



# Exploring Daniel

**Adult Sunday Evening Small Group**

September 2013



Cornerstone Sunday Evening Small Group 2013-2014

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# Preface to A Study in Daniel

The book of Daniel is a good example of a book in which readers may often focus on the human characters in the book while missing the focus of God in the book.

We may focus our attention on Daniel and his interaction with others. In so doing we learn valuable lessons, but we can miss the primary point of the book. While it is not inappropriate to learn lessons from the life of Daniel, it was Daniel's intent for us to learn about the character and attributes of God.

- I can learn from the faith displayed in the lives of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
- I can avoid the pride of both Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.
- I can mirror the prayer life of Daniel.
- I can stay true through times of difficulty like Daniel did.
- I can purpose in my heart to follow God's commands and guidelines.

All of those things are good lessons to learn, but consider the possibility that one might miss God in the midst of their focusing on all the human characters?

God's sovereignty in the affairs of men is the predominant theme throughout the book. Everywhere we look, God is sovereignly designing and controlling the plans of men.

- God directs the destruction of Jerusalem due to their disobedience to Him.
- God allows Daniel to remain healthy when he does not eat the king's meat.
- God gives Nebuchadnezzar a vision and Daniel the interpretation.
- God humbles Nebuchadnezzar.
- God writes on a wall and tells Belshazzar he is about to be overrun.
- God provides a prophetic account of the upcoming world powers and then works history out accordingly.

Do you ever wonder about your future? Do you wonder where you'll live, marry, college, kids, job . . . "God don't come back yet, I have a lot I want to do." Surely, you think about the future.

What can be clearly seen in the book of Daniel is the one (God) who controls and directs the future. We can have a relationship with the sovereign of the universe.

# Daniel Worksheet

(Don't use your Bible)

Who is the primary character in this book?

Write down some reasons why we should study this book.

Below, write an example (in Daniel) of how God showed His sovereignty.

- God is in control of men \_\_\_\_\_
- God is in control of nations \_\_\_\_\_
- God is in control of nature \_\_\_\_\_
- God is in control of history \_\_\_\_\_
- God is in control of circumstances \_\_\_\_\_
- God is in control of the supernatural \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the king of Babylon that takes Daniel into captivity?

What are the names (Hebrew or Babylonian) of Daniel's three friends?





- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

How old was Daniel when he was taken into captivity? \_\_\_\_ How old was he at the end of the book? \_\_\_\_

How many days did Daniel and his three friends eat only vegetables and water? \_\_\_\_\_

What was Nebuchadnezzar's dream about in Daniel 2?

Below write down what element each part was made of, and which nation is symbolized by that part.

In chapter 3 what did Nebuchadnezzar want everyone to do, and what was the response of Daniel's friends?

Nebuchadnezzar has a vision concerning himself and a future point in his life. What happens to Nebuchadnezzar that was shown to him in his vision?

How many years did this point in Nebuchadnezzar's life last?

Who was the king during the handwriting on the wall?

What happened to Daniel in chapter 6?

What was he accused of and who accused him?

What was the result of the accusation?

Chapter 9 speaks about the seventy weeks of Daniel. What are the seventy weeks referring to, explain.

# The Setting of Daniel

## Background Study

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### OVERVIEW OF DANIEL

#### Chapters 1 – 6

These chapters are in the form of narrative (court tales or biographical stories).

Chapter 2 is an exception for it contains Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the statue which is a prophetic dream.

This portion is historical and much of our practical preaching comes from these chapters.

- Daniel's exile
- Daniel's examination
- Fiery furnace
- Nebuchadnezzar's madness
- Fall of Babylon, Pride of Belshazzar
- Daniel's deliverance from the lions

#### Chapters 7 – 12

As a whole there is much prophecy / eschatology in these chapters.

Eschatology is a difficult doctrine to understand, yet as believers it is our responsibility to seek to understand. There is much controversy and debate over Daniel as well as Revelation, but we need to do our best to come to a decision and then stand on that position and apply those truths. It does matter what we believe. There are ramifications that enter into many different areas of theology. Let us take the time to search God's word and find the meaning.

### WHY THE BOOK OF DANIEL

#### Practical Life Application

There is much in this book that we can take home with us so that we may live a more God honoring life.

- Grow in our understanding of the character of God
- Learn from the determination of Daniel and his three friends
- Find out how Daniel purposed in his heart to stay right before God
- See God reward faithfulness
- Learn how to handle crisis
- See God punish the sin of pride
- Seek to have a similar testimony to that of Daniel's

## CIRCUMSTANCES OF DANIEL

### Babylon is at its height of glory and power

In 722 the Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria and was sent into exile.

Esarhaddon was the father of Ashurbanipal and Shamash-shun-ukim. Shamash-shun-ukim was given the city of Babylon, but was not content and fought his brother, Ashurbanipal. After an unsuccessful revolt Shamash-shun-ukim committed suicide.

Nebopolassar shortly after took reign of Babylon and eventually built it into an empire.

Although Ashurbanipal was Assyria's greatest leader, he was more concerned with the affairs of state than concerned with the outer borders of his territory. As a result in 612 B.C. The Assyrian Empire was defeated at the battle of Nineveh, and in 605 at the battle of Carchemish. Babylon destroyed the remnant of Assyria.

In 605 Nebuchadnezzar, crown prince and general of the Babylonian army, defeated Egypt (who had too late joined Assyria for assistance) at the battle of Carchemish. It must have been around this time that Nebuchadnezzar went through Israel and took some of the elite Israelite young men and some of the Temple vessels. It is shortly after his push to Egypt that he hears of his father's death and races home across the desert (in 21 days) to claim the kingdom. We know according to Ezra 7 that the rest of the army and captives probably took 4 months to return to Babylon. It is in this Jewish exile that Daniel and his three friends are taken, and it is in chapter one of Daniel that they begin their Babylonian Captivity.

Jehoiakim was bound in fetters to be taken to Babylon, but was not taken (II Chronicles 36:6). He may have been spared due to the royal seed being taken instead. Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar after three years and Nebuchadnezzar sent bands of marauders to fight him. It appears that Jehoiakim was killed at this point and Jehoiachin, his son, becomes king. Later, 597 B.C. Jehoiachin is taken into captivity to Babylon (II Kings 24:1-2).

Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605 B.C. In 597 he would have been about 20 and already have experienced the events in Daniel chapter 2.

### Israel is beaten

- The temple is in ruins
- There are no sacrifices
- There are no rituals
- There are no offerings
- There are no functioning priest
- The people are in exile . . . Outside of the promise land, Outside of the place of blessing
- The king is in prison



SEQUENCE	DATE	POPULACE EXILED	PROPHET EXILED	KING EXILED	TEMPLE VESSELS EXILED
First Exile	605 BC	Royal Seed	Daniel		Yes
Second Exile	597 BC	10,000 all but the lowliest	Ezekiel	Jehoiachin	Yes
Third Exile	588-586 BC	Balance of population		Zedekiah	yes

## WHAT DID THE EXILES NEED TO HEAR?

They needed to hear that they were the faithful remnant. This fact is the major theme in Ezekiel but the minor theme in Daniel.



They needed to hear that God was still in control. This is the major theme of Daniel

God is sovereign in the affairs of men.

- God controls men -- Nebuchadnezzar
- God controls nations -- Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome
- God controls history -- 70 year captivity
- God controls circumstances -- lion's den
- God controls nature -- water and lentils, fire
- God controls the supernatural -- handwriting on the wall

## OUR APPROACH TO DANIEL

The book of Daniel is a good example of a book that often will focus on the human characters in the book while missing the focus of God in the book.

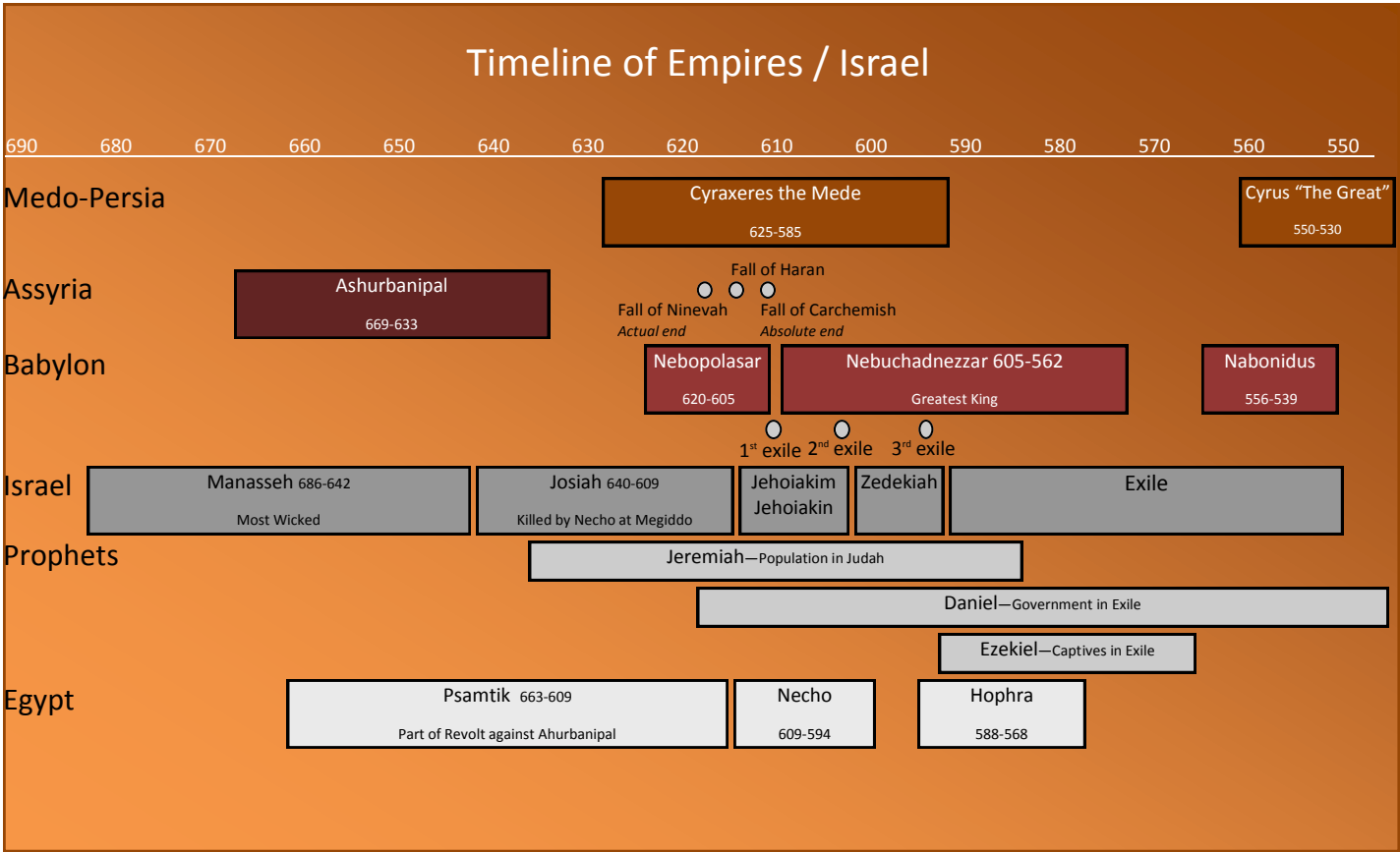
One can view Daniel and his interaction with others and learn valuable lessons from that. In so doing they may miss a primary point of the book. While it is appropriate to learn lessons from the life of Daniel, one ought to learn the lessons that Daniel intends to teach concerning the character and attributes of God.

**1 Corinthians 10:6** Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.<sup>7</sup> Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."<sup>8</sup> We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.<sup>9</sup> We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents,<sup>10</sup> nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.<sup>11</sup> Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.<sup>12</sup> Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

God's sovereignty in the affairs of men is the predominant theme throughout the book. Everywhere we look, God is sovereignly designing and controlling the plans of men.

- God directs the destruction of Jerusalem due their disobedience to Him.
- God allows Daniel to remain healthy when he does not eat the king's meat.
- God gives Nebuchadnezzar a vision and Daniel the interpretation.
- God humbles Nebuchadnezzar.
- God writes on a wall and tells Belshazzar he is about to be overrun.
- God provides a prophetic account of the upcoming world powers and then works it out accordingly.

What can be clearly seen in the book of Daniel is the one (God) who controls and directs the future. We can have a relationship with the sovereign of the universe.



Dates	Passage	Events	Daniel's Age
Nov-Dec 605 B.C.	Daniel 1:1-17	Deportation to Babylon	13-15
Mar-Apr 602 B.C.	Daniel 1:18-20	Examination following initial three-year period	16-18
Mar-Apr 602 B.C.	Daniel 2	Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image	16-18
594-593 B.C.	Daniel 3	"Loyalty Oath" on the Plains of Dura (the fiery furnace)	24-26
569-562 B.C.	Daniel 4	Neb's dream of the great tree and subsequent madness.	49-51
550 [553] B.C.	Daniel 7	Daniel's dream of the four beasts and Ancient of Days	68-70
547 [550] B.C.	Daniel 8	Daniel's vision of the Ram and He-Goat	71-73
539 B.C.	Daniel 5	Fall of Babylon	79-81
539-538 B.C. [?]	Daniel 6	Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den	80
Oct 538 B.C.	Daniel 9	Daniel's answer to prayer – the 70 sevens	80
536 B.C.	Daniel 10-12	Daniel's "great warfare" vision	81-83

# Living a Purposeful God Driven Life

Daniel 1:1-21 | Lesson 1

## INTRODUCTION TO EXPLORATION

1. To note the foundation of and reward for the strong convictions of Daniel and his three friends.
2. To observe specific attributes in reference to God's sovereignty in His directing Judah's captivity.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

1 In the third year<sup>1</sup> of the reign of Jehoiakim<sup>2</sup> king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king<sup>3</sup> of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim<sup>4</sup> king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God.<sup>5</sup> And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

3 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz,<sup>6</sup> his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility,

4 youths without blemish,<sup>7</sup> of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.<sup>8</sup>

5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 46:2 states that Neb. defeated Egypt in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim's reign, whereas this passage dates this account to the third year of Jehoiakim. The discrepancy has to do with the different calendars used by the two different prophets as well as their manner of counting years. (Refer to Tishri – Nisan Calendar Chart) There were as well a couple different ways of counting "regal years." Some began counting the reign of a king after the first New Year of his reign, where others dated the king's reign from the time of his coronation.

<sup>2</sup> In 609 B.C. Jehoiakim is pro-Egypt and is set up as king by Necho II. In 605, he is conquered by Neb and swears allegiance to Babylon (2 Kings 24:1). In 602 he is once again pro-Egypt and revolts with Egypt's aid (2 Kings 24:1). In 597 Neb finally deports him to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:5-7). Between 602 and 597 God sent a number of different groups against him (2 Kings 24:1-2).

<sup>3</sup> Neb. was not yet king, but was soon to be. Nebopolassar died August 15, 605 B.C. Neb hurried back to Babylon, according to Josephus, through the desert and delayed his Egyptian conquest to return and claim the throne. He was crowned king September 6<sup>th</sup>. In Ezra 7:9, Ezra records that it took them from the first day of the first month to the first day of the fifth month to travel from Babylon to Israel. It took Neb. 21 days.

<sup>4</sup> Jehoiakim was bound in fetters to be taken to Babylon, but was not taken (II Chronicles 36:6). Perhaps the royal seed was taken instead and would then use those people to produce governors and administrators for his empire. Jehoiakim in December of 604 cut Jeremiah's prophecies to pieces (Jeremiah 36:9-32). After three years, Jehoiakim rebels against Nebuchadnezzar and Neb. sends bands of marauders to fight him. He is then taken into captivity to Babylon (II Kings 24:1-2)

<sup>5</sup> People and objects taken into Captivity: | Refer to Chart displaying the Royal Seed and Temple Vessels | Vessels were often taken, to take away the ability to worship as they please . . . Note that these vessels were returned to Jerusalem with Ezra by decree of Cyrus when the captives returned to Israel (Ezra 1:7).

<sup>6</sup> Ashpenaz -- master of his eunuchs -- eunuchs could better be translated, "Court officials" or "officials." Literally, he was the head or chief of something. If Daniel were a eunuch he would not be qualified as a prophet. (Deuteronomy 23:1) The context and other evidence would be the determination that Ashpenaz was a leader of some kind, not an actual eunuch.

<sup>7</sup> "in whom was not blemish" -- physically perfect. This would be a support that Daniel was not a eunuch.

<sup>8</sup> Chaldeans appears to be used in two different ways in Daniel. (1) It is used in a religious sense referring to a group of priests and (2) It is used in an ethnic sense referring to a group of people from the delta region of Mesopotamia (the ethnic origins of Neo-Babylons Rulers).

of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

6 Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah.

7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.<sup>9</sup>

8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs<sup>10</sup> to allow him not to defile himself.<sup>11</sup>

9 And God gave<sup>12</sup> Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs,

10 and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king."

11 Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12 "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink.

13 Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see."

14 So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food.

16 So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

17 As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and

<sup>9</sup> Changing of names was a regular practice in the ANE | Daniel (God is my Judge) -- Belte-shazzar (Protect his life) | Hananiah (YHWHY is gracious) -- Shadrach (Meaning is uncertain) | Mishael (Who is as God) -- Meshach (I am of no account) | Azariah (YHWH has helped) -- Abed-nego (Servant of Nego)

<sup>10</sup> This word can refer to one who has been castrated, but more likely refers to an office not a physical condition. If Daniel had been castrated he would have been disqualified from being a prophet (cf. Deut 23:1). Also it is argued that he was not castrated due to the fact that they refer to him as "without blemish."

<sup>11</sup> Daniel's decision meant (1) He disobeyed the king rather than God (2) He chose to incur liability for punishment (3) He chose to reject the best of the menu and (4) he chose to spoil his chances for promotion.

To eat would have been an abominable thing (Deuteronomy 14:3-20). This would have been an act of idolatry . . .

A.L. Oppenheim -- "From several extant descriptions of divine repasts, the following sequence can be reconstructed. First . . . water for washing was offered in a bowl. A number of liquid and semiliquid dishes . . . and containers with beverages . . . Next, specific cuts of meat were served as a main dish. Finally, fruit . . . Having been presented to the image, the dishes from the god's meal were sent to the king for his consumption. Clearly, the food offered to the deity was considered blessed by contact with the divine and capable of transferring that blessing to the person who was to eat it. This person was always the king." (pg. 188-189)

Leon Wood -- "The reasons for defilement, which they saw, would have been basically two: first, that the food would likely include at times meat declared unclean by the law of Moses; and, second, that it would regularly be food first offered to the Babylonian gods. . . it would have been to give recognition, though in an indirect manner, to the existence of Babylon's false deities. Food first dedicated to gods was thought to insure to the eaters the favor of those gods . . . Everyone eating it, then, would have been considered as also desiring favor and thus giving recognition and obeisance to the Babylonian deities.

<sup>12</sup> Note the sovereignty of God displayed in this passage. For the benefit of one of His children (and for His ultimate glory) he providentially worked in the life and mind of the "chief of the eunuchs".

dreams.<sup>13</sup>

18 At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king.

20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.

21 And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.<sup>14</sup>

The young men had many opportunities to set their faith aside. They were away from their home and family. They were very young. And they were in a country where they were regularly pressured to change.

They were put into a three year program which was intended to train them to become Babylonian leaders. In this program they were taught all the literature and language of the Chaldeans which included: language, science, history, and philosophy.

As well, their names were changed. This was a common practice in the Ancient Near East. Changing someone's name was (1) part of changing them entirely and (2) a way of displaying subjection to their captor.

- Daniel (God is my Judge) -- Belte-shazzar (Protect his life)
- Hananiah (YHWH is gracious) -- Shadrach (Meaning is uncertain)
- Mishaël (Who is as God) -- Meshach (I am of no account)
- Azariah (YHWH has helped) -- Abed-nego (Servant of Nego)

## Characteristics of healthy convictions

### Rooted at a young age

Daniel was between the age of 13-15 when he was taken into captivity.<sup>15</sup> It seems that at this age he had enough training that would keep him true to God throughout his life in captivity.

On the other hand, you may realize that Daniel and his friends were not the only ones taken into captivity, but they were the only ones (apparently) that remained true to God's commands . . . at least of those taken to the city of Babylon. We know that Ezekiel remained true to God as well.

### Not based or altered due to circumstances

Daniel was immersed in a new culture and world view, and yet he did not bend to the ungodly cultural practices.

<sup>13</sup> Progress of Daniel in Babylon: Physical blessing of God | Intellectual blessing of God | Political blessing of God

<sup>14</sup> This is a chronological reference offering us an overview of Daniel's time, telling us that Daniel lived into the reign of Cyrus. This would give some support to the idea that Daniel wrote this around 539/538 BC.

<sup>15</sup> A number of qualifications were necessary before young men were eligible for training in Babylon. The trainees had to be a certain age. "Young men" is the translation of the Hebrew word yeladim, which may refer to children, boys, or young men. Young points out that according to Plato, "the education of Persian youths began in their 14th year," and it is reasonable to assume that the Babylonians commenced the training of young people at about the same age as the Persians. (Stephen R. Miller, Daniel, page 60)

## In harmony with our actions

Not only did Daniel hold to his convictions, he practiced them outside of his comfort zone. He was surrounded by the ungodly and actively encouraged to give up his beliefs and change his practices, but he did not. Daniel and his three friends (1) disobeyed the king rather than God and (2) chose to reject the best of the menu.

Eating this meat would have been wrong for them for a number of reasons. (1) Much of the meat would have been meat disallowed for their consumption under the law of Moses (Deuteronomy 14:3-20). (2) The meat had most likely already been offered to idols, and their eating of the meat would have been unacceptable. It was common for the meat offered to idols to be taken to the king because the meat was deemed to be blessed by the idols. Most often the meat offered to idols was only for the consumption of the king. (3) This act would have implied loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>16</sup>

## Held to be more important than the potential consequences

### **Foundation for Healthy Conviction**

#### God's Word

They must have known the law of God to know that they could not eat the meat.

Their knowledge of God's Word was strong enough to combat all error taught them in three years of education.

They daily chose to follow God's word, and not be swayed by their peers. (i.e. Ashpenaz in vs. 10, the other youth in vs. 13)

#### Godly fellowship

It is common throughout the book of Daniel to see these 4 men finding counsel and strength in each other.

Faithfully walking with the Lord is not an easy thing to do, and is not meant to be done alone. God has given us great gifts in godly friends and counselors. We need to take advantage of them and also avoid ungodly friendships and counsel.

#### Faith in God's Power

Throughout this book these four men show a belief in the Power of God.

Here they suggest a ten day trial period in which they are sure that God will prove Himself powerful.

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<sup>16</sup> "The reasons for defilement, which they saw, would have been basically two: first, that the food would likely include at times meat declared unclean by the law of Moses; and, second, that it would regularly be food first offered to the Babylonian gods. . . it would have been to give recognition, though in an indirect manner, to the existence of Babylon's false deities. Food first dedicated to gods was thought to insure to the eaters the favor of those gods . . . Everyone eating it, then, would have been considered as also desiring favor and thus giving recognition and obeisance to the Babylonian deities. (Leon Wood)

"From several extant descriptions of divine repasts, the following sequence can be reconstructed. First . . . water for washing was offered in a bowl. A number of liquid and semi liquid dishes . . . and containers with beverages . . . Next, specific cuts of meat were served as a main dish. Finally, fruit . . . Having been presented to the image, the dishes from the god's meal were sent to the king for his consumption. Clearly, the food offered to the deity was considered blessed by contact with the divine and capable of transferring that blessing to the person who was to eat it. This person was always the king." (A.L. Oppenheim, pg. 188-189)

## Rewards for Healthy Conviction

The rewards that we find in this chapter were the unique ways in which God chose to reward these 4 men. His reward in our lives may look extremely different. We will probably never rise to such positions of power and authority. Nonetheless, when we serve God faithfully, He rewards us and positions us where He sees fit.

### Physical blessing from God

**Daniel 1:15** At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food.

### Political blessing from God

**Daniel 1:19** And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king.

### Intellectual blessing from God

**Daniel 1:20** And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.

Daniel's wisdom was later used as a measure for wisdom . . .

**Ezekiel 28:3** you are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you;

## OUR SECURITY IS FOUND IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.

### God's justice was displayed through God's sovereignty.

"The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into" the hands of the Babylonians.

Instead of reflecting God's justice (in this instance), consider that His justice may result in our discomfort. God's justice displayed in the life of Israel resulted in Daniel's dramatic discomfort.

While Judah was being judged for their disobedience, Daniel was not at fault personally, but he was deeply affected by the sin of others. God's justice was the perfect plan for Daniel. I can imagine he might have struggled accepting that on his trip to Babylon.

### God's benevolence was displayed through God's sovereignty.

"God granted Daniel favor"

"God gave" Daniel and his friends "knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom"

The necessary tools that Daniel and his friends needed for God to work out His plan were given to them. While Daniel benefited, there was nothing of which Daniel could boast. The sole purpose of giving the gifts was so that God would be glorified through them.

As believers we are abundantly blessed by God, let us not forget that those blessings are for His glory, not our own.

As well, understanding that He was gracious in the giving of the gifts, we should be gracious in the using and ministering with those gifts.

## EXPLORING THE MEANING

1. In one sentence what is the main point of the passage?

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2. Does this passage somehow connect to the overall storyline of the Bible?

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3. What are some timeless truths that can be drawn from this passage?

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4. What attributes of God are revealed in this passage?

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5. Can we learn anything about Daniel's faith by the fact that we know he had the vision while he was asleep?

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## EXPLORING OUR APPLICATION

1. How might God want this passage to affect my daily life?

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2. Of the timeless principles that were already acknowledged, which ones might I apply today?



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# Character in the midst of challenges

Daniel 2:1-28 | Lesson 2

## INTRODUCTION TO EXPLORATION

What do little kids do when someone else (a sibling or friend or school mate) pushes them? Don't they usually respond back with an equal or more dramatic response? When they are confronted by an authority figure usually their response is, "they \_\_\_ me first!" They justify their actions because the treatment dealt to them was unfair.

What do teenagers do when someone treats them mean or unfairly? While the reaction might be a little more "mature," usually the teenager responds in a similar fashion – a dramatic and often larger response.

What about adults . . . they quit work and join the other union workers on the picket line.

Is it not true that we all hate being treated unfairly . . . is it not also true that when we are treated unfairly we usually react with anger and overdramatized reactions . . . and to take it a step further, do we not often justify our actions by pointing at the wrong actions of the other person?

There is a great deal of information in this chapter. Through its verses we can find much communicating to us the beauty of God's attributes, especially His sovereignty. We can also find Daniel in the midst of unfair circumstances, and it is through these circumstances that we see a wonderful model of how to approach other people and God in the midst of difficult situations.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

1 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar<sup>17</sup>, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams<sup>18</sup>; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.

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2 Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans<sup>19</sup> be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.

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3 And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream."

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4 Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic<sup>20</sup>, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation."

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<sup>17</sup> Date: late 603/602 BC -- It is unclear if this event occurred before the examination of 1:18 or following the three years of instruction.

<sup>18</sup> We are uncertain whether Daniel is referring to a reoccurring dream or several separate dreams.

<sup>19</sup> Wise men of Babylon: Magicians: sacred writers, teaching priests | Enchanters: Ashupu priests, parallel to soothsayers or astrologers | Sorcerers: used herbs, charms, potions in league with evil forces | Chaldeans: priests

<sup>20</sup> Daniel 2:4 – 7:28 are written in Aramaic | The **liberal view** for a late dating of Daniel is articulated by S. R. Driver in his book, *Introduction to the Literature of the OT*, page 58: "The Persian words presuppose a period after the Persian empire had been well established; the Greek words demand, the Hebrew supports, and the Aramaic permits, a date after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great (332 B.C.)" | The **conservative view**: Franz Rosenthal -- "The Aramaic of Daniel is Aramaic of the courts and chancelleries of the 7th century B.C. (600's)." | K.A. Kitchen -- "The Aramaic of Daniel is closely akin to the Elephantine Papyri (400's B.C.) and Ezra (600's B.C.)."

5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.

6 But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation."

7 They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation."

8 The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm-

9 if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation."

10 The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand,<sup>21</sup> for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean.

11 The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

12 Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

13 So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed;<sup>22</sup> and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

14 Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.

15 He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel.

16 And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,

18 and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night.<sup>23</sup> Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The Wise men's ignorance is a theme throughout the book. Daniel and the wise men are pitted against each other (ch. 2, 4, and 5). Each time the wise men will not know, but Daniel will glorify God with the answer given him by God.

<sup>22</sup> The ESV translates that they were being killed. The Hebrew allows for the possibility that either (1) the wise men were in imminent danger of being slain or (2) The wise men were already in the process of being slain, one by one. It is possible that when Arioch came to Daniel the wise men were already being slain.

<sup>23</sup> This verb in the context of prophetic perception refers to a revelation of the divine word, usually at night during a deep sleep. If this is a dream, that means that Daniel came and prayed with his friends and then went to bed. Faith = intense prayer and pleasant rest.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel displayed much wisdom and prudence (1) Daniel approached Arioch in an appropriate manner (2) He showed respect for the man, his position and his authority (3) Daniel approached the king with humility and boldness (4) Daniel showed faith in God through his prayer

20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

23 To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for 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 matter."<sup>25</sup>

24 Therefore Daniel went in 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; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."

25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation."

26 The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?"

27 Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked,

28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.<sup>26</sup> Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these:

## Daniel's Predicament

### Daniel's position (2:1-2)

Daniel was a teen age boy that had been taken hostage into Babylon.

At the beginning of this chapter we are told that the events of this chapter took place in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Therefore Daniel was most likely near the completion of his three years of training (cf. 1:5). He is likely around 15-16 years old.

The passage appears to indicate that these four men were not present during the interaction with the king. This may indicate that they had not yet been fully acknowledged as wise men. On the other hand, 2:13 tells us that the guards went to kill Daniel and his friends which would signify that they were considered part of the group known as "wise men."

### Nebuchadnezzar's request (2:3-9)

Nebuchadnezzar called in the wise men to tell him (1) the content of his dream and (2) the meaning of the dream.

<sup>25</sup> Daniels prayer: Blessed God | Thanked God | Remained humble

<sup>26</sup> Refer back to verses 10 and 11

Neb. remembered his dream but, as a test, wanted the wise men to tell him anyway. If the wise men thought that he had remembered his dream they would likely have offered an alternate dream.

He warned them that if they were unable to tell him the dream and its' interpretation he would have them and their families killed, and their houses made dunghills.

The wise men were not able to tell him the content or meaning of the dream and so they attempted to buy time (2:8).

### The Wise men's problem (2:10-11)

1. This request is outside the realm of human ability.
2. This request is unlike any that any other king has ever asked.
3. This request is unreasonable.
4. This request could only be fulfilled by the gods.

### Nebuchadnezzar's decree (2:12-13)

The decree to kill the wise men was made. Before or during the execution of that decree Daniel approached and handled the situation in an exemplary way.

## **Daniel's Response**

While Daniel and his friends were innocent, seeing that they were not even at the initial meeting, they were still found guilty and condemned to death.

### Daniel approached Arioch with respect. (2:14-15)

**Prudent:** advise, take counsel . . . The meaning of "consult together" is most often used, whereas in one instance the Hebrew means "conspire".

**Discretion:** taste or judgment

He showed respect for Arioch, his position, and his authority.

### Daniel approached the king with humility and boldness. (2:16)

1. He humbly asked the king for some time.
2. He boldly told the king that he would be able to give him an answer.

### Daniel approached God in faith. (2:17-23)

1. Immediately Daniel approached God in prayer.
2. He received the interpretation in a dream, which means that he prayed and then went to bed.
3. Daniel thanked God for giving "them" the interpretation. Daniel came to his three friends and requested that they pray with him. God answered all their prayers and Daniel praises God.

### Daniel declares the power of God publicly. (2:24-28)

## EXPLORING THE MEANING

6. In one sentence what is the main point of the passage?

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7. Does this passage somehow connect to the overall storyline of the Bible?

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8. What are some timeless truths that can be drawn from this passage?

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The tendencies of our flesh are visceral and impatient when troubles come our way. We often react poorly to others and ignore or become upset with God when life doesn't go the way we think it ought. From this passage, one lesson that may be learned is that we ought to be characterized by patience, respect and faith in the midst of a challenging and unfair world.

9. What attributes of God are revealed in this passage?

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God's sovereignty involved Daniel's difficulty. We often struggle thinking or wondering whether or not God forgot about us when we go through difficult times. It is not natural for us to look at really difficult challenges as an opportunity to be molded by God or be used by God to bring glory to Himself. And yet, that is exactly what happens in this story with Daniel. It is because of events like this and Daniel's appropriate response in the midst of them that God raises him up to a significant position in the government. More importantly, God is magnificently glorified through it all.

10. Can we learn anything about Daniel's faith by the fact that we know he had the vision while he was asleep?

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## EXPLORING OUR APPLICATION

3. How might God want this passage to affect my daily life?

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4. Of the timeless principles that were already acknowledged, which ones might I apply today?

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Assess yourself . . . what is your natural response when treated fairly? Do you show respect to those involved?

What do you depend on to solve problems – faith in God or your own reason? Prayer and dependence on God doesn't negate God using your mind to help solve an issue, but is prayer an important part of the process?

Would faith characterize how you deal with problems? Do you approach difficulties in life with the faith that God is in control and will work it out the way He sees fit? Are you comfortable letting God work out problems the way He sees fit?

# The Image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream

Daniel 2:29-49 | Lesson 3

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## INTRODUCTION TO EXPLORATION

**Fallen Condition Focus ::** We can often struggle as we view the world in which we live and conclude that God has completely given up on us. Chaos, destruction and misery seem to be the norm. It is very easy in the midst of that to wonder what God is doing.

**Purpose ::** Be at peace as you realize God's sovereign hand over history. We desire to accomplish this by . . .

1. Outlining the details of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
2. Understanding the relevance of the dream.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

29 To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be.

30 But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.<sup>27</sup>

31 "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image<sup>28</sup>, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.

32 The head of this image was of fine gold<sup>29</sup>, its chest and arms of silver<sup>30</sup>, its middle and thighs of bronze<sup>31</sup>,

33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Note how Daniel takes no credit for the interpretation.

<sup>28</sup> The image represented the Satan dominated kingdom of the world. It is given from man's perspective (Nebuchadnezzar's perspective). View is earthly -- kingdoms are symbolized positively by precious metals and human body parts. The kingdoms progressively deteriorate. This deterioration was not in quantity of power but in quality of power. Each kingdom is marked by a progressive decentralization of government. Governments range from absolute monarchy to absolute anarchy: (1) Babylon -- king alone (2) Medo -- Persia -- seven noble families and the law of the Medes & Persians (3) Greece -- military aristocracy (4) Rome -- Caesar ruled by the Senate and actually ruled by the military, and ultimately by public opinion. The lower value of the metals from gold to clay reflects the poorer quality of empires being symbolized. The progressive strength of the metals symbolizes the increased dependence on the military

<sup>29</sup> Babylon: Cross referenced to verse 38, tells us that Nebuchadnezzar is the head. The prophecy was addressed to an individual and not an empire. Babylon was known as the Golden city (Isaiah 14:4)

<sup>30</sup> The Medo-Persian Empire: Difficulties: (1) Because some critics date Daniel in 165 BC they must squeeze these four empires into history before 165 (2) If this view is correct, the fourth kingdom could not be Rome (3) In order to fit these kingdoms into their history they must divide the one Medo-Persian Empire into two, the Median and the Persian Empire

The supports that Medo-Persia was a unified empire are offered in the main notes on page 26.

<sup>31</sup> Greek Kingdom: Bronze suggests a strong and spectacular army which will rule over all the earth -- Alexander conquered all the known world



34 As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.<sup>33</sup>

35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces,<sup>34</sup> and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.<sup>35</sup>

36 "This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.

37 You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory,

38 and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all- you are the head of gold.

39 Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

40 And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

41 And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.

42 And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.

43 As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.<sup>36</sup>

44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a

<sup>32</sup> Roman Kingdom: Reasons for being Rome (1) According to history Rome did follow Greece (2) The 10 toes fit nothing in the Grecian Empire (3) The ten toes in 2:44 are called kings (4) The ten toes are parallel with ten horns in 7:24 (5) The ten toes are parallel with ten horns in Revelation 13:1

Summary: (1) It is one kingdom with two stages (2) The gap is between empirical Rome and Eschatological Rome (3) Verse 41 speaks of a divided kingdom (4) It exists until the end of gentile dominion (5) It exists until the eternal kingdom is set up

<sup>33</sup> The stone is commonly a symbol of the Messiah (Psalms 118:22, Isaiah 8:14, 28:16, I Peter 2:4-6, Ephesians 2) This stone falls during the final stage of the 4th empire and destroys the whole image. It destroys all gentile power and then sets up an eternal kingdom. It destroys all the kingdoms at once which is understood by using the food chain image. Each one's concepts and cultures were absorbed by the conquering empire, and when the last empire was destroyed, they all were destroyed.

<sup>34</sup> The golden empire is the first empire and culminates in the fourth empire which consists of ten kings which are destroyed completely by the rock. The final kingdom is then established.

<sup>35</sup> It went from a stone to a Great Mountain, which implies a process that takes some time. The amillenialists view this stone As Christ's first coming and he established the church which is a spiritual kingdom. A few problems: (1) It parallels the other four kingdoms which are physical earthly kingdoms (2) It crushes the other four earthly kingdoms (3) Rome continued to grow after the birth of the church. (4) The church was contemporary with and never replaced Rome

<sup>36</sup> "And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. (NIV) Leupold thinks that the reference is to the fact that "Roman stock and Germanic stock intermarried – a melting pot experiment – but the resultant stock was not the material that enduring empires are made of" (Daniel, 120). "I summary, shortly before the second coming of Christ, ten literal or symbolic kingdoms or nations or unequal strength will unite to form a coalition that will rise out of the ruins of the ancient Roman Empire." (Miller, 99)

kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,

45 just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.

47 The king answered and said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery."

48 Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

49 Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

## Preface to the Dream

This dream provides an introduction to and an overview of the prophetic portions of Daniel. The following prophecies will expand on the prophecy of this chapter in whole or in part. As well, chapter 2 serves as a type of summary outline of what will be revealed in the course of the whole book.

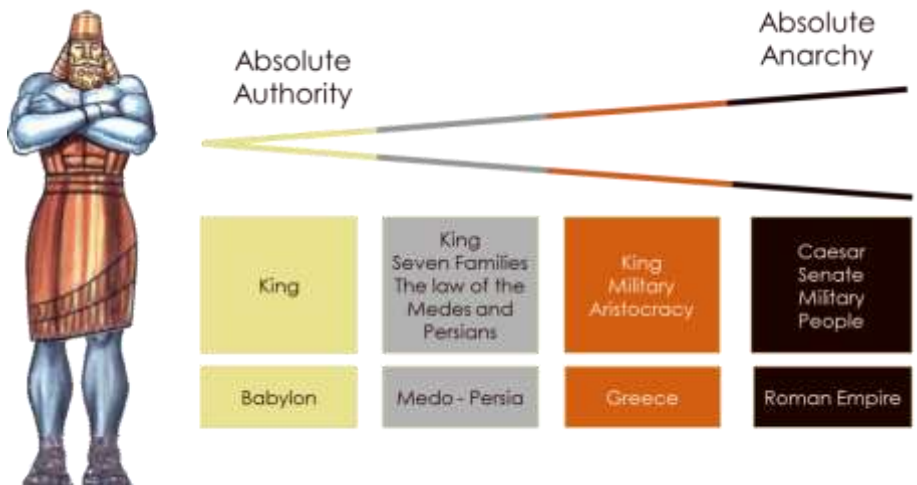
The image is symbolic of the Satan dominated kingdoms of the world.

The image is given from man's perspective, specifically Nebuchadnezzar's perspective. This is seen in the fact that the kingdoms are positively symbolized by precious metals and human body parts. (God did not view these kingdoms as precious metals. We see God's perception of these kingdoms in the beasts of chapter 7.)

## The Details of the Dream

The kingdoms progressively deteriorate in quality (seen in the lower values of the metals — this symbolizes the decentralization in their governments)

The kingdoms progressively increase in their dependence on their military which is seen in the increase of strength in the metals.



### First: Babylonian Empire

Cross referenced to verse 38, tells us that Nebuchadnezzar is the head.

The prophecy was addressed to an individual and not an empire

Babylon was known as the Golden city (Isaiah 14:4)

### Second: Medo-Persian Empire

1. The symbolism best fits the Medo-Persian Empire.

- The bear in chapter 7 with one raised shoulder better pictures the domination of the Persians over the Medes.
- The 3 ribs in the bears mouth picture the defeat of Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt by Medo- Persia.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> beast corresponds to nothing in the Persian Empire but corresponds well with Alexander's Greece.

2. In chapter 5 the handwriting on the wall, "Mene, Tekel, Peres" . . . "Peres" has the same radicals as the noun for Persia (paras) and seems to be a play on words.

3. Darius' rule after the fall of Babylon was "according to the law of the Medes and the Persians".

**Daniel 6:8** Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked."

4. The conquest of Media by Cyrus the Great took place at least 10 years before the fall of Babylon.






5. Daniel clearly states that the kingdom of Medo-Persia will be overthrown by Greece (8:20-21).

**Daniel 8:20** As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia.<sup>21</sup> And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king.

### Third: Greek Empire

Bronze suggests a strong and spectacular army. This army would rule over all the earth -- Alexander conquered all the known world. (Read Appendix "[Division of the Greek Empire](#)")

**Alexander III of Macedon** (20/21 July 356 – 10/11 June 323 BC), commonly known as **Alexander the Great**, was a king of Macedon, a state in northern ancient Greece. By the age of thirty, he had created one of the largest empires of the ancient world, stretching from the Ionian Sea to the Himalayas. He was undefeated in battle, and is considered one of the most successful commanders of all time. Born in Pella in 356 BC, Alexander was tutored by Aristotle until the age of 16. Alexander succeeded his father, Philip II of Macedon, to the throne in 336 BC after Philip was assassinated. Philip had brought together most of the city-states of mainland Greece under a Macedonian hegemony, using both military and diplomatic means. ([Wikipedia](#))

	Kingdom	Verses	Metal
	1 <sup>st</sup> Kingdom -- Babylon	2:32, 36-38	Fine gold
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Kingdom -- Medo-Persia	2:32, 39	Silver
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Kingdom -- Greece	2:32, 39	Bronze
	Empirical Rome	2:33, 40	Iron
	4 <sup>th</sup> Kingdom -- Rome	Eschatological Rome 2:33, 41-42	Partly iron, partly clay

## Fourth: Roman Empire

### Reasons for being Rome

- According to history Rome did follow Greece.
- The 10 toes fit nothing in the Grecian Empire.
- The ten toes in 2:44 are called kings.

**Daniel 2:44** And in the days of those **kings** the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,

- The ten toes are parallel with ten horns in 7:24.

**Daniel 7:24** As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings.

- The ten toes are parallel with ten horns in Revelation 13:1.

**Revelation 13:1** And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

### Summary

- It is one kingdom with two stages. Daniel 2:41 speaks of a divided kingdom. The gap is between empirical Rome and Eschatological Rome.

**Daniel 2:41** And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.

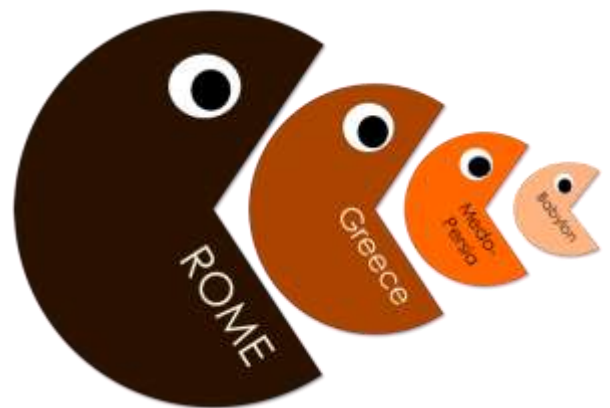
Stephen Miller quotes H.C. Leupold . . . “Roman stock and Germanic stock intermarried – a melting pot experiment – but the resultant stock was not the material that enduring empires are made of”<sup>37</sup>

- It exists until the end of gentile dominion.
- It exists until the eternal kingdom is set up.

## Fifth: Stone that Became a Mountain

The stone is commonly a symbol of the Messiah (Psalms 118:22, Isaiah 8:14, 28:16, I Peter 2:4-6, Ephesians 2). This stone falls during the final stage of the 4th empire and destroys the whole image. It destroys all gentile power and then sets up an eternal kingdom. It destroys all the kingdoms at once which is understood by using the food chain image. Each one's concepts and cultures were absorbed by the conquering empire, and when the last empire was destroyed, they all were destroyed.

It went from a stone to a Great Mountain, which implies a



<sup>37</sup> Miller, *Daniel*, 98.

process that takes some time. The amillenialists view this stone As Christ's first coming and he established the church which is a spiritual kingdom. A few problems:

- (1) It parallels the other four kingdoms which are physical earthly kingdoms.
- (2) It crushes the other four earthly kingdoms.
- (3) Rome continued to grow after the birth of the church.
- (4) The church was contemporary with and never replaced Rome.

The premillennialists conclude that Christ will return in the future and set up a literal kingdom for the Jewish people at that time. There is much debate on what role the church will play in this kingdom. As well, while premillennialists say that the literal kingdom is a future reality, they often will still hold that Jesus Christ is building his kingdom and believers are considered "kingdom dwellers." Christ is considered as reigning in our hearts. There is much debate on whether or not this is consistent with a truly premillennial view.

## EXPLORING THE MEANING

1. In one sentence what is the main point of the passage?

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2. Does this passage somehow connect to the overall storyline of the Bible?

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If we see the overall storyline of the Bible being about God redeeming a people unto himself and that is accomplished through the sacrifice of the Messiah, Jesus Christ . . . we see a part of that storyline in this passage when we see the Messiah. The Messiah enters this story as a stone that destroys the image. The Messiah is often referred to as a stone (Psalms 118:22, Isaiah 8:14, 28:16, I Peter 2:4-6, Ephesians 2).

This stone falls during the final stage of the 4<sup>th</sup> empire and destroys all gentile kingdoms and then sets up an eternal kingdom.

**Psalm 118:22** The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

**Isaiah 8:14** And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**1 Peter 2:4-6** <sup>4</sup> As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

3. What are some timeless truths that can be drawn from this passage?

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4. This passage seems to indicate that man will rule throughout history. Gentile nations will dominate the political scene from the time of this dream until the end. The empires will become more diverse and will progressively deteriorate and be destroyed. What principles, encouragements, or realities must we embrace as a result?

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5. What attributes of God are revealed in this passage?

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God rules in history. He is ultimately in control of man's history and will ultimately set up His own kingdom. God's kingdom will be a (1) physical kingdom (2) a universal kingdom (3) a future kingdom (4) an eternal kingdom and (5) a kingdom with limited entry.

6. There are many who would criticize this view and consider it to be overly pessimistic (believing that the world will continue to deteriorate until Christ comes and destroys it). How can this be viewed positively?

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## EXPLORING OUR APPLICATION

1. How might God want this passage to affect my daily life?

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2. Of the timeless principles that were already acknowledged, which ones might I apply today?

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## James Montgomery Boice, "Daniel" Pages 39-40.

Daniel 2:24-49

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hands"—and the mountain of the dream is his kingdom. That is the easy part of the interpretation.

The difficult part has to do with the place in human history where that great kingdom is to be located. Is it in the present, here and now? Does it refer to the church and its expansion throughout the world? The church's destruction of the world's kingdoms? That is one explanation. Or does it refer to the kingdom of Christ still to come? That is the second explanation. As is often the case with interpretation like this, there are pros and cons on both sides.

The great strength of the view that the church is the rock that grows up to be a mountain that fills the whole earth is the historical sequence. If the parts of the statue represent the kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, as I have indicated, it is hard to escape noticing that Jesus came to earth in the days of the Roman Empire and that his church has gradually expanded into all corners of the world from that time to this. Moreover, we have Christ's significant words to Peter: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:18). Most (but not all) in the Reformed camp hold to this position.

Unfortunately, the matter is not so simple as this argument suggests. The dream given to Nebuchadnezzar suggests that the fourth empire, Rome, would be divided into two parts (the legs) and then into ten affiliated but separate kingdoms (the toes). This happened. The empire divided into two parts, its eastern and western halves, and later it disintegrated even further. But this happened *after* the birth of Christ, not before, which is what the dream requires. Again, although it is true that the church of Christ has expanded to fill the whole world in some sense, it has not destroyed the world's kingdoms, which is what the dream demands. The empires of the world have not fallen; they have not broken into pieces and been scattered like chaff. In other words, there has been no great catastrophe from the world's perspective.

On the other side of the argument, the view that sees the rock that fills the earth as a future ("millennial") reign of Christ can insist on the catastrophic aspect. Indeed, it is suggested by later books of prophecy, especially Revelation, which portrays a sudden return of Christ, a millennium, and a final judgment. If Christ is actually to rule on earth, establishing an earthly and not merely a spiritual kingdom, then other kingdoms obviously must be overthrown, and it is easy to imagine the overthrow of ten independent but confederated kingdoms.

The weakness of this view is that Nebuchadnezzar's dream fails to account for the intervening years of church expansion. Adherents must speak of a "gap" in prophecy into which the "times of the Gentiles" fit. Some have said that prophecy *per se* relates almost exclusively to Israel and that there is therefore something like a stopping of the "prophetic clock" until the times of

the Gentiles are fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> This is the dominant view of dispensationalists and of most writers of prophecy in the last generation.

### Kiss the Son

In my opinion, the second of these views, the view of the dispensationalists, is the best interpretation of Daniel 2—though I am not a dispensationalist. But I want to emphasize that the main point made by Daniel's interpretation of this dream is not the precise period of history in which the kingdom of Christ will grow and fill the earth, or how that will happen, but rather that it *will* happen and that the kingdoms of this world will be scattered before it. Daniel's real point is that of Psalm 2.

In Psalm 2 we are told how the kings and people of the earth take their stand against the Lord and his Anointed, saying, "Let us break their chains . . . and throw off their fetters" (v. 3). But what is the reaction of God to this act of cosmic arrogance? Does God tremble before kings like Nebuchadnezzar or the secularists of our time? Not at all! The psalm says that God laughs at their rebellion. This is the only place in the entire Bible where we are told that God laughs, and it is not a good-humored, mirthful laugh. It is a laugh of derision.

The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them.  
Then he rebukes them in his anger  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,  
"I have installed my King  
on Zion, my holy hill."

verses 4–6

That is Daniel's chief message for Nebuchadnezzar and for our own time. The kingdoms of this world are powerful and sometimes even glorious—from our point of view. But even their strength is given to them by God, and just as God sets up kingdoms, so does he bring them down and dispose of them. He was to do that with Nebuchadnezzar. He has done that with all the world's past kingdoms, and he will do it with those of our time.

For our part, the only wise course is to recognize that "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15) and to "kiss the Son" in grateful devotion.



## Ian M. Duguid, “Daniel: Reformed Expository Commentary” pages 36-37

### *Gone with the Wind*

by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. (Dan. 2:36–45)

The dream and the interpretation given to Daniel were actually quite simple, at least if we focus our attention on its central message, and yet at the same time incredibly profound. What Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was an enormous statue of a man made up of four parts (Dan. 2:31). It had a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and legs of iron with feet of iron mixed with baked clay (2:32–33). While Nebuchadnezzar was watching, a rock was cut out but not by any human agency (2:34). It struck the statue on its feet, and the whole statue disintegrated into pieces, which the wind blew away like chaff. Meanwhile, the rock grew into a huge mountain and filled the earth (2:35).

Daniel interpreted this picture as follows: the head of gold is Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:37). God is the one who gave him great dominion and power and glory. In fact, his power and glory are described in terms reminiscent of what was granted to Adam at the beginning of the world, with dominion not only over human beings but the birds of the air and the beasts of the field (2:38). After Nebuchadnezzar’s time there would be more kingdoms, each of which would be inferior to the one that went before it in glory, though still strong and of wide-ranging power. The last of these kingdoms will be strong as iron, yet in the end it will prove to be an unstable composite of different peoples who cannot hold together. At that time, God will establish his final kingdom, which will ultimately destroy all other kingdoms. Though it starts small, it will grow to fill the earth and, unlike the earthly kingdoms, it will endure forever.

At this point, the temptation is to start inquiring about the identity of the four kingdoms in the vision. If the first kingdom is Babylon, can we also identify the other three? Some people argue that the four kingdoms are Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece, while others say that they are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.<sup>1</sup> If the last kingdom is Rome, then who

1. The former scheme is widely accepted by critical scholars, who date the book as a whole during the Maccabean crisis in the middle of the second century B.C. (e.g., André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans. D. Pellauer [Atlanta: John Knox, 1979], 51), while the latter more traditional view is generally argued by conservative scholars (e.g., Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman, 1994], 55–56). Nevertheless, some conservative scholars have argued in favor of the former view (see R. J. M. Gurney, “The Four Kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7,” *Themelios* 2 [1977]: 39–45; John Walton, “The

## DANIEL 2:24–49

are the ten toes? It doesn't take long before we find our heads spinning with the variety of interpretations offered, all of which go far beyond the interpretation and application that Daniel himself gave here. It is important to notice, however, that the passage itself gives us virtually no data about the specifics of any of these kingdoms, because it intends to give a philosophy of history rather than a precise analysis of history ahead of time. As John Goldingay puts it, "In the drama of the story the description has to be allowed to remain allusive. People miss the point when they spend time arguing who the empires were."<sup>2</sup> The focus of the dream itself and its interpretation are more concerned with *what* the future holds than *when* it will come to pass. In our analysis, we shall focus our attention on the interpretation of the vision that the passage itself gives to us rather than pursuing broader and more speculative connections.

## THE RISE AND FALL OF EARTHLY EMPIRES

So what, according to Daniel 2, does this dream seek to teach us? First, it shows us that God gives every earthly kingdom its glory and power: they do not come from their own strength. God gave Nebuchadnezzar his unparalleled sovereignty, power, strength, and glory (Dan. 2:37). In fact, the height of Nebuchadnezzar's authority is underlined by the creation language used to describe it: like Adam, he has been given authority not only over people, but over nature itself, so that the beasts of the field and the birds of the air are placed in his hands (2:38).<sup>3</sup> Yet that same creation imagery also underlines the dependent and transient nature of his position: like Adam, if he sins, he too can be cast down from his exalted position.<sup>4</sup> Even if he is

Four Kingdoms of Daniel," *JETS* 29 [1986]: 25–36). As Walton correctly notes, the identification of the kingdoms in Daniel 2 does not flow out of information contained within the passage itself but depends on attempts to correlate subsequent events with this passage and other complex prophetic texts.

2. John Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1989), 58. See also Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*, New International Version Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 82, and E. C. Lucas, *Daniel*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 79. A similar scheme, with four successive ages of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, where the key point is their character rather than their identity, is also found in Hesiod, a Greek poet of the eighth century B.C.

3. The claim to this authority over nature was perhaps the rationale behind the royal game parks that Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs established (see A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964], 46).

4. This is comparable to the exalted Adamic language used to describe the King of Tyre in Ezekiel 28, which likewise precedes anticipation of his fall.

# Daniel's Snapshot of the Future

Daniel 7:1-28 | Lesson 4

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## INTRODUCTION TO EXPLORATION

**Fallen Condition Focus** :: It is easy for us, in our religiously free nation, to fail to see the reality of human domination being made up of ugly, grotesque and distorted people – allegorically speaking. Sadly, it is becoming easier for us. Yet, we still live in a nation where our beliefs are allowed and somewhat respected by the general population. Typically, Americans don't receive physical, or even emotional and verbal, persecution. We may read a chapter like Daniel 7 and fail to miss the significance.

We can also have a tendency to get overly excited about eschatological passages and draw conclusions based more on our present day events than what the passage allows. Often in the midst of economic trials and war people too quickly interpret themselves and their day into eschatological passages. The reality is that most people have thought their day was the end times.

**Purpose** :: By carefully approaching chapter 7, we will have a more realistic view of human government, both in the past and in the future; and will yet be encouraged to know that God is in control of it all. We will accomplish this by . . .

1. Comparing chapters 2 and 7.
2. Outlining the four beasts of chapter 7.
3. Understanding the supremacy of "Ancient of Days" and "One Like the Son of Man" over earthly kingdoms.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

<sup>1</sup> In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon,<sup>38</sup> Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven<sup>39</sup> were stirring up the great sea.

<sup>3</sup> And four great beasts came up out of the sea<sup>40</sup>, different from one another.

<sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings.<sup>41</sup> Then as I looked its wings were plucked off,<sup>42</sup> and it was lifted up from the ground

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<sup>38</sup> Date: 553 B.C. | 50 years after chapter 1 | Probably the first year of Belshazzar's co – regency with Nabonidus, three years before the fall of Babylon spoken of in chapter 5

<sup>39</sup> Heavenly forces which God sends forth to stir up the world (Jeremiah 49:36, Revelation 7:1, Psalms 104:4)

<sup>40</sup> (1) Scripture often views the sea as a "sea of humanity" (Psalm 68:22, Jude 1:13, Revelation 17:15, 20:13) (2) Ancient Near Eastern imagery often views the sea as chaos and instability. (3) The Old Testament often views the sea in direct conflict with God.

and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it.

<sup>5</sup> And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear.<sup>43</sup> It was raised up on one side.<sup>44</sup> It had three ribs in its mouth<sup>45</sup> between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.'

<sup>6</sup> After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back.<sup>46</sup> And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>7</sup> After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>8</sup> I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots.<sup>49</sup> And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

<sup>9</sup> As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>10</sup> A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

<sup>11</sup> I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.

<sup>41</sup> Lion with eagle wings -- Babylon (Jeremiah 4:7, 13; 49:19:22; 50: 17,44)

<sup>42</sup> Perhaps a reference to Nebuchadnezzar's bout with insanity

<sup>43</sup> Bear -- Medo-Persia (the bear serves as an appropriate figure in biblical times to picture a kingdom large in size and fierce in battle (could be a reference to the heavy, gigantic armies of Medo-Persia.

<sup>44</sup> It did not raise itself up on one side as the KJV would imply but it was raised up on one side, that is a passive verb, meaning that he was deformed, with one shoulder higher than the other. The raised shoulder showed that one nation was more powerful than the other. (Persia was more prominent than Media)

<sup>45</sup> three ribs in its mouth could signify the victories over others, such as Lydia (546), Babylon (539), and Egypt (525).

<sup>46</sup> Leopard with four wings -- Greece. The leopard with four wings signifies speed. In 33 years Alexander the Great lives and dies, and in that time establishes one of the largest empires in the world. His empire and life were characterized by speed. He took Tyre in six months, and Nebuchadnezzar took 13 years to gain any control.

<sup>47</sup> Alexander died in 323 BC and was followed by four heads of government which gradually divided the empire. There were four heads but one kingdom.

<sup>48</sup> Terrible Beast -- Rome | The ten horns correspond with the ten toes in chapter 2.

<sup>49</sup> A further development of the ten toes in chapter 2:44-45. (parallels the beast in Revelation 13:1-2, 5-8; 17:11-14) Take note that the "little horn" that came up among the ten was a separate horn, the eleventh horn and it defeated three horns. It appears that in so doing it conquered them all.

<sup>50</sup> His clothing was like white snow—God's absolute **purity** | His hair was like pure wool—God's **wisdom** | His throne was on fire—God's **wrath** | A river of fire flowed before Him—God's wrath poured out on the wicked



<sup>12</sup> As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>13</sup> I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man<sup>52</sup>, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

<sup>14</sup> And 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 one that shall not be destroyed.

<sup>15</sup> "As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me.

<sup>16</sup> I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things.

<sup>17</sup> 'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth.'<sup>53</sup>

<sup>18</sup> But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.'

<sup>19</sup> "Then I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet,

<sup>20</sup> and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions.

<sup>21</sup> As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them,<sup>54</sup>

<sup>22</sup> until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.

<sup>23</sup> "Thus he said: 'As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces.

<sup>51</sup> The fact that their lives were "prolonged" likely speaks to how each of the first three kingdoms were amalgamated into each successive kingdom. Their cultures, traditions, arts, etc. became part of the next kingdom, so in one sense they were not completely destroyed.

<sup>52</sup> Jesus Christ often referred to himself as the "Son of Man" (Matthew 16:27, 19:28, 26:64; Luke 19:10, 22:48; John 3:13-14).

<sup>53</sup> Most likely Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander the Great, and the Anti-Christ.

<sup>54</sup> The horn that made war with the saints is held to be the Anti-christ by premillennialists. Others think there is too little data to draw any type of conclusion. Many believe the Anti-christ to be Antiochus IV Epiphanes, from the second century A.D. Antiochus clearly blasphemed God and fought against the people of God. Some of the imagery in the passage does seem to be lost on Antiochus.

<sup>24</sup> As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings.





<sup>25</sup> He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law<sup>55</sup>; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>26</sup> But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>27</sup> And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.'

<sup>28</sup> "Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart."

## A Comparison between chapter 2 and 7

	Babylon	Medo-Persia	Greece	Rome		Revived Rome	Messianic Kingdom
2	Head of Gold	Breast & Arms of Silver	Belly & Thighs of Brass	Legs of Iron	A Gap of Time	10 Toes of Iron & Clay	Stone cut out of a mountain without hands
							
7	Lion	Bear w/raised shoulder	Leopard w/4 heads and wings	Terrible Beast		Ten Horns / Little Horn	Son of Man Receives Kingdom
							

<sup>55</sup> He will intend to make alterations in times (God's schedule) and in law (God's decrees).

<sup>56</sup> "time, times, and half a time" has been understood by the premillennialists as three and a half years. Many of them would see this as the second half of the Tribulation period (cf. Daniel 9:27).

<sup>57</sup> God will judge and will remove the Anti-christ and condemn him to eternal punishment and destruction.

## Similarities

- Same framework of four symbols followed by a fifth.
- In each chapter the symbols represent Gentile World Power.
- Four of them are part of history whereas the fifth is still future.
- The interpretation in each chapter concerns earthly kingdoms.
- The progressive inferiority of the symbols in each chapter. The symbols in chapter 2 progress from the head of gold to the feet of clay. The symbols in chapter 7 progress from the king of beasts to a wild unknown beast.
- The second kingdom has a duality connected to it in each chapter. Two shoulders of the image parallel the two shoulders (one raised) on the bear.
- There is a 10 fold division of the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom in each chapter.

## Differences

- Kingdoms are pictured as beasts instead of precious metals. Potentially chapter 2 portrays the kingdoms from man's perspective, whereas in chapter 7 the kingdoms are viewed from God's perspective.
- The Antichrist is emphasized in chapter 7 but is not mentioned in chapter 2.

## **The Beasts of Chapter 7**

### Their origination – They come from the sea

**Daniel 7:3** And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another.

- Scripture often views the sea as a "sea of humanity".

**Psalms 68:22** The Lord said, "I will bring them back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea,

**Jude 1:13** wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

**Revelation 17:15** And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.

**Revelation 20:13** And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

- Ancient Near Eastern imagery often views the sea as chaos and instability.
- The Old Testament often views the sea in direct conflict with God.

"By the time Daniel lived and wrote, in the sixth century B.C., the sea was a well-established image for denoting the forces that stood against God. God was the one who established order out of chaos and the sea represented a reversion to chaos. At times in poetic literature, God was the One who waged war against the sea (Psalm 77, 114; Nahum 1) and its monsters (Leviathan, Psalm 74)"<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Tremper Longman III, *Reading the Bible with Heart and Mind*, 218

## Their Descriptions

### Lion with Eagles Wings (Babylon)

**Daniel 7:4** The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it.

- King of the Beasts and King of the Birds
- Perhaps pictures both Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar
- “its wings were plucked” perhaps is a reference to Nebuchadnezzar’s insanity
- “a human mind was also given to him” is probably a reference to his restoration

### Bear (Medo-Persia)

**Daniel 7:5** And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.'

- The bear was an appropriate figure to picture a kingdom large in size and fierce in battle
- Pictures the heavy, gigantic armies of Medo-Persia
- “raised up on one side” — the animal did not raise itself up on one side, the animal was deformed with one shoulder higher than the other. The raised shoulder signifies the strength of one nation (Persia) over the other. This symbolism goes well with chapter 8’s symbol of the ram with two horns, one larger than the other.
- Three ribs (victims) were in its mouth (1) Lydia, 547 BC (2) Babylon, 539 BC (3) Egypt, 525 BC.

In **547 BC**, the **Lydian king** Croesus besieged and captured the Persian city of Pteria in Cappadocia and enslaved its inhabitants. The Persian king Cyrus The Great marched with his army against the Lydians. The Battle of Pteria led to a stalemate, thus forcing the Lydians to retreat to their capital city of Sardis. Some months later the Persian and Lydian king met at the Battle of Thymbra. Cyrus won and captured the capital city of Sardis.<sup>59</sup>

In **539 BC** **Cyrus invaded Babylonia**. A battle was fought at Opis in the month of June, where the Babylonians were defeated; and immediately afterwards Sippar surrendered to the invader. Nabonidus fled to Babylon, where he was pursued by Gobryas, and on the 16th day of Tammuz, two days after the capture of Sippar, "the soldiers of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting." Nabonidus was dragged from his hiding-place, where the services continued without interruption. Cyrus did not arrive until the 3rd of *Marchesvan* (October), Gobryas having acted for him in his absence. Gobryas was now made governor of the province of Babylon, and a few days afterwards the son of Nabonidus died. A public mourning followed, lasting six days, and Cambyses accompanied the corpse to the tomb.<sup>60</sup>

It was quite natural that, after Cyrus had conquered the Middle East, Cambyses should undertake the conquest of **Egypt**, the only remaining independent state in that part of the world. The war took place in **525 BCE**, when Amasis II had just been succeeded by his son Psamtik III. Cambyses had prepared for the march through the desert by an alliance with Arabian chieftains, who brought a large supply of water to the stations. King Amasis had hoped that Egypt would be able to withstand the threatened

<sup>59</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lydia>

<sup>60</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonia>



Persian attack by an alliance with the Greeks . . . But this hope failed, as the Cypriot towns and the tyrant Polycrates of Samos, who possessed a large fleet, now preferred to join the Persians, and the commander of the Greek troops, Phanes of Halicarnassus, went over to them. In the decisive battle at Pelusium the Egyptian army was defeated, and shortly afterwards Memphis was taken. The captive king Psammetichus was executed, having attempted a rebellion. The Egyptian inscriptions show that Cambyses officially adopted the titles and the costume of the Pharaohs.<sup>61</sup>

### Leopard with four wings of a bird (Greece)

**Daniel 7:6** After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

- This speed is seen in Alexander the Great.

In 334 BC Alexander the Great began his invasion of Asia Minor; and within 10 years and by the age of 32, he had conquered the entire Medo-Persian Empire all the way to the borders of India.

- The Beasts had four heads which stands for no centralized government. Alexander's empire had a gradual fourfold division.

Alexander's death was so sudden that when reports of his death reached Greece, they were not immediately believed. Alexander had no obvious or legitimate heir, his son Alexander IV by Roxane being born after Alexander's death. This left the huge question as to who would rule the newly conquered, and barely pacified empire. According to Diodorus, Alexander's companions asked him when he was on his deathbed to whom he bequeathed his kingdom; his laconic reply was "tôi kratistôi"—"to the strongest".

Given that Arrian and Plutarch have Alexander speechless by this point, it is possible that this is an apocryphal story. Diodorus, Curtius and Justin also have the more plausible story of Alexander passing his signet ring to Perdiccas, one of his bodyguards and leader of the companion cavalry, in front of witnesses, thereby possibly nominating Perdiccas as his successor.

In any event, Perdiccas initially avoided explicitly claiming power, instead suggesting that Roxane's baby would be king, if male; with himself, Craterus, Leonnatus and Antipater as guardians. However, the infantry, under the command of Meleager, rejected this arrangement since they had been excluded from the discussion. Instead, they supported Alexander's half-brother Philip Arrhidaeus. Eventually, the two sides reconciled, and after the birth of Alexander IV, he and Philip III were appointed joint kings of the Empire—albeit in name only.

It was not long, however, before dissension and rivalry began to afflict the Macedonians. The satrapies handed out by Perdiccas at the Partition of Babylon became power bases each general could use to launch his own bid for power. After the assassination of Perdiccas in 321 BC, all semblance of Macedonian unity collapsed, and 40 years of war between "The Successors" (*Diadochi*) ensued before the Hellenistic world settled into four stable power blocks: the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, the Seleucid Empire in the east, the Kingdom of Pergamon in Asia Minor, and Macedon. In the process, both Alexander IV and Philip III were murdered.<sup>62</sup>

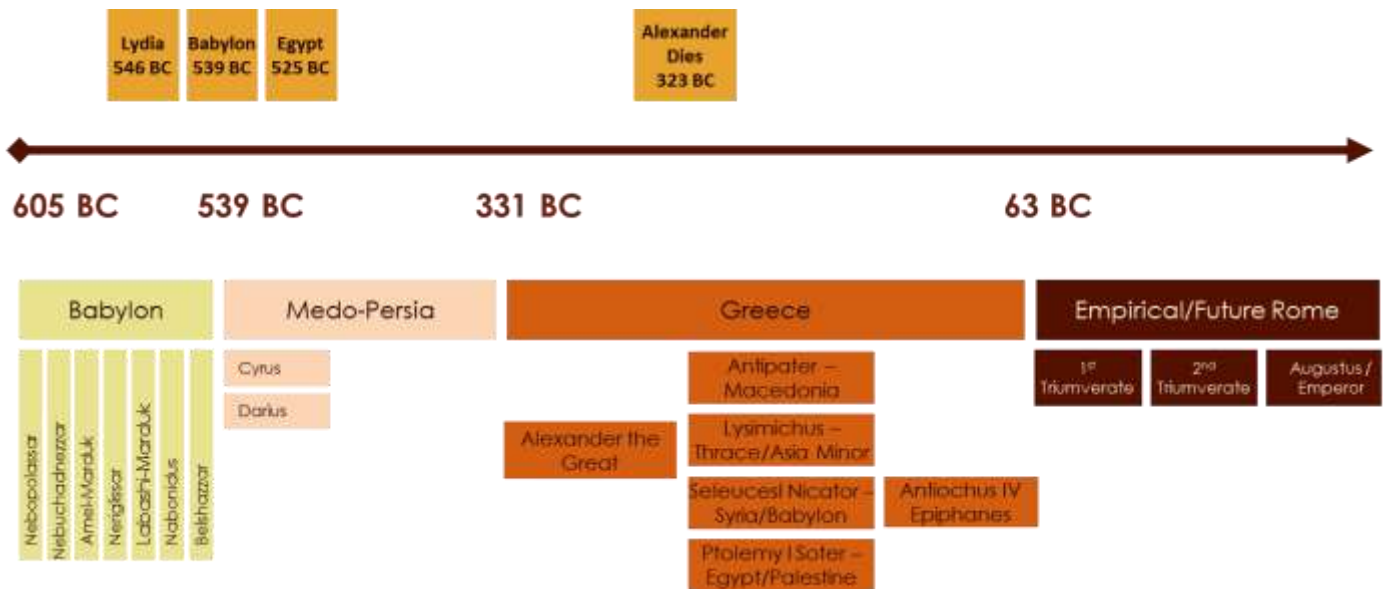
<sup>61</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambyses\\_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambyses_II)

<sup>62</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_the\\_Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_the_Great)

## Terrible Beast (Rome)

**Daniel 7:7** After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

- The beast was so dreadful that no known animal could describe it.
- It conquers with fierceness and strength “devoured and crushed and trampled.”
- Ten Kings are present during the Final stage of the 4<sup>th</sup> Empire (Revelation 17:12 is still future)



## The Destruction of the Fourth Beast

### Activity of the Antichrist

**Daniel 7:8** I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them **another horn, a little one**, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

- it is from/among the others (it is not one of the 10)
- it is small in its beginnings
- it pulls out by the roots three other horns
- it has the qualities of a man

**Daniel 7:11** I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.<sup>12</sup> As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

**Daniel 7:24-26**<sup>24</sup> As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings.<sup>25</sup> He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.<sup>26</sup> But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end.

- He will speak out against the most High

- He will wear down the saints of the Highest One
- He will intend to make alterations in times (God's schedule) and in law (God's decrees).
- Time, times, and half a time . . . God allows him to rule for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years.

### Ancient of Days

**Daniel 7:9-10** <sup>9</sup> As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. <sup>10</sup> A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

- His clothing was like white snow—God's absolute **purity**
- His hair was like pure wool—God's **wisdom**
- His throne was on fire—God's **wrath**
- A river of fire flowed before Him—God's wrath poured out on the wicked

### One Like a Son of Man

**Daniel 7:13-14** <sup>13</sup> I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came **one like a son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And 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 one that shall not be destroyed.

Christ's Humanity: the concept of son in the OT carries the idea of human likeness

Christ's Deity: (1) "Clouds of Heaven" connected to the Ancient of Days (2) Able to stand directly before God the Father (3) Given an Eternal Kingdom and a Universal Kingdom.

## EXPLORING THE MEANING

1. In one sentence what is the main point of the passage?

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2. Does this passage somehow connect to the overall storyline of the Bible?

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3. What are some timeless truths that can be drawn from this passage?

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4. What attributes of God are revealed in this passage?

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## EXPLORING OUR APPLICATION

1. How might God want this passage to affect my daily life?

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2. Of the timeless principles that were already acknowledged, which ones might I apply today?

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# A Vision of the Ram and He-Goat

Daniel 8:1-27 | Lesson 5

## INTRODUCTION TO EXPLORATION

Chapter 8 is more than an interesting story about future events (future in reference to Daniel). We fail to see its' significance when we limit it to a study in eschatology. God desired to impact Daniel and his future readers. Was God's only intention to offer a puzzle for us to forever strive to piece together? No.

God wanted to reveal Himself as the Sovereign. In so doing, He brought hope and a realistic view of the future to His people. We must attempt to learn these same lessons. To do so let's . . .

1. Better understand some of the details of chapter 8,
2. Better understand Daniel's point of view in reference to history and this vision, and
3. Draw some practical conclusions for the modern reader.

**Setting . . .** The year is 551-550 BC and is the third year of the reign of Belshazzar. Two years have passed since the vision of chapter 7. Susa was a chief city of the Medo-Persian Empire, and was about 250 miles East of Babylon. It is likely that Daniel was there in his vision but not actually present physically. This vision pictures the rise of Persia before she arose. As well it pictures Greece's conquest of Medo-Persia long before Greece comes to power.



## EXPLORING THE TEXT

<sup>1</sup> In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first.

<sup>2</sup> And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the capital, which is in the province of Elam<sup>63</sup>. And I saw in the vision, and I was at the Ulai canal.

<sup>3</sup> I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, a ram standing on the bank of the canal. It had two horns, and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.

<sup>4</sup> I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward. No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

<sup>5</sup> As I was considering, behold, a male goat came from the west

<sup>63</sup> located approximately 230 miles east of Babylon and 150 mile north of the Persian Gulf. It became a royal city under Cyrus, and Susa is the major city in Elam. (Isaiah 21:1,2,9)

across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground.  
And the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>6</sup> He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal, and he ran at him in his powerful wrath.

<sup>7</sup> I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him and struck the ram and broke his two horns. And the ram had no power to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled on him. And there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Then the goat became exceedingly great, but when he was strong, the great horn was broken<sup>66</sup>, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Out of one of them came a little horn<sup>68</sup>, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>10</sup> It grew great, even to<sup>70</sup> the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>11</sup> It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown.

<sup>12</sup> And a host will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper.

<sup>13</sup> Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?"

<sup>14</sup> And he said to me, "For 2,300<sup>72</sup> evenings and mornings<sup>73</sup>. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

<sup>15</sup> When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a

<sup>64</sup> Alexander the Great, the first and greatest king, the only king of the united empire.

<sup>65</sup> This took place in October 1, 331 B.C. at the "Battle of Gaugamela" also called Arbela.

<sup>66</sup> Alexander died in June of 323 B.C.

<sup>67</sup> Cassander -- Macedonia | Lysimachus -- North | Ptolemy -- Egypt and South | Seleucus -- Syria and east

<sup>68</sup> All scholars admit that this little horn represents Antiochus Epiphanes of the Seleucids. This horn is of the third empire, not the fourth.

<sup>69</sup> South -- Egypt / East -- Armenia / Beautiful Land -- Palestine

<sup>70</sup> "to" = against

<sup>71</sup> The language in this verse would not allow for him to trample down God or the angels, but the host refers to the people and the stars refer to their leaders.

<sup>72</sup> Either 2300 literal days or 1500 days with sacrifices done both in the morning and the evening.

<sup>73</sup> The 2300 days are a mixture | Part are historical referring to the inter-testamental period, the last section is an anti-type of the eschatological beast [All Antiochus (all historical) . . . or . . . All anti-christ (all prophetic)]

man.

<sup>16</sup> And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."

<sup>17</sup> So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end."

<sup>18</sup> And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up.

<sup>19</sup> He said, "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end.

<sup>20</sup> As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia.

<sup>21</sup> And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king.

<sup>22</sup> As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power.

<sup>23</sup> And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise.

<sup>24</sup> His power shall be great- but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints.

<sup>25</sup> By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken- but by no human hand.

<sup>26</sup> The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true, but seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now."

<sup>27</sup> And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

## Overview of the Vision

### Ram (Medo-Persia)

The direction of the conquest was westward, northward, and southward (note the three fold direction in comparison to the three ribs in the bears mouth in chapter 7).

The Ram had two horns – one was longer or dominant which symbolized that the kingdom is composed of a duality and the second member of the kingdom is dominant (Persia was stronger than Media).

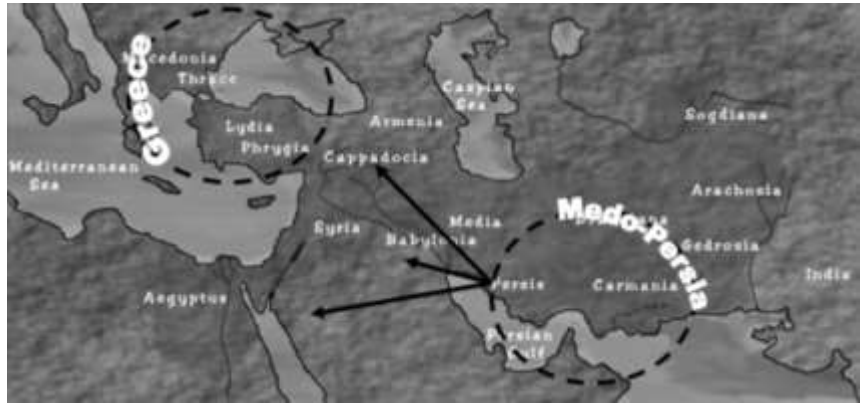
### A Male Goat (Greece)

It came from the west (Greece).

The fact that it did not touch the ground again shows its speed (similar to the leopard in chapter 7).

The notable horn between the eyes was Alexander the Great.

The Goat destroyed the Ram. Greece destroyed Medo-Persia on October 1, 331 BC at the Battle of Gaugamela.



The Notable Horn replaced by four horns refers to the death of Alexander the Great and the consequent fourfold division of the empire to his 4 generals.

### The Little Horn of the Male Goat

Most people acknowledge this horn to be Antiochus Epiphanes.

This is a Grecian horn out of the third not the fourth Kingdom.

This horn came out of one of the other horns not among the others.

This little horn is distinct from the little horn in chapter 7.

Daniel 7 (Anti-Christ)	Daniel 8 (Antiochus Epiphanes)
Associated with ten horns	Associated with four horns
Rises between 10 other horns	Rises out of one of the four horns
Associated with terrible beast (Rome)	Associated with the He-Goat (Greece)
Continues 3 ½ Years (7:25)	Continues 1150 or 2300 days (8:14)
Associated with times of the Gentiles or the end times just prior to the eternal kingdom	Associated with the Greek Kingdom or just before the rise of the Roman Empire
Horn and kingdom destroyed and replaced by an eternal kingdom (Christ)	Horn is broken but nothing is said about the kingdom (kingdom continues)

### The Host of Heaven

The host is associated with the Commander who is also called the Prince of princes.

This host is able to transgress (vs. 12).

This host is associated with the Holy Place (vs. 13).

This host is able to be persecuted by the horn (vs. 24-25).



To Whom is this referring? 1 Maccabees seems to indicate that the host of Heaven refers to the Jewish people. The Jewish people turned from the truth and followed the commands of Antiochus (v.45).<sup>74</sup>

### 2300 Evenings and Mornings

**Daniel 8:13-14** <sup>13</sup> Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?" <sup>14</sup> And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

This could refer to 2300 morning and evening sacrifices which would mean 1150 days

- This would more closely correspond to the period of Antiochus Epiphanies' activity.
- If this is the case, the prophecy has only a general or approximate correspondence with its historical fulfillment.

Or it could mean an actual 2300 days

- Compare Genesis when evening and morning were one day
- 2300 days would be 6 years and 110 days.
- The date that the holy place was restored is fairly firm. December 25<sup>th</sup>, 165 BC Judas Maccabeus restored the temple. If the 2300 was referring to literal days, then the beginning of this time would be marked at September 6, 171. There is no known significance to that day.

For further information and study read the "Additional Notes" at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>74</sup> 1 Maccabees 1:20-64 <sup>21</sup> And after Antiochus had ravaged Egypt, in the hundred and forty-third year, he returned and went up against Israel. <sup>22</sup> And he went up to Jerusalem, with a great multitude. <sup>23</sup> And he proudly entered into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof, and the table of proposition, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the little mortars of gold, and the veil, and the crowns, and the golden ornament that was before the temple: and he broke them all in pieces. <sup>24</sup> And he took the silver and gold, and the precious vessels: and he took the hidden treasures, which he found: and when he had taken all away, he departed into his own country. <sup>25</sup> And he made a great slaughter of men, and spoke very proudly. <sup>26</sup> And there was great mourning in Israel, and in every place where they were: <sup>27</sup> And the princes, and the ancients mourned, and the virgins and the young men were made feeble, and the beauty of the women was changed. <sup>28</sup> Every bridegroom took up lamentation: and the bride that sat in the marriage bed, mourned: <sup>29</sup> And the land was moved for the inhabitants thereof, and all the house of Jacob was covered with confusion. <sup>30</sup> And after two full years, the king sent the chief collector of his tributes to the cities of Juda, and he came to Jerusalem with a great multitude. <sup>31</sup> And he spoke to them peaceable words in deceit; and they believed him. <sup>32</sup> And he fell upon the city suddenly, and struck it with a great slaughter, and destroyed much people in Israel. <sup>43</sup> And king Antiochus wrote to all his kingdom, that all the people should be one: and every one should leave his own law. <sup>44</sup> And all nations consented, according to the word of king Antiochus. <sup>45</sup> **And many of Israel consented to his service,** and they sacrificed to idols, and profaned the sabbath. <sup>46</sup> And the king sent letters by the hands of messengers to Jerusalem, and to all the cities of Juda; that they should follow the law of the nations of the earth. <sup>47</sup> And should forbid holocausts and sacrifices, and atonements to be made in the temple of God. <sup>48</sup> And should prohibit the sabbath, and the festival days to be celebrated. <sup>49</sup> And he commanded the holy places to be profaned, and the holy people of Israel. <sup>50</sup> And he commanded altars to be built, and temples, and idols, and swine's flesh to be immolated, and unclean beasts, <sup>51</sup> And that they should leave their children uncircumcised, and let their souls be defiled with all uncleannesses, and abominations, to the end that they should forget the law, and should change all the justifications of God. <sup>52</sup> And that whosoever would not do according to the word of king Antiochus, should be put to death. <sup>53</sup> According to all these words he wrote to his whole kingdom: and he appointed rulers over the people that should force them to do these things. <sup>54</sup> And they commanded the cities of Juda to sacrifice. <sup>55</sup> Then many of the people were gathered to them that had forsaken the law of the Lord: and they committed evils in the land: <sup>56</sup> And they drove away the people of Israel into lurking holes, and into the secret places of fugitives. <sup>57</sup> On the fifteenth day of the month, Casleu, in the hundred and forty-fifth year, king Antiochus set up the abominable idol of desolation upon the altar of God, and they built altars throughout all the cities of Juda round about: <sup>58</sup> And they burnt incense, and sacrificed at the doors of the houses and in the streets. <sup>59</sup> And they cut in pieces, and burnt with fire the books of the law of God: <sup>60</sup> And every one with whom the books of the testament of the Lord were found, and whosoever observed the law of the Lord, they put to death, according to the edict of the king. <sup>61</sup> Thus by their power did they deal with the people of Israel, that were found in the cities month after month. <sup>62</sup> And on the five and twentieth day of the month they sacrificed upon the altar of the idol that was over against the altar of God. <sup>63</sup> Now the women that circumcised their children were slain according to the commandment of king Antiochus, <sup>64</sup> And they hanged the children about their neck in all their houses: and those that had circumcised them, they put to death.

Additional Thoughts

Daniel is not yet aware of Judah’s freedom from Babylonian Captivity (something he learns later in chapter 9 by reading Jeremiah’s prophecy), and he is being told of Jerusalem (which has not yet been rebuilt) being destroyed nearly 400 year later.

He is as well being informed of an empire (Medo-Persia) being destroyed by another empire (Greece) and Babylon has not even been defeated by Medo-Persia yet.

There is no wonder why Daniel was perplexed and exhausted. He had just seen a vision of Judah’s destruction and Judah hadn’t even recovered from their Babylonian captivity.

	Babylon	Medo-Persia	Greece	Rome	Revived Rome	Messianic Kingdom
2	Head of Gold 	Breast & Arms of Silver 	Belly & Thighs of Brass 	Legs of Iron 	10 Toes of Iron & Clay 	Stone cut out of a mountain without hands
7	Lion 	Bear w/raised shoulder 	Leopard w/4 heads and wings 	Terrible Beast 	Ten Horns / Little Horn	Son of Man Receives Kingdom
8		Ram with one horn longer than the other	Male Goat with 1 large horn 4 horns & 1 little horn			

EXPLORING THE MEANING

1. In one sentence what is the main point of the passage? Why does God communicate this information to Daniel through a vision and eventually to the modern reader through the preserved Word of God?
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2. Does this passage somehow connect to the overall storyline of the Bible?

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3. What are some timeless truths that can be drawn from this passage?

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4. What attributes of God are revealed in this passage?

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God is not only aware of but is in control of history. God informs Daniel of some of the nuances of world history over the following 400 years, including that a king over an empire that was not yet in existence would die by a divine work not a human agency.<sup>75</sup> This event is unfolded for us in 2 Maccabees.<sup>76</sup>

God's plan in history includes the suffering of His people. Daniel's vision includes a horrible period of history for the Jewish people. Suffering is not limited to the Jewish people (Romans 8:35-39, 1 Peter 1:7).

## EXPLORING OUR APPLICATION

1. How might God want this passage to affect my daily life?

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Be alert, Christ will return!

**Mark 13:33** Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.<sup>34</sup> It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake.<sup>35</sup> Therefore stay awake- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning-<sup>36</sup> lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

<sup>75</sup> **Daniel 8:25** By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken- but by no human hand.

<sup>76</sup> **2 Maccabees 9:1-12 KJA** About that time came Antiochus with dishonor . . . being put to flight of the inhabitants returned with shame . . . <sup>4</sup> Then swelling with anger, he thought to avenge upon the Jews the disgrace done unto him by those that made him flee. Therefore commanded he his chariot man to drive without ceasing, and to dispatch the journey, the judgment of God now following him . . . <sup>5</sup> But the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, smote him with an incurable and invisible plague: or as soon as he had spoken these words, a pain of the bowels that was remediless came upon him, and sore torments of the inner parts . . . <sup>7</sup> Howbeit he nothing at all ceased from his bragging, but still was filled with pride, breathing out fire in his rage against the Jews, and commanding to haste the journey: but it came to pass that he fell down from his chariot, carried violently; so that having a sore fall, all the members of his body were much pained. <sup>8</sup> And thus he that a little afore thought he might command the waves of the sea, (so proud was he beyond the condition of man) and weigh the high mountains in a balance, was now cast on the ground, and carried in an horse litter, shewing forth unto all the manifest power of God. <sup>9</sup> So that the worms rose up out of the body of this wicked man, and whiles he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell away, and the filthiness of his smell was noisome to all his army. <sup>10</sup> And the man, that thought a little afore he could reach to the stars of heaven, no man could endure to carry for his intolerable stink. <sup>11</sup> Here therefore, being plagued, he began to leave off his great pride, and to come to the knowledge of himself by the scourge of God, his pain increasing every moment. <sup>12</sup> And when he himself could not abide his own smell, he said these words, It is meet to be subject unto God, and that a man that is mortal should not proudly think of himself if he were God.

**1 Thessalonians 5:2** For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

**Mark 13:32** "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

2. Of the timeless principles that were already acknowledged, which ones might I apply today?

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES

### Barnes

The *terminus ad quem* - the conclusion of the period is marked and settled. This was the "cleansing of the sanctuary." This took place, under Judas Maccabeus, Dec. 25, 165 BC - Prideaux, iii. 265-268. Now, reckoning back from this period, two thousand and three hundred days, we come to August 5, 171 BC. The question is, whether there were in this year, and at about this time, any events in the series of sufficient importance to constitute a period from which to reckon; events answering to what Daniel saw as the commencement of the vision, when "some of the host and the stars were cast down and stamped upon." Now, as a matter of fact, there commenced in the year 171 b.c. a series of aggressions upon the priesthood, and temple, and city of the Jews on the part of Antiochus, which terminated only with his death. Up to this year, the relations of Antiochus and the Jewish people were peaceful and cordial.

### Stephen R. Miller, Daniel, pg. 230

The case for the 2,300-day view seems conclusive, indicating that the period in view covered six years and almost four months. December 164 (the reconsecration of the sanctuary) is the termination date given by the text, thus the 2,300 days began in the fall of 170 B.C. Something significant must have occurred at that time that marked the beginning of the persecution, and such an event did take place. In 170 B.C. Onias III (a former high priest) was murdered at the urging of the wicked high priest Menelaus, whom Antiochus had appointed to that position for a bribe. From this point trouble between Antiochus's administration and the Jews began to brew. In 169 B.C. Antiochus looted the temple and murdered some of the Jewish people. That altar to Zeus was not set up until 167 B.C., but the persecution had been going on long before that event.

### Works of Josephus: Wars of the Jews

Book I :: CHAPTER 1 . . . HOW THE CITY JERUSALEM WAS TAKEN, AND THE TEMPLE PILLAGED [BY ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES]. AS ALSO CONCERNING THE ACTIONS OF THE MACCABEES, MATTHIAS AND JUDAS; AND CONCERNING THE DEATH OF JUDAS.

1. At the same time that Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, had a quarrel with the sixth Ptolemy about his right to the whole country of Syria, a great sedition fell among the men of power in Judea, and they had a contention about obtaining the government; while each of those that were of dignity could not endure to be subject to their equals. However, Onias, one of the high priests, got the better, and cast the sons of Tobias out of the city; who fled to Antiochus, and besought him to make use of them for his leaders, and to make an expedition into Judea. The king being thereto disposed beforehand, complied with them, and came upon the Jews with a great army, and took their city by force, and slew a great multitude of those that favored Ptolemy, and sent out his soldiers to plunder them without mercy. He also spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for three years and six months. But Onias, the high priest, fled to Ptolemy, and received a place from him in the Nomus of Heliopolis, where he built a city resembling Jerusalem, and a temple that was like its temple concerning which we shall speak more in its proper place hereafter.

2. Now Antiochus was not satisfied either with his unexpected taking the city, or with its pillage, or with the great slaughter he had made there; but being overcome with his violent passions, and remembering what he had suffered during the siege, he compelled the Jews to dissolve the laws of their country, and to keep their infants uncircumcised, and to sacrifice swine's flesh upon the altar; against which they all opposed themselves, and the most approved among them were put to death. Bacchides also, who was sent to keep the fortresses, having these wicked commands, joined to his own natural barbarity, indulged all sorts of the extremest wickedness, and tormented the worthiest of the inhabitants, man by man, and threatened their city every day with open destruction, till at length he provoked the poor sufferers by the extremity of his wicked doings to avenge themselves.

# The Fiery Trial

Daniel 3:1-30 | Lesson 6

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## INTRODUCTION TO EXPLORATION

**Fallen Condition Focus:** Most people cave to pressure. As we consider Daniel 3, we will quickly see that the vast majority of people (including other Jews) yielded to the intense pressure placed upon them. This reality is true as well today. The pressure doesn't have to be nearly as intense and most people will still cave to that pressure. Standing for truth is challenging because usually you will be standing alone.

**Purpose:** In the midst of this story we will learn that one's relationship with and their knowledge of God will sustain them in the midst of struggle. We will accomplish this by . . .

1. Viewing the actions, motivation and consequences of each group of individuals in this story,
2. More fully understanding the Three Friends understanding of God, and
3. Considering the pressures that were placed on the Three Friends in the midst of this trial.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

<sup>1</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

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<sup>2</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

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<sup>3</sup> Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

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<sup>4</sup> And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,

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<sup>5</sup> that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

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<sup>6</sup> And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace."

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<sup>7</sup> Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews.

<sup>9</sup> They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!

<sup>10</sup> You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image.

<sup>11</sup> And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace.

<sup>12</sup> There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

<sup>13</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king.

<sup>14</sup> Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?

<sup>15</sup> Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

<sup>17</sup> If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.

<sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

<sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated.

<sup>20</sup> And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>21</sup> Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>22</sup> Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

<sup>23</sup> And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>24</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

<sup>25</sup> He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

<sup>26</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire.

<sup>27</sup> And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them.

<sup>28</sup> Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

<sup>29</sup> Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way."

<sup>30</sup> Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

There are some ancient text (Prism Text) that seem to indicate that there was a revolt in the Babylonian Empire between 595 and 594, nearly 10 years after the beginning of Judah's Babylonian Captivity. During these years Nebuchadnezzar apparently (1) built an image in the likeness of his dream and (2) forgot his awe of God after Daniel interpreted the dream.

It is possible that this decree by Nebuchadnezzar was meant for the purpose of establishing loyalty. Jeremiah 51:59-64 tells us that Zedekiah went to Babylon during this time, and it is possible that he was at this occasion.

Due to nearly 10,000 Jews being sent into Babylonian captivity during 597 BC, it seems safe to assume that there were many other Jews at this event as well.



The image itself was most likely a wooden or earthen structure that was covered in gold (not likely that they would have had enough gold to cover something of that size). It was 90 feet tall (probably included the base which the image sat on) and 9 feet wide.

This is the second time, in Daniel, God revealed His power in the midst of a situation where men acknowledged the inability of any man or god (ch2: wise men say no man on earth could know and interpret dream / ch3: Nebuchadnezzar says no god could deliver them). Take some time to consider the different characters in this chapter. Consider each character, their motivation, and the consequences for their actions.

	Action	Motivation	Consequences
Nebuchadnezzar	<sup>1</sup> Nebuchadnezzar builds an image <sup>2</sup> and demands that all bow down to it <sup>3</sup> threatens to throw into fiery furnace any who rebel  It is possible that he was establishing himself as deity and he wanted everyone to worship him. It is more likely that he was using this image as a symbol of his authority and Babylonian deities. When SMA rejected to bow it says that they disregarded both Neb's gods and his image (vs 12)	His pride, driven by the fact that he was the head of gold in the image of his dream.  If there was a revolt near this time in Babylon, he very well may have wanted to use this opportunity to establish his subjects loyalty to him.  SMA's rebellion to his authority is probably taken very seriously in light of his present circumstances.	SMA rebel and are brought in Neb offers another opportunity Neb throws in fire Neb realizes the supernatural Neb praises God
	Had furnace heated 7 times hotter	Neb lost all common sense Driven by his emotions	Kills some of his men due to his thoughtless anger

	ACTION	MOTIVATION	CONSEQUENCES
CHALDEANS	Came forward and brought charges against the Jews. (vs 8-12) Implied disloyalty to the king	While determining this motivation is subjective, it is possible although not likely, that they simply turned in SMA because it was their job to take note of those who didn't stand.  "Certain Chaldeans" probably speaks to ethnic relatives of Neb. They probably would not have had such a menial job as looking out for people in the above noted way.  Anti-Semitism—it is possible and probable that they did not like Jews in general "There are certain Jews . . ."  They probably didn't like SMA specifically "whom you appointed over the administration . . ."  Were there any other Jews there? Probably. Should we assume that all of them bowed? Not sure. These Chaldeans may have just hated SMA.	SMA are asked one more time to bow down and due to their continued rebellion to Neb, they are thrown into the fiery furnace



SHADRACH, MESHACH & ABED-NEGO	ACTION	MOTIVATION	CONSEQUENCES
	They don't bow down to idol	Command by God to <sup>1</sup> have only one god, <sup>2</sup> and to not bow down to any graven image	They are taken to Neb and confronted
	They boldly tell Neb that they don't need to respond or defend themselves to him	Absolute faithfulness to God and faith in God's power Their loyalty lies to God alone, not to Nebuchadnezzar They are unsure of result, but that does not influence their boldness in standing true to God	Neb throws them into furnace They are saved and the fire does not singe them.

GOD	ACTION	MOTIVATION	CONSEQUENCES
	He gives Neb the dream which most likely resulted in this image He places SMA at this point to be tested He gives them the strength to stand up He not only saves them from the fire, but He or an angel comes to them in the fire	He is slowly drawing Neb to belief in Him He desires to be faithful to His promise that He would reward those who obey Him He wants there to be a remnant of faithful Israel (SMA are physical display of that remnant) He wants to be glorified	He is glorified and praised by a heathen king He is undoubtedly glorified and praised by SMA—They see a supernatural work of God in their lives and it solidifies their awe of Him

## EXPLORING THE MEANING

1. In one sentence what is the main point of the passage? Why does God communicate this information to Daniel through a vision and eventually to the modern reader through the preserved Word of God?

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2. Does this passage somehow connect to the overall storyline of the Bible?

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3. What are some timeless truths that can be drawn from this passage?

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4. What must these men have believed about God for them to act in such a manner?

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That He was present. That He was personal. (they knew him personally and He knew them personally). That He was powerful. ("Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace . . .")

5. What pressures did they endure while remaining true to Scripture and refusing to yield to idolatry?

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It appears that no one else stood with them (vs. 7). They were challenged a number of times (vs. 15, 16). The pressure of the king/emperor would appear to be greater than just normal people. The threat of death was given to those who would not obey (vs. 6, 17-18). They may have struggled trying to rationalize simply bowing. (They were not told to give up their worship to YHWH. They would only have been obeying their ruler, He would have been responsible. Nebuchadnezzar had been gracious to them -- let's just play along. They could have asked for forgiveness later.)

## EXPLORING OUR APPLICATION

1. How might God want this passage to affect my daily life?

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2. Of the timeless principles that were already acknowledged, which ones might I apply today?

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3. Is there a lesson to be learned in regards to our friendships?

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It is very likely that these men found strength in each other. As well they had been encouraged to stand previously through the example of Daniel, and God had shown His power as well then. Don't underestimate the value of godly friendships.

# From Pride to Repentance

Daniel 4:1-37 | Lesson 7

# INTRODUCTION TO EXPLORATION

Pride is an integral part of our flesh. We inherently think too highly of ourselves and it can affect nearly everything we do and every decision we make. Nebuchadnezzar had allowed pride to permeate throughout his whole life, and God used him to show us that no one ought to boast in anything they have accomplished but instead acknowledge and herald the power and sovereignty of God.

We will better understand and apply this story of Nebuchadnezzar's pride by . . .

1. Understanding both Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation;
2. Following the story through to Neb's downfall; and
3. Considering the rage God feels against pride.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

<sup>1</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! <sup>2</sup> It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. <sup>3</sup> How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation. <sup>4</sup> I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. <sup>5</sup> I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me. <sup>6</sup> So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. <sup>7</sup> Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. <sup>8</sup> At last Daniel came in before me- he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods- and I told him the dream, saying, <sup>9</sup> "O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation.

<sup>10</sup> The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. <sup>11</sup> The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven,

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. <sup>12</sup> Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

<sup>13</sup> "I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. <sup>14</sup> He proclaimed aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. <sup>15</sup> But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. <sup>16</sup> Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him.

17 The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.' 18 This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because 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 gods is in you." 19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, "Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies!

<sup>20</sup> The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, <sup>21</sup> whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived- <sup>22</sup> it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. <sup>23</sup> And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,'

<sup>24</sup> this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, <sup>25</sup> that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and

[illegible]

gives it to whom he will. <sup>26</sup> And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. <sup>27</sup> Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity."

<sup>28</sup> All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>29</sup> At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, <sup>30</sup> and the king answered and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?"

<sup>31</sup> While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, <sup>32</sup> and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." <sup>33</sup> Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

<sup>34</sup> At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason 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 endures from generation to generation; <sup>35</sup> all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" <sup>36</sup> At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. <sup>37</sup> Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

## Author of Chapter

There is much conjecture whether or not Nebuchadnezzar wrote this chapter or whether Daniel placed Nebuchadnezzar's declaration in his writings. The possibilities are . . .

1. Daniel wrote this on behalf of Nebuchadnezzar.
2. Nebuchadnezzar wrote this as a letter to all the nations and Daniel simply inserted it into his writings.
3. Nebuchadnezzar wrote this for the purpose of Daniel including it in his writings.

To some degree there is little relevance to who wrote it, because we believe, regardless of the human author, it is part of scripture and is therefore inspired by God and worthy of our attention.

One note of relevance . . . If Nebuchadnezzar wrote this himself, and it was inserted into scripture (which we see that it was); there seems to be some indication of Nebuchadnezzar being a believer. I would be hard pressed to imagine an unbeliever writing a portion of scripture. Either way we have a Gentile emperor writing part of scripture.

## Date of Chapter

Likely the incidents in this chapter begin around 570 B.C. We have little information concerning Nebuchadnezzar during the years between 569-562 B.C. Second and Third Century B.C. historians allude to Nebuchadnezzar's sickness happening late in his life. It appears that the majority of his building was complete at this point in his life, which would make for a date later in his reign. This chapter happens probably around 25 years after chapter three. If the above dates are correct, Daniel is around 50 years old.

## Nebuchadnezzar's Request for an Interpretation

To some degree we see similarities to chapter 2. Nebuchadnezzar has a vision and desires an explanation. He calls in his wise men for the interpretation. Unlike chapter 2, he does not ask the wise men to tell him the vision, he simply wants the interpretation. They are unable to help him. At this point Daniel is called.

## Daniel's Singular Ability to Interpret

Nebuchadnezzar's response to Daniel seems to display a healthy respect for Daniel even though it had likely been 25 years since chapter 2. As well Nebuchadnezzar refers to Daniel as the chief of the magicians. There seems to be enough indication that Daniel was in good standing with Nebuchadnezzar, but did not come immediately for some unknown reason (ie. He was gone at the time or maybe he wanted to allow for the wise men to once again show their inability so that God could be seen as glorious later.)

Daniel's God was, once again, the only powerful God who was able to reveal and supply the interpretation. This is just one more experience used to draw Nebuchadnezzar to Himself and another opportunity for God to reveal Himself as all powerful and sovereign.

## Content of the Dream

### The Prosperous Tree (4:10-12)

The Prosperous Tree is in the midst of the earth -- focal point of the world. The tree had worldwide power (its strength and height reached to the sky) and worldwide benefit (abundant fruit and food for all).

### The Fallen Tree (4:13-16)

The tree is cut down per the command of an angelic watcher (vs. 14). A stump is left which signifies that the tree was not completely destroyed. As well the tree had the ability to be restored. (vs. 15). Not only is it not completely destroyed but it is as well protected from complete destruction (*a band of iron and bronze around it*). The tree is displayed in human terms, although a human that becomes beast like (vs. 15-16).

## Interpretation of the Dream

### Daniel's Prolonged Answer

Why was Daniel dismayed or upset (4:19) as his thoughts alarmed him? It appears that his silence was not due to the fact that he could not answer but that the interpretation was not good for Nebuchadnezzar.

Why might Daniel not have wanted to tell Nebuchadnezzar the bad news? There could be a couple of reasons (1) Daniel appreciated Nebuchadnezzar and (2) Nebuchadnezzar was an unbeliever who was going to be judged.

### Nebuchadnezzar's Greatness (4:20-22)

Nebuchadnezzar was the great tree. He was near the pinnacle of his greatness. He had built an incredible kingdom that had prospered the whole world.

### Nebuchadnezzar's Punishment (4:23-26)

His punishment involved him living outside like an animal for 7 years. During this time his kingdom would remain secure until the point he came to realize God's greatness.

### Daniel Implores Nebuchadnezzar to Repent (4:27)

Is Daniel promoting a works based salvation? A common theme of the Old Testament was for a believer to show their trust in God by their good works. Daniel first encourages Nebuchadnezzar to repent or turn away from his sin. The display that he had turned away from his sins would be right actions.

Daniel may very well have been wanting to help Nebuchadnezzar avoid the impending calamity that was pictured in the vision. Ridding himself of pride and doing good might help Nebuchadnezzar avoid the judgment. Daniel may not have been specifically thinking of eternal salvation as much as he was thinking of temporary salvation from the judgment. If that were the case, the remedy may have been simply good deeds (stop doing bad and start doing good). This would not have reconciled Nebuchadnezzar to God but it may have helped him avoid judgment.

### God offers Time for Nebuchadnezzar to Repent

The dream that Nebuchadnezzar had occurred 12 months before its fulfillment. Nebuchadnezzar had many opportunities to repent and acknowledge God. He chose not to.

## Fulfillment of the Dream

### Nebuchadnezzar chooses Pride (4:29-30)

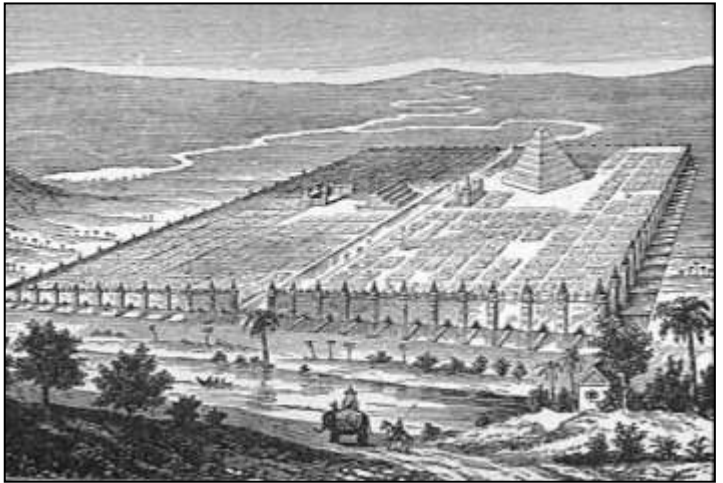
Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt and Tyre in 569/568 B.C. (It is possible that the dream occurred before the campaign and his fall after the victory)

*"Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built"*

- There were double walls around the city. The outer wall was 25 feet thick and 17 miles long. The two walls were 40 feet apart. The walls had 360 towers along them. One of the walls was wide enough to have two chariots ride on it.



- The Ishtar Gate was 35 feet tall and opened to a 75 foot paved processional leading to the main temple. Each side of the path was a 40 foot wall covered with blue enameled brick. There were 6 foot lions made of red and yellow enamel tiles along the path. The Gate was covered with lapis lazuli which would be equivalent in value to gold and silver.
- There was a seven level ziggurat. It was 288 feet tall and 130 square yards at the base. It is estimated that there were nearly 60,000,000 bricks in the tower. Each of them was 13 x 13 and had imprinted on them "Nebuchadnezzar the builder." The lower half consisted of brown glazed bricks and the top half of blue (resembling heaven and earth). There was a small temple at the top.
- There were 50 temples inside the walls
- He built the Hanging Gardens, one of the 7 wonders of the world. He built it for one of his wives, Amytis, who was homesick for the mountains of her home in Media. The artificial mountain was watered from the Euphrates using an ingenious pump and well system.



### God Chooses Judgment (4:31-33)

The judgment was in the immediate context of Nebuchadnezzar's pride. A voice from heaven immediately declared the judgment and Nebuchadnezzar's fall. Nebuchadnezzar's insanity is assumed by many as the first noted case of boanthropy. Boanthropy is the mental sickness in which one thinks they are a cow or ox. Due to this though, they begin to act like these animals. This is similar to lycanthropy which is when someone thinks they are a wolf man.

### Nebuchadnezzar Glorifies God (4:34-37)

It is likely that this restoration was short lived. If we are correct in our timing of this in Nebuchadnezzar's life, he would have died a year or two after his seven years of insanity.

## EXPLORING THE MEANING

1. What indications do you see that would indicate that Nebuchadnezzar was a believer or an unbeliever by the end of this chapter?

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2. God judges what sin in this chapter? How does this sin display itself in our lives?

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Man must realize that any of his personal accomplishments are due to the empowerment of God.

No one has accomplished anything in and of themselves of which to be proud. Nebuchadnezzar accomplished much, probably more than most men throughout history, and yet he also came to realize that any man's success is due to the ability and empowerment given to them by a Sovereign God.

3. What sins did Nebuchadnezzar commit that were driven by his pride?

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He threatened or began to kill off all the wise men in chapter 1. He built an image of gold and wanted all to bow down to him in chapter 2. He threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fire because of his arrogance in chapter 3. He is judged for his pride in chapter 4. God alone should be exalted for any achievements of men.

4. What appears to be true in respect of God's treatment to those who humble themselves?

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Humility is not natural to any of us. Due to one's awareness of the greatness of God and their comparable weakness, a humble man is quick to be aware of his sin and repent of it. Humility acknowledges God as the source of all accomplishment. A humble man follows God's path and not his own.

## EXPLORING OUR APPLICATION

1. How might God want this passage to affect my daily life?

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2. Of the timeless principles that were already acknowledged, which ones might I apply today?

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Humility is a virtue all preach, none practice, and yet everybody is content to hear. The master thinks it good doctrine for the servant, the laity for the clergy, and the clergy for the laity. -- Selden

# The Fall of Babylon

Daniel 5:1-31 | Lesson 7

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Daniel had been in Babylon for about 60 years and is around 80 years old.
- About 25 years have passed since chapter 4 (50 since chapter 3).
- Belshazzar is the co-regent of Babylon, along with His father, Nabonidus.
- The Medo-Persian army is outside of Babylon.
- Belshazzar and his thousands of guest are partying.

<b>Nebuchadnezzar</b>	<b>605-562</b>
<b>Amel-Marduk</b> Son of Nebuchadnezzar Executed by Neriglissar	<b>562-560</b>
<b>Neriglissar</b> Son in law of Nebuchadnezzar	<b>560-556</b>
<b>Labashi-Marduk</b> Son of Neriglissar & grandson of Nebuchadnezzar Executed by Nabonidus' chief officers	<b>Few months</b>
<b>Nabonidus</b> Babylonian noble who married Nebuchadnezzar's daughter. In 553 he conquered and began to repair Tema, an oasis in the Arabian desert. He was probably in this area and away from Babylon for nearly 14 years of his 17 year reign. It appears that he did not worship the gods of Babylon but instead his own gods. This provided a number of problems with the people in Babylon and their feasts and festivals that required the king present. In his absence he left Belshazzar to rule in Babylon as coregent. He returned to Babylon in the spring of 539 just before Babylon's fall	<b>556-539</b>
<b>Belshazzar</b> Son of Nabonidus & grandson of Nebuchadnezzar Co-reigned with Nabonidus	<b>? 549-539</b>

## LESSON OUTLINE

## Belshazzar's Sin

### His scorn

**Daniel 5:2-4** **2** *When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels . . . taken out of the temple which [was] in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them . . .* **4** *They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.*

### His Pride

**Daniel 5:18-23** **18** *“O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father . . .* **20** *“But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and [his] glory was taken away from him . . . until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and [that] He sets over it whomever He wishes.* **22** *“Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, **23** but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven . . . and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and your ways, you have not glorified.*

## Belshazzar's Destruction

### The Handwriting Explained

Once again we see **the inability of the wise men** to accomplish the task of interpretation. Even though Belshazzar offers ruling power to the one who interprets, no one is able.

**The queen reminds Belshazzar of Daniel.** This queen is probably Amytis, the widow of Nebuchadnezzar. It is possible that this queen was Nitocris, Nabonidus' wife and Belshazzar's mother, but it is more likely that she would have been with Nabonidus and not at this event.

**Daniel is summoned to this feast.** It is likely that Belshazzar was aware of Daniel, but had disregarded him over the last 20 or so years. This is probably due to a number of factors, but it is possible that Daniel was viewed as a rival due to the power that he had in the past and the potential of him having held the throne for Nebuchadnezzar during his insanity.

#### **“MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN”**

MENE :: God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. Repetition shows emphasis.

TEKEL :: you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient.

PERES :: your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.

### The Handwriting Fulfilled

**Daniel 5:30-31** **30** *That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. **31** So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.*

While Belshazzar was slain that same night, it appears that no one else died in this defeat. According to ancient historians the city was taken without firing a shot and the only recorded casualty was Belshazzar.

According to historians Cyrus planned the siege of Babylon for some length of time. Per the historians, Cyrus began a campaign of propaganda in 547 BC in which he told people “Marduk has called me to Babylon.” The following quote speaks of Marduk guiding Cyrus to defeat Babylon because of Nabonidus' insults to Marduk.

“He (Nabonidus) interrupted in a fiendish way the regular offerings . . . he established within the sacred cities. The worship of Marduk, the king of the gods, he changed into abomination, daily he used to do evil against his city . . . He tormented its inhabitants with corvee-work without relief, he ruined them all.

Upon their complaints the lord of the gods became terribly angry . . . Marduk . . . scanned and looked through all the countries, searching for a righteous ruler willing to lead him (Marduk) in the annual procession. He pronounced the name of Cyrus, king of Anshan, declared him to be the ruler of the world . . . ordered him to march against his city Babylon . . . going at his side like a real friend.” (ANET, 315)

For nearly 14 years Nabonidus had neglected the yearly festivals in honor of Marduk. It was only at the very end that Nabonidus returned to Babylon and participated in the events. He as well gathered all the gods from the surrounding towns into Babylon so as to provide more strength and protection for Babylon. In September, Ugbaru (who was Nebuchadnezzar’s general and died three weeks after Babylon’s defeat) defeated Nabonidus’ army at Opis.

In October the Medo-Persian army conquered Sippar. Sippar was about 30 miles north of Babylon. At this victory there was no battle at all and Nabonidus fled. It appears that, due to Nabonidus’ fleeing, Belshazzar assumes full control of Babylon, and likely the feast spoken of in this chapter is an inauguration feast for Belshazzar.

It was this day, October 12<sup>th</sup>, that Ugbaru and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon with no battle. The reason that there was no battle seems to be that the priest of Marduk (in both Sippar and Babylon) opened the gates for the army and let them in. The priest of Marduk so hated Nabonidus due his disrespect and disregard for Marduk and the feast and festivals. As well when Nabonidus took the gods from all the surrounding towns, none of those towns wanted to fight without their god.

Nabonidus returned to Babylon later and was arrested. According to an historian, Nabonidus was arrested and exiled to Cormanian which is modern Afghanistan.

If this attack was so apparent, why was Belshazzar feasting?

- 1. He had a false sense of security in the fortification of Babylon.
- 2. He was surrounded by all the gods in the area.
- 3. There is evidence that Babylon possessed 20+ years of food supplies.
- 4. As stated in the passage, he was arrogant.

Comparison Between Nebuchadnezzar And Belshazzar

NEBUCHADNEZZAR		BELSHAZZAR	
<i>Similarities</i>			
Judged for sin of pride—3; 4:30		Judged for sin of pride—5:22-23	
Blasphemed God— “What god can deliver you		Blasphemed God—used temple vessels to party	

from my hands?”	and worship his gods
Idolatrous—90 foot image of gold	Idolatrous—”they drank and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone”

<b>Differences</b>	
Nebuchadnezzar's pride results in temporal judgment	Belshazzar's pride results in his immediate death
Nebuchadnezzar honored the God of the Jews on a number of occasions (probably even coming to believe in Him)	Belshazzar blasphemes God in a more direct way when he took the temple vessels and used them for common use
Nebuchadnezzar is given an opportunity to repent	Belshazzar is not given an opportunity to repent
Daniel treats Nebuchadnezzar with respect even prior to his praise of God	Daniel is short with Belshazzar and offers him no hope
Nebuchadnezzar seems to respond to God's communication	Belshazzar seems to belittle God's communication and communicator (Daniel)
The primary distinction is that God sovereignly chose to offer Nebuchadnezzar a chance and sovereignly decided to not offer Belshazzar a chance to repent. There was nothing in either of them that warranted God's patience with them.	

## APPLICATION

Without the work of God in our lives we would act just like these two kings. We are of course not as powerful as these men and have less with which to be proud. With that in mind, we should be all the more humble with the little that we have. If God can humble the most powerful men in the world, we are of little consequence.

In God's sovereignty he has chosen to give you what you have and make you what you are. Why did He choose to use you and not someone else? No one can answer that—your only response should be that of gratitude for His grace.

Should you fear the same judgment that came upon Belshazzar?

Not if you are a believer. While it is true that God would find us lacking if He based our merit on our own worth; He instead sees the worth of Christ on us covering us, and it is Christ's worth which allows us to be found acceptable to God.



# God's Glory Revealed Through Daniel

Daniel 6:1-28 | Lesson 8

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## LESSON PURPOSE

We live in a day and age when integrity seems to be little cherished. Someone who highly value integrity or uprightness is often viewed as a prude, religious zealot, spiritual elitist, or puritanical – and none of those are meant as a positive quality. And yet it is those very qualities of integrity and uprightness that are so needed in the world and so cherished by true believers. This is no different than during Daniel's times. Many people did not appreciate Daniel's character and integrity. As we consider the storyline of Daniel 6, we will see how the greatness of God is revealed through the consistent and godly character of Daniel.

We will accomplish this by . . .

1. Assessing Daniel's extraordinary character, and
2. Observing the affects of Daniel's character on those around him.

## BACKGROUND TO CHAPTER 6

This chapter seems to occur shortly after the events of chapter 5. There is no indication in the chapter that there was a lengthy period of time between the two chapters.

Daniel has been in Babylon for nearly 70 years and is likely between 80 to 83 years old.

## THE REVELATION OF DANIEL'S CHARACTER

### Daniel's Extraordinary Spirit

**Daniel 6:1-3 NET** It seemed like a good idea to Darius to appoint over the kingdom 120 satraps who would be in charge of the entire kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Over them would be three supervisors, one of whom was Daniel. These satraps were accountable to them, so that the king's interests might not incur damage.<sup>3</sup> Now this Daniel was distinguishing himself above the other supervisors and the satraps, for **he had an extraordinary spirit**. In fact, the king intended to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

This extraordinary spirit may have been <sup>1</sup> the Holy Spirit or <sup>2</sup> extraordinary character/ability. Either way, the Holy Spirit is directly involved. Either what was seen in Daniel was the Holy Spirit or at least the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. The word translated "extraordinary" is used 8 times in Daniel (and only used in Daniel).

#### Extraordinary

**Daniel 2:31 NET** "You, O king, were watching as a great statue— one of impressive size and **extraordinary** brightness

**Daniel 3:22 NET** But since the king's command was so urgent, and the furnace was so **excessively** hot . . .

**Daniel 4:36 NAU** "At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me . . . so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and **surpassing** greatness was added to me.

**Daniel 5:12 NET** Thus there was found in this man Daniel, whom the king renamed Belteshazzar, an **extraordinary** spirit . . .

**Daniel 5:14 NET** I have heard about you, how there is a spirit of the gods in you, and how you have insight, discernment, and **extraordinary** wisdom.

**Daniel 6:3 NET** Now this Daniel was distinguishing himself above the other supervisors and the satraps, for he had an **extraordinary** spirit. In fact, the king intended to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

**Daniel 7:7 NAU** "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and **extremely** strong . . .

**Daniel 7:19 NAU** "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, **exceedingly** dreadful . . .

### Spirit

**Daniel 4:8 NET** Later Daniel entered (whose name is Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom there is a **spirit** of the holy gods). I recounted the dream for him as well,

**Daniel 4:18 NET** "This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, for none of the wise men in my kingdom are able to make known to me the interpretation. But you can do so, for **a spirit of the holy gods is in you.**"

**Daniel 5:12 NET** Thus there was found in this man Daniel, whom the king renamed Belteshazzar, an **extraordinary** **spirit**, knowledge, and skill to interpret dreams, solve riddles, and decipher knotty problems. Now summon Daniel, and he will disclose the interpretation."

This 'extraordinary spirit' led Darius to promote Daniel to a place of esteemed leadership.

What did Darius notice about Daniel? What was the extraordinary spirit?

Darius saw either the direct work of the Spirit in Daniel's life or he saw what we have come to label as the fruit of the Spirit.

**Galatians 5:19-26 NET** Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity,<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions,<sup>21</sup> envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.<sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.<sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

### 'Fruit of the Spirit' is a singular entity.

Notice that the 'deeds of the flesh' is plural. These actions can be done separate and distinct from one another. You could be characterized as a drunkard but never be characterized by sorcery . . .

Notice that the opposite to the 'deeds of the flesh' is the singular 'fruit of the Spirit.' Whereas you may be one or the other in respect to the 'deeds of the flesh' you are either characterized by the 'fruit of the Spirit' or you are not. They are a package. If you produce the 'fruit of the Spirit' you will be characterized by each of the above. While there may be weaknesses in some area or another, as well there may be greater strengths in some areas; but all of them are present to some degree.

The fruit of the Spirit is really the character of Christ being revealed in us as we grow.

Example . . . Consider the ‘deeds of the flesh’ as a clump of grapes with which you could pick one or another, but consider the ‘fruit of the spirit’ as an orange. Inside it does contain a number of parts, but you can’t get to them without the entire orange . . . or consider the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ like a bowl of Fruit Loops. All the colors are present in each bowl, but there may be many more of one color than another. All are present but to different degrees.



### The fruit is a product not the goal.

We often want to make the fruit of the Spirit the goal we strive after in our Christian life. We desire to be loving and gentle and good, so we set those as goals and work at being loving and gentle and good.

Instead of focusing on the fruit (making it the goal), we ought to strive to have a relationship with Christ. Christ-likeness ought to be the goal. When that goal is realized, the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ will be produced.

**John 15:4-5 NET** Remain in me, and I will remain in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me— and I in him— bears much fruit, because apart from me you can accomplish nothing.

Instead of training you how to be loving, I want to encourage to know Christ. If you come to know Christ, you will be loving, but not only loving; for you will produce all of the parts of the ‘fruit of the Spirit.’

It is important that as the fruit of the Spirit is produced in us that we do not become boastful. You cannot boast in the fruit produced in you because no one bears fruit apart from Christ in them.

## Daniel's Consistent Testimony

### Daniel Was Blameless

**Daniel 6:4-5 NET** Consequently the supervisors and satraps were trying to find some pretext against Daniel in connection with administrative matters. But **they were unable to find any such damaging evidence, because he was trustworthy and guilty of no negligence or corruption.** <sup>5</sup> So these men concluded, "We won't find any pretext against this man Daniel unless it is in connection with the law of his God."

We see that God desires that those who are disciples of Christ are found to be blameless. Consider the following verses . . .

**Ephesians 1:4 NAU** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

**Ephesians 5:27 NET** so that he may present the church to himself as glorious— not having a stain or wrinkle, or any such blemish, but holy and blameless.

**Philippians 1:9-11 NET** And I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight <sup>10</sup> so that you can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

**Philippians 2:14-15 NET** Do everything without grumbling or arguing, <sup>15</sup> so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without blemish though you live in a crooked and perverse society, in which you shine as lights in the world

There are a number of Greek words that are translated as “blameless” in our Bibles. Those words carry the following meanings . . .

- Blameless
- Not stumbling or jarring against anything
- Void of offense
- Of the conscience, clear
- Faultless
- Without Guilt
- Without defect

I would assume that any believer, who is aware of his flesh, might be overwhelmed by this standard of blameless. Based upon the verses above on what or whom do we rely to meet up to the challenge?

### Daniel Was Consistent

**Daniel 6:16-20 NET** *So the king gave the order, and Daniel was brought and thrown into a den of lions. The king consoled Daniel by saying, "Your God whom you continually serve will rescue you!"<sup>17</sup> Then a stone was brought and placed over the opening to the den. The king sealed it with his signet ring and with those of his nobles so that nothing could be changed with regard to Daniel.<sup>18</sup> Then the king departed to his palace. But he spent the night without eating, and no diversions were brought to him. He was unable to sleep.<sup>19</sup> In the morning, at the earliest sign of daylight, the king got up and rushed to the lions' den.<sup>20</sup> As he approached the den, he called out to Daniel in a worried voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, was your God whom you continually serve able to rescue you from the lions?"*

Some of us at times may feel that the only thing we are consistent at is being inconsistent. We are aware of our weaknesses and failures and might feel anything but consistent in our walk with Christ.

Daniel is characterized as someone who is constantly / consistently serving his God. **What might that look like in our lives?**

What must be a reality in someone's life for them to be constantly serving God?

- A constant awareness of one's need for dependence on Christ
- It seems appropriate in this context . . . regular prayer
- Not dependence on one's own strength and ability

### **Daniel's Habitual Prayer**

**Daniel 6:10 NET** *When Daniel realized that a written decree had been issued, he entered his home, where the windows in his upper room opened toward Jerusalem. Three times daily he was kneeling and offering prayers and thanks to his God just as he had been accustomed to do previously.*

- Full knowledge of the decree
- Windows open, no sign of concealing his actions
- It was a habit that he prayed three times a day

“What can be done at any time and in any manner is apt to be done at no time and in no manner.” Dr. Gordon Lovik

**1 Thessalonians 5:17 NET** *constantly pray,*

**Ephesians 6:18-20 NET** With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints.<sup>19</sup> Pray for me also, that I may be given the message when I begin to speak— that I may confidently make known the mystery of the gospel,<sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may be able to speak boldly as I ought to speak.

## THE EFFECTS OF DANIEL'S CHARACTER

### Daniel's Character Could Be Clearly Seen

**Daniel 6:16-20 NET** So the king gave the order, and Daniel was brought and thrown into a den of lions. The king consoled Daniel by saying, "Your God whom you continually serve will rescue you!"<sup>17</sup> Then a stone was brought and placed over the opening to the den. The king sealed it with his signet ring and with those of his nobles so that nothing could be changed with regard to Daniel.<sup>18</sup> Then the king departed to his palace. But he spent the night without eating, and no diversions were brought to him. He was unable to sleep.<sup>19</sup> In the morning, at the earliest sign of daylight, the king got up and rushed to the lions' den.<sup>20</sup> As he approached the den, he called out to Daniel in a worried voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, was your God whom you continually serve able to rescue you from the lions?"

Darius noticed a difference in Daniel. There was something about Daniel that was appealing. People wanted to be around Daniel. Darius probably did not know what that difference was, but it was present and favorable.

We have already looked at the extraordinary spirit that Daniel possessed and was produced in him by the Spirit of God. The word that is translated 'spirit' can be translated 'smell' or 'wind/breath.' Consider the following scenarios . . .

1. Someone has bad breath or an unpleasant body odor . . . what does this do for you? Do we not often avoid close contact with such people? We try not to let them speak directly at us, or we joke about them not lifting their hands in the air. In essence their smell is a repellant.
2. Someone wearing a costly intoxicating perfume or cologne . . . The smell is present before they are and the smell lingers after they have left. Their presence changes the atmosphere of the room in a positive way. You find yourself wanting them to be around.



What do you smell like? I know that may be an odd question. The question is not meant for you to consider your physical smell as much as your spiritual scent. Consider yourself in light of the two above scenarios. Do people see you and see an extraordinary character and as a result are drawn to be around you, or do they see a character or personality that is wrought with bitterness, anger, sinful habits, pride, selfishness, etc? Do people avoid you because you smell bad?



Some of you may say, "I live for the Lord and people avoid me **because** I live for the Lord." At times this may be true as well. Consider the following passage . . .

**2 Corinthians 3:14-16 NET** But their minds were closed. For to this very day, the same veil remains when they hear the old covenant read. It has not been removed because only in Christ is it taken away.<sup>15</sup> But until this

very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds,<sup>16</sup> but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

In our passage we can see that both (a repellant to a godly person as well as an attraction to the same godly person) are present. The other leaders hated Daniel due to what his extraordinary spirit produced, and Cyrus (as well as Nebuchadnezzar) had great respect and admiration for Daniel due to his extraordinary spirit.

## Daniel's Character Resulted in Others Glorifying God

**Daniel 6:25-27 NET** Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and language groups who were living in all the land: "Peace and prosperity!<sup>26</sup> I have issued an edict that throughout all the dominion of my kingdom people are to revere and fear the God of Daniel. "For he is the living God; he endures forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed; his authority is forever."<sup>27</sup> He rescues and delivers and performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions!"

Not only did people see the character of Daniel, but they as well acknowledged the greatness of his God due to his character. It would have been easy for Daniel to receive and accept the accolades that came with all that he had done, but it is clear in every instance that Daniel deflects any praise to God.

This type of response is not unfamiliar to Daniel. Recall Nebuchadnezzar's response to Daniel's interpretation of his dream in chapter 2, Shadrach Meshach and Abednego's deliverance from the fiery furnace in chapter 3 and Neb's own experience with humility in chapter 4. In each instance Nebuchadnezzar praises God for the display of His power.

Do people see a consistent testimony in you? Do they know that your consistent testimony is based upon your devotion to God, and not just a set of standards or morality you endorse? Do they see the greatness of God at work in your life? Do you communicate that it is God that works in you and not your own strength and ability?

# Daniel's Model Prayer

Daniel 9:1-19 | Lesson 10

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## INTRODUCTION

Every now and again something comes along that impresses you . . .

Susan Boyle . . . She was not what is expected . . . She stood out from among the others . . . you're drawn to her . . . You may even want to emulate her . . .

In scripture, there are a couple passages that stand out as impressive or memorable in the area of prayer . . . John 17 and Daniel 9.

Let's be realistic . . . probably none of you would read Daniel 9 and begin crying and remain glued to the pages wishing that it would just keep going on . . . None of you probably thought, "Oh, I wish I could pray like that!" You may have even thought . . . oh, great another lesson in Daniel!

I don't know that I'm going to be able to paint this prayer in a way that amazes you, but needless to say, it is quite amazing . . . it sticks out from among what you may normally hear or pray personally . . . It sure doesn't present itself as phenomenal or necessarily unforgettable . . .

And at the same time, it is worth listening too . . .

## DANIEL'S PRAYER

### How many times have you personally asked forgiveness for the sins of others?

Daniel did . . .

**Daniel 9:5-8 NAU** **we** have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. <sup>6</sup> "Moreover, **we** have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to **our** kings, **our** princes, **our** fathers and all the people of the land." <sup>7</sup> "Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to **us** open shame, as it is this day-- to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You. <sup>8</sup> "Open shame belongs to **us**, O Lord, to **our** kings, **our** princes and **our** fathers, because **we** have sinned against You.

In our society, we are often very focused on our own spiritual development and often distance ourselves from others. Our sense of community seems to be lacking.

### How many times have you acknowledged sin for what it really is?

Daniel did . . .

How often do we justify our sins? How often do we redefine or reword sins to make it sound more palatable?

Daniel offers for us a rather strong description of sin . . .



**Daniel 9:5-6** we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. <sup>6</sup> "Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land.

### Missing the Mark

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

If we view sin through our often viewed lens of glorifying God, sin is the reverse of accomplishing the task of reflecting the character of God. In glorifying God we reflect correctly the attribute of God, anything that falls short of reflecting the attributes of God (with the exception to those attributes which we cannot reflect, ie. His omnipotence) is sin.

In summary, sin is missing the mark of true godliness.

### Twisting / Distorting the Truth

While the 4 words used in this verse are all speaking to the sin of Israel, there are some slight nuances to each. "Sin" is missing the mark, whereas "committing iniquity" is twisting or distorting the truth. Sin is a very general term. The term for iniquity seems to deal with the sins of commission. There is a purposeful/planned affront to the character or laws of God.

### Rebellious Lifestyle

The word translated "wicked" is used twice in a row in this verse - emphasizing the intensity of the wickedness. The sin of Israel was extremely wicked.

The underlying term used here characterizes the sinner one step further by displaying that the sin is a lifestyle/habit. It is not that Israel just struggled and at times they sinned and committed iniquity. They were habitually sinning. Their lifestyle was characterized by outright sin.

They were rebellious. They had revolted from the commands of God and they were living consistently in wickedness.

### Completely Turning Away from the Truth

This term seems to summarize their departure from God and the truth. Over time, Israel slowly turned from God to the point of completely abandoning the truth.

### Rejection of God's Spokesman

Israel is characterized by sin, outright and deliberate wickedness. They had no desire to obey God's commands. In their state of rebellion God sent men to speak truth to them, and they rejected them.

## **How often have you accepted the consequences of your sin?**

Daniel did . . . and he wasn't even the one who committed them.

**Daniel 9:7-8 NAU** "Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day-- to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You. <sup>8</sup> "Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.



## How often have you acknowledged God's greatness and compassion in the midst of turmoil?

Daniel did . . .

### He acknowledges God's faithfulness to His promises.

**Daniel 9:4** *I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,*

Daniel is reading from the book of Jeremiah . . .

**Jeremiah 25:11-13** <sup>11</sup> *'This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. <sup>12</sup> 'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation. <sup>13</sup> 'I will bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.*

**Jeremiah 29:10** <sup>10</sup> *"For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup> 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.*

Israel (the first exile) is taken into captivity in 605 B.C., therefore the end of seventy years would be in 536 B.C.

If Daniel was 12 or 13 when he went into captivity, and he is now about 80, he only has a couple more years to go until the seventy years is complete.

### He acknowledges the great compassion of God.

**Daniel 9:18 NAU** *"O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of **Your great compassion.***

### He acknowledges the weight of God's great name.

**Daniel 9:18-19 NAU** *"O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called **by Your name**; for we are **not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own**, but on account of Your great compassion. <sup>19</sup> "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For **Your own sake**, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are **called by Your name.**"*

God did not preserve Judah by restoring them to their land following the Babylonian Captivity due to their dynamic change and impressive credentials. For His Name to be held in honor and glory, He acted in accordance with His promises.

Consider the promises He has made to those who have trusted in Christ. He has promised to preserve them until the end and present them perfect to Christ. In the midst of our time here on earth, if we were to ever look at the quality and worth of our lives, we could probably become quite concerned about our eternal well-being . . . and yet our perseverance in the faith is not dependent on our value or strength, but on the promises of God and the value He has placed on the glory of His Name.

## CONCLUSION

Consider “American Idol” or in the case of Susan Boyle, “Britain’s Got Talent”. The auditions are full of people that think they have what it takes to make it big. Many of them think they are going to blow away the judges . . . only to be ridiculed and left behind.

I’ve often asked myself, “How did they think they would do well?” I imagine that they were surrounded by people who truly loved them and continually affirmed them . . . and yet had no real ability to judge quality or talent. As a result they amount to nothing – in the contest.

I don’t even remotely mean to leave any of you with the impression that your prayers stink unless they sound like Daniel’s . . . but I do think Daniel’s prayer is worth our consideration. His priorities and passion, probably put us to shame . . .



# Appendix

## Division of the Greek Empire

Alexander's death was so sudden that when reports of his death reached Greece, they were not immediately believed. Alexander had no obvious or legitimate heir, his son Alexander IV by Roxane being born after Alexander's death. This left the huge question as to who would rule the newly conquered, and barely pacified empire. According to Diodorus, Alexander's companions asked him when he was on his deathbed to whom he bequeathed his kingdom; his laconic reply was "tôi kratistôi" — "to the strongest". Given that Arrian and Plutarch have Alexander speechless by this point, it is possible that this is an apocryphal story. Diodorus, Curtius and Justin also have the more plausible story of Alexander passing his signet ring to Perdiccas, one of his bodyguard and leader of the companion cavalry, in front of witnesses, thereby possibly nominating Perdiccas as his successor.

In any event, Perdiccas initially avoided explicitly claiming power, instead suggesting that Roxane's baby would be king, if male; with himself, Craterus, Leonnatus and Antipater as guardians. However, the infantry, under the command of Meleager, rejected this arrangement since they had been excluded from the discussion. Instead, they supported Alexander's half-brother Philip Arrhidaeus. Eventually, the two sides reconciled, and after the birth of Alexander IV, he and Philip III were appointed joint kings of the Empire—albeit in name only.

It was not long, however, before dissension and rivalry began to afflict the Macedonians. The satrapies handed out by Perdiccas at the Partition of Babylon became power bases each general could use to launch his own bid for power. After the assassination of Perdiccas in 321 BC, all semblance of Macedonian unity collapsed, and 40 years of war between "The Successors" (*Diadochi*) ensued before the Hellenistic world settled into four stable power blocks: the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, the Seleucid Empire in the east, the Kingdom of Pergamon in Asia Minor, and Macedon. In the process, both Alexander IV and Philip III were murdered.

## Worksheet for Chapter 8

Write down the elements and the body part that were symbolized by the image in chapter 2. As well write down the animal and distinguishing marks mentioned in the vision of chapter 7. For chapter 8 answer the following questions.

	Babylon	Medo-Persia	Greece	Rome		Revived Rome	Messianic Kingdom
Daniel 2							
Daniel 7							
Daniel 8							

What do the 2 horns symbolize?

Why is one horn longer than the other?

What is similar between the bear and the ram?

What does it mean that the goat was not “touching the ground”?

Who is the “horn between his eyes”?

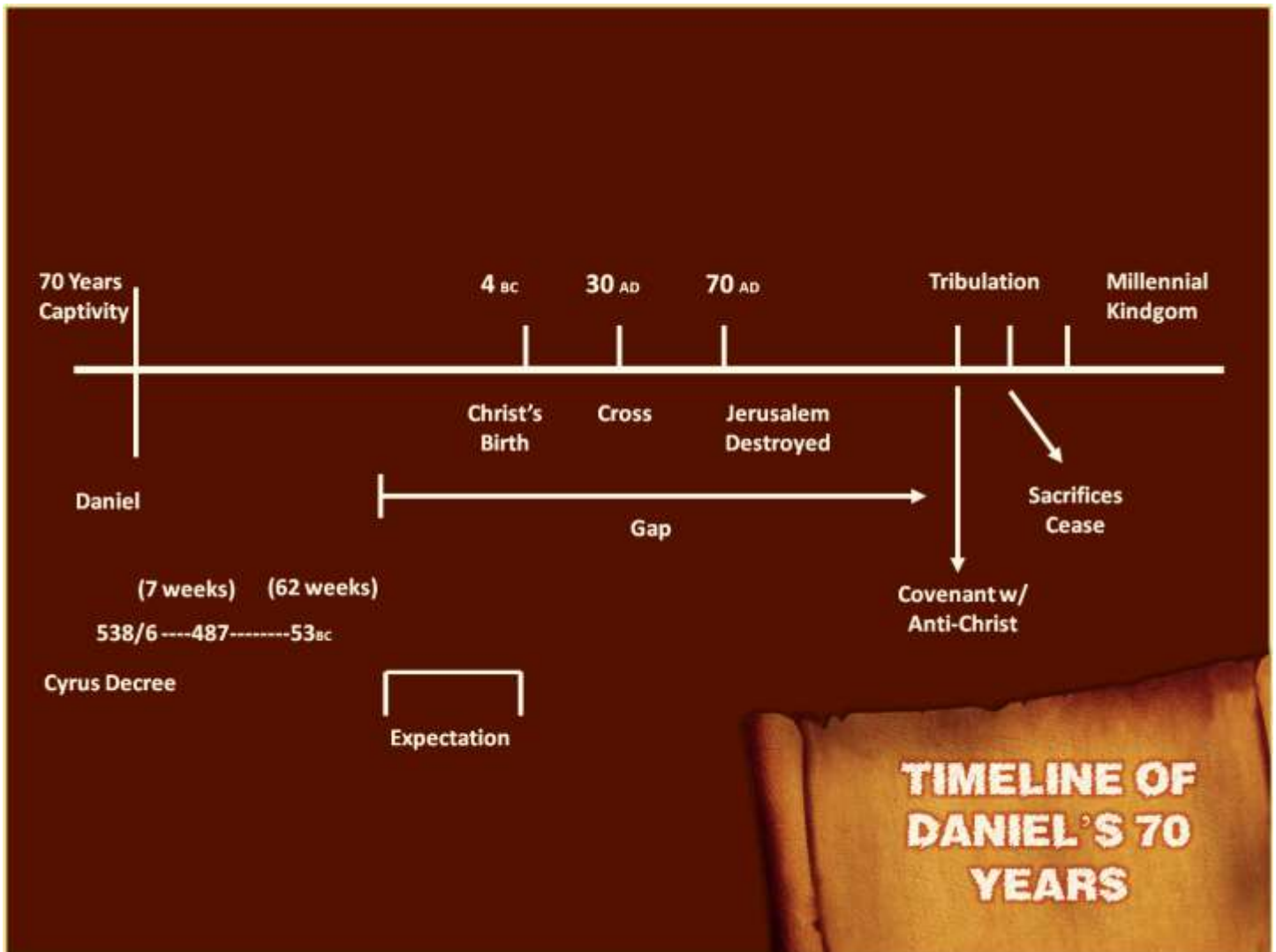
What does it mean that the large horn was broken and that in its place came 4 conspicuous horns?

Who is the small horn which came out of one of the 4 horns?

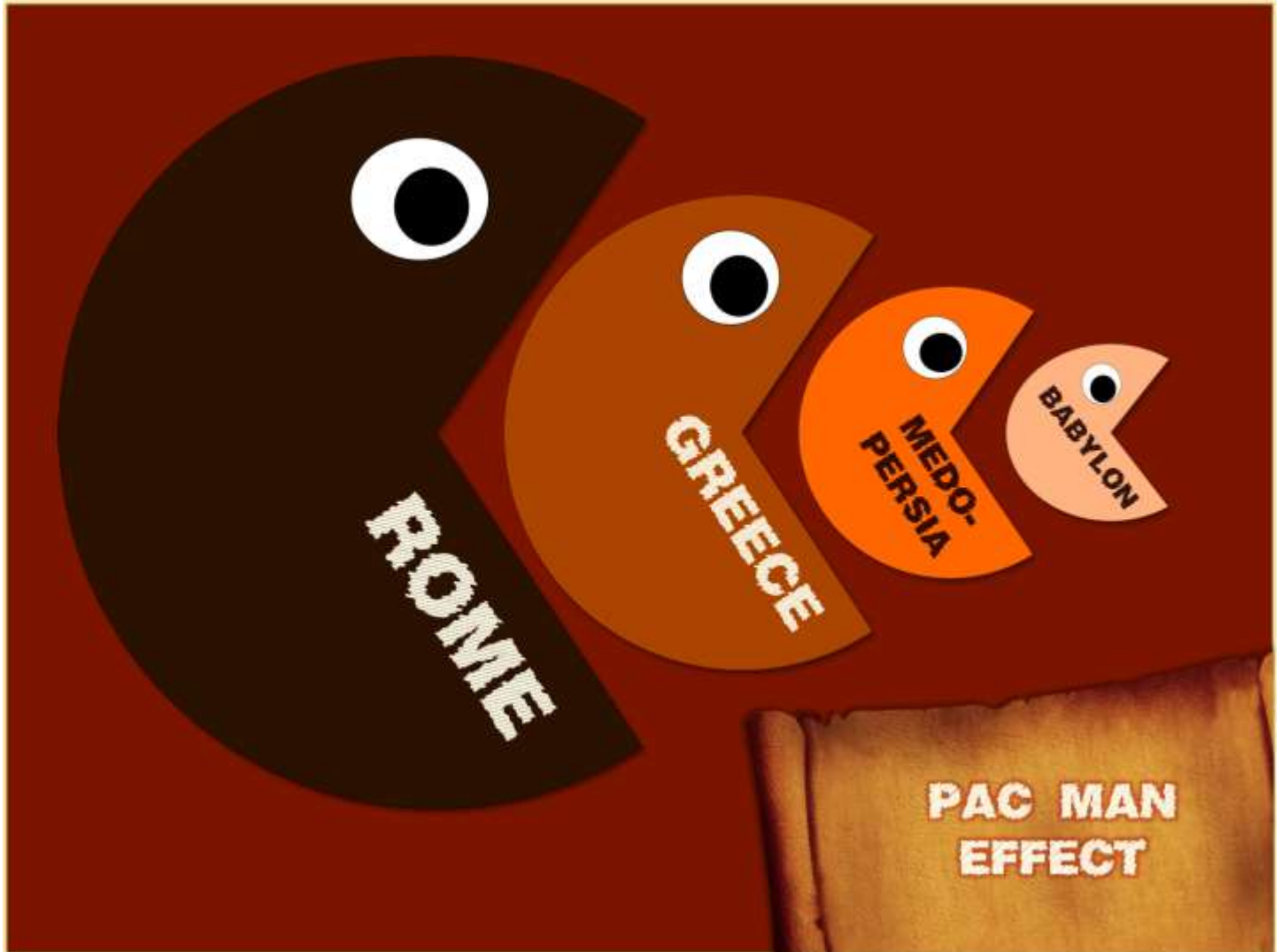
Is the little horn in chapter 8 different than the little horn in chapter 7? Why and How?

What similarities are there between the male goat and the leopard of chapter 7?

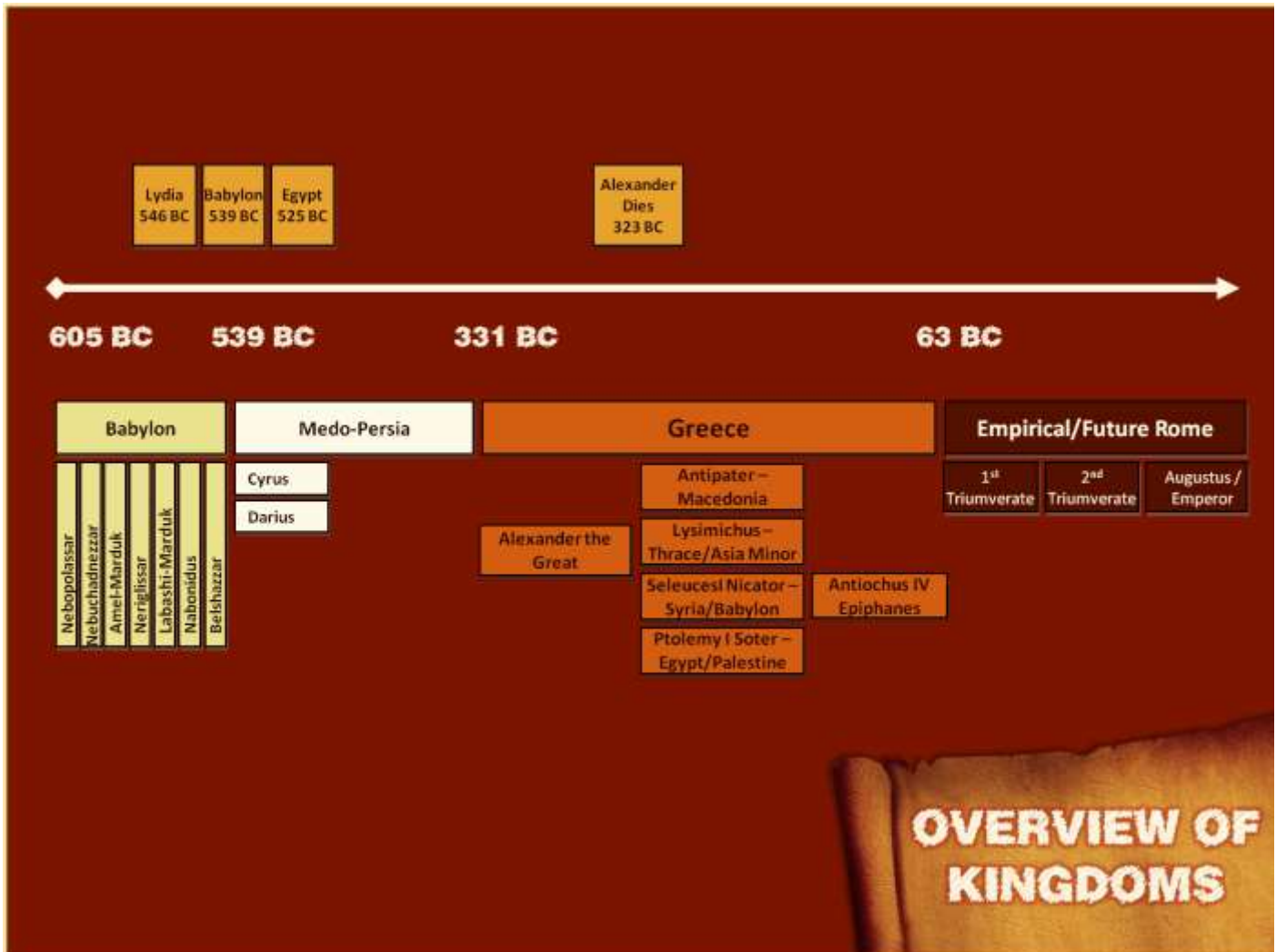
# Timeline of Daniel's Seventy Years



## PAC Man Effect

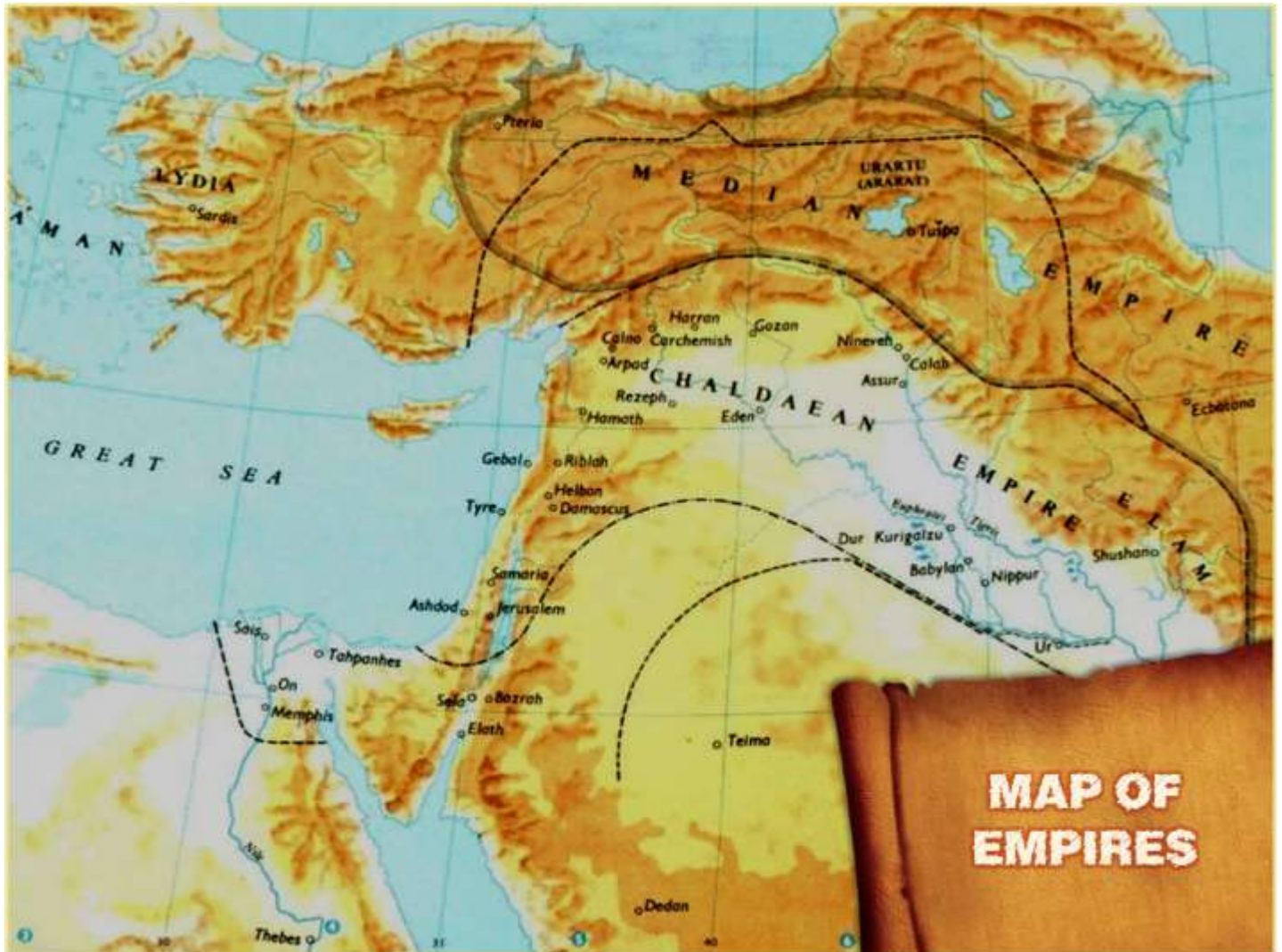


# Overview of Kingdoms

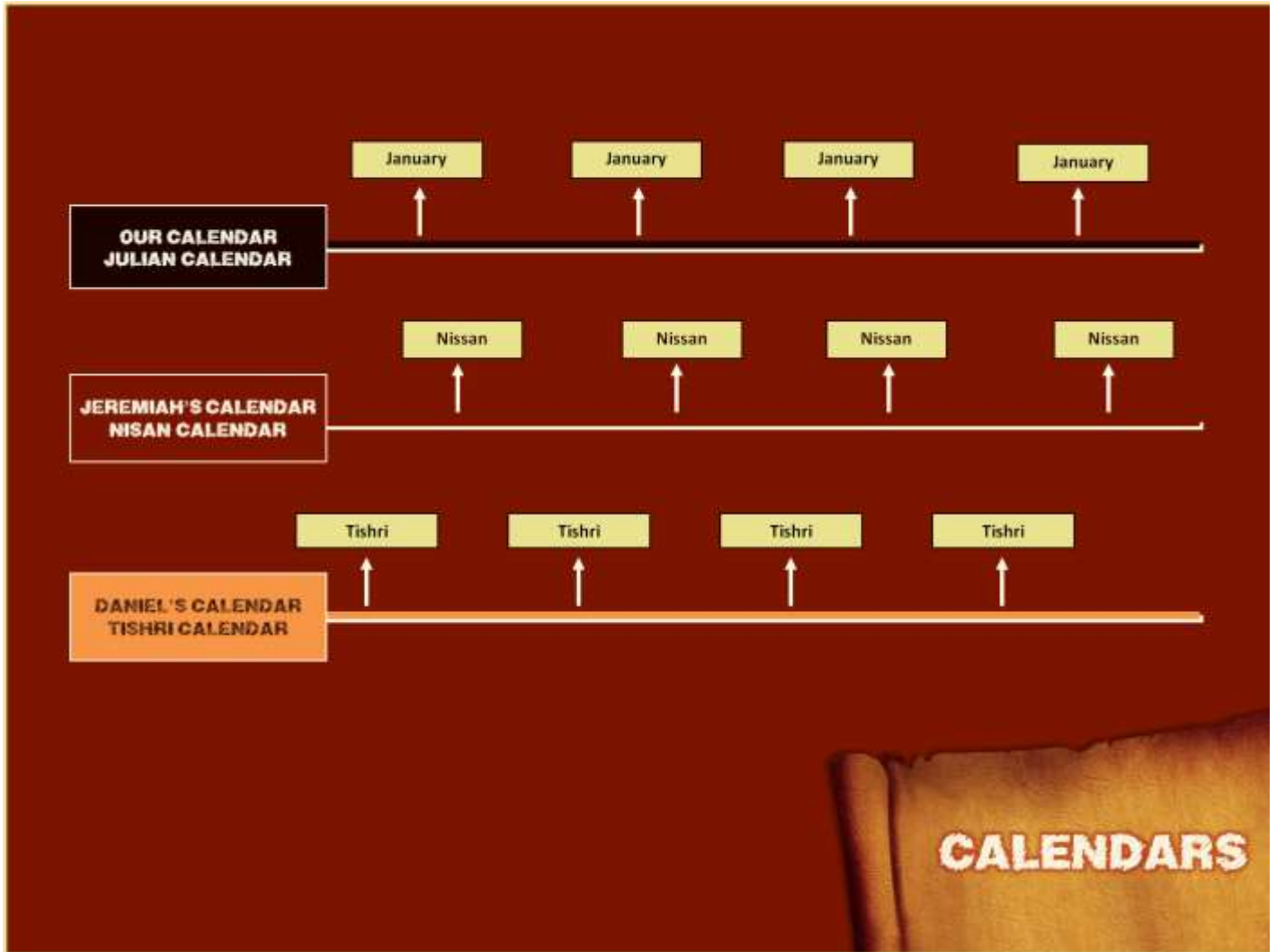




# Map of Empires



# Calendars

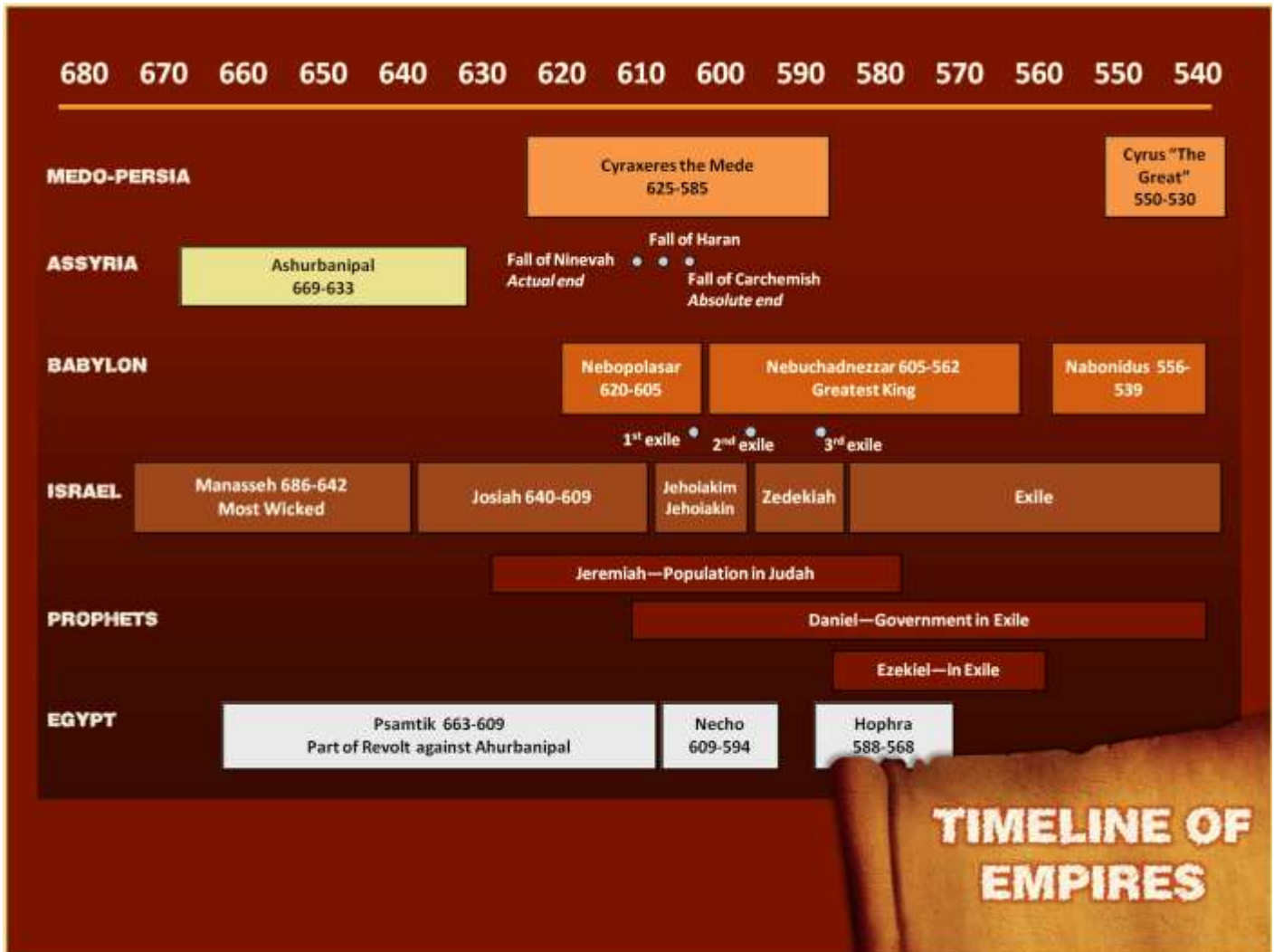


# Exiles

SEQUENCE	DATE	POPULACE EXILED	PROPHET EXILED	KING EXILED	TEMPLE VESSELS EXILED
First Exile	605 BC	Royal Seed	Daniel		Yes
Second Exile	597 BC	10,000 all but the lowliest	Ezekiel	Jehoiachin	Yes
Third Exile	588-86 BC	Balance of population		Zedekiah	yes

**EXILES**

# Timeline of Empires








## Order of Events in Daniel

DATES	PASSAGE	EVENTS	DANIEL'S AGE
Nov-Dec 605 B.C.	Daniel 1:1-17	Deportation to Babylon	13-15
Mar-Apr 602 B.C.	Daniel 1:18-20	Examination following initial three-year training period	16-18
Mar-Apr 602 B.C.	Daniel 2	Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image	16-18
594-593 B.C.	Daniel 3	"Loyalty Oath" on the Plains of Dura and the fiery furnace]	24-26
569-562 B.C.	Daniel 4	Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great tree and subsequent madness	49-51
550 [553] B.C.	Daniel 7	Daniel's dream of the four beasts and Ancient of Days	68-70
547 [550] B.C.	Daniel 8	Daniel's vision of the Ram and He-Goat	71-73
539 B.C.	Daniel 5	Fall of Babylon	79-81
539-538 B.C. [?]	Daniel 6	Daniel's deliverance from the lions	80
Oct 538 B.C.	Daniel 9	Daniel's answer to prayer -- the 70 sevens	80
536 B.C.	Daniel 10-12	Daniel's "great warfare" vision	81-83

**ORDER OF EVENTS IN DANIEL**

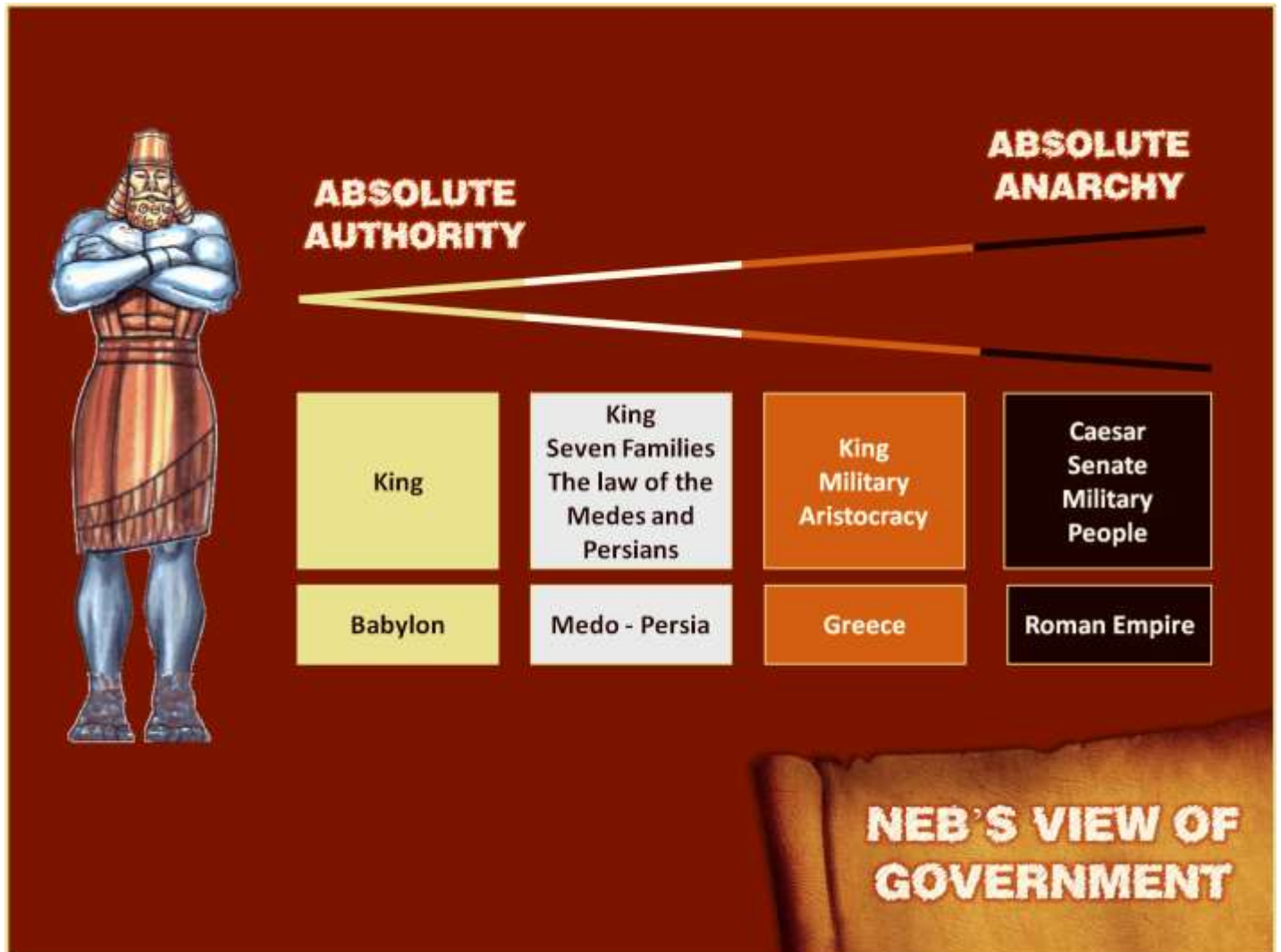


# Nebuchadnezzar's image











	KINGDOM	VERSES	METAL
	1 <sup>st</sup> Kingdom -- Babylon	2:32, 36-38	Fine gold
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Kingdom -- Medo-Persia	2:32, 39	Silver
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Kingdom -- Greece	2:32, 39	Bronze
	4 <sup>th</sup> Kingdom -- Rome	Empirical Rome 2:33, 40	Iron
		Eschatological Rome 2:33, 41-42	Partly iron, partly clay

**NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S  
IMAGE**

# Nebuchadnezzar's view of government



## Chapter 2 and 7 overview

	BABYLON	MEDO-PERSIA	GREECE	ROME		REVIVED ROME	MESSIANIC KINGDOM
<b>2</b>	Head of Gold 	Breast & Arms of Silver 	Belly & Thighs of Brass 	Legs of Iron 	A Gap of Time	10 Toes of Iron & Clay 	Stone cut out of a mountain without hands
<b>7</b>	Lion 	Bear w/raised shoulder 	Leopard w/4 heads and wings 	Terrible Beast 		Ten Horns / Little Horn 	Son of Man Receives Kingdom

### CHAPTER 2 AND 7 OVERVIEW