan. 1:1-2, 6

It is this same event in the fourth year Jehoiakim that Jeremiah proclaimed would begin the seventy year captivity.

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), ... 2 which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: ... 11 And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 ‘Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the LORD; Jer 25:1-2 11-12

Yet with this decree is also given the prophesy that Babylon would fall at the end of these 70 years. Although none of those alive then would see it, the fourth generation would like to see it. Daniel later refers to this same passage.

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, ... 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Dan 9:1-2

Was Daniel a Eunuch?

It is implied in many different ways that Daniel was a eunuch. First we have the prophecy that God had Isaiah give to Hezekiah that some of his sons would be taken to become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord: 17 'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the Lord. 18 'And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'" 2Kings 20:16-18

When Nebuchadnezzar took the first people captive, he instructed "*the master of his eunuchs*" to bring some of the "*children of Israel*," both "*kings descendants*" and "*nobles*" to work in the "*king's palace*." All of these words are in direct fulfillment of God's prophecy to Hezekiah.

Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, 4 young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. Dan 1:3-4

When this "*chief of eunuchs*" hand picks "*Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah*," and gave names" to them, again there is a strong inference that they were eunuchs under his authority.

Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego. Dan 1:6-7

Finally, it is stated three different times that Daniel had both direct and indirect contact with this "*chief of Eunuchs*." There is no further evidence than this, so it can't be stated with certainty, but there is a strong possibility that this is the case.

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. ... 11 So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ... 18 Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. Dan 1:8, 11, 18

Changing the Names

Evidently it was the custom of Nebuchadnezzar to change the names of those who were conquered. Whether it was to humble them, help them forget their previous nation, or for some other reason. He did this with the kings of Judah after he conquered them and he did it with these young men, including Daniel. "*Daniel*" either means "*God is my Judge*," or "*the judge of God*." His name was changed to "*Belteshazzar*" which either means "*the prince of Bel*," or "*Bel (Lord), protect him (or his life)*." "... *the name of the chief god of the Babylonians*..." (from Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament).

The exact meaning of the name is disputed. The full form (דַּנְיֵאל) is probably more correct, ... so that the sense will be *God is my Judge*... Others interpret the word as the *Judge of God*, ... This interpretation is favored by the Chaldaean name, *Belteshazzar* (בִּלְטַשְׁצָר, 1:7, i. e. *the prince of Bel*; Sept. [Theod.]; Βαλτάσαρ; Vulg. *Baltassar*), which was given to Daniel at Babylon ([Dan 1:7](#)),. (McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia)

To Daniel, he gave the name Belteshazzar. In Babylonian this name was probably *Belu-lita-sharri-usur*, which means "*O Bel, protect thou the hostage of the king*," a most appropriate name for one in the place which Daniel occupied as a hostage of Jehoiakim at the court of the king of Babylon. (Standard Bible Encyclopaedia)

bḏlššar: A proper noun designating Belteshazzar. The Babylonian name given to Daniel by a chief

official, while Daniel was captive in Babylon. The name means “**Bel (Lord), protect (him or his life)**” in Babylonian. Daniel did not recognize this pagan god but served the Lord God. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT)

Daniel' Character

The very first event recorded about Daniel had to do with his purity, holiness, and dedication to keeping God's commandments. Since “*He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.*” (Lk. 16:10-11), Daniel's feelings toward unclean food is an indication of his attitude toward God. He alone seems to have raised the objection, but his friends were also added as being in agreement with him.

*But **Daniel purposed in his heart** that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Dan 1:8-9*

*So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over **Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days,** and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants." Dan 1:11-14*

***As for these four young men,** God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Dan 1:17*

The reasons for the objection could have been the one Peter raised, or it may have been the problem Paul spoke of in Romans 14 and 1Cor 8-10.

In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." 14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." Acts 10:12-14

However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 1Cor. 8:7

This meat could not be determined to be clean, it may not have been properly bled, it had been sacrificed to their gods, and the wine may have contained alcohol.

Daniel made the decision to not eat this food or drink the wine. Under normal circumstances this would probably have led to his death, which subsequent events prove he would have been willing to do. But God did something through his providence that led to a favorable outcome.

Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. Dan 1:9-10

The chief of the eunuchs wanted to help Daniel, but he had his own life to be concerned about. His concern is legitimate. He could have lost his life if those in his charge became ill or looked bad and investigations led to the conclusion he had changed their died.

And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. Dan 1:5-6

Instead of turning him down he expressed his concern which Daniel has a fair proposal which he know God would help him with. They would conduct an experiment. The four of them would eat the vegetables and water, while the other young men ate the food prescribed by the king. At the end of ten days, it would be evident if this would cause a problem or not. Again, God's providence works as their appearance is far better after just ten days. As a result, all the Jewish men under the authority of the chief of the eunuchs was given the same vegetables and now ate clean food.

Daniel's Growth and Development

Daniel's age is never given at this point in the account. The term youth narrows it down to under forty, because they were still young men who grew up with the 41 year old Rehoboam(1Kings 12:10; 14:21). The only real time we have to work with are the seventy years of captivity. Daniel

was still living after those 70 years, so we can work out that he couldn't have been thirty and probably wasn't yet 20.

He came as a part of a group known for being, a cut above others.

*young men in whom there was **no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand**, Dan 1:4*

At the end of the three years, God had again used His providence to give them knowledge and skill. Daniel had also been given understanding in vision and dreams. Whether this was known before Nebuchadnezzar's dream is not stated.

***three years of training for them**, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. Dan 1:5-6*

*As for these **four young men**, God gave them **knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom**; and **Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams**. Dan 1:17*

It was made clear to the king that there was something special about them. No one in all his realm could compete with them. "In all matters of wisdom and understanding," they were "ten times better" than everyone else in the realm.

Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm. Dan 1:19-21

Yet in the subsequent chapters the king seems to have forgotten about them. Their skill did not lead to any special position. Perhaps it was their being foreigners and captives, or perhaps it was because they were from Israel and served only their own God.

Daniel 2

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Once again the problem with dates arises. Nebuchadnezzar had conquered and taken Daniel in his first year.

*The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, **in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Jer. 25:1-2***

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. Dan 1:1

So Daniel was definitely taken in that same first year. Yet it was only second year of Nebuchadnezzar when the dream came.

*Now **in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; dDan. 2:1-2***

The difficulty arises because the first chapter ends with Daniel finishing his three years of training.

*And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and **three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. Dan. 1:5***

*Now **at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in**, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. 1:18*

Hence it is not possible for all these things to be done in the order the book had been written. Two possibilities have been put forth. The first is that the first year of Nebuchadnezzar in Jeremiah was his first year as co-regent with his father and the second year in Daniel is after his father died and he took the throne. , giving Daniel the time to finish his training before the dream came. The second is that it was in the first year of Daniel's three years of training that he had the dream. We don't have enough information to know which of the two is true.

Nebuchadnezzar's dreams were so vivid and so troubling that he could not sleep. So he called all the idolatrous men who claimed to have the power of the gods to read minds, see the future, and resolve issues like this one.

*Now **in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. 2 Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream." Dan. 2:1-3***

Nebuchadnezzar's Challenge to the Wise Men

These men thought to do what they had always done. To hear the dream and then after giving some thought to it, giving the king the most likely interpretation, claiming it had all come from the power of the gods. Because they always spoke in generalities, they had a great chance that this would satisfy the king.

*Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! **Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.**" Dan. 2:4*

But for some reason, he doesn't want to leave it to chance or worse to deception. He comes up with an ingenious plan to be certain that they can really interpret it. It seems clear to the king that if they can really give him the interpretation, they should also be able to tell him the dream itself. This was the challenge he gave to his wise men.

*The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "**My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. 6 However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts,***

rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.” Dan. 2:5-6

There are two outcomes. The first is both logical and fair. If they can't make known the dream, they are fakes and imposters who deserve to die for deceiving the king. The second is the same. If they truly can give him the dream and the interpretation, then they have proven their worth and ought to be rewarded for it.

One can only imagine the fear and consternation among these wise men. They know they can't do what the king asks of them. So they first seek for the best solution, which is for the king to change his mind and tell them the dream.

*They answered again and said, “Let the king **tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.**” Dan. 2:7*

But the king is in no mood for any compromise. He sees their reasoning for what it is, an attempt to put off the inevitable. His decision now hardens. If they can't make known the dream, there is only one outcome. They have been telling him lying and corrupt words to him from the very beginning and now their lies have caught up with them and they deserve to be punished.

*The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: **9 if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.**” Dan. 2:8-9*

These men have now reached the level of despair. They know that no one can do what the king has asked of them. No one has ever demanded such a thing from any astrologer or idolatrous priest. Their answer reveals their impotence and lack of any real relationship with the “gods.” If they had the power they had been claiming all along, they could have easily done this. They are like those who proclaim they can heal all diseases, yet they never go to a real hospital and help real people. If a truly sick person were brought before them, they too would be proven to be frauds.

*The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “**There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.**” Dan. 2:10-11*

The king now sees that he has been deceived all these years and that no one truly has any power. He will never know the interpretation of the dream which has troubled him. Although his anger and fury reveal his character, there is a fairness in his judgment. The account is clear. He immediately began to carry out his threat of punishment. Even Daniel is not exempt from this sentence.

*For this reason **the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.** Dan. 2:12-13*

Daniel Intervenes

When Daniel becomes aware of his danger, he first seeks to find out its cause. Either he was left out or chose not to come, but he had attended this event, so he did not know the outcome. When the danger is revealed to him, he first seeks to find out the cause. The captain was evidently not happy with this task and possibly was a friend to Daniel so instead of simply killing him as commanded, he gives him the explanation Daniel seeks.

*Then **with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; 15 he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, “Why is the decree from the king so urgent?”** Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel. Dan. 2:14-19*

Although it says that Daniel went in to the presence of the king to ask him for the time necessary to get the interpretation, the later account modifies it to he sent word to the king that an answer could be given and he should wait for that outcome. The king, seeing a ray of hope that he might get the answer he sought, granted his request. Daniel then went to his three friends and after

informing them of the problem asked their help by adding their prayers to his in finding the answer the king sought. It is evident that his request is not to save the lives of the idolatrous men who have been deceiving the king, but in saving his own life and that of his friends.

*So Daniel went in and **asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation.** 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and **made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,** 18 that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that **Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.** Dan. 2:16-18*

As they prayed and pleaded with God the secret was revealed to him. This time God did not send a dream, but a vision. Daniel praised and glorified God for giving him the answer and thus sparing his life and that of his three friends.

*Then **the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.** So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Dan. 2:19*

Dreams and Visions

Introduction:

God has spoken to men through dreams and visions from the very beginning. This is summed up by God as He defended Moses against the murmuring of Miriam and Aaron against Moses. We have a long list of both dreams and visions.

*Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, **I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.** 7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. 8 I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?" Num. 12:6-8*

For sake of ease of seeing them, the dreams are first and the visions later. There is some difficulty in telling the difference. Some visions are given while awake while dreams are always while someone is asleep. Yet many dreams are later called visions and occasionally visions are called dreams.

Peter thought he saw a vision when the angel was leading him out of prison and Paul did not know if his vision of the third heaven was done while was in his body, or if God had taken him out of his body. In some dreams and visions, men speak to God or to an angel.

Dreams

*But God **came to Abimelech in a dream by night,** and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." Gen. 20:3*

*Then **he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth,** and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. Gen. 28:12*

*Then **the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream,** Gen. 31:11*

*But **God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night,** and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad." Gen. 31:24*

*Now **Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers;** and they hated him even more. Gen. 37:5-6*

*And they said to him, "**We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.**" So Joseph said to them, "**Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please.**" Gen. 40:8*

*Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "**The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do:** 26 The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. Gen. 41:25-27*

When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. 6 And when Saul inquired of the Lord, **the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.** 1 Sam 28:5-6

At Gibeon **the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night**; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" 1 Kings 3:5

"I have heard what the prophets have said who **prophecy lies in My name**, saying, '**I have dreamed, I have dreamed!**' 26 How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophecy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, Jer. 23:25-27

"The **prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream**; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the Lord. Jer. 23:28

As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and **Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.** Dan. 1:17

"And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, **Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.** Joel 2:28

But while he thought about these things, behold, **an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream**, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. Mt. 1:20-21

Then, **being divinely warned in a dream** that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way. 13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of **the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream**, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." Mt. 2:12-13

Now when Herod was dead, behold, **an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph** in Egypt, 20 saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." ... And **being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.** 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, Mt. 2:19-23

Visions

10 Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." 15 So Samuel lay down until morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And **Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision.** 1Sam. 3:10,15

4 But it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, 5 "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: "**According to all these words and according to all this vision**, so Nathan spoke to David. 2Sam. 7:4-5, 17

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Isa. 1:1

And the Lord said to me, "The prophets prophecy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; **they prophecy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.** Jer. 14:14-15

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that **the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.** Ezek. 1:1-2

He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and **brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem**, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy. Ezek. 8:3-4

Then the Spirit took me up and **brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea**, to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me. Ezek. 11:24-25

Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: Dan. 2:28

I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. Dan. 4:5-6

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, **Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed**. Then **he wrote down the dream**, telling the main facts. 2 Daniel spoke, saying, **“I saw in my vision by night**, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. Dan. 7:1-3

Then the Lord answered me and said: **“Write the vision And make it plain on tablets**, That he may run who reads it. 3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. Hab. 2:2-3

Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, **“Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”** Mt. 17:9

But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and **they perceived that he had seen a vision** in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless. Luke 1:22

When they did not find His body, **they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.** Luke 24:23

Now there was a certain disciple **at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.”** And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” 11 So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. 12 **And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in** and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.” Acts 9:10-12

About the ninth hour of the day **he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in** and saying to him, “Cornelius!” Acts 10:3

Now while **Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant**, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius ... 19 While **Peter thought about the vision**, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are seeking you Acts 10:17, 19

“I was in the city of Joppa praying; and **in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet**, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. Acts 11:5-6

So he went out and followed him, and **did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.** Acts 12:9-10

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 Now **after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia**, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. Acts 16:9-10

Now **the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision**, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; Acts 18:9

14 And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ 19 “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, “Therefore, King Agrippa, **I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision**, Acts 26:14, 19

It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. **I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:** 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago — **whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows — such a one was caught up to the third heaven.** 2Cor. 12:1-3

Daniel 3

Introduction/Review

Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that is so vivid and so different from any other dream he has ever had. He wants the true interpretation so badly that he refuses to tell his wise men and enchanters (those who claim revelation from their god or supernatural power to see into the future). He knows that once they know the dream it will be easy for them to fabricate an interpretation. In his quest to know the meaning of the dream he does something that no king before him had ever done.

The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." Dan. 2:10-11

He is so enraged at their inability that he decrees death to them.

For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. Dan 2:12

Before we judge him too harshly, we need to remember that he had supported these men all these years because he believed they truly had the power to help him see the future. If they can't fulfill this request, it proved to him that they had deceived him all these years and taken his money without really giving him any service at all. He doesn't give them any more time but immediately sends out captain of his guard to arrest them, then either immediately, or some time later executed them.

When Daniel heard that his life and that of his three friends was now in danger, he went to his home and with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah begin to plead with God for knowledge of the dream and its interpretation. God heard their prayers and gave Daniel the knowledge he sought.

Daniel's Praise to God

What Daniel said to God is recorded (Dan. 2:20-23). This may have been a prayer, and it may have later been made into a Psalm. It covers every aspect of God's gift to Daniel. Praising God's name of His amazing attributes that gave to Daniel what he needed to save his life.

*Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His
And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings
He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding
He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him
I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might
And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand*

He spoke of God's power to change **times and seasons** (referring to the history of man and the nations God would set up and take away).

And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. Acts 1:7-8

He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, Acts 17:26-27

He also **removes kings and raises up kings**

This will be one of the central themes of the book of Daniel.

In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.' Dan 4:17

25 till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He

chooses. **26 your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules.** Dan. 4:25-26, 32; 5:21

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Rom 13:1-2

Wisdom to the wise, knowledge to the understanding, reveals secret and dark things, knows what is in the darkness.

This is another important thing to remember in order to give God the praise and adoration due to Him. No one with wisdom can glory in that wisdom. It is a gift from God, both in whatever natural abilities one has and also whatever God has done to supplement them. We must never forget that what God did for Solomon He does for all to a lesser degree.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. Jas. 1:5-6

God had just revealed a dark secret to Daniel, but it is a small thing compared to what God has the ability to do.

You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. ...6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. ...14 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. Ps 139:2-4, 6

Daniel Tells Nebuchadnezzar's the Contents of his Dream

It is the opening words of this account that forced us to understand what was said in verse 16 in a more general way. The king held off his decree to kill the wise men because of Daniel's words, but it appears from the later account that the king did not know exactly who would bring him the interpretation. Daniel returned to Arioch and told him he would not have to destroy these wise men. He asked to be taken before the king where he would give the interpretation. He didn't tell Arioch that he also knew the dream itself, but waited until he was in the presence of the king.

16 So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. ... 24 Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation." 25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation." Dan. 2:24-25

Nebuchadnezzar has not changed his stance and position. He is still demanding the contents of the dream before he will accept any attempt at the interpretation. Daniel is now in the presence of the king and made it clear as had been said earlier that these men could never meet the king's demand. No man on earth could tell another man his dream because "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. (1Cor. 2:11). Only God knows the thoughts of all men.

"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. 1 Chr. 28:9-10

Daniel made a contrast between those who serve the God who created the world and the abilities of those who follow any idols. Those who follow idols can't do it, but a servant of God can. Yet even with that Daniel took no credit. All the glory belonged to God. It was the God of heaven who had revealed these things.

The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" 27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the

magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. 28 But **there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.** Dan. 2:26-28

God had told Israel something very similar under the preaching of Isaiah. No one but God can declare the end from the beginning. It is interesting that in the passage God proclaimed the very impossibility that those who serve idols also knew. Only God can do this.

*"I have **declared the former things from the beginning**; They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and **they came to pass**. 4 Because I knew that you were obstinate, And your neck was an iron sinew, And your brow bronze, 5 Even from the beginning I have declared it to you; **Before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you, Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them, And my carved image and my molded image Have commanded them.'** ... I have **made you hear new things from this time, Even hidden things, and you did not know them**. 7 They are **created now and not from the beginning**; And **before this day you have not heard them**, Lest you should say, 'Of course I knew them.' 8 Surely you did not hear, Surely you did not know; Surely from long ago your ear was not opened. For I knew that you would deal very treacherously, And were called a transgressor from the womb. Isa 48:3-5, 6-8*

Not only would Daniel recount the dream, but also what Nebuchadnezzar was thinking about before he fell asleep. He tells him that God was actually revealing to Nebuchadnezzar the things that would happen in the latter days. He reminded Nebuchadnezzar of his thoughts before falling asleep that night. He had been thinking about what the future might hold. Daniel then emphasized again that he had nothing to do with this interpretation, but that all was given by God. God simply wanted to give Nebuchadnezzar the answer to his questions. The dream was actually that answer.

*As for you, O king, **thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this**; and He who reveals secrets has **made known to you what will be**. 30 But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, **(to the intent that the interpretation may be made known to the king ASV)**, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart. Dan. 2:29-30*

One can only dimly imagine what this must have done in the king's heart. While it began with some general words, he got more specific as the content of the dream is revealed. His eyes must have grown wider and wider and his heart must have been filled with astonishment, awe and amazement.

An Image with Four Metals, with Feet of Iron and Clay Mixed

The dream is simple and straightforward. It is a great image of a man, but made with different metals that are all blended into a whole. God also gave to this image a glory and splendor that exceeded the metals it was made of. There are five parts of the image. A head of fine gold, the chest and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of bronze, the legs of iron, and its feet a mixture of iron and clay, rendering the image very unstable.

The dream continued with a stone cut out of the ground that began to roll. Whether it rolled because it was on a hill or mountain, or just started moving on its own, only Nebuchadnezzar knows. But it rolled into the image and the image was broken into pieces so small that they became like chaff and the wind blew it away. But then the rock grew into a great mountain that filled the entire earth.

*"You, O king, were watching; and behold, **a great image!** This great image, whose **splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome**. 32 This image's **head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze**, 33 **its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay**. 34 You watched while **a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces**. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were **crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.** Dan. 2:31-35*

Daniel didn't give the king time to say anything, but immediately moved into the interpretation.

Daniel Told Nebuchadnezzar's the Interpretation of his Dream

As one can see from the image below, through this dream God has revealed to king Nebuchadnezzar the future. God already knows who will rule in the kingdoms of men for the next 600 years. Not only who would be ruling, but which nations they would be ruling over. God had already done this with Cyrus in Isaiah.

Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid.'" Cyrus, God's Instrument 45 "Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held — To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: Isa. 44:28-45

Since Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold, The image begins It has already begun with this king. He is the head of gold. Although God does not reveal this to Daniel or Nebuchadnezzar, this kingdom will be of a very short duration of less than 50 years. God intended to punish Babylon even before the Jews were allowed back to their own land

Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all — you are this head of gold. Dan 2:36-38

In this dream God doesn't give the details he will give to Daniel in chapter seven and eight. But to Nebuchadnezzar it is revealed there will be three lessor kingdoms following his. The second kingdom will be of silver, the third bronze and the fourth iron.

*But after you shall arise **another kingdom inferior to yours**; then another, **a third kingdom of bronze**, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And **the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron**, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. Dan. 2:39-40*

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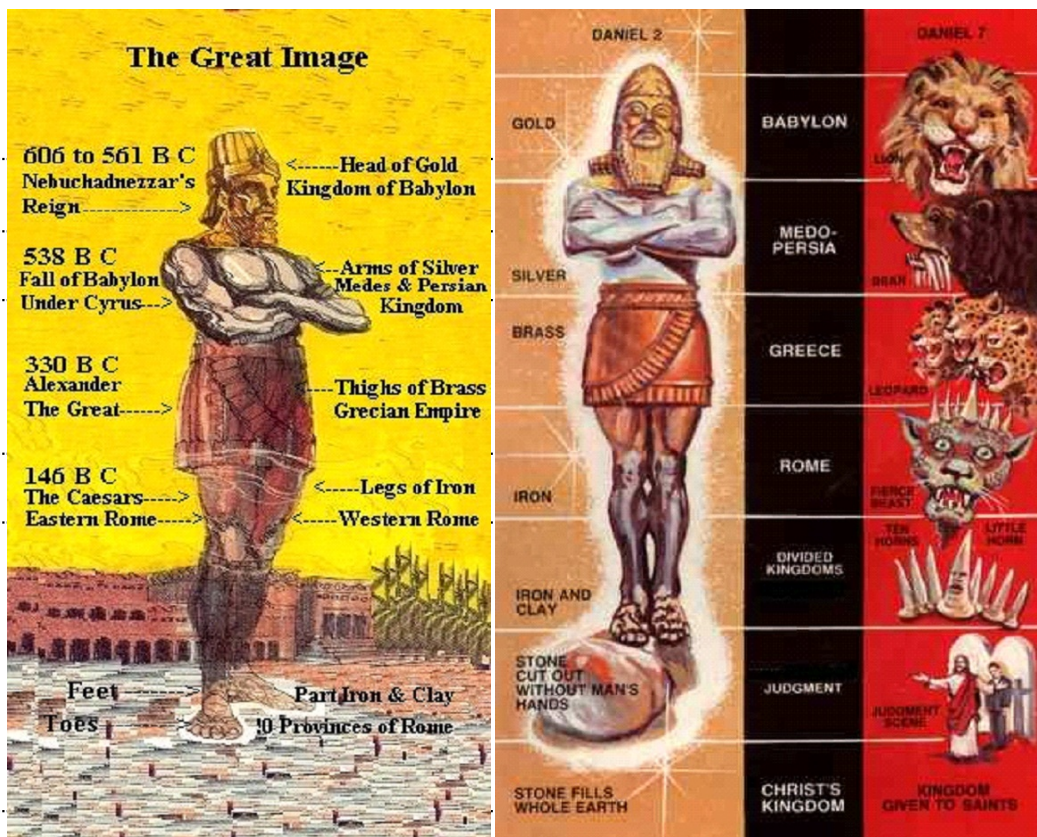
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a male goat came from the west, ... the male goat is Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation



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The dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the two dreams/visions of Daniel reveal the same events emphasizing different aspects. We will look at them more fully later in the class.

God will set up a Kingdom

The final interpretation is the most important of all. Once again illustrating that God rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever he chooses. God will set up a kingdom that can never be destroyed while at the same time destroying all these other kingdoms

*And in the days of these kings the **God of heaven will set up a kingdom** which shall **never be destroyed**; and the kingdom shall **not be left to other people**; it shall **break in pieces** and **consume all these kingdoms**, and it **shall stand forever**. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold — **the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.**" Dan 2:44-45*

Although It is not mentioned again, in the original dream this stone became a great mountain.

*Now it shall come to pass in the latter days **That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains**, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and **let us go up to the mountain of the Lord**, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. NKJV Isa 11:1-2 11 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Isa. 2:2-3*

***They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain**, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea. 10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." Isa. 11:9-10*

***Even them I will bring to My holy mountain**, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." Isa. 56:7*

***But you have come to Mount Zion** and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. Heb. 12:22-24*

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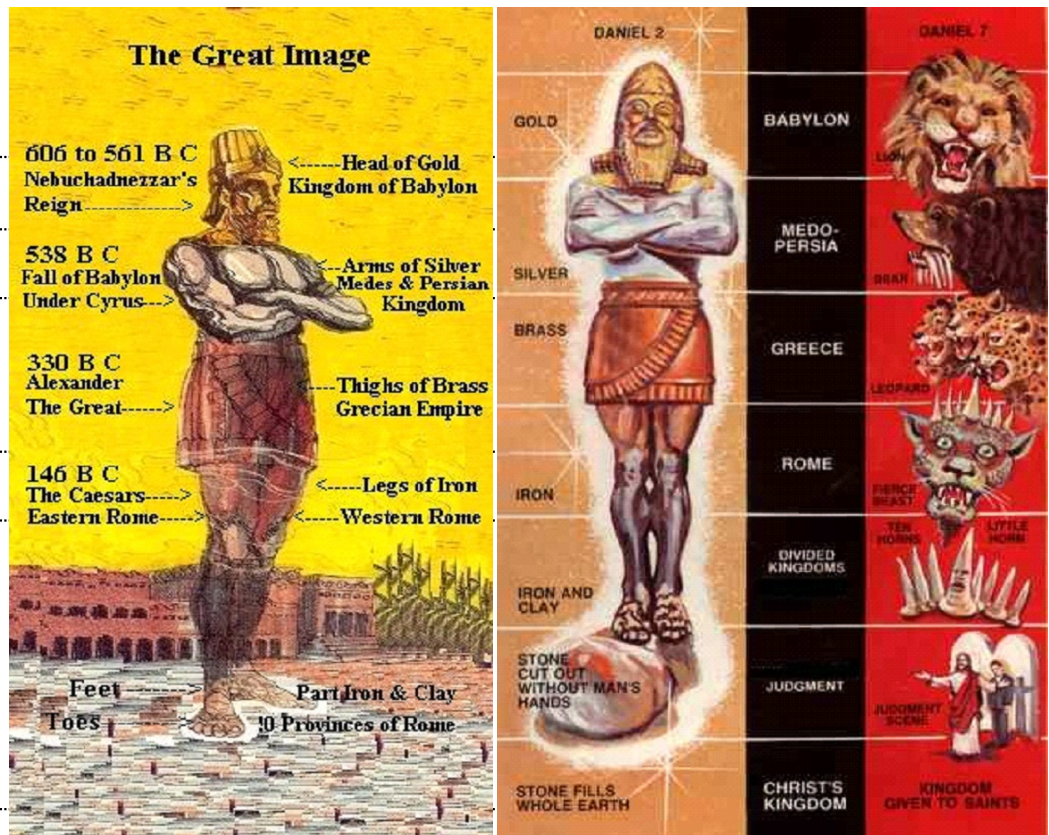
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God will set up a Kingdom

The final interpretation is the most important of all. Once again illustrating that God rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever he chooses. God will set up a kingdom that can never be destroyed while at the same time destroying all these other kingdoms

*And in the days of these kings the **God of heaven will set up a kingdom** which shall **never be destroyed**; and the kingdom shall **not be left to other people**; it shall **break in pieces** and **consume all these kingdoms**, and it **shall stand forever**. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold — **the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.**" Dan 2:44-45*

Although It is not mentioned again, in the original dream this stone became a great mountain.

*Now it shall come to pass in the latter days **That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains**, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and **let us go up to the mountain of the Lord**, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. NKJV Isa 11:1-2 11 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Isa. 2:2-3*

***They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain**, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea. 10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." Isa. 11:9-10*

***Even them I will bring to My holy mountain**, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." Isa. 56:7*

***But you have come to Mount Zion** and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. Heb. 12:22-24*

Daniel 4

Introduction/Review

God first brought Daniel and his three friends to the attention of Nebuchadnezzar after their initial training when they were interviewed and found to be “ten times better” than every other wise men in his kingdom.

Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better Dan. 1:19-20

Later after the failure of all his wise men to make known the dream, God revealed it to Daniel. After Daniel reveals the dream and the interpretation, the king is astonished.

Nebuchadnezzar is Overwhelmed

The amazement that Daniel could reveal the dream and the awesome revelations of the future nations that he knew must be true because Daniel knew the dream brought the king to a powerful display of respect. First he falls down before Daniel in token of his homage. Second, he brings an offering and incense to him, in recognition of his greatness. Third, he speaks of Jehovah as a God above all gods. Although we would have hoped for more, subsequent history proves he is still an idolater. So all that God had done for him through Daniel only brought Nebuchadnezzar to a recognition that Daniel’s God was greater than all the other gods.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. 47 The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." Dan. 2:46-48

Nebuchadnezzar is still in the early stages of the process of conversion. It will take several more events (the fiery furnace, the dream that warned him and the curse that humbled him) to bring him to the full recognition that led him to say “I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever” (Dan. 4:34)

God has now brought Daniel into the favor of the king and in a position to have influence over the people of Babylon. He has been made:

1. Ruler over the whole province of Babylon.
2. Chief administrator over all the wise men.
3. Sat in the gate(court) of the king.

Daniel then sought and succeeded in bringing his three friends, faithful to God and to him into the same position of influence and authority.

Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king. Dan. 2:48-49

Nebuchadnezzar’s Image of Gold

There isn’t much to go on as to the nature of this image. The Aramaic term is only used in the second and third chapters of Daniel, but there is enough information to draw a few conclusions. It is used of the image of his dream in the second chapter, which was clearly the image of a man.

*"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great **image!** This great **image**, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This **image's** head was of fine gold, **its** chest and arms of silver, **its** belly and thighs of bronze, 33 **its** legs of iron, **its** feet partly of iron and partly of clay. Dan. 2:31-34*

It is used in the third chapter of this image and then of Nebuchadnezzar's face.

*Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the **expression** on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. Dan. 3:19-20*

From these uses it is evident that this is not just a pillar, but the image of something. The most obvious image would be that of a man, but beyond that we really can't go. Some think it was his own image, others the image of his father, or perhaps even a replica of the image he saw in his dream, but no one knows because God didn't reveal it. What we do know is that this image is 60 cubits high(90') and 6 cubits wide(9'), and thus could be seen far away.

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Dan. 3:1-2

Nebuchadnezzar's Decree

His invitation is interesting, because Daniel has not been invited. All the government officials have been commanded to attend, but the one above all of them is not there. The most obvious reason would be Nebuchadnezzar's respect for him and his God, but the reason is not given.

And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Dan. 3:2-3

After they arrive the heralds reveal the plan of Nebuchadnezzar regarding the image. A large "band" or "orchestra" has also been assembled along with these leaders. A song of some form has been selected, and the plan was to play that song, and when they heard it, they were all in unison to fall down prostrate in front of the image to manifest respect to it and to the king's command. After the command is given, the punishment for those who chose to disobey it is also decreed. The fact that it was to be done immediately infers that the fiery furnace was also present somewhere near the image.

Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5 that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; 6 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." Dan. 3:4-6

Everything was done exactly as the herald had described, but Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego have again agreed to remain faithful to God. While the idolaters could easily worship another idol along with their own, Israel could not. They could not bow down to an idol without violating one of the Ten Commandments.

*"You shall not make for yourself a carved image — any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 **you shall not bow down to them** nor serve them. **For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. Ex 20:4-6*

Charges Against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

After the initial event, some of the Chaldeans bring charges against them.

There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up." Dan. 3:12

After his dealings with Daniel, it should not have been surprising to the king that his friends would not bow down to his image. But the respect he had shown to Daniel because his "God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings," did not extend to these friends. His concept of God was still limited, and he still showed no fear or respect to him.

Instead of becoming concerned that he had put these friends of Daniel who served the God of gods, into a difficult position and showing the proper respect to God, he became enraged and demanded that they choose between life and their service to their God.

Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?" Dan. 3:13-15

The rage and fury reveal that this king could not tolerate any lack of respect or disobedience to his commands. Yet, in spite of his rage, he offered them a second chance. It is evident from the statement that “*the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego,*” that in the beginning he held them in some regard. Perhaps he doesn’t believe those who charged them or maybe he wants to put additional pressure on them. But they must now make a decision. Once again it is obvious that what Daniel had done in making known the dream did not make a lasting impression on him. In spite of all he had already seen and confessed He makes the foolish statement that no god can deliver them.

But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?" Dan 3:15

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego Proclaim their Decision

There is an important truth for all to consider in this situation. These men declared their loyalty to God along with Daniel as soon as they arrived in Babylon after being taken into captivity. There had been no compromise from the very beginning. Once this has been done, it is much easier when placed in this situation to remain fixed to that decision. But, if there had been any compromises at any time prior to this, they would have been greatly tempted to compromise again. There really was no decision to for them to make. Their heart was fixed and steadfast and they would be so to the end.

There is a boldness to their answer that should have caused him to pause and consider what he was doing. It is not lack of respect that led them to speak in this manner. They knew that he already had enough experience with God to know what they would say. If he is going to force them into the position of making such a choice, then there is only one answer to give and he should have already known it. First, God is able to deliver them from the fiery furnace. His answer to Daniel’s request for the dream and its interpretation already proved that. Second, no matter what God would deliver them out of the hands of the king either by delivering them from death or delivering them through death. But regardless of what God chose to do with them, they would never serve any other gods or bow down to the gold image.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. 18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." Dan. 3:16-18

Nebuchadnezzar’s Rage

Whatever respect the king felt toward these men because of their relationship to Daniel was gone and the expression on his face hardened into the decision that they must die. In that rage, he did something that would greatly increase the power of the miracle God was about to perform.

- 1 Since it was all done “*in the same hour,*” all those gathered for the initial event were now witnessing their execution.
- 2 Their anticipation is heightened as they watch the preparations and the time it took for the furnace to become seven times hotter than it normally would be.
- 3 They watch as the three men are tied up and prepare for execution.
- 4 Nebuchadnezzar chooses some of his best and well known men, mighty men of valor(heros) to

carry them to the furnace to cast them in.

- 5 The heat of the fire is now so hot that it could not be approached. Those who got close enough to cast them inside are killed in the heat and are lying dead at the mouth of the furnace.
- 6 Every eye is glued on that furnace. Obviously most could not see inside, but they could observe the king.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Dan. 3:19-23

these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Dan. 3:19-23

Daniel 5

King Nebuchadnezzar's Astonishment

The king is close enough to see into the furnace. As he watches, he sees the men he sent lying dead in front of the furnace. He watches the three of them fall inside, but instead of seeing them die, God gives him a vision by allowing him to see a fourth person in the furnace.

We need to visualize this scene. All the leadership of Babylon is present to watch this execution, but instead of seeing it, they witness the king quickly arise and speak to all his counselors who are near enough to see into the furnace with him. His question must have aroused amazement at least as great as that of the king. They are not dead, but their bonds have been removed and they are now walking around inside of the furnace.

The most amazing thing of all to the king was the fourth person God allowed all of them to see. While the king reveals his own observation that the bearing and appearance of the fourth was unlike anything on the earth. Later he calls him an angel, but we don't know who it was.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." 25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Dan 3:24-27

Again, in the presence of all the witnesses, the king walks as near as he dare to the mouth and calls for them to come out. Now he refers to God just as he did of Daniel. "Most High God." It is emphasized again all the people who saw this event.

While the mighty men are still smoldering on the ground, the three servants of God have suffered no effects at all. Their hair and garments are not singed and there is no smell of fire upon them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. 27 And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them. Dan, 3:26-27

Nebuchadnezzar's Journey of Faith

After the interpretation of his dream, Nebuchadnezzar responded with a acknowledgment of the power of God.

"Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." Dan 2:47-48

What sounded like a confession of faith turned out to only be a recognition that of all the gods in Nebuchadnezzar's experience this is a god with specific powers regarding secrets. We see this by the building of the very image, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to serve.

Now, In the presence of all the other leaders of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar reveals the next level in his journey.

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!

No longer what "(g)od can deliver," it is now "Blessed be the God." but it is clear in the next chapter that he has still not recognized the exclusive sovereign power of God.

After the next dream and it's consequences, his words become clearer and obvious.

*I blessed **the Most High** and **praised and honored Him who lives forever**: For His dominion is **an everlasting dominion**, And His **kingdom is from generation to generation**. 35 **All the inhabitants***

of the earth are **reputed as nothing**; He does **according to His will** in the **army of heaven** And among the **inhabitants of the earth**. **No one can restrain His hand** Or say to Him, "What have You done?" Dan 4:34-35

Nebuchadnezzar's Decree

While he extolled the convictions of the men, without seeking to share them, he also expressed his own convictions regarding the event. While the later translations deal with the actions of the three men in "*frustrating*" "*violating*" or "*setting aside*" the king's command, the ASV follows every other use with the term change.

An Aramaic verb meaning to *change*; to be *different*. It refers to a difference that has become evident in something or persons; they have changed (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT 8133)

While they did violate his command and bring on themselves the penalty, it was God's intervention that brought about the change in the command itself. They yielded their bodies rather than manifest any disrespect to their God.

Far from wanting this hidden as a rebellion against his authority, he wants it clearly understood that this event has changed this command leading to a new decree. The first decree was to worship his image alone. The second decree places God on the same or slightly higher level as the image he had made.

While he had been prepared to kill them for not honoring his image, now he will kill anyone who speaks anything amiss (blasphemy).

29 Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other god who can deliver like this." Dan 3:28-29

Lastly, adding even further credibility to the story, he promotes the very men who violated his command regarding the image to an even higher position.

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon. Dan. 3:30

Chapter Four

The Completion of Nebuchadnezzar's Journey

This is an amazing chapter. There are some important things we can conclude from this regarding God's mercy and providence. God did some things for Nebuchadnezzar that we don't see anywhere else in the Old Covenant. He gave him a dream, brought about a catastrophe, and allowed Nebuchadnezzar to see things about Him that others had rejected and ignored. We know God is not partial so whatever was done to Nebuchadnezzar openly, would also be done to everyone else.

*Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that **God shows no partiality**. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. Acts 10:34-36*

*For **there is no partiality with God**. Rom*

*And if you call on the Father, **who without partiality judges according to each one's work**, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 1Pet. 1:17*

Since God is not respecter of persons this is not a special sign of favor. It fits right in with the rest of what is spoken of in the Old Testament. What we are not accustomed to reading into these verses is that it extended beyond Israel to the rest of mankind. Since all men have souls and God wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, it should not surprise us that even among the Gentiles, He is not far from each one of us, and that the tests He gives show the right responses, He will give more. Abraham was called in uncircumcision and as he passed God's tests of faith, God gave more and more to him.

I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. 1Chr 29:17

The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the hearts. Pr 17:3

The Lord is in His holy temple, The Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. 5 The Lord tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Ps. 11:4-5

The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. 14 From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth; 15 He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works. Ps. 33:13-15

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? 10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. Jer. 17:9-10

The chapter begins with Nebuchadnezzar's praise for the results of God's work with him. Since the last account of his words and deeds, we don't know how deeply into his character these things have gone, but since love believes all things (puts the best motive and outcomes on the words), it is very likely that this is a deep and sincere faith. It appears to be a good confession, made not privately, but to all the peoples, nations and languages on the earth.

*Nebuchadnezzar the king, To **all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth**: Peace be multiplied to you. 2 I thought it good to declare the **signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me**. 3 How **great are His signs, And how mighty His wonders!** His kingdom is an **everlasting kingdom**, And His **dominion is from generation to generation**. 4:1-3*

It is interesting that the same terms that are used throughout the NT are also used here. Nebuchadnezzar wants to extol the "signs and wonders" God has shown to him. They are what have convinced him, and what he wants everyone else to understand. Pharaoh never spoke like this. These were signs and wonders work for him and he was fully aware of it.

The Events as they Transpired

A second dream, but he has not learned to fully trust Jehovah the God of Daniel. He begins with all the wise men again. He is still putting his fate and outcome in the hands of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and soothsayers. Although he tells them the dream this time, they are afraid(?) or maybe learned a lesson from the previous dream, not wanting to put their heads in the chopping block.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 6 Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation. 4:4-6

After they have heard and feared to make something up, he called Daniel. It is important to see the distinction even in the names. After these events, Nebuchadnezzar now calls him Daniel, a name he had never used before for when he first called him to interpret the dream, it was still Belteshazzar.

*But at last **Daniel** came before me (his name is **Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God**), and I told the dream before him, saying: 9 "**Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.** 4:8-9*

This time he made a distinction between the name that proclaimed Daniel's relationship to the one true God and the one he had given him to extol his own.

"**Daniel**" either means "**God is my Judge,**" or "**the judge of God.**" His name was changed to "**Belteshazzar**" which either means "**the prince of Bel,**" or "**Bel (Lord), protect him (or his life).**" "... **the name of the chief god of the Babylonians...**" (from Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the OT)

There are a few discordant notes in these words, but they are a description of his mind set before

the signs and wonders. He still makes the distinction “my god” (still calling him “**my**” god) and the “*Spirit of the Holy God.*”

The Contents of the Dream

This time it was a great tree and not an image that God sent to him in a dream/vision. Although it began at a great height, it continued to grow as he watched. It became so large that it could be seen by to the ends of the earth. It was large enough for the beasts of the earth(not just farm animals, but all beasts) to find shade and the birds of the heavens to live within. It also possessed the fruits that could feed the entire earth.

*“These were the visions of my head while on my bed: I was looking, and behold, **A tree in the midst of the earth, And its height was great.** 11 **The tree grew and became strong; Its height reached to the heavens, And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.** 12 **Its leaves were lovely, Its fruit abundant, And in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, And all flesh was fed from it.** 4:10-12*

This part of the dream was fixed in his mind before the next event occurred. It is difficult to fully understand this “*watcher,*” for although Daniel quotes it later, he attributes it all to God. It may have been part of the vision, an inference to angel or archangel, or some other being. But this “*watcher*” has come with a decree to cut down the tree. After the tree is cut down, branches cut off, leaves stripped and fruit scattered, it is bound with iron.

*“I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was **a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.** 14 **He cried aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, And the birds from its branches.** 15 **Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, Bound with a band of iron and bronze,** 4:13-15*

Then with no explanation the pronoun is changed. It is to be wet with dew, but let **him** graze with the beasts. His heart is to be changed from man to beast, and seven times are to pass. The final words of the watcher give the power and authority of the decree. Once again, it is the “*watchers*” and “*holy ones*” who make this decree, leaving us to grapple with its full meaning. But the intent of the vision leads to a single result. All living must know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and it is by His will that the one who receives the rule is determined.,

*In the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, And **let him graze with the beasts** On the grass of the earth. 16 **Let his heart be changed from that of a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him.** 17 **‘This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.’** 18 **“This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.”** 4:13-18*

Daniel Explained the Second Dream

The relationship between Daniel and the king are now detailed. Daniel appears to respect and like this king and is deeply troubled by the interpretation. It doesn’t appear to be fear, but concern. This is a dream on those who hate and are his enemies could enjoy interpreting.

*Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was **astonished** for a time, and his **thoughts troubled him.** So the king spoke, and said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.” Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!” 4:19*

As is evident from the final words about the heart of a man, he and the nation he leads (Babylon) are the tree. As the head of gold and the greatest kingdom of the first dream, so also the lovely leaves and abundant fruit here.

“The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and

which could be seen by all the earth, 21 whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home — 22 it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth. 4:20-22

The interpretation is a terrible prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's future. He is to become the beast wet with dew and he will remain in that condition until seven times (a term for completeness). Only after he acknowledges the power of God will his reasons return to him. Yet God assures him that the kingdom will remain his and he will in fact come to that knowledge of God.

this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: 25 They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. 26 "And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules. 4:24-26

Nebuchadnezzar Ignores Daniel's Advice

Daniel knows what the king needs to do. He must repent before these things force him to do so. If he will acknowledge now what he was to learn from the humiliation it may be averted. Daniel makes clear what this full acknowledgment of God's rule would mean. He would break off his sins and iniquities by replacing it with mercy to the poor.

Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity." 4:27

It was an act of pride and self-sufficiency that led to the fulfillment of the threat that had been decreed against him. He had not take the words about God ruling and giving him this power. He took all the glory to himself. At the moment these words left his mouth the judgment fell.

All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" 31 While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses." 4:28-32

The description of this ailment defies any human explanation. This was a divine judgment specially given to Nebuchadnezzar to complete his journey of faith. Thought he circumstances are entirely different, there are still similarities between what happened to Saul of Tarsus and here.

That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. 4:33

The Lessons Nebuchadnezzar Learned and the Praise it Created.

No mention is made about the length, only that as soon as he learned what was necessary, it was removed. It mentions that his reasoning departed and returned, yet there had to be enough reasoning ability in him to make these decisions and learn these lessons.

And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?" 4:34-35

The final outcome is that Nebuchadnezzar follows the path of Job. What he lost was restored and all was as it was with the exception that the rest of his life is spent giving God the glory. He even confesses the sin of pride as one of the reasons he was put into that position.

36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

This is one of the most amazing events we read about concerning God's dealings with the Gentiles after He "gave them up." It is similar to that of the widow and leper in the days of Elijah, which again revealed this was not an exclusive case. God gave this to Nebuchadnezzar and by its public nature also gave a lot to the wise men. Yet we will learn in the next chapter it gave no help to his son.

Daniel 6 – Belshazzar’s Feast

Introduction:

For centuries skeptics proclaimed that the words found in Isaiah 53 were too close to the actual events to be a prophesy. With no proof except for translations that could not take us before the birth of Christ, it was impossible to refute and could only be accepted by faith. But when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1947-1956, and a copy of Isaiah that was written before the birth of Christ was found, it proved that this prophesy was in fact given before Christ’s birth.

The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsaa) is one of the original seven Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in Qumran in 1947. It is the largest (734 cm) and best preserved of all the biblical scrolls, and the only one that is almost complete. The 54 columns contain all 66 chapters of the Hebrew version of the biblical Book of Isaiah. Dating from ca. 125 BCE, it is also one of the oldest of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some one thousand years older than the oldest manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible known to us before the scrolls' discovery. (Digital Dead Sea Scrolls)

In exactly the same way, this chapter in Daniel has been the brunt of the skeptic’s scorn. There were no secular records mentioning the name of Belshazzar. The commentaries written before the 1850’s all noted the discrepancy, and simply stated that it was a matter of faith with no way to prove its truth. But in 1854 a archeological discovery again changed the view.

In 1854, J.G. Taylor found four cuneiform cylinders in the foundation of a ziggurat at Ur. These were deposited by Nabonidus; all four apparently have an identical inscription. In 1881, Assyriologist Hormuzd Rassam made an important find at Sippar in Babylonia (now called Abu Habba), where he discovered the temple of the sun. There he also found a clay cylinder of Nabonidus.[4] This cylinder, excavated in the royal palace, is now in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. A copy is in the British Museum in London. (Wikipedia)



Belshazzar is called king several times in the Book of Daniel (5:1,9,30; 7:1; 8:1). He is referred to as the son of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 5:21-22. There may be many things we still do not know about the historical setting of Daniel, but we understand from Babylonian records that Nabonidus was the king of Babylon at this time (556–539 B.C.). How can it be said that Belshazzar is king, and how can Daniel be third in the kingdom (Daniel 5:7,16,29)?

The inscriptions proved that the ruined tower was the temple of the city of Ur. The words were a prayer for the long life and good health of Nabonidus—and for his eldest son. The name of that son, clearly

written, was Belshazzar! (Ferrell Jenkins)

Clay foundation cylinder naming Nabonidus and Belshazzar. British Museum ME 91128. Photo by Ferrell Jenkins.

Belshazzar's Feast – “God Rules in the kingdoms of men” (Part 2)

After the dream in the previous chapter, and God’s judgment poured out on Nebuchadnezzar, he had confessed and lived the rest of his life with this new conviction:

I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down. Dan 4:36-37

As the new chapter begins, a new king sits on the throne, and although he knew everything that had happened to his father, he rejected any reverence.

This feast is very similar to the one we read about in Esther, and was evidently a common event.

*in those days when **King Ahasuerus** sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the citadel, 3 that in the third year of his reign **he made a feast for all his officials and servants — the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces being before him —***

4 when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for many days, one hundred and eighty days in all. Est 1:2-4

Although a common event among the kings, Belshazzar decided to use it as an opportunity to insult and blaspheme God. To take the vessels taken from His temple alone would have been a blasphemous act. But to use them in praise to other gods is a powerful insult. His gods had conquered the God of Israel and destroyed His temple. He felt no fear.

Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. 2 While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. 3 Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. 4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. Dan. 5:1-4

God' Passes Judgment

The account doesn't indicate if the king was the only one to see this vision. As they are drinking and praising their own gods, he suddenly sees the fingers of a man's hand. The vision obviously forced him to realize that the rest of that hand was in another realm with great power. The candlestick may have been the one taken from the temple in Jerusalem, or it may have been only one that was already there.

In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Dan. 5:5

The change in the king's countenance indicates that he knew there was a risk in doing what he had done. Later Daniel will charge him with a wilful knowledge of what he was doing. He had been aware of what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar and he was using his youthful pride against God to spite Him. When God immediately sent a judgment, he could not read the writing, but he knew it was going to be against him.

6 Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other. Dan. 5:6

Did he forget about Daniel or just ignore him? He goes to his own gods and astrologers offering a great reward, seeking some sort of solace and a way to remove his fear and dread, but they can't help him. The mood in the banquet hall has turned from festivity and carelessness to dread and anguish and the entire assembly is now "astonished/perplexed"

The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." 8 Now all the king's wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation. 9 Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished. Dan. 5:7-9

At this point the news begins to spread through the household and the "queen" (most take this to be his mother, or even Nebuchadnezzar's widow. Enters the hall and speaks to Belshazzar. Her advice was to contact Daniel (probably the last man he wants to see). She reminds him of all the great things Daniel had done. Unfortunately she also reminds him that he serves "the Holy God," (the one he has just insulted)!

The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change.

*11 There is a man in your kingdom **in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God.*** And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father — your father the king — made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. 12 Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel,*

whom the king named Belshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation." Dan. 5:10-12

*– **“in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God”** (NKJV NASB) – **“in whom is the Spirit of the holy gods.”** (KJV ASV ESV NIV). Why is there a difference in these translations? It is not a textual problem. The reason lies in a different direction.

Here are the facts. Because Daniel was written in Aramaic, this is an Aramaic term for God and not the Hebrew. In the Hebrew both the singular (**el**) and the plural (**elohim**) refer only to Jehovah, the God of Israel. But in the Aramaic, the plural (**'alaahiyn** - the origin of the Arab **allah**) always refers to idolatrous gods and the singular (**'elaahaa'**) to Jehovah the God of Israel.

'elah OT:426, "god." This Aramaic word is the equivalent of the Hebrew **'eloah**. It is a general term for "God" in the Aramaic passages of the Old Testament, and it is **a cognate form of the word 'allah the designation of deity used by the Arabs**. The word was used widely in the Book of Ezra, occurring no fewer than 43 times between Ezra 4:24 and 7:26. ... In the only verse in the Book of Jeremiah that was written in Aramaic 10:11, the word **'elah** appears in plural form to describe "gods" that had not participated in the creation of the universe. Although such false "gods" were being worshiped by pagan nations (and perhaps worshiped by some of the Hebrews who were in exile in Babylonia), these deities would ultimately perish because they were not eternal in nature. ... In the Book of Daniel, **'elah** was used both of heathen "gods" and the one true "God" of heaven. The Chaldean priests told Nebuchadnezzar: "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" Dan. 2:11. The Chaldeans referred to such "gods" when reporting that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to participate in idol worship on the plain of Dura Dan. 3:12. The "gods" were enumerated by Daniel when he condemned Nebuchadnezzar's neglect of the worship of Israel's one true "God" Dan. 5:23. In Dan. 3:25, the word refers to a divine being or messenger sent to protect the three Hebrews Dan. 3:28. In Dan. 4:8-9, 18; and 5:11, the phrase "the spirit of the holy gods" appears (KJV, RSV, NEB, NIV). Elsewhere the references to **'elah** are to the living "God" whom Daniel worshiped. (Vine's OT 426)

Since the word in both forms is only used in Jeremiah (once in plural (**'alaahiyn**) for idols) Ezra, and Daniel, it is difficult to find a pattern. The general rule throughout both books is that the plural refers to idols and the singular refers to God. But sometimes in context the singular refers to an idol. In the case of the plural use in Daniel, the (KJV– 1611), ASV – 1901), (NASB, – 1971), (NIV – 1978), (ESV – 2001) all stayed with the consistent **“holy gods.”** Only two of the later translations (NKJV – 1982), and AMP – 1965) translated **“Holy God”**. There doesn't appear to be any good reason for this except for one, The attitude of the speaker. Did Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:18), the queen who came to Belshazzar (Dan. 5:11) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5:14) still refer to Daniel as a servant of **“gods”** - KJV, ASV, NASB, ESV, NIV) or **“God”** (NKJV, AMP)? It is not a textual or grammar issue, but an issue of putting the best motive or simply being consistent with the text. Do we want to see faith growing in their hearts manifested by their newfound confession. Yet there is no other good reason to change the text like this. Because of time limitations, I did not look up all the Hebrew uses of this word (91 times) to see if there was ever a clear use of the plural to refer to God. Perhaps someone else can do that.

The king then calls for Daniel, and in spite of the terrible nature of the events continues to keep up the appearances of being confident and in control of the situation. He acts like he doesn't know anything about Daniel, but if it is the case, Daniel will later accuse him of wilful ignorance. He offers feeble praise in spite of the fact that he is the last one to be called and it is the God of Daniel that he has chosen to insult. He would have been better off to begin with humility instead of hubris.

*Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? 14 I have heard of you, **that the Spirit of God is in you***, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. 15 Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. 16 And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." Dan. 5:13-16*

Daniel Teaches, Reminds, and Rebukes

Daniel is not rude, but brisk and to the point. He wants nothing to do with the gifts or rewards now offered to placate a painful conscience. Although he doesn't want the reward, it is not because he doesn't have the ability. He will both read the words and then give the interpretation.

Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation. Dan. 5:17

But before he reads the words he gives Belshazzar a brief history lesson and then a rebuke.

- 1st Daniel reminded Belshazzar that the great power and majesty of Nebuchadnezzar had been given to him by the Most High God (the very God he had just insulted).
- 2nd When Nebuchadnezzar's heart had been lifted up (in a manner exactly the same as that of his son now), God had deposed him from the throne and took all the glory away from him.
- 3rd In a merciful judgment, Nebuchadnezzar was cursed, but only to the degree that he might learn his error and repent.
- 4th He was left in his curse until he learned the vital lesson that should have been learned by an entire nation, but at the very least by his family.
- 5th Nebuchadnezzar learned that God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.

O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. 19 And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. 21 Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. 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 rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses. Dan. 5:18-21

After this brief history lesson already well known, Daniel sternly rebuked this young man. He had not learned the lesson of history and was now doomed to be punished.

In an inspired revelation, Daniel tells Belshazzar exactly what was going on his mind when he did the things that brought the handwriting

- 1st He had not humbled his heart. Like so many before and after, they knew God, but refused to glorify him as God. He knew what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar, he knew the truth of all the words, but refused to submit or be humbled.
- 2nd By bringing those vessels to drink wine from, he had "***lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven.***"

rûm: An Aramaic verb meaning to lift up, to exalt. It literally means to raise up. Used of God, it means to exalt Him (Dan 4:37[:34]). It refers to honoring or promoting a person (Dan 5:19); it indicates a person's heart being lifted up, becoming arrogant (Dan 5:20); or persons lifting themselves up against God (Dan 5:23). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT:7313)
- 3rd You praised gods of silver... who can't see or hear or know.
- 4th The God who holds your breath in his hand and owns all your ways you did not glorify.

"But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. 23 And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before

you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. Dan. 5:22-23

Daniel 7 – Belshazzar’s Feast

Daniel Reads the Writing

Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written. 25 "And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. Dan. 5:24-25

Since the words are given in Aramaic (the language of the Chaldeans), there must have been some reason why they could not be read. Perhaps they were written in an entirely different language (Hebrew) or a language from heaven and Daniel puts them into words they could all understand. The definition of Scholars is much more limited in the books of Daniel and Ezra. These are the only books written in Aramaic. Even Ezra only has a few chapters in Aramaic, so there are very few places to compare to determine the meaning of the term.

We are therefore much more reliant on the interpretation than the workd themselves, as the first two are somewhat ambiguous. The first word is “MENE” which is only used here in the OT. It is generally understood to be a weight of measurement of coins or money.

mene ... weight of measurement. It indicates a unit of weight of gold and/or silver (Dan. 5:25,26). Dan. 5:25,26. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT:4484) see *mina*

The second term “TEKEL” is also a weight of money, in this case a shekel.

teqal ... weigh cognate to Hebrew *teqel* shekel ... (TDWOT 3063 - 8025)

as a verb: 1) to weigh; (P'il) to be weighed as a masculine noun: 2) a tekell, a shekel; (P'al) tekell, a unit of weight, a shekel (Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lex. 3063 - 8025)

The final term is very close to the Hebrew that they can be used to help understand.

peres ... *upharsiyn* ... *parsiyn*: I. An Aramaic verb meaning to be divided, to be broken in two. It refers in its participial form to something divided, split up; in context Babylon (Dan. 5:28). ... II. A masculine proper noun *peres*. The word is set aside in quotations or put into capitals and treated in a special way by some translations since it was part of an original message that was being interpreted (Dan. 5:28). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT: 6537)

peras break in two, divide. Hebrew similar *peres* ... probably half-mina (KB, half-shekel). The word is probably used as a word play in Dan. 5:25, in the handwriting on the wall, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." The words can be taken to mean mina, a shekel, and a half mina (or half shekel). This makes little sense and Daniel interpreted it as the verbs number, weigh, and divide. The last verb may have a double word play in its similarity to Persia, which was about to conquer Belshazzar. The word "upharsin" is the conjunction "and" plus the plural of *peres* (TDWOT 6537)

Daniel Interprets the Writing

MENE The first term “minah” or weight looks to the result of the judgment. The kingdom itself has been assessed and found to have nothing worthy within it. What has been taught clearly to Nebuchadnezzar was now completed in his son. As God had told Abraham, the cry of Sodom and future of the seven nations of Canaan led Him to number their kingdoms as well.

And the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know." ... Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." Gen 18:20, 32

But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." Gen 15:16

God also did this with the flood as he assess each man’s imaginations and found not one.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen 6:5

He had told Jeremiah if he could find one man he would spare Jerusalem.

Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places If you can find a man, If there is anyone who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her. Jer 5:1

What God had done with all these He had also done with Babylon. There was nothing worthy in Babylon so it was not finished and the first portion of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was now fulfilled.

TEKEL The second term takes on a more personal note. First the kingdom and then the individual.

Tekel: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; Dan. 5:26

Belshazzar had been weighed in the balances and there was not enough there to spare the nation or him. He had done a terrible thing in pitting himself against God in the manner he did. It revealed a character of very little worth and when placed on the balances of God's judgement and assessment the balance tips. The weight of righteousness and equity placed on each man was too heavy in this case. He had not measured up to the potential God knew he was capable of becoming.

"Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: in the balances they will go up; they are together lighter than vanity. Ps 62:9



Goods are bought and sold based on weight, and fairness requires the weight and balance used to determine value be fair.

"A false balance is an abomination to Jehovah; But a just weight is his delight" Pr. 11:1

"You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in measures of length, of weight, or of quantity. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, you shall have" Lev. 19:35-36).

We learn here that God too weighs everyone in a just balance. Both the balance and the weight of duty that each man can carry are fairly distributed.

And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. Lk. 12:47-48

And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; Mt. 25:15

For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have. 2 Cor 8:12

In this case, whatever had been required of Belshazzar he had not brought the beam up to it. Whatever abilities and whatever he had, he had failed to use and was found wanting.

UPHARSIN

Some have wondered if the actual kingdom was divided between the Medes and the Persians, and although there is a possibility that this is the meaning, it doesn't appear in Scripture. The more obvious meaning is seen in the dream of a head of gold and its chest and arms of silver. Something was divided or lost between the two kingdoms.

Peres: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." Dan. 5:28

Belshazzar's Final Command

Although the interpretation is of the worst possible, Belshazzar does not argue or dispute it. Instead he gives the promised reward. It is now impossible to assess why he responded in this manner. Perhaps his conscience smote him, perhaps he just wanted to get him out of there as quickly as possible.

Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the

kingdom. 30 That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. Dan. 5:29-30

There is no way to verify or dispute the statement that it occurred that very night. Those with faith in God and the Scriptures accept it without question, while archaeologists dispute these facts with no evidence except skepticism.

Darius the Mede

Once again we are faced with the problem of harmonizing secular history and Biblical history. To this day there is no mention of Darius in any of the discoveries in archeology. He just isn't there. This has led atheists and agnostics to proclaim the demise of the inspiration of Scripture. Our answer is simple. There is no mention "YET!" Such an issue does not impact the faith of God's people. He will be found in time, and even if not found, he is still there.

And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old. Dan. 5:1-4

Since this is the only record we have, we can say no more than what the Scriptures here reveal in Daniel.

Daniel 8 –

Daniel Works under Darius

When one nation takes over another nation, generally all from the old are swept away. For some providential reason, Daniel was kept on and placed above these 120 satraps. Not only was he one of the 120 satraps

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; 2 and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. Dan. 6:1-2

Over time, Daniel's honesty integrity and ability brought him to the attention of Darius.

Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. Dan. 6:3

He had an "excellent spirit."

yattiyr: An Aramaic adjective designating something as excellent, outstanding. Its basic sense is excellence, superiority. It refers to the splendor of the statue in Dan. 2:31 as extraordinary, outstanding. It has the sense of very or extremely (Dan. 3:22; 7:7,19); surpassing, exceeding (Dan. 4:36[33]); special or excellent (Dan. 5:12,14). Daniel had an excellent spirit (Dan. 6:3[4]) and possessed superb wisdom. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT:3493)

rûah: An Aramaic noun meaning wind; spirit of a person, mind; spirit divine. All occurrences of the word are located in the book of Daniel. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT:7308)

It is interesting that the word spirit has the same basic meaning as it does in Greek. It can be the wind, our own spirit, or the Holy Spirit. It is difficult to determine which of the latter two was under consideration, but at this point it was more probable that it was his own spiritual mental and moral disposition. He had an integrity and honor that even his adversaries recognized as they sought to destroy him.

Jealousy or greed caused the other two governors and the 120 satraps to find the means to remove Daniel. They may have wanted him out of the way because they wanted to use their power in more practical and useful ways that would benefit them, while Daniel only sought the best interests of the king in righteousness.

Initially, using themselves as standards, they assumed they could find some charge based on his own weaknesses. But when they could find nothing, they began to realize that they would have to set up a trap. Again using normal means was fruitless so they finally settled on the plan to force Daniel to choose between obedience to the king or the violation of the laws of God. Perhaps they learned of his initial disobedience in not wanting to eat the food of the king of Babylon. Perhaps it was the example of Shadrach Meshach or Abed-Nego that gave them the idea.

So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Dan. 6:1-5

The Manipulation of Darius

Both miscalculation and overreach were then devised. They did not realize how much respect Darius had for Daniel, and they did not foresee how angry it would make the king when it became clear that they had used him to destroy Daniel. Maybe they thought Darius would not see through what they were trying to do or maybe they figured there was nothing he could do to so many, but they made a terrible mistake.

Their goal was easy enough to accomplish. They had found by researching Daniel's character that he was always praying to his God in a public manner three times a day. They decided to use this obvious means to destroy him. The plan was simple. They would use the vanity of the king to bring

about the goal of removing Daniel. They asked for a new law that would last for thirty days. It would demand that all citizens in the Medo-Persian empire would only pray to him. For idolaters this would pose no problem, but for Daniel, it would be an insurmountable one. Even the punishment of being cast into the den of lions (no different than the fiery furnace), would not deter him was their hope.

With his background as an idolater and an evident inclination toward pride, Darius did not foresee the implications or consequences of this command, so he signed it without hesitation.

So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! 7 All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." 9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree. Dan. 6:6-9

Daniel's Response to their Threat

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. Dan. 6:10

The truth that "he knew the writing was signed" implies that he knew about the law and either could not or chose not to intervene. Maybe he sought to change the direction of these men, but was unable to do it. Whatever the initial reasons, he now knew about the decree. He had at least three options. He could go down into a private chamber for 30 days and pray toward Jerusalem, not changing his habit in the least. He could have stopped praying aloud or at all for that thirty days, or as his enemies hoped, he could continue to do what he had always done. He knows the reason and purpose of their for their plan and held their efforts?

Was God testing the king here? Was it Daniel's decision or did God command it? We know there would have been nothing wrong with becoming more private in his devotions. But he chose to continue to do what he had always done in respect to God, knowing full well the outcome of the decree. We also learn that it had been Daniel's custom since his early days of youth to pray to God three times each day.

The Trap is Sprung

First, they catch Daniel in the act of violating the law. They knew where he would be and what he would be doing so it was easy to catch him. Then, as eyewitnesses, they approached the king and act as though they are only seeking the best interests of the kingdom. They quote the new law and the king immediately agrees that it is the law. They knew this would seal Daniel's fate because the law could not be changed.

Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12 And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, 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 does not alter." Dan. 6:11-15

After the affirmation about the law came the accusation that Daniel had violated that law. They identified Daniel not as the governor that all of them had to report to but as one of the captives of Judah who had not shown due regard to the king and had actually violated "the decree you have signed." These were prosecuting lawyers who knew the law and knew the best way to frame it to indict and convict Daniel. He is not only violated the law, but is doing so three times every day.

So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day." Dan. 6:12

Darius sees it all in an instant and realized he had made a great blunder by placing his most trusted

servant into such a position. Thinking it was a mistake, he sought to save Daniel from his own blunder. He then had the opportunity to see how wicked and conniving these governors and satraps were. They would not compromise or allow the king to change the edict.

And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15 Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed." Dan. 6:15-16

Seeing himself painted into a corner, he had no choice but to fulfill the command. He was forced into the position of violating his own law or keeping law and order in the nation by being bound by the same laws as everyone else. The satraps were right when they said the law could not be altered. There was nothing he could do except trust that Daniel's God would protect him through the night.

So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." 17 Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. Dan. 6:16-17

A Just King

There is a very important point made in this passage. Note how the king who does not want to put Daniel into the lions den and labors through the day to find a way to save him. In the end, there was nothing the king could do.

Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed. 16 "So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." Dan. 6:15-16

There was a law that had been signed and set into place. That law could not be altered regardless of the consequences. The king could set aside the law and cease to be just and bring great damage to the justice and order of his kingdom or he could remain just and submit to the law. He chose the latter as the only proper decision.

This event illustrates one of the more important doctrines set forth in the NT. It illustrates Jesus' atonement on the cross. What Darius was faced with was the same position in which our Heavenly Father found Himself. He did not want to punish those who loved and trusted Him. But there was a law that He had never and never could set aside.

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, 2Pet. 2:4-5

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Jude 6-7

This was something God had always done (even before the creation?) and must always do. He could not be just and save Noah and his family when He destroyed all other sinners in the flood. Nor could He spare Lot when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

The sad truth is that all have sinned and the wages of sin is death.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Rom 3:23-24

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 6:23

Just as Darius could not simply set aside His law and remain just, neither could God. Yet God

found another way.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Rom 3:24-26

It took the grace, redemption (*redeem one by paying the price or ransom*) and propitiation (*appeasing and expiating*) through Jesus' blood to "demonstrate God's righteousness." Before Jesus died on the cross, God could only forbear (*holding back, delay, a truce*) and pass over (*ignore, withhold punishment, suspension of penalty*).

After the gospel "revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith: (Rom. 3:23), showing how Jesus death of the cross fully atoned for the sins of all men.

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. 1Jn. 2:2

In this act, God became "**just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus.**" Jesus paid the penalty that gave God the right to set aside our punishment laying it on Him. The propitiation (placating and appeasing) that Jesus endured on the cross involved at least the following:

By His stripes we are healed.	Jehovah laid upon him the iniquity of all of us.
It pleased God to bruise him and put him to grief.	He made his soul an offering for sin.
God was satisfied by the travail of his soul.	He shall bear their iniquities.
He poured out his soul unto death	He was numbered with the transgressors.
He bore the sin of many.	

So that now "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1Jn. 1:9).

Darius' True Character

Darius begins to reveal his own character and possibly why Daniel had made such a great impression on him. He spends the night fasting and removing from himself all the normal pleasures he enjoyed. He could not sleep because of his concern. These are all the marks of a good man who truly loved this neighbor (Daniel) as himself). He rose up early in the morning and rushed to the lions den to see what had occurred.

Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. His "lamentable" voice stressed the grief and pain in his heart. Dan. 6:18-20

*siyb ... An Aramaic verb meaning to pain, to grieve. It is similar to the Hebrew word *āsāb* (6087) It appears only one time in the form of a passive participle and is used as an adjective to modify *qôl* (6963), meaning voice." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT:6088)*

Darius' confession was absolute truth. He must have spoken to Daniel or some other to get this knowledge. His question is simple. Was God able to deliver you. He knew that only God could stop those lions from devouring him. Doubtless the men who had set the trap made certain the animals were ready. Daniel's answer amazed and comforted the king. Daniel proclaims to things about God and the reason God saved him. First, Daniel was found innocent in the eyes of God and thus worthy of having his life spared. Second, he had done no wrong to the king and was thus undeserving of this punishment. God has sent His angel. Whether this was Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21) or the Angel of Jehovah spoken of so often during the times of Moses, Joshua, and the Judges or some other angel is not revealed.

The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” 21 Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! 22 My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.” Dan. 6:20-22

Darius full feeling toward Daniel is expressed by the joy and happiness that he felt because he was spared. They brought him out of the den unscathed. A third reason is now given as to why God spared Daniel, He believed in his God.

Now the king was exceedingly 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 injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God. Dan. 6:23

Now that the law has been fulfilled and Daniel has been spared and proven to be innocent, the men who set this trap and manipulated him into having to put Daniel in the lion’s den are now brought to the same fate. This time there is no deliverance and the hunger and ferocity they had hoped would remove Daniel was not unleashed upon them. The scriptures are graphic and detailed. The 120 satraps, 2 governors, their wives and all their children were cast into this den. It doesn’t reveal if this was done all at once or over time as they were gathered from their various locations.

And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions — them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den. Dan. 6:24

Darius Letter

This would have been the equivalent of a royal proclamation. It was addressed to all peoples nations and languages in his realm which infers that it would have been sent out to them and read to them.

In this midst of the letter Darius passed another law that he wanted all his people to know about. He demanded that in every dominion of his realm, all must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. The power of this act to influence the Jews at the very least and other truth seekers is obvious. Darius again makes a very public confession that Daniel’s God is the living God. While Nebuchadnezzar had learned that God rules in the kingdoms of men, Darius proclaims even more. God has a kingdom that will never be destroyed. This was the final conclusion of the first dream about the image. Added to this is that His dominion will endure to the end and he will deliver and rescue as His will decrees, but never by limited power. Added to this are things he could only have learned from the Scriptures. God works signs and wonders in heaven and delivered Daniel from the power of lions.

Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. 26 I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end. 27 He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. Dan. 6:25-27

Daniel then continued in his position throughout the reign of Darius and into Cyrus. Since Darius had “given thought to putting him over the entire kingdom, it seems very probable from these words that he did so.

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Dan. 6:28

Daniel 9

Introduction

The theme that resonates through the book of Daniel was spoken to Nebuchadnezzar in the third chapter.

In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.' Dan. 4:17

The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. As we read the book of Romans we learn that this was not something for only that time. It is still true today.

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Rom 13:1-2

Implications of the First Dream

As Daniel pleaded with God for the dream and its interpretation, God gave him both. As he interpreted the dream to Nebuchadnezzar, it was clear that God had foreknowledge of future kingdoms. There would be four kingdoms coming in succession.

***You, O king, are a king of kings.** For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; — **you are this head of gold.** 39 **But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze,** which shall rule over all the earth. 40 **And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron,** ... you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, Dan 2:41-42*

*And **in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed;** and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Dan 2:44-45*

As we consider this passage, we see two very important things. First, God has a foreknowledge of how the events in the future will unfold. As Paul preached in Athens, he revealed this was a fundamental part of God's plan.

*And He has **made from one blood every nation of men** to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has **determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,** 27 **so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him,** though He is not far from each one of us; Acts 17:26-28*

Added to foreknowledge in Daniel is also His ability to change the course of history at will, bringing down nations and raising them up.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. Jer 18:1-4

*Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, **as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand,** O house of Israel! 7 **The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it,** 8 **if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.** 9 **And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,** 10 **if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.** Jer 18:5-10*

So some interesting applications must now be made. Who is God speaking to when He speaks concerning a nation? Through Daniel we find that at the least He is speaking to the angels like Gabriel and Michael.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.
Dan 10:13-14

Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And **now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come.** 21 But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. **(No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince. 11 "Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.)** 2 And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, **three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece** Dan 10:20-21; 11:1-2

So within the pages of Daniel we are given a glimpse of how God rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He pleases. All the visions in Daniel carry on this same theme.

The Vision of the Wind and the Sea

These visions come in chronological order, but are unrelated to the time events of the book itself. The first vision takes us back to chapter five and the ascension of Belshazzare after the death of Nebuchadnezzar.

*In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then **he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.** 2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, **the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.** 3 And **four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.** Dan 7:1-4*

Daniel watches the roaring of the sea and witnesses four different beasts leaving the sea.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 "And suddenly another beast, **a second, like a bear.** It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' 6 "After this I looked, and **there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.** Dan 7:4-6

Then a fourth beast different than all the others came up out of the sea.

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. Dan 7:7-8

Then the application of the vision is again set forth. God is in control of all these events and they are all designed for one important purpose.

*"I was watching in the night visions, And behold, **One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.** 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His **dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.** Dan 7:13-14*

Since most of this vision can be confirmed by other Scriptures, there can be no doubt that this is talking about Jesus. Since the clouds received him out of their sight, the next is from heavens perspective as He comes with the clouds. The dominion, glory, and kingdom are clearly described by Peter.

Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts 2:33-36

Peter also quoted David after the first serious persecution describing again how Jesus was placed in heaven as King of Kings. He revealed that God had set up the circumstances whereby Pilate of

Rome and Herod an Idumean who ruled over Israel with the High Priests under both of them. These ruled over and brought the power of the Gentiles against Jesus. Yet all these men, set in place by God, could only do exactly what he had purposed to be done.

*who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The **kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.**' 27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Acts 4:25-29*

The people of Israel included both the Jewish leaders Peter pointed out in the first sermon and all the Jews in the second. Both the Jewish Sandehim and the people who denied him at the judgment seat of Pilate.

*Him, being delivered **by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God**, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; Acts 2:23-24*

*The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom **you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.** 14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life, Acts 3:13-15*

All of this is summed up in Daniel.

'Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.' Dan 7:17-18

As we look at Paul's statement in Galatians we can now form some important conclusions.

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Gal 4:4-5

God needed Babylon for the seventy year captivity. He needed Medo Person to return them to their land. He needed Alexander the Great to spread the Greek culture and language throughout the world so there would be a common language, and He needed Rome in place to crucify His son.

The Vision of the Ram and Goat

Two years after the first vision in the third year of Belshazzar, Daniel had a second vision which was another way of setting forth the first vision, but with added details.

*Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was **a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.** Dan 8:3-4*

*And as I was considering, **suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. ... 7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.** Dan 8:5-7*

*Therefore **the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. 9 And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.** Dan 8:8-10*

There is no doubt to whom this is referring as the angel revealed it even as we learned in history class in school.

*"Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be. 20 **The ram which you saw, having the two horns** — they are the **kings of Media and Persia**. 21 **And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece**. The **large horn that is between its eyes is the first king**. 22 **As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.** Dan 8:19-22*

The events here described occurred long after they were recorded here, but they again reveal both the foreknowledge and power of God.

The Vision of the man clothed in Linen

The third and final vision centered more on the one bringing the message. He is wearing a linen robe with a belt made of fine gold. But it wasn't the clothing that set this man apart but his appearance. The stone "beryl" comes in a variety of colors so it is impossible to see it as Daniel, but the burnished bronze gives us a golden like color. With a face like lightning, eyes like torches of fire, and a voice like that of a multitude, it must have been a fearsome vision.

*Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, **a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!** 6 **His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.** Dan 10:4-6*

Though the words of explanation were soothing, Daniel the touch and appearance led him to tremble in his knees and hands. was still trembling at what he saw.

*Suddenly, **a hand touched me**, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. 11 **And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you."** While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Dan 10:10-11*

Even the next words which contain some of the highest compliments in Scripture still did little to sooth his heart.

*Then he said to me, "**Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ... Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.**" Dan 10:12-14*

Daniel is given a great privilege that again emphasizes the foreknowledge and power of God to bring it about. In order to help Daniel get past his fear another person enters the vision. This time it looks like a son of man and he too speaks soothing words, but it is difficult for Daniel to get over the shock of what he had seen.

*14 **Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.**" 15 **When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless.** 16 **And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength.** 17 **For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."** Dan 10:14-17*

We now return to this king of Greece, who will conquer Medo Persia, but not live long enough to enjoy or consolidate his reign. His four generals will replace him, but only two of the four have any impact on the future of God's people so only they are under consideration.

*he shall **stir up all against the realm of Greece**. 3 **Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.** 4 **And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.** Dan 11:2-4*

It is with the kings who will rule to the south and the north of Israel that the angel now describes. They will

be the Ptolomy's of Egypt and the Antiochus of what was Syria and Damascus.

*"Also **the king of the South shall become strong**, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion. 6 And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for **the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement**; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, Dan 11:5-6*

*"Also **the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land**. 10 However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife. Dan 11:9-10*

Daniel 10

Introduction

Daniel and his three friends were taken into captivity the first time Nebuchadnezzar took the city of Jerusalem.

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god. ... 6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Dan. 1:1-2, 6

Jeremiah's Baskets of Figs

After the second captivity, God gave Jeremiah the vision of the baskets of figs. Those in the first and second wave of those taken captive to Babylon are called the basket of good figs, while the people left after that second captivity that Jeremiah continued to work with were called the bad figs

Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans. 6 For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. Jer. 24:4-6

8 'And as the bad figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad' — surely thus says the Lord — 'so will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the residue of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt. 9 I will deliver them to trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their harm, to be a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them. 10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.'" Jer. 24:6-10

Jeremiah's Letter

It is of these good figs that Jeremiah spoke of in the letter he sent to the captives regarding the time they would spend in Babylon, and what God would continue to do for them while they were there. Since it was to the prophets who were already in Babylon, this would be Daniel and Ezekiel.

Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive — to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. ... 4 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters — that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9 For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord. 10 For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. Jer. 29:1-10

Also included in the letter are the wonderful promise God gave them and that Daniel is now basing the prayers and supplications of this chapter.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I

will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive. Jer. 29:10-14

King Cyrus will Help them Return

There is no indication that Daniel ever met Cyrus. He is mentioned in Daniel. It is perplexing why in the first chapter Daniel is said to continue until the first year of Cyrus, since he was still prospering in the reign of Cyrus and still receiving prophesies in his third year Darius.

*Thus **Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus. Dan 1:21***

*So this **Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Dan 6:28***

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. Dan 10:1

There are a few possibilities. The most likely is that Daniel retired after the reign of Darius. If he was 15 when he arrived at Babylon, he would be 85 when Cyrus had the people return to Jerusalem 70 years later. There is not indication that Daniel ever met Cyrus.

Ezra Records the Exodus

Though it is mentioned in as the king when he had one of his final visions, but if there was any personal interaction between Daniel and this king, it is not recorded in Scripture. Ezra records it in the beginning of the book that bears his name.

*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, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. 3 Who is among you of all His people? May 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 God), which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem Ezra 1:2-4***

Zerrubabel, Haggai, Zechariah and Joshua bring the people back to Jerusalem.

Yet Ezra never met Cyrus as he began his work either. Zerrubabel brought the people back to Jerusalem with Haggai, Zechariah, and Jeshua (Joshua in Zechariah).

Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. 2 So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them. Ezra 5:1-2

It was long after these things that Ezra began his work.

Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, 2 the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, 3 the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, 4 the son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, 5 the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest — 6 this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. Ezra 7:1-7

Thus his return to Jerusalem was in an entirely different reign. Artaxerxes reigned about 50 years after that of Cyrus.

Between the dedication of the temple in the sixth year of Darius and the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem, a period of fifty-seven years had elapsed. "In the reign of Artachshasta king of

Persia, went up Ezra," etc. ... The fact that the Artachshasta of the book of Nehemiah (Neh 1:1; 5:14; 13:6) can be no other than Artaxerxes, is decisive of this point: for in Neh 13:6 the thirty-second year of Artachshasta is mentioned; while according to Neh 8:9; 12:26,36, Ezra and Nehemiah jointly exercised their respective offices at Jerusalem. (Keil & Delitzsch)

The fulfillment of the Prophecy Long ago Given by Isaiah

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, And He who formed you from the womb: "I am the Lord, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself; 25 Who frustrates the signs of the babblers, And drives diviners mad; Who turns wise men backward, And makes their knowledge foolishness; 26 Who confirms the word of His servant, And performs the counsel of His messengers; Who says to Jerusalem, 'You shall be inhabited, 'To the cities of Judah, 'You shall be built, 'And I will raise up her waste places; 27 Who says to the deep, 'Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers'; 28 Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built, "And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." 45:1 "Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held — To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: 2 'I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron. 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel. 4 For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. 5 I am the Lord, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me, 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting That there is none besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; 7 I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things.' Isa. 44:25-28; 45:

Daniel Prayer of Repentance and Confession

All of this is the context of the events recorded in Daniel 9.

9 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans — 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Dan 9:1-2

Daniel only speaks of the books, which would include Jeremiah as quoted above and though he does not mention it, Isaiah. He does not tell us whether there was also some revelation from the Spirit. History here is sketchy, but we have this quote from Keil and Delitzsch

Darius did not become king over the Chaldean kingdom by virtue of a hereditary right to it, nor that he gained the kingdom by means of conquest, but that he received it (Dan. 6:1) from the conqueror of Babylon, Cyrus, the general of the army. The first year of the reign of Darius the Mede over the Chaldean kingdom is the year 538 B.C., since Babylon was taken by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus in the year 539-538 B.C. According to Ptolemy, Cyrus the Persian reigned nine years after Nabonadius. But the death of Cyrus, as is acknowledged, occurred in the year 529 B.C. From the nine years of the reign of Cyrus, according to our exposition, two years are to be deducted for Darius the Mede, so that the reign of Cyrus by himself over the kingdom which he founded begins in the year 536, in which year the seventy years of the Babylonish exile of the Jews were completed; (Delitzsch, Franz; Keil, Karl Friedrich)

Once Daniel explains what led to the events of this chapter, he then explains what was done.

Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4 And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. 6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. Dan 9:3-7

Daniel takes just as much a part in the guilt of their captivity as the worst of the sinners. This is not hyperbole, because he too recognizes his sins. He too could not keep the Law or the prophets. Even though he has never descended to the level of the wicked who remained behind as part of the “*bad figs*,” he recognizes he is a part of this. He is very different from the Pharisee Jesus described.

Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘**God, I thank You that I am not like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.** 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, **this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**” Lk. 18:9-14

Daniel extols God for their present circumstances have nothing to do with him.

O Lord, **righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face**, as it is this day — to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which **You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.** 8 “O Lord, **to us belongs shame of face**, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 **To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.** Dan 9:7-10

He is far from those who Ezekiel had to deal with.

The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, 2 “**What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children’s teeth are set on edge?’** 3 “As I live,” says the Lord God, “**you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel.** 4 “Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; **The soul who sins shall die.**” Ezek 18:1-4

He praised God and fully admitted that they have received exactly what they deserved.

We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11 **Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.** 12 **And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.** Dan 9:10-12

Daniel then turns to the curses proclaimed in the book of Deuteronomy and admits that everything God had said would happen had occurred. God had been very specific as to what would occur and things had been done exactly as it had been revealed. It appears that even now, the children of Israel have not been praying or repenting.

13 “As it is written in the Law of Moses, **all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.** 14 Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day — **we have sinned, we have done wickedly!**” Dan 9:13-15

Daniel himself pleads with God to be merciful and forgive Israel for the sins they committed while in Jerusalem and the sins committed while in Babylon

“O Lord, **according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.** 17 Now therefore, our God, **hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.** 18 O my God, **incline Your**

ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name." Dan 9:16-19

It is at this time that God sends an angel to give His answer.

Now while I was speaking, 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 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: Dan 9:20-23