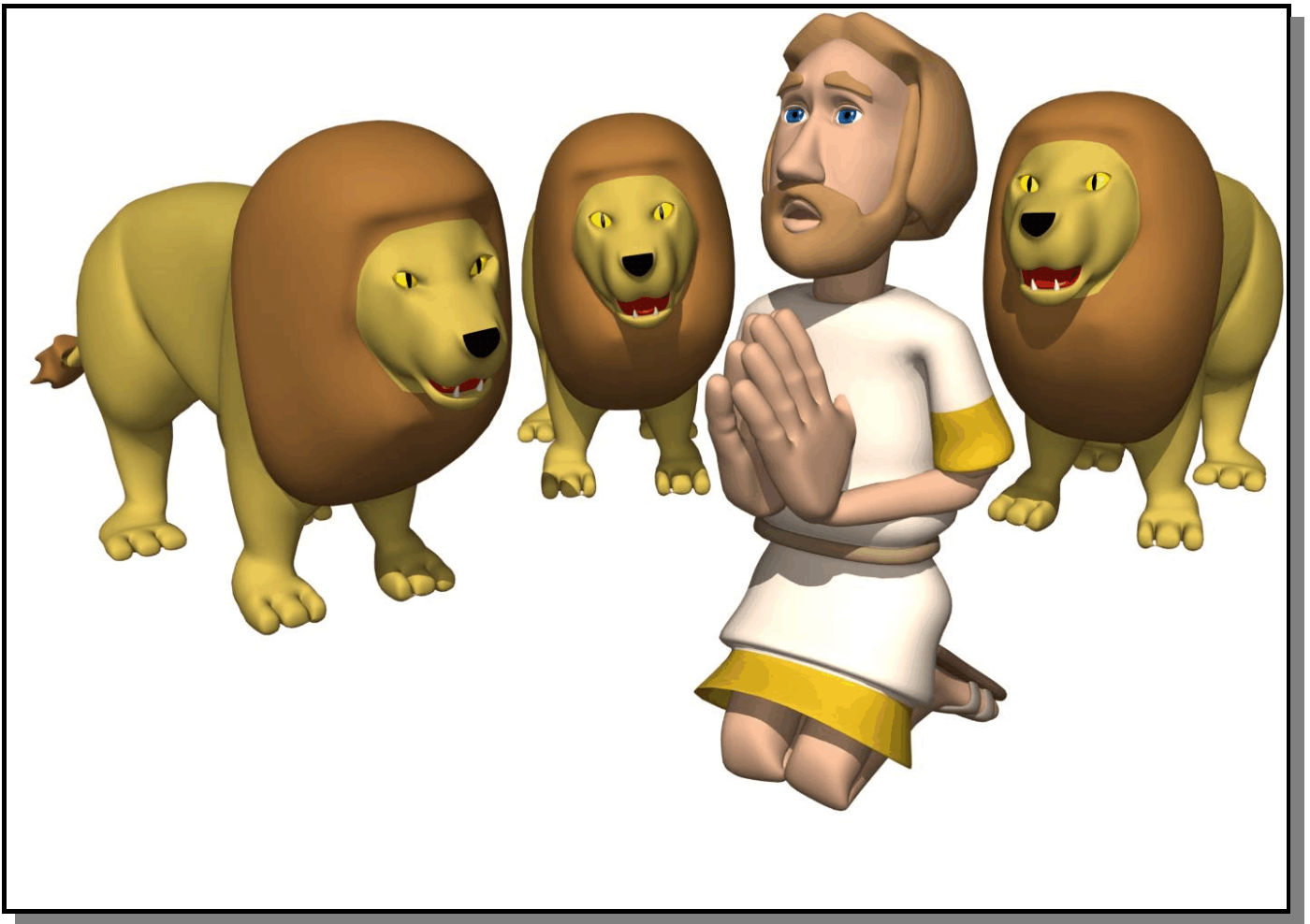


DANIEL AND THE FUTURE

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL



By Wayne E. McMorran

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INTRODUCTION

It is strange that, if you were to ask the average Bible reading person the names of the four youths taken into Babylon, the answer would almost always be, "Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego." It is a strange answer because "Daniel" was his HEBREW name while the other three are identified by their CHALDEAN names! As we go through this study, we will try to find out why.

You may wonder why I have not named this study, "The Prophet Daniel" (or some variation of this). The fact is that Daniel was not a prophet!

PROPHET. One who is divinely inspired to communicate God's will to His people and to disclose the future to them.

— New Unger's Bible Dictionary

Daniel spent all his years in Babylon and its successors. Because of this he never communicated God's will to His people. He interpreted Dreams of Babylonian and Medio-Persian kings, but nothing to Israel. Thus he does not fit the definition. For this reason, Daniel is not included in the "Prophetic Books" in the Hebrew Bible. It is placed in the (other) "Writings." Also, technically speaking, Daniel is not written in Hebrew. It is almost all written in Biblical Aram, iac (a corrupted form of Hebrew caused by their long captivity).

It is not greatly different, mostly a change in the spelling of many of the words..

The good news is that I am not a Hebrew and I don't know that any of you are. Therefore, Daniel's revelations can be directed at you and me.

In a time previous to the events recorded here, the ten "Northern Tribes" had been taken captive by the Assyrians. As a result, only Judah (with Benjamin and Simeon) were left. The book opens with this part of the Hebrew Empire being taken into captivity. Why did it happen? I don't know but I have some idea of things that led to it.

At that time Berodach-baladan a son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all his treasure house, the silver and the gold and the spices and the precious oil and the house of his armor and all that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them. Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where have they come to you?" And Hezekiah said, "They have come from a far country, from Babylon." He said, "What have they seen in your house?" So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasuries that I have not shown them." Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord. 'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the Lord. 'Some of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you

will beget, will be taken away; and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.' " Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good." For he thought, "Is it not so, if there will be peace and truth in my days?" Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might, and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? So Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and Manasseh his son became king in his place.

2 Kings 20:12-21 (NASB)

(The above is also recorded in Isaiah 39) As the kings of Judah went, Hezekiah was better than most, but he was still the one responsible for what we read in the beginning of Daniel.

I would like to cite the following from John F Walvoord, before we get into the actual study.

The Great Scope of Daniel's Prophecies

The tremendous scope of Daniel's prophetic revelation can hardly be overemphasized. Only Daniel gives us the sweep of Israel's history in 490 years with the present age interjected between the 483rd year and the 490th year. Likewise, Gentile prophecy, describing the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, have the same course, beginning at 605 b.c. when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and extending to the second coming of Christ when Gentile power will be destroyed and the world ruler cast into the lake of fire. Like the panoramic view of Israel, Gentile prophecies relating to the kingdoms will be interrupted by the present age, extending from the first coming of Christ to the period just before His second coming and excluding the period from Pentecost to the Rapture of the church. The revelation of Daniel is not only essential to understanding Old Testament prophecy but it is in a particular sense the key to understanding the Book of Revelation. The Book of Daniel supports the point of view that the Book of Revelation from chapter 4 to the end is future from our present point of view like the end times of the times of the Gentiles in Daniel and the end times in the course of Israel's prophetic future.

Every Prophecy of the Bible.

This is the reason for doing this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

Daniel 1:1-2 (NASB)

Why did the Babylonians besiege Judah? We read the reason in the introduction. I believe anyone who has any brains and a great amount of wealth will not show someone else all his wealth and where it is stored. But, alas, too often we put pride ahead of wisdom. Hezekiah must have had a great time showing all that he possessed. It was, therefore, only a matter of time before the Babylonians came to get this treasure. The greatest treasure was some of the youths of Judah. Little did they know what four of these youths would do in Babylon. God knew! God arranged the whole thing. Nothing happens except what God does or allows. When Satan wanted to tempt Job, he had to get God's permission first.

One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Job 1:6-12 (NIV)

Satan had to approach God a second time to get permission to attack Job physically. God always has been in control of the affairs of man, is now, and will ever be so.

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them

the literature and language of the Chaldeans. The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

Daniel 1:3-7 (NASB)

When the wealth (physical and human) arrived in Babylon, the king wanted to see some of the youths who might be useful in serving in his court.

Ashpenaz is listed as the "chief of his 'officials'" The Hebrew word may refer to a "eunuch" or to a king's official. Often a man was both. We can not say with any certainty that he was a eunuch but what follows would indicate that he most likely was.

The young men who were to be chosen were to be:

- of the royal family
- with no defect
- good looking
- intelligent in all wisdom
- understanding
- with knowledge
- able to serve the king.

Most of these characteristics need no "translation." "With no defect," means he could not have acne!

The "literature and language of the Chaldeans" means primarily that. Daniel had to read and write in this language.

ARAMAIC (ar-a-ma'ik). A NW Semitic dialect. It was formerly inaccurately called Chaldee (Chaldaic) because it was spoken by the Chaldeans of the book of Daniel (Daniel 2:4-7:28). But since the Chaldeans are known to have generally spoken Akkad., the term Chaldee has been abandoned. Numerous references to the Aramaeans (Arimi, Ahlâme) occur in Assyrian records from the fourteenth century b.c. onward. Monumental inscriptions in Aram. also are found, such as the votive stela of Ben-hadad II set up about 850 b.c. and discovered in 1941 just N of Aleppo in Syria. These monuments inscribed in Aram. extend into the Persian Period, when Aram. became the lingua franca of all SW Asia as the result of the traffic of Aramaean merchants; business documents, weights, measures, etc., are found in Aram. dating in the eighth to the fifth century b.c. The main source of Aram., however, is the deposit of Aram. papyri from Elephantine in Upper Egypt dating from 500 to 400 b.c.

» See: Amarna, el-
Our Lord spoke Galilean Aram., and Aram. portions of the OT
— New Unger's Bible Dictionary

I should note that at the time they were taken captives they would have been youths in their late teens.

The Aramaic is not a LOT different than the Hebrew. The primary difference is in the spelling and pronunciation. We are not concerned with the pronunciation, but we do have to manage to connect Aramaic words with Hebrew. Under the influence of the language of Babylon, the Aramaic developed.

Well, there was a great benefit in being chosen. They would receive the same choice food and from the wine the king drank. Boy, that must have been good stuff! But, seriously, the implications were that Daniel and friends would be made eunuchs and this food would “fatten them up” under such conditions. What an opportunity! I will return to this a bit later.

We are told the names of those who won the contest. Actually, the contest was “rigged” because, I am sure, God arranged for them to be chosen. Who won this contest?

NAMES			
DANIEL	HANANIAH	MISHAEL	AZARIA
“God is my Judge”	"Jehovah was favored"	“who is like God?”	“helped by Jehovah"
BELTSHAZZAR	SHADRACH	MESHACH	ABED-NEGAL
"Balat-su-usur (Bel), protect his life"	"command of the moon god"	“the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal”	“servant of Nego or Nebo”

They all had to be renamed because their Jewish names all made reference to God or Jehovah. The new names substituted names of the Babylonian Gods.

But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king."

Daniel 1:8-10 (NASB)

It did not take long for Daniel to make up his mind as he looked at the menu. He would not have any of it. It is fairly easy to understand him not wanting pork as God had forbade that. Why refuse the rest? Besides its preparation (i.e. cooking, etc.)

But even more, the king's food would first be offered to idols, and no faithful Jew would eat such defiled food. The early church faced this same problem. The Bible Exposition Commentary

The king's right-hand-man could of said, "Eat it or you will die!" He did not. God was way ahead of Daniel ***Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials.*** If God has a plan for your life, he will give you all that you need to fulfill that plan. If God does not have a plan for your life, it is because you have not received His Son!

While the commander had compassion on Daniel, like most worldly people, his first allegiance was to himself. If he brought three skinny and gaunt you men before the king - of with his head! If they did not eat this great food, what would they eat and how would they fare on that diet?

But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. "Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

Daniel 1:11-13 (NASB)

They wanted to go on a vegetarian diet - vegetables and water. One surely would not get fat on that. In fact, some people go on a diet like that to loose weight. Daniel was fair with the commander. He did not make a protest sign and march back and forth in front of the palace. He only wish to be tried for ten days and then the decision would be made. They would not become very gaunt in that short period of time.

This was a very reasonable request to the overseer. He must have gone to the commander and got permission to run this trial.

So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables. As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.

Daniel 1:14-17 (NASB)

It would seem that this paragraph contains two separate topics. I do not believe they were unconnected. I believe the diet they ate permitted them to learn far better than the others. Of course, God was behind it all. Daniel's three friends learned a lot from their teachers. Daniel did also but, it appears, he gained additional knowledge. He could understand visions and dreams. This would be

of great importance in his ministry for the Lord.

He was granted the ability to interpret visions and dreams. Is there a difference? Both refer to visions and, in Daniel's case visions from God. The difference is that we have "visions" while we are awake and "dreams" while we are asleep. Both have the same result. I wish Daniel was here to interpret some of my dreams - or maybe it is better as it is.

Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service.

Daniel 1:18-19 (NASB)

Guess what? Daniel and his three friends got top scores on their final exams. They were apparently as they were administered by Nebuchadnezzar himself. Thus the four were selected to be in the personal service of the king. Is it not strange how that works out? Joseph was left for dead and became the commander over all Egypt. Moses claimed he had no ability to speak and yet God used him to lead Israel out of Egypt.

At this point, if you are not as old as I, you might seek to see if the Lord has something special for you and you have not yet discerned what it is. This what has happened in a short period of time. Daniel get carried away as a captive from Judah. "Boy, things are going to be rough for me!" But a short time later, he is one of the king's personal servants and, in particular, his dream interpreter.

The chapter concludes as follows:













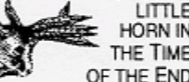
As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm. And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

Daniel 1:20-21 (NASB)

I don't know if the king checked their SAT scores or what but, by some means, he determined they were ten times better than anyone else in his service. Of course, we should interpret ten as a round number. Because of Daniel's ability, Daniel served a long time!, about 70 years! That is a long time to serve a "public office." It is also rather extraordinary that kings came and kings left and Daniel continued his position! In the next chapter, we shall see his first challenge.

CHAPTER TWO

Before we get into the text, we should take a look at the chart below. This is from Dr. Ironside's Commentary on Daniel (Public Domain). This will be referred to many times through this study.

OUTLINE of the BOOK of DANIEL the PROPHET (MATTHEW 24:15)									
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTORY—The MORAL CONDITION suited to ENLIGHTENMENT in the WAYS and COUNSELS of GOD. SEPARATION MAINTAINED. <small><i>"The Undeiled in the Way"</i></small>									
TIMES OF THE GENTILES	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9	CHAPTERS 10-12
	 BABYLON v. 38 MEDO-PERSIA v. 39a GREECE v. 39b ROME v. 40	ENFORCED WORSHIP OF THE IMAGE A PRESERVED REMNANT TYPICAL OF THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION AND THE FAITHFUL REMNANT IN	 NEBUCHADNEZZAR HUMBLED TYPICAL OF THE SUBJUGATION OF ALL GENTILE POWER IN	 MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN BABYLON DESTROYED MEDO-PERSIA SUCCEEDS TO WORLD EMPIRE TYPICAL OF THE IMPIETY AND DOOM OF GENTILE POWER IN	DANIEL IS PRESERVED IN THE LION'S DEN TYPICAL OF THE LORD'S CARE OF THE ISRAELITISH REMNANT IN	 BABYLON  MEDO-PERSIA  GREECE  ROME	 MEDO-PERSIA  GREECE [ANTIOCHUS DEFILES THE SANCTUARY] THE 2300 DAYS 69 Heptads—483 years to Christ's Coming and Rejection 7 yrs 49 yrs 62 weeks of 434 years  MESSIAH CUT OFF	THE PROPHECY OF THE 70 WEEKS OR HEPTADS OF YEARS NEHEMIAH 2 JERUSALEM REBUILT "UNTO MESSIAH THE PRINCE" CHAPTERS 10-12 PROPHETIC HISTORY IN DETAIL CHAPTER 10 ANGELIC MINISTRY AND THE "WORLD RULERS OF THIS DARKNESS" (EPHESIANS 6:12) CHAPTER 11:1-3 WORLD EMPIRE PASSES TO GREECE CHAPTER 11:4-35 WARS OF THE PTOLEMIES AND THE SELEUCIDS (EGYPT & SYRIA)	
<h3 style="margin: 0;"><i>The PRESENT AGE or CHURCH PERIOD: From the CROSS to the RAPTURE</i></h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Revelation of THE MYSTERY. A Dateless PARENTHESIS in GOD'S GREAT PLAN (Ephesians 3:3-11).</p>									
THE	 REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE TIME OF THE END Matthew 24:14	THE TIME OF THE END Matthew 24:15-24 Revelation 13:11-18	THE TIME OF THE END Isaiah 60:12-16	THE TIME OF THE END Revelation 17:1-19:21	THE TIME OF THE END Jeremiah 30:7 Zechariah 13:8-9 Revelation 7:1-17	 THE ROMAN LITTLE HORN IN THE TIME OF THE END Revelation 13:1-10	 THE GRECIAN LITTLE HORN IN THE TIME OF THE END ISAIAH 14:24-27 1 HEPTAD—7 YEARS THE TIME OF THE END 3-1/2 years 1260 days	ANTI-CHRIST'S FALSE COVENANT	CHAPTER 11:36-12:13 ANTICHRIST AND HIS OVERTHROW IN THE TIME OF THE END
GENTILE DOMINION ABOLISHED: CHRIST'S KINGDOM ESTABLISHED RIGHTEOUSNESS TRIUMPHANT. Chapter 7:13-14.									

Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. The king said to them, "I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream."

Daniel 2:1-3 (NASB)

WORLD EMPIRES OF THE BIBLE IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL						
EGYPT	ASSYRIA	BABYLON	MEDIO-PERSIA	GREECE	ROME	MILLENIAL KINGDOM
	722 BC	605 BC	539 BC	321 BC	63 BC	
	Captivity of ten tribes	Captivity of two tribes	Return to Israel 536	Syrial controls Israel	Roman control of Israel	
					Jerusalem destroyed, 70 AD	

According to the above chart, this book begins about 603 and ends in the Millennium (prophetically speaking) It terms of writing, it would have covered 603 BC to around 536BC (67 years) Daniel would have been an old man by that time..

Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. It was and is not unusual for God to communicate with someone in a dream.

**"Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.'"
Genesis 31:11 (NASB)**

**In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask what you wish me to give you."
1 Kings 3:5 (NASB)**

**"Indeed God speaks once, Or twice, yet no one notices it. "In a dream, a vision of the night, When sound sleep falls on men, While they slumber in their beds, Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction,
Job 33:14-16 (NASB)**

So, in this case, it was Nebuchadnezzar who had a dream, in fact, several dreams. The fact that there were several was especially troublesome. What would our President do if he had something that was troubling him and he needed answers. Would he not call his cabinet members to seek an answer. So it was with Nebuchadnezzar that he called "the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers

and the Chaldeans “

Who were these :advisers?

- magicians: *A masculine noun meaning engraver, a writer associated with the occult*
- conjurers: *conjurers of spirits, necromancers, or astrologers.*
- sorcerers: *to practice magic, to practice sorcery*
- Chaldeans: *priestly people who were given to the study of the heavenly bodies.*

Sometimes I wonder about the Predisent’s cabinet! Seriously, I think the terms make them seem more like Charlatans than educated men but the fact is that, which they engaged in practices we would not, they were educated and could given Nebuchadnezzar usefull advice.

When the “cabinet” was assembled, Nebuchadnezzar outlined his problem. He wanted to know what the dream or dreams he had meant. This would not be an unlikely thing to do. So, what did has “cabinet” have to say?

Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: "O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation." The king replied to the Chaldeans, "The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap. "But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation."

Daniel 2:4-6 (NASB)

NOTE: AT THIS POINT THE TEXT SWITCHES FROM HEBREW TO ARAMAIC!

They spoke in the Aramaic Language. We noted this in the Introduction. “O king, life forever!” This is simple a term of respect before they spoke - especially when they had something unpleasant to say. Note that only the “Chaldeans” are mentioned here but the term probably includes the others as well. They wanted the king to tell them the substance of the dream so they could interpret. Note that they did not claim supernatural powers. They had to hear the specifics of the dream before they could interpret it. This was not good enough for the king! He wanted to know what it meant. If they didn’t tell him, they would be put to death - a cruel and unreasonable death.

On the other hand, if they could tell him both the dream and what it meant, they would receive great rewards. The dream was very troublesome to him.

They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation." The king replied, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation."

Daniel 2:7-9 (NASB)

The “cabinet” repeated the question and the king replied with a response that may indicate several things. *I know for certain that you are bargaining for time.* Where they? Of course they were stalling. They were between the proverbial “rock and a hard place.” They could not interpret his dream and, of course, they did not wish to die an excruciating death. They certainly were looking for some way out of their situation. Nebuchadnezzar accuses them of stalling so they could make up a dream and its interpretation. They may well have been doing that, they may have trying to figure some other strategy.

The real question st this point, one that is typically brought up by Bible scholars is whether or not the king had actually forgotten the dream. It seems unlikely that he would forget such an astonishing dream, but, I have to ask, have you ever had a strange dream and yet could not remember it when you awoke? If God spoke to him in the dream, it would not make sense for him to forget it. However, we have not yet ascertained that this was the case.

I would suspect that the “cabinet” reasoned that he had not forgotten it or they would have made up some strange dream and its interpretation. That is what Nebuchadnezzar was suspicious of.

The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. "Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh."

Daniel 2:10-11 (NASB)

There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. Whether or not this state is true or not, it makes sense. They are telling the king that this is not in their “job description.” The continue by saying there is none on earth who can do such a thing. This statement is certainly true. They claim only the gods could do such a thing which is also true. The last part of the statement is only true in part. True that the gods (or God) do not dwell with mortal man but not true that they (or He) can not communicate with man.

Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

Daniel 2:12-13 (NASB)

Now, as some would say, “the plot thickens.” Daniel et. al. apparently were not before the king. Probably only the chief cabinet members had been summoned. Yet the edit was to kill all of them! This is not logical. He should of sought an answer from some of the others. The king was “indignant and very furious.” The two Aramaic terms used here do not appear to have Hebrew equivalents and appear only here. It is not difficult to see they they show that the kings was beside himself with rage,

When one gets in that state, he ability to think logically leaves him.

So, now, Daniel is in big trouble as well. "Daniel to the rescue!"

Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; he said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter. So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.

Daniel 2:14-16 (NASB)

Now Daniel is in the "hot seat!" What can he do? He answered Arioch *with discretion and discernment* The term "discernment" comes from *te'ēm*, an Aramaic masculine noun meaning taste. This is taste in the sense of eating but it came to mean "taste" in ones choice of words and speech. "*For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?*" The English is a pretty good translation of the Aramaic althou "urgent" could be replaced with "harsh" or "severe." I would think that, in that pending execution was waiting in the wings, "severe" would be the best translation.

Arioch was risking his own life, but the officers in the palace had learned that the four Jewish men were trustworthy. Their gracious actions and words during their three years of training were now helping to save their lives.

Arioch allowed Daniel time to speak to Nebuchadnezzar, and the king must have been surprised to see him.

Bible Exposition Commentary.

Dr. McGee shows some insight into this when he wrote,

Daniel got an audience with the king -- he is already in favor -- and he requested the king to give him time to tell him the dream. This seems presumptuous; in fact, it seems to be the act of a very brash young man. However, succeeding events will reveal that it was the confidence of a man with faith in God.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

One other comment is in order here.

Daniel was evidently held in high esteem by the king because he was permitted access to the king's presence and was able to petition the king directly. Though not recorded, Daniel had possibly interpreted dreams previously, though not necessarily for the king. So he was sure he could recall the dream and interpret it.

— Bible Knowledge Commentary

This concept may have come from the situation with Joseph where he interpreted the dreams of the baker and the cup-bearer (Genesis 40) which eventually resulted in his appearance before the Pharaoh.

Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, "I would make mention today of my own offenses. "Pharaoh was furious with his servants, and he put me in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, both me and the chief baker. "We had a dream on the same night, he and I; each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. "Now a Hebrew youth was with us there, a servant of the captain of the bodyguard, and we related them to him, and he interpreted our dreams for us. To each one he interpreted according to his own dream. "And just as he interpreted for us, so it happened; he restored me in my office, but he hanged him." Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; and I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."

Genesis 41:9-16 (NASB)

There is a great deal of similarity here, Both had confidence that God would reveal the dream through them.

So Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, "In my dream, behold, I was standing on the bank of the Nile; and behold, seven cows, fat and sleek came up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass. . . . Etc.

Genesis 41:17-18 (NASB)

The difference is that Pharaoh revealed his dream so Joseph could (with God's leading) reveal the meaning. Nebuchadnezzar was not about to do that (if he could).

Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel 2:17-18 (NASB)

Daniel has escaped death for a time but he had to act quickly. What is the first thing we should do in a time like this? Go to the library on look up books about dreams? The first is to engage God in prayer. Not only that, but to get as many of your friends to pray with you.

"Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

Matthew 18:19-20 (NASB)

Is it alright to pray for oneself? Should we just pray for others? Well, Daniel wasted no time in deciding that he and his friends had better pray as if their lives depended on it. It was their lives that were at stake. Note that they did not pray for the Babylonians. They prayed they would not *be destroyed with the rest*.

Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding. "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. "To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, For You have made known to us the king's matter."

Daniel 2:19-23 (NASB)

The mysterious dream was revealed to Daniel in a night vision, so, apparently Daniel was given time to prepare to answer Nebuchadnezzar's request. With regard to the Aramaic word for "mystery,"

rāz is an Aramaic term occurring nine times, all in the book of Daniel. In every case it refers to a "secret" or "mystery" in relation to the visionary dreams given to King Nebuchadnezzar

— Expository Dictionary of Bible Words

Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Does that expression seem strange? We expect God to bless us but do we think that we should bless God? What do we have to "bless" him with? We will find the same Aramaic word "bless" in chapter six where it is translated "kneel." I would suppose one translation says how it is to be done and the other what is to be done. In other words it is to pray to God and thank Him for what He has done for us. Dr Ironside made a comment about the name used of God here.

The expression, "the God of heaven" is used in three books in the Old Testament (Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel) and one in the New Testament (Revelation). All refer to almost the same period—when God had scattered His people among the nations because of their sins. He had forsaken His throne at Jerusalem. The glory had gone up to Heaven, and He was no longer called the Lord of the whole

earth. He was now "the God of heaven," and so far as the world is concerned that is still His title. He will never again be owned as the Lord of the whole earth until the millennium.

— H.A. Ironside Expository Commentary

I believe it goes further than that. First "God" in the Hebrew language is usually ELOHIM. Hebrew nouns ending in IM are plural. The word for "god" (small g) is EL - singular. Daniel is not in Israel, he is in Babylon where multiple gods were worshiped. To make it known that the only true God is referenced, the term "God of Heaven" Dr. Ironside was not quite correct when he limited the use of this term to only three books. It is true that nearly all of the occurrences are in the above three books but you will find it occasionally in other places. (Of course, Dr. Ironside didn't have a computer to tell him that!). One interesting occurrence goes even further.

and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live,

Genesis 24:3 (NASB)

Another reference is below.

When we heard about it, we lost heart. There was no courage left in any of us because of you. The Lord your God is the God of heaven and earth.

Joshua 2:11 (GW)

The inhabitants of Jericho knew nothing about ELOHIM. They might have assumed it to mean "gods" so they say to Joshua and company *The Lord your God is the God of heaven and earth* except here ELOHIM is used.

What is the difference between a dream and the term used here, "night vision?"

During the night the dream was revealed to Daniel in a vision (ḥēzû), and he gave praise (bĕrāk) to the Lord for graciously granting their request. Wood thinks that Daniel and his friends prayed and then went to sleep, but most likely they continued in prayer until God revealed the dream. A vision may be received when awake (cf. 9:20–23) or asleep (cf. 7:1), and it is difficult to imagine that the young men had gone to sleep with an imminent death penalty hanging over their heads.

New American Commentary

So the "night vision" would be a vision one would have when awake at night.

In his prayer, Daniel says, *He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings*. This statement would indicate to me that Daniel indeed knew the dream since that is what the dream was all about. It had to do, as we shall learn, with the setting up of kings and the

removal of them.

He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding. At first glance this seems like a strange statement. I would think a man would have wisdom if he was a wise man. The same is true for knowledge and understanding. At any rate, Daniel lists two things that God gives to men. These are (1) Wisdom and (2) Knowledge. I would suppose we ought to distinguish between these two. I know how to read music and sing it (not very good). That is a fact. We know facts. Wisdom is knowing what to do by deduction. You consider all the facts in the case and your wisdom enables you to use these to make a decision and decide not to be a singer!.



He who reveals the profound and hidden things. These two terms go together. We may not be able to see something because it has been hidden from us. We may not be able to see something because it is at the bottom of our well (deep). That is a literal interpretation of deep but, more often, it refers to things that are too complex for us to understand. Most people haven't the least idea of how a computer works but they use them just the same.

He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. The difference between darkness and light was established in Genesis 1. God is a god of light and in Him there is no darkness. But, He knows what is going on in dark places.

To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, For You have made known to us the king's matter." Daniel concludes his prayer with thanks, as we all should. It is curious that he says that God made known to US. Did his companions also have the dream revealed to them?

God's revelation was granted in response to Daniel's petition. This demonstrates the principle that believers should not grow weary in prayer, for God hears and answers their cries for help. Daniel also illustrated the necessity of collective prayer as he summoned his friends to join him. Special power seems to be promised when believers worship and pray together as a group (cf. Matt 18:19–20).

New American Commentary

"Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

Matthew 18:19-20 (NASB)

If they did not have it revealed to them by God, Daniel surely revealed it to them. Some have noted Daniel's prayer of thanksgiving. I suppose it is true that, too often, we do not thank God for answered prayers as we should. There are a number of reasons why we don't but I shall only enumerate a few of them here. Sometimes we simply do not recognize the answer. Sometimes we forget what we

asked for. In all cases it is a failing on our part.

Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king." Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!"

Daniel 2:24-25 (NASB)

You can bet that the events described above were carried out in haste. Time was running out for the Chaldeans and there is none to spare. Probably with a great sigh of relief, Arioch told the king, "*I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!*" The English is quite clear here and in keeping with the Aramaic.

The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?" Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. "As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place.

Daniel 2:26-29 (NASB)

The NIV has here,

The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

Daniel 2:26 (NIV)

The reason I bring up this variation is that it does not seem correct to have the king say regarding the dream, "which I have seen." I have never used a phrase like that. I do not consider a dream as "seeing" something. To ask if Daniel could tell the king "what I saw in my dream" makes more sense. First, Daniel was most likely to show credibility by telling the king what was seen in the dream - assuming Nebuchadnezzar had not really forgotten it. Then Daniel was to "interpret" it. There is nothing special in the term "interpret so we go one from there.

Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able

to declare it to the king. "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. "As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. "But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.

Daniel 2:27-30 (NASB)

As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. Daniel told the king the same thing the Chaldeans had said. No man, not even Daniel can do what the king had requested. This was a noble gesture on the part of Daniel because, by saying this, he removes the onus placed upon the king's cabinet.

"However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days." Daniel, rightly, gives credit to God and he begins by stating what the purpose of the dream was. It was to let the king know what would happen in the "latter days." This last term is somewhat technical in the Scriptures. There are "last days" and there are days which are "more latter." (Incorrect English but to the point). The term appears 11 times (NASB) and is found either in the prophetic books or in other books that have prophet sections in them. Let me list, in order, some of the "last days."

- The Rapture of the church and the Lord's return in the air
- The return of Christ on earth to begin the Tribulation period
- The end of the tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium
- The end of the Millennium and the New Heaven and New Earth.

The king's dream goes as far as #3 above.

. "As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. "But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind. The interesting thing in this statement is that God did not just arbitrarily send this dream to Nebuchadnezzar but gave it in response to the king's desire to know what lay in the future. You or I might not be that concerned but a man like Nebuchadnezzar who was the most powerful man (that we know of) at that time would certainly like to know what was going to happen to him and his kingdom.

Daniel is very careful in eliminating himself from any interpretation of the dream. In Daniel's explanation it was quite simple.

- The king wanted to know what the future would bring.

As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future.

- Daniel's God would answer Nebuchadnezzar's request and tell him.
He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. "

Again, Daniel makes sure he does not take any credit for what he is about to say. *But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind*

"You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome.

Daniel 2:31 (NASB)

The dream involved a statue, an immense statue (see page #9 and below) of a man, probably in the appearance of a king. Daniel stated that it had extraordinary splendor and that it was awesome. I think we all know what "splendor" is but I shall expand on "awesome."

The idea is one of slinking or crawling, such as a serpent or a worm; to back away or tremble in fear. People trembled before the greatness which God gave Nebuchadnezzar

— Complete Word Study Dictionary

CHAPTER II

TIMES OF THE GENTILES



BABYLON vs. 38.

MEDOPERSIA vs. 39 first clause

GREECE vs. 39, last clause

ROME vs. 40

The PRE. Revelati

THE REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE TIME OF THE END.

"The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

Daniel 2:32-33 (NASB)

Daniel starts with the head of the statue which, I suppose, is the normal place to stop. Going from the head to the toes we have: **gold > silver > bronze > iron < iron mixed with clay**. The metals of the statue grow lesser in value as you go down. Now, who on earth would build such a statue? (Later we shall find that Nebuchadnezzar tried to) It is not likely than anyone would do it but it was God who did it (i.e. in the dream). Such a strange looking statue must have awakened or refreshed the king on what he had dreamt.

"You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried

them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel 2:34-35 (NASB)

If the statue was not strange enough, Daniel then described a stone “cut without hands.” It crushed the statue into such fine pieces that the wind blew them away, leaving only the stone, growing into a “great mountain.”

Several features of the rock would have impressed Nebuchadnezzar. (1) Its origin was supernatural, for it was cut out of the mountain without human hands. (2) The rock had extraordinary power, for it annihilated the statue. (3) Its scope was worldwide as symbolized by the fact that it grew into a huge mountain and filled the earth. In vv. 44–45 Daniel identified this great rock as the coming kingdom of God, and its development into a huge mountain symbolizes its universal dominion

New American Commentary

Now, back to the explanation.

"This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

Daniel 2:36-38 (NASB)

I am definitely sure that Nebuchadnezzar was pleased with the first part of the interpretation. Daniel describes him as the one who rules the entire world, even the creatures. Where did old Nebuchadnezzar get such power. Daniel is very clear that the “God of heaven” gave this to him. Why did God do this?

Nebuchadnezzar was the first great world ruler. I think that this was God's ideal for Adam -- he was given dominion, but he lost it. The world has known four great world rulers; there have been four great nations who have attempted to rule the world. They all just butchered the job -- none of them made a real success of it -- but the first one, Nebuchadnezzar, did the best job.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Indeed, as we shall learn later,

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His

works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

Daniel 4:37 (NASB)

There is reason to believe that we will see Nebuchadnezzar in heaven one day. As we shall see as we proceed through the vision, what came after him was not as great as he.

"After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. "As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.

Daniel 2:39-43 (NASB)

At this point you should refer to the table of the kingdoms on page #9. The second kingdom was the Medio-Persian kingdom which we will learn about later in the book - Daniel lived through much of this prophecy! The third was the Grecian Kingdom, the last, the Roman. We shall look at these in detail later in the study. Daniel interprets the dream saying that the second kingdom (Persia) would be inferior to Babylon. According to JFB,

inferior -- "The kings of Persia were the worst race of men that ever governed an empire". Politically (which is the main point of view here) the power of the central government in which the nobles shared with the king, being weakened by the growing independence of the provinces, was inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar, whose sole word was law throughout his empire

— Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

As time goes on, each kingdom gets worse. The Persian Empire was divided (some note the two arms on the statue indicating these). The Greek Empire was divided four ways (more later). The Roman Empire . . . well, it is still with us! The feet of iron and clay, significant of two things that do not mix, characterizes the divided world of today. This was some dream to reveal some 2500 years of human history!

Daniel concludes the interpretation of the dream with,

"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will

never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

Daniel 2:44-45 (NASB)

Recall that the stone ground the statue into such small bits and blew it away. One day, Christ will return with his saints to set up His kingdom on earth, the millennial kingdom.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery." Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king's court.

Daniel 2:46-49 (NASB)

Note carefully that Nebuchadnezzar says, ***Surely your God is a God of gods.*** We have previously noted that, in time, Nebuchadnezzar appears to believe in "the God of Heaven" himself. Here, however, it is "your God."

Like Joseph in Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel ruler over the province of Babylon (second to him, of course). He also made him the "chief prefect" over all the wise men. What is that? Daniel was now the head wiseman. So Daniel said "thank you" and went his way. ? I don't think so. Not Daniel. With a friend like Daniel you would need no other friends. Daniel would not take the assignment unless his three friends, who had prayed with him, and had helped him, were given key positions as well.

CHAPTER THREE

Apparently, the interpretation of his dream made Nebuchadnezzar “too proud for his britches.” He would make a better statue. It would be all of Gold and would be a representation of him, the “great king.”

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Daniel 3:1-7 (NASB)

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. Before we consider the importance of the image, look at its dimensions.

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

Revelation 13:18 (NASB)

Six is always the number for man, One less than seven, the number of perfection. At the end times man will become “complete” with 666. There is, then, significance to its size.

He set it up on the “plain of Dura”

The word dura means "the wall" in Aramaic. So Nebuchadnezzar set up this image on "the plain of the wall." There were two sets of double walls

surrounding the city of Babylon. The inner set, about a mile long on each side, surrounded the central part of the city. The outer set of walls, several miles in length, surrounded the eastern half of the city about a mile to the north and east of the city. This left a large open area between the two sets of walls and bordered by the Euphrates River on the west. This vast area was probably "the plain of the wall" spoken of in this verse

<http://www.patmospapers.com/daniel/dan3.htm#overview>

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Daniel 3:2-3 (NASB)

Nebuchadnezzar sent out invitations to quite a list of people:

1. satraps,
2. prefects
3. governors
4. counselors
5. treasurers
6. judges
7. magistrates
8. all the rulers of the provinces

I believe that all that was omitted was the director of the Humane Society! Everyone who was "anyone" in Babylon was invited to see this great statue. There they all stood staring at this statue which was about 90 feet tall (60 cubits). You would not have to get very close to see it. The Washington Monument is only 555 feet tall, so you can get some comparison of its size.

So, there they all gathered. What was happening next?

Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Daniel 3:4-7 (NASB)

The king was going to put on a real band concert of the guests. The band included

1. horn - a cornet
2. flute - It refers to one of the woodwind instruments
3. lyre - a stringed instrument of the harp family
4. trigon - Apparently a triangular instrument with four strings.
5. psaltery - a harp
6. bagpipe - This word (Daniel 3:5, 15) is borrowed from the Greek symphonia (whence English "symphony")
7. all kinds of music - This covers everything not mentioned above.

I am quite sure that none of us would appreciate this kind of music.

But this was more than a political assembly; it was a religious service, complete with music, and it called for total commitment on the part of the worshipers. Note that the word "worship" is used at least eleven times in the chapter. Nebuchadnezzar was wise to use instrumental music because it could stir the people's emotions and make it easy for him to manipulate them and win their submission and obedience. Throughout history, music and song have played an important role in strengthening nationalism, motivating conquest, and inspiring people to act. Music has the power so to grip human thoughts and emotions that people are transformed from being free agents into becoming mere puppets. The English poet William Congreave wrote that "music has charms to soothe a savage breast," but music also has power to release the savage in the breast. Music can be used as a wonderful tool and treasure from the Lord or as a destructive weapon from Satan.

Bible Exposition Commentary

People will say that I am an "old fuddy-duddy" but I think music is playing the same sort of role today. I think there are times when it brings us closer to God but there is a lot of music (and musicians) that lead in the opposite direction. In any case, the music worked!

Nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Oh Oh!

'You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 26:1 (NASB)

That was something that Daniel et. al. Could not do. So, what DID they do?

For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever! "You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image. "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. "There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."

Daniel 3:8-12 (NASB)

One of the first questions that usually comes to mind here is, "What about Daniel?" My thought is that Nebuchadnezzar had raised him to such a high position, these men would not dare accuse him. In addition, for some reason, he may not have been present. There is a word in the above passage that many seem to pass over without thought. The text says that "CERTAIN" Chaldeans came forth. Not all of them, not some of them, but "certain" ones.

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Genesis 6:4 (NASB)

The related Hebrew word is found above, translated "mighty men." These Chaldeans that came forward were not "just any Chaldeans." They were, most likely, men of higher rank than Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. It would be difficult in any situation for men of lower rank to accuse men of higher rank. Again, this may be why Daniel is not mentioned.

At this point it should be noted that Nebuchadnezzar did not have to construct a furnace. Such a furnace as this was already in existence and used for this purpose. Today the ACLU would have it banned as "cruel and unusual punishment."

Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? "Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what

god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

Daniel 3:13-15 (NASB)

What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands? This is a statement that immediately brings back to my memory a somewhat similar situation. We needed to fly to somewhere and it was very important that we get there. The ticket agent said our flight would not land at our destination as that airport was closed tight due to fog. What to do? The agent said "It would take a miracle to get a plane on the ground there today." That was all we needed - we went - and the plane landed. I guess that is what comes from knowing the one true God.

What would you do if you had been one of these three? Do you believe the Bible?

But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.

Isaiah 43:1-2 (NASB)

If we are in God's hands, He can protect us from anything. There is a very important point in the promise above. God does not say that, by trusting in Him, we will not have to go through "trials by fire?" No! He says we will still have to go but He will protect us and keep us from being harmed. The "certain Chaldeans" did not know the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. Neither did the king.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Daniel 3:16-18 (NASB)

The three began by stating the promise we looked at in Isaiah. I personally believe they did not just state the same concept that Isaiah did, I believe they had Isaiah's words in their minds. Then they added that they would not bow down in any case. Notice something in their reply! **". . . to serve your gods."** They made it known that their allegiance was broader than simply not bowing down to the king. Again, I believe they had committed the law in Leviticus (above) to memory as well. So they were basing their response totally on God's word. Would you, in the same condition, do the same? Think about it!



Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire. Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up.

Daniel 3:19-23 (NASB)

Let me begin with the last part of this section. To avoid all arguments saying “the furnace was not really that hot” and similar statements, we are told specifically that the men who threw them in were killed by the intense heat. Let me note also that the term “valiant warriors” is from the same Aramaic root as that above regarding “certain” (See page #26).

One commentary I read said this furnace was used for the express purpose of executing men. (I don't remember where I saw it. However, the other interpretation is:

The furnace was used for smelting ore. It had a large opening at the top through which fuel and vessels full of ore could be placed into the fire, and there was a door at the bottom through which the metal was taken out. An opening in a wall enabled the smelters to check on the progress of their work, and through holes in the wall they could use bellows to make the fire blaze even more. The unit was large enough for at least four persons to walk around in it. It was into this furnace that Nebuchadnezzar cast the three faithful Jews, fully clothed and bound. It seemed like certain death for the men who refused to obey the king.

Bible Exposition Commentary

There is some question as to why so much is made of the fact that they were cast into the furnace with their *trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes*. It was, perhaps, because of the king's wrath that they did not strip them. It was customary to execute men in the nude. Maybe God saw to it that these clothes were made of asbestos! (Not seriously.) I do not believe that Nebuchadnezzar's men had some sort of pyrometers¹ to make the furnace seven times hotter. Then seven times hotter than what? If it was 200 degrees Celsius then it should be 1400 degrees Celsius. But in Fahrenheit it would be different and trachincally, the temperature would be in degrees Kelvin. The expression simply means they got it as hot as it was possible to do. Their statement that they “*fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up*” would indicate that they were dropped in from

¹pyrometer >n. an instrument for measuring high temperatures, especially in furnaces and kilns.

the top as explained in the above citation.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire.

Daniel 3:24-26 (NASB)

"Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm. What a surprise for old Nebuchadnezzar. I wonder what was the greatest surprise: (1) the four men, or (2) that they were not harmed. The number of persons is listed first and so I would assume that was the most startling thing. Who was this fourth person? Look back at the reference from Isaiah (page #27). Does it not read, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. This refers to waters but evidently extends to flames as well. So, according to the promise relayed by Isaiah, there should have been four in the furnace. There are differences of opinion on what Nebuchadnezzar had said. "like a son of the gods," is most likely the proper translation. He knew little about the one true Triune God. What he actually saw is not contested by any. It was a preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. "I will be with you" states who it was so there can be no doubt.



Come out, you servants of the Most High God!

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

Luke 1:32 (NASB)

This name for God, "Most High God" is used twice in the Psalms and, the Greek rendering, a number of times in the Gospels (as above). As we go on, Nebuchadnezzar seems to recognize more and more that the God of Daneil and Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego is the one true God.

If he saw four men in the furnace, why did he only call three of them out? The fact that he apparently recognized that the fourth was the Most High God made it unnecessary for the fourth to be called out.

The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them. Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.

Daniel 3:27-28 (NASB)

Before we continue, the text says they were not effected nor were their trousers. It does not mention their other clothes. How are we to interpret this? Actually, the one term refers to all of their clothing (just check different translations!). They didn't even have the smell of fire. I usually have a "burn day" once a year in which I burn all the brush and limbs I have gathered. I wish I could do so without smelling like smoke when I am done!

"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. Say what you like about Nebuchadnezzar but he was an intelligent man and he knew what he was seeing.

"Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 3:29-30 (NASB)

What can I say? God not only delivered Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego but he convinced the king that they had a real God who deserved to be worshipped. Now, noone in the kingdom could speak ill of the one true God os Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

CHAPTER FOUR

Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound! "It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. "How great are His signs And how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom And His dominion is from generation to generation.

Daniel 4:1-3 (NASB)

Let us begin this unusual chapter by looking at the following note.

This is a unique chapter in the Bible because it's an official autobiographical document, prepared by the king of Babylon and distributed throughout his vast kingdom. That Nebuchadnezzar should openly admit his pride, his temporary insanity, and his beastly behavior, and then give glory to the God of Israel for his recovery, is indeed a remarkable thing. He learned an important lesson the hard way just as people are learning it the hard way today: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"

Bible Exposition Commentary

Royal proclamations. A proclamation such as this would typically be recorded on a stele and set up in a prominent place. Sometimes copies would be made to be circulated, as was done with Darius' Behistun Inscription. Many of the elements of this proclamation are common to royal inscriptions or to Aramaic letters, though it is unusual for a king to be so vulnerable as here.

— Bible Background Commentary

Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound!" As indicated in the above two references, Nebuchadnezzar made an official proclamation. It was not addressed to Babylon, but the whole world. Of course, Nebuchadnezzar already knew he "was the greatest" as was his kingdom.

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:18 (NIV)

He begins with the following statement. *"May your peace abound! "It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me.* What is wrong with that statement? I do not recall in the interpretation of the dream that God elevated Babylon because of him. *Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was the builder of "Babylon the great" and the architect of its peace and prosperity, but he was soon to learn that all these things had been permitted by the will*

of the Most High² It has, perhaps, been about 20 years since his mysterious dream” and, on the basis of that, he had probably built a great number of edifices in his own honor (including the golden statue). He then states what God had done.

1. How great are His signs
2. How mighty are His wonders!
3. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom!
4. His dominion is from generation to generation.

These words were certainly true. God’s kingdom is everlasting but not Nebuchadnezzar’s. There would come an end, but not yet. God was not finished with him.

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. "I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. "So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. "Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me. "But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and I related the dream to him, saying, 'O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.

Daniel 4:4-9 (NASB)

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. He had done a lot of "great things" and so now he could sit back and enjoy the works of his hands. There was a time when I dreamed of retiring so I could just sit at ease and do the things I had always wanted to do. God had different plans for my retirement.

As before, he saw a dream and it made him fearful; and these fantasies as he lay on his bed and the visions in his mind kept alarming him. As before, he needed an interpretation. *"So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. "Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me.* This seem vaguely familiar. Didn't he do the same thing before? Why did he not learn and call Daniel to begin with? Apparently he had forgotten (as we noted, this was probably a number of years later).

But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods;

It may seem strange that Daniel was not first summoned. But it was ordered by

God's providence that he should be reserved to the last, in order that all mere human means should be proved vain, before God manifested His power through His servant; thus the haughty king was stripped of all fleshly confidences.

— Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation. Daniel had done it before so he assumed he could do it again.

'Now these were the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great. 'The tree grew large and became strong And its height reached to the sky, And it was visible to the end of the whole earth. 'Its foliage was 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 sky dwelt in its branches, And all living creatures fed themselves from it.

Daniel 4:10-12 (NASB)



Nebuchadnezzar's Tree

There was a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great.

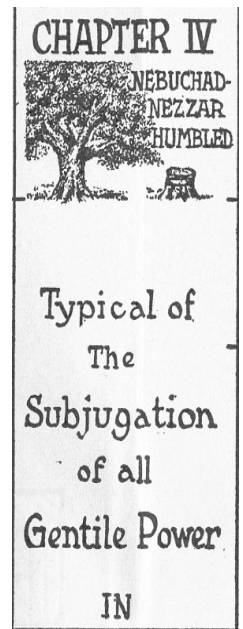
The concept of the cosmic tree in the center of the world is a common motif in the ancient Near East. It is also used in Ezekiel 31. The roots of the tree are fed by the great subterranean ocean, and its top merges with the clouds, thus binding together the heavens, the earth and the netherworld

— Bible Background Commentary

This was a very tall and full of branches. The tree in the photo took about 40 years to reach this size. For Nebuchadnezzar the tree appeared full grown

in his dream. Some commentators believe that as many as 20 years had passed since the grate statue. The tree had grown as had Nebuchadnezzar's kindom. It now provided:

1. Its foliage was beautiful
2. Its fruit abundant
3. It was food for all
4. The beasts of the field found shade under it
5. The birds of the sky dwelt in its branches
6. And all living creatures fed themselves from it.



The Babylonian kingdom had reached its peak and its influence was worldwide. It provided the necessities of all in it. It was a marvelous tree. So, what did this all mean?

'I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven. 'He shouted out and spoke as follows: "Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; Let the beasts flee from under it And the birds from its branches. "Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, But with a band of iron and bronze around it In the new grass of the field; And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth. "Let his mind be changed from that of a man And let a beast's mind be given to him, And let seven periods of time pass over him. "This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers And the decision is a command of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men."

Daniel 4:13-17 (NASB)



The Tree Stump

Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit. These words are meaningful to me. A number of years ago I felled a large (60-80 foot) pine tree. First there chopping (chain sawing) the tree down. Then there was sawing off all of its limbs. Finally, there was cutting the branches from the limbs. Thus, there were three things left: (4) the trunk (sliced in pieces), (2) the limbs (also cut in pieces), (3) the branches (hauled of for they were of no value for burning) and (4) the stump.

It says "let the birds flee from its branches." I was too busy with the saw to note this. The important part of this text was the stump in the ground. The rest of the tree is gone - burnt up. The birds are gone from it. The animals no longer come around it. It is just a stump in the ground.

But with a band of iron and bronze around it In the new grass of the field. No one seems to know what purpose a band of metal around a tree stump would play. Some stumps will actually grow an "new tree" without any bands.

Let **him** be drenched with the dew of heaven, And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Note the change of pronouns here. All along the tree has been described concerning **ITS** parts but here the pronoun changes to **HIM**. We go from the details of the tree to the characteristics which will befall the king. There are some inconsistencies in the translations regarding the "dew of heaven" but there is no doubt that the rest of the vision refers to the king and not the tree.

And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth. "Let his mind be changed from that of a man And let a beast's mind be given to him.

“His mind” (lit., “heart” [lěbab], used here as the seat of reason [cf. Jer 5:21; Hos 7:11]) will “be changed” from that of a man to that of an animal (v. 16). This individual would actually believe himself to be an animal, a psychological phenomenon known as lycanthropy. “Lycanthropy” (lit., wolf-man) originally referred to the delusion of believing oneself to be a wolflike creature (the primitive werewolf superstition was inspired by this malady) but today has come to be a general designation regardless of the type of animal involved. P. Keck reports that studies “suggest that lycanthropy, though unusual, is very much alive in the twentieth century.” Persons involved in Keck’s studies believed themselves to be a wide assortment of animals—wolves, gerbils, dogs, birds, cats, rabbits, tigers, and an unidentified creature. In 1946 R. K. Harrison observed a patient in a British mental institution with an illness virtually identical to that described in the Book of Daniel. The patient wandered about the grounds of the institution eating grass as if he were a cow. His drink consisted of water. Harrison stated that “the only physical abnormality noted consisted of a lengthening of the hair and a coarse, thickened condition of the fingernails

New American Commentary

And let seven periods of time pass over him. Does this refer to 7 days, 7 weeks, or what? Hebrew scholars are in general agreement that this refers to “seven years.” We shall deal with time periods of “seven” later in the study. For seven years, Nebuchadnezzar will be a cow! - no, I guess that would have to be a bull! We shall see more detail as Daniel interprets

This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers And the decision is a command of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men.” Note the NASB has “angelic” prefixed to “watchers” in italics. The word does not explicitly refer to angels but the context would certainly make it seem so.

'This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.'

Daniel 4:18 (NASB)

As before, Nebuchadnezzar’s cabinet had no clue as to what the dream meant. This time he even related it to them. I guess they were not as smart as they thought. To Daniel he said, *but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.*” John Walvoord translates the king’s statement regarding the one from whom the dream came as “Most High God” (see below)

Nebuchadnezzar reported that he was told that the fulfillment of his dream would make clear that God was the Most High God

Every Prophecy of the Bible.

And

"This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you."

Daniel 4:18 (NKJV)

The above is the only translation that has "the Holy God." The rest all have what we had above, a *spirit of the holy gods*. The only question related to this is, to whom did Nebuchadnezzar refer? Did he really know about the God of Israel, the only true God, or is this a more general statement. The reason for the question is to determine whether Nebuchadnezzar actually knew about God and had some kind of relationship with Him.

"Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, 'Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.' Belteshazzar replied, 'My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries! 'The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged— it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth. 'In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him," this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. 'And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules. 'Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.'

Daniel 4:19-27 (NASB)

"Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. Why are both names for Daniel given? If you will remember, the king had this inscribed for future generations to read and so he had to make it clear. Why would Daniel be so alarmed. Was he not taken into captivity in Babylon? If Nebuchadnezzar wasn't around, maybe Daniel could have gone home. But,

We get the impression that Daniel had a great personal concern for the monarch, and as they had worked together in the affairs of Babylon, he had sought to introduce him to the true and living God.

Bible Exposition Commentary

Daniel evidently had perceived that God put him in that place to personally be God's witness to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was human, just like you and me. With such thoughts running through his mind, he could not help but let his face show it. So the king responded and said, 'Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you. This seems to me to indicate the high regard the king had for Daniel.

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Ephesians 6:5-8 (NKJV)

This is what Paul said should be our position. *Belteshazzar replied, 'My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries! Daniel still procrastinated and did not tell the meaning of the dream. Why would Daniel be reluctant to tell the king, "The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged— it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth."* That is terribly good news. It is what followed that troubled Daniel.

Daniel then related the "bad" part of the dream, ending with "*and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.*" We noted the variations in the term Nebuchadnezzar used for God above. Here Daniel uses another form, "Most High," a name used infrequently by the Hebrews.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a

priest of God Most High.

Genesis 14:18 (NASB)

The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:35 (NASB)

"However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says:

Acts 7:48 (NASB)

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,
Hebrews 7:1 (NASB)

Note that the last reference is a reference to the first. Daniel concludes the interpretation with, "*And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules.* The one good thing in the interpretation is that the situation was not permanent. When Nebuchadnezzar realized his faults and admitted them, he would be restored. He needed to really know who the Most High is.

'Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.' Daniel added a P.S. He told the king if he repented right away that, perhaps, the judgement would be delayed. A "prolonging" is what it was.

"All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. "Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. "The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.' "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

Daniel 4:28-33 (NASB)

To be exact, the king got a 12 month delay in his “execution.” Why then? He made the question (to himself) *'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'* Whoops! What happened to the “Most High?” It was just old Nebuchadnezzar that accomplished all that was done.

How often does that sort of thing happen to you. You have a bad habit and you repent of it and the Lord blesses you for it. Then, after a while, you get cocky again and resume the bad habit. Apparently the dream scared Nebuchadnezzar for twelve full months, but then its effect wore off.

*While the **word was in the king's mouth**, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. God wastes no time. The second Nebuchadnezzar began to give himself credit for the kingdom - IT HAPPENED. It was a three-fold decree.*

1. sovereignty has been removed from you
2. you will be driven away from mankind
3. your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field

Of the three, I would be most afraid of the last. Job would have said the same thing.

Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. "However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." So the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life."

Job 2:4-6 (NASB)

Job did not curse the Lord when he lost his possession. He did not curse the Lord when he lost his children. He didn't even curse the Lord when the Lord left him with his wife and “three friends.” But Satan pointed out, “You put his very life in misery - that will be a different story. That would be the worst Satan could do. Job, however, passed the test. So now, for seven long years, Nebuchadnezzar is going to act as if he were one of the cattle in the field. I wonder when went through his mind during these seven years. Since his mind was not in its normal state, his thoughts must have been altered. But still, he had the power to do one thing and, finally, seven years later, he did it!

"But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward 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. "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' "At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. "Now I,

Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."
Daniel 4:34-37 (NASB)

*But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever. As God had promised, his sanity returned to him. The very first act was that of praise. Some people would have said, "Well it is about time!" They might have responded with even worse remarks. But he did not! He praised **the Most High**. This would be a record which would be "played" for his son at a later time. (In the next chapter).*

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done? Maybe you and I ought to eat grass! He seems to have learned a lot about the "Most High." He did not say, when his mind return, "what have you done?" He knew that was wrong. So, what kind of king was he after this?

Daniel tells us nothing more of Nebuchadnezzar. We are to assume that he looked to the Most High for the rest of his time and ceased from his self-pride.

CHAPTER FIVE

Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had 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. Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

Daniel 5:1-4 (NASB)

Belshazzar? Who was that? Daniel forgot to tell us. He was the last king of Babylon. History tells us the following.

The book of Daniel is thus not in error in representing Belshazzar as the last king of Babylon, as negative criticism once believed, nor can it be said to be wrong in calling Belshazzar the son of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5:2). Apparently Belshazzar was lineally related to Nebuchadnezzar because his mother, Nitrocris, seems to have been Nebuchadnezzar's daughter. Moreover, "son of" in Semitic usage is equivalent to "successor of"; so one could properly be called a son of even if not in lineal descent

— New Unger's Bible Dictionary

Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. I do not know if this is to be interpreted literally or if the thousand were drinking with him. Regardless, drinking strong drink has always been wrong. "A little wine for thy oft infirmities" (1 Timothy) is alright, but not to the extent of being intoxicated. I wonder how many people over the years have regretted something they did while "under the influence."

When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem. If you will look back, you should recall the following.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

Daniel 1:1-2 (NASB)

Nebuchadnezzar had taken the treasures and put them in his vault. There they stayed, unharmed and undefiled for over 50 years! God put them in his safekeeping. But that was about to change. Belshazzar, in a drunken stupor, decided he would use all those neat treasures that Nebuchadnezzar had stored up. In particular, the silver vessels. *so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.* He would desecrate them. He probably, in his drunken stupor, had no idea what he might be doing.

So the drunken party continued, using the Lord's holy vessels to drink out of. It takes very little intelligence to realize that God would not allow that to continue. So, what happened?

Belshazzar knew that the army of the Medes and Persians was encamped outside the city, but he was indifferent to the danger that they posed. After all, the city was surrounded by a complex series of walls, some of them over 300 feet high, and there were numerous defense towers on the walls. Could any army break through the fortified bronze gates? Wasn't there sufficient water for the people from the Euphrates River that flowed through the city from north to south, and wasn't there adequate food stored in the city? If ever a man was proud of his achievements and basked in self-confidence, it was Belshazzar. But it was a false confidence, not unlike what will happen to the people of this world before God declares war. "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them"

Bible Exposition Commentary

It happened all of a sudden.

Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. Then the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together. The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, "Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom." Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed.

Daniel 5:5-9 (NASB)

Before we look at this section, I shall tell you what was written on the wall.

מנא מנא תקל ורטין

Can you read the above? There is an indication that Belshazzar could not even read the words. We do not now if these are Hebrew words or Aramic. Whether he could read the words, the meaning of them escaped him. Not only Belshazzar, but the rest of those present.

Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. Then the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together. The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners

Regarding the "Lampstand," some say it was "It used oil and possibly wicks to create its light."³ Others say it was a candlestick. The former is probably correct. It seems a bit strange to me that it refers to "the lampstand." Was this the only source of light in the chamber? JFB make an interesting note here.



against the candlestick -- the candelabra; where the mystic characters would be best seen. BARNES makes it the candlestick taken from the temple of Jerusalem, the nearness of the writing to it intimating that the rebuke was directed against the sacrilege.

— Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, "Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom. It seems like we seen this sort of thing before. After all Daniel's interpretations, why not call Daniel to begin with?

Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed. As before, the others could not interpret the handwriting. They are even less educated than I thought. They ought to be able to read. Likely they could read the words but had no idea what they meant. So, Belshazzar, call Daniel. Apparently he knew nothing about Daniel. He was not a man like his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar was. He apparently knew nothing about the God that is in heaven. He did not even pay attention to the fact that the vessels they were using belonged to this God. At this point I think of Paul's words to Timothy.

³Complete Word Study Dictionary

For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.
2 Timothy 1:5 (NASB)

Timothy had a “head start” because he had a loving mother and a loving grandmother who taught him from the (Old Testament) Scriptures. Apparently, Belshazzar learned nothing from his parents and grandparents. His mother and his queen had, however.

The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen spoke and said, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale. "There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans and diviners. "This was because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation."

Daniel 5:10-12 (NASB)

The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; Why wasn't the queen there to begin with. I don't know but I do know that this appears to be the standard. When king Ahasuerus had a big banquet, Vahsti, the queen was not present (and refused to come!). Apparently she was summoned to see if she could be of help.

She came in and said, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale. "There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. Apparently the king knew nothing about Daniel but she did! God bless the women of the world! She knew who needed to be brought in, She has high words of praise for Daniel. The fact that she was “queen would probably mislead many.

She was wife either of Nebuchadnezzar or of Evil merodach; hence her acquaintance with the services of Daniel.

— Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

In addition to his relation to the “holy gods,” he had the spirits of “illumination,” “insight,” and “wisdom.” All three words are synonyms in the Aramaic and so, by using three terms, she is simply amplifying the abilities of Daniel.

*And King Nebuchadnezzar, **your father**, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans and diviners. (Note: “father” is used in a generic sense and refers to his*

grandfather). Nebuchadnezzar had given Daniel a prominent position in the kingdom. Why was he not there at the banquet with all of the others? Do I have to answer that? Would you have been there? While the queen knew much about Daniel, she apparently had not been able to teach Belshazzar anything about him and so he was lost amongst the palace officials.

This was because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar. Here she adds another ability, that of explaining "engimas." If you have never heard of this word, consider below.

The Enigma machine was a [cipher machine](#) used to [encrypt](#) and decrypt secret messages. More precisely, Enigma was a family of related electro-mechanical [rotor machines](#), comprising a variety of different models.

The Enigma was used commercially from the early 1920s on, and was also adopted by the military and governmental services of a number of nations – most famously by [Nazi Germany](#) before and during [World War II](#).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enigma_machine

Some claim this to be the world's first computer. However the ENIAC, built by two Americans was really the first electronic computer. Anyway, an enigma is something that is either very difficult or impossible to solve (hence the notion of a computer). Daniel could "solve difficult problems." I wish he would come to my home once in a while! ☺

Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation." So, the logical step was to call for Daniel I am sure that he was sought in a big hurry.

Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? "Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you. "Just now the wise men and the conjurers were brought in before me that they might read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not declare the interpretation of the message. "But I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and wear a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will have authority as the third ruler in the kingdom."

Daniel 5:13-16 (NASB)

"Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah?" Belshazzar wanted to check Daniel's credentials. He informs Daniel of what the queen had told him and he also informed him that the other "wise men" had already been brought in and they had no success. He offers Daniel the same thing he offered the others, namely, one-third of his kingdom. Remember what I noted before - that night the Medes and Persians would invade the city and overthrow the Babylonian kingdom. For this reason (as well as, perhaps, others, Daniel answered.

Then Daniel answered and said before the king, "Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him. "O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father. "Because of the grandeur which He bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations and men of every language feared and trembled before him; whomever he wished he killed and whomever he wished he spared alive; and whomever he wished he elevated and whomever he wished he humbled. "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. "He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like that of beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes. "Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; 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. "Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out.

Daniel 5:17-24 (NASB)

"Keep your gifts or give them to someone else." He didn't say it was because they would be worthless the next morning.

He starts out with a reference to the "Most High God." Twice Nebuchadnezzar had referred to God by this name. Now Daniel takes it up. Perhaps he thought it might spark some memory in Belshazzar about Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar became a great king. Why? Because God gave him the characteristics of:

- sovereignty,
- grandeur,
- glory
- majesty

Daniel reminds Belshazzar about the period of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity. Note carefully what Daniel says next!

"Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this. Belshazzar knew this but ignored it. Why was he so dumb and ignore it? The same reason that so many people today has access to the Gospel or friends who could lead them to the Gospel, but they are not interested. They are only interested in "bettering themselves."

**"And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."
Luke 13:30 (NASB)**

If you allow yourself to be "last" in order to put God in control of your life, God will bless you. As for Belshazzar, if he had any sense, if he had any understanding of spiritual things, he would not have ended up by being told "*you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand.*

It is a sad but often true case where very Godly parents will have one (or more) child go the worldly rought and ignore the "God of Heaven." Belshazzar was one of them.

Well, back to the wall.

**"Now this is the inscription that was written out: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.' "This is the interpretation of the message: 'MENE'—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. " '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." Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom. That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.
Daniel 5:25-31 (NASB)**

מנא = MENE, (pronounced men-ay') meaning mene; weight of measurement.

תקל=TEKEL, (pronounced tek-al') meaning to weigh. It means literally to find the weight of something.

פרטין - shortened to **פרט**, (pronounced per-as') An Aramaic verb meaning to be divided, to be broken in two. It refers in its participial form to something divided, split up; in context Babylon.

Putting these all together, the last word

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

— Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

I can't resist Dr. McGee's comment here any more than he could.

I can't resist telling you the story of a man who was a foreigner in this country and was finally persuaded by his daughter to go to church, although he had great difficulty understanding English. However, he agreed to go with his daughter, Minnie, on the Sunday the preacher had unfortunately chosen for his text the account of this writing on the wall: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. As soon as the preacher mentioned this, the man grabbed Minnie his daughter by the hand and took her out of the church. "Father, what in the world is the matter?" she asked. With a very heavy accent, he replied, "Did you hear what the preacher said? He said, 'Minnie, Minnie, come tickle the parson!'" Well, that is not the interpretation of this writing upon Belshazzar's wall. Daniel gives the interpretation:

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

So we have:

- 'MENE'—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it.
- '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 first and the third interpretation deals with kingdom, the second falls on Belshazzar.

It is questioned whether Daniel's promotion was of any value since the city fell to the Medes that very night. *That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.* We shall look for an answer to this question as we proceed to the next chapter..

CHAPTER SIX

It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. Then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God."

Daniel 6:1-5 (NASB)

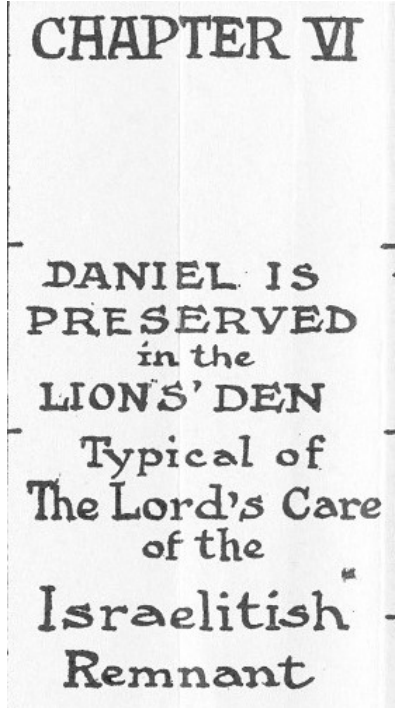
As soon as Darius took over, he set up his governing body. The top rank in this body was a "commissioner" or/and satrap. He set up 120 of them. This seems like a very large number to keep tabs on to me. He did enlist help in three men who would rule over them.

Surprise! Daniel was one of them. I am being a bit facetious here, but God always works things this way when there is a need. Daniel was the star diplomat.

*Daniel began distinguishing himself because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, "Extraordinary" is the same adjective used in Chapter 2 of Nebuchadnezzar's statue - "of **extraordinary** splendor"*
Daniel, however, had the same dilemma that many intelligent business men have today. If you use your intelligence to its maximum potential and do a great job for the company, what happens? You make enemies of your coworkers. You can be dumb and popular or smart and alone.

When the king planned to promote him, the others begin trying to find a flaw in Daniel's service they could point out and keep him from getting promoted. I like the text here, it says it exactly as it was: *They began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and **no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.*** They were busy looking for something that did not exist. Then they conceived a plan. Do you believe that? I believe Satan conceived a plan and put it in the men's minds. The only way they could trap him is to trap him between doing what Daniel's God wanted of him and what the king wanted of him.

If the government say "Do this!" and the Bible says, "Do that!", what are you to do. Paul says we are to be in submission to those in authority over us.



First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (NASB)

However. Peter had something else to say about it.

When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Acts 5:27-29 (NASB)

We are to obey those in authority over us **unless** it would be contrary to God's commands. So, the men figured out what they could do to divide Daniel's allegiance and trap him.

"We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God." What might this conflict be?

Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever! "All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den. "Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

Daniel 6:6-9 (NASB)

"All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together All? According to my definition, "all" means everyone - including Daniel. So these men were liars to begin with. The thing which would put a wedge between Daniel and his God and the king was with regards to something they could count on. What did Daniel do regularly that they could easily catch him at it and turn him over to the king?

Anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den. For a full month, a person could pray to no one but the king. To make matters worse, the Medes and Persians had, in my estimation, a stupid law. Once certain decrees were signed, they could not be revoked. Not all decrees were this way, just certain ones. Esther had a similar problem on her hand. The Persian king had signed an edict that all the Jews in the kingdom were to be killed on a certain day. The law could not be revoked. However, the king could, and did,

issue a new edict saying that the Jews were to defend themselves and hence they were spared.

Well, how were they going to know if Daniel violated this law. Jesus said,

"But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:6 (NASB)

If Daniel prayed in secret, they would never know. This brings us to a question which will be difficult to answer.

Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?" The king replied, "The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."

Daniel 6:10-13 (NASB)

When Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house.

We are given a parenthetical question. *(now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem. Why were his windows open. This does not sound like "praying in secret" to me.*

Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings 8:48, had entreated God to hear the prayers of those who might be in strange lands, or in captivity, when they should turn their faces towards their own land, which God gave unto their fathers; and towards the city which he had chosen, and the house which was dedicated to his name. It was in reference to this that Daniel turned his face towards Jerusalem when he prayed

Adam Clarke's Commentary

Daniel had been doing what Solomon asked those in captivity to do. I wonder how many Christians pray three times each day. I suppose I pray many times each day but we are speaking of formal

prayers and petitions here.

Apparently, the other men had seen Daniel praying in his room and that is why they concocted this plan. Daniel was a “goner!”

Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. You can be sure that they would do this and at the soonest opportunity. Daniel, also, wasted no time in going to his room and praying. Was this one of his three daily prayers or a special prayer? Apparently this was his normal prayer time. The text would indicate that he had, perhaps, prayed several times before he was caught in the act.

I can just see these men coming before the king and saying, “*Hey King, did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?*” No, the didn't say “Hey King” but I bet this was in their hearts! Notice the way they slowly bring in the accusation!

"Daniel, who is one your chief commisioners, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day." Read it again! That is NOT what they said. They said,

*"Daniel, who is one of the **exiles from Judah**, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."*

They cautiously avoided making reference to Daniel's position. I would suppose they did this because the king would be likely to get more inflamed than if he knew it was Daniel.

Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

Daniel 6:14-15 (NASB)

One must give the king credit for looking into any possibility of sparing Daniel's life. He pondered the situation all day and into the evening. When it became apparent he was stalling, the officials came to him and reminded him that he **had** to carry out the decree.

Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you." A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel. Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.

Daniel 6:16-18 (NASB)

What was the lion's den like? I think that, perhaps, the best description is given below.

The lions' den was a large pit divided by a moveable wall that could be pulled up to allow the lions to go from one side to the other. The keeper would put food in the empty side and lift up the wall so the lions would cross over and eat. He would quickly lower the wall and clean the safe side of the pit. The animals weren't fed often or great amounts of food so that their appetites would be keen in case there was to be an execution. Living at the gnawing edge of hunger didn't make them too tame!

Bible Exposition Commentary



Daniel was finally thrown into (or let down into) the Den of Lions. It is said that a king would have these to use on his hunting expeditions. I am reminded of an old vaudeville routine ("The Two Black Crows") (politically incorrect today). I had it on two old 78 records and my friend and I played them over and over until we had transcribed the words and then performed it several times. At one point, Mac says, "I believe the story about Daniel in the den of lions!" Moe says, "O man, this was way back in B.C.!" Mac says "what is 'BC'" Moe says "Before Circuses!" Yeh, it was a dumb routine!

These were, definitely, not tamed circus lions. The king says, "*Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you.*" I wonder if the king is making a statement here or, in reality, asking a question. "Your God will deliver you won't He?"

The den had a hole in the top as explained above. That was where Daniel was let down and it was also where the stone was placed to seal it (physically and with the king's seal).

Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him. Is there a lesson here? You bet there is. This king was in a terrible state of mind. In his rash decision to sign the decree, he (presumably) sealed Daniel's fate. As Christians, when possible, if we have a big decision to make, we should wait long enough to pray about it and wait for the Lord to answer us. It was too late for this king!

Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime." Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

Daniel 6:19-24 (NASB)

After a sleepless night, the king ran out of the palace to the place where the lion's den was. According to one commentator, the king was anxious to see the verdict!

Innocence By Ordeal. "Ordeal" describes a judicial situation in which the accused is placed in the hand of God using some mechanism, generally one that will put the accused in jeopardy. If the deity intervenes to protect the accused from harm, the verdict is innocent. Most trials by ordeal in the ancient Near East involved dangers such as water, fire or poison. When the accused was exposed to these threats, he or she was in effect being assumed guilty until the deity declared otherwise.

— Bible Background Commentary

When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. "Troubled" comes from a Aramaic term usually main "pained" or "grieving." He had lied awake all night grieving over the situation and painfully waited for the first light of day to come up. We are not told what kind of night Daniel might have had. Some might picture him with a chair and whip (usual lion taming tools) keeping the lions away from him. However, Daniel had no training in controlling lions that I know of. I really believe Daniel found a nice comfortable spot and laid down and went to sleep.

The king asked the question he had wanted to ask all night. *The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"* Note that there is an extra phrase here. The king could have simply asked, *Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, ~~whom you~~ **constantly** serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?* The term for "constantly" is defined below.

ted-iyrā': An Aramaic feminine noun meaning continuance. It is used adverbially to describe a practice or an attitude that is done or held without fail

— Complete Word Study Dictionary

That is precisely what got Daniel into this trouble. He prayed with such regularity that it was easy to

catch him. The king had observed this in Daniel as he called out to him.

"O king, live forever! "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime." I have emphasized two part of Daniel's answer. First, God had found him innocent. Because of this, according to the practice noted above, he was found innocent of disobeying the king.

So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. Daniel was lifted out of the den via the same opening he was dropped in. It appears that the king ordered a complete physical examination to make sure Daniel was not injured in any way. They may have even examined his toes. Can you imagine what a heavy lion pouncing on your bare toes might do? Daniel was pronounced well from head to foot.

Then the king ordered all those involved in Daniel's ordeal brought to him. Not only the men, but their families as well. Is it proper to punish children from what their dad may have done? It is not legal in the U.S. but that is not where they were. Is there any rational for this. One might say these men had bad genes that they would pass on to their families. Anyway, that was they way they did ut then and there.

The main reason for including the notice of the execution of the others is this. *they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.* This is to prove, without question, that the lions were alive, awake, and very hungry. It is the same sort of proof that we saw with the fiery furnace where the men who threw the three in were burned to death.

God does not promise us that, when we accept His Son, we will have no more trials and tribulations. He does promise that He will be WITH us as we go through them. He has shown this in the fiery furnace and in the den of lions. I do not know what tribulation God may have in store for you, but I can tell you that the result will be good. It will be good for you and it will be good for the Kingdom.

Paul can testify to this fact. In fact, he did.

Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

2 Corinthians 11:24-27 (NASB)

It you wish a rich blessing from the Lord, you need to earn it. True, you are saved by grace. But, once you are saved, then what? Are we just supposed to sit around and wait for the rapture? Christ told us to go into ALL the world. We have not yet done that. Maybe there is a part of the world that the Lord has called you to. If so, are you willing to go?

Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land: "May your peace abound! "I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. "He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Daniel 6:25-28 (NASB)

Like Nebuchadnezzar, Darius had a real revelation. Look at how he refers to Daniel's God.

- ***The God of Daniel;***
- *He is the living God*
- *He is enduring forever*
- *His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed*
- *His dominion will be forever*
- *He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth.*

Twice in this chapter he has referred to God as the "Living God." No other Gentile in the Bible made that statement. No other Gentile has ever referred to Him and the who who "endures forever." Only Peter and the Psalmists have done so. No other Gentile has stated that His kingdom "will not be destroyed: the Psalmists and the Prophets did. No other person in the Scriptures acknowledged that the God "performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth."

With such a testimony, I would not be surprised to see Darius some day. Some commentators agree. Others say that, in spite of his eloquent pronouncement, he was still a polythesist.

The Jews had been humiliated by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple because their defeat made it look as though the false gods of the Babylonians were stronger than the true God of Israel. The idolatry of the Jewish people, especially their kings and priests, had brought about the ruin of Judah, and the Lord used an idolatrous nation to defeat them. Jehovah hadn't been honored by His own people, but now He was receiving praise from pagan rulers whose decrees would be published throughout the Gentile world. These decrees were a witness to the Gentiles that there was but one true God, the God of the Jews; but the decrees were also a reminder to the Jews that Jehovah was the true and living God.

Bible Exposition Commentary

So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. This completes the more-or-less chronological events in Daniel's life. As we go to the next chapter, we shall move back in time to some of the visions and dreams Daniel, himself, had.

CHAPTER SEVEN

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it.

Daniel 7:1 (NASB)

Let me introduce this chapter with the following from Dr. McGee and the New American Commentary..

Chapter 7 opens a new and different section of the Book of Daniel. The first six chapters contained the historic night with prophetic light; the last six chapters are prophetic light in the historic night. Whereas in the first section of the book the emphasis was upon the historical, the emphasis will now be on the prophetic, yet still with an historical background.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

For a variety of reasons, “modern commentators are generally agreed that chapter 7 is the single most important chapter of the Book of Daniel.” Porteous calls it “the heart of the Book of Daniel,” and Heaton declares, “It would be no exaggeration to say that this chapter is one of the most important passages of the OT.”

New American Commentary

You should note at the outset a rather strange grammatical feature. In the first verse, above, the text says, “Daniel saw a dream.” Who is relating this information? If I had a dream, I would say, “I had a dream” and not “Wayne had a dream.” I would also say that “I wrote it down,” not, “Wayne wrote it down.” Why is this? None of the commentaries I have seen make any note of this. I offer this as an explanation:

Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.

Daniel 2:1 (NASB)

I believe Daniel wished to reveal the dream using the same grammatical setting as when Nebuchadnezzar had his dream. There is a strong parallel in these two dreams. In other words we have the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the dream of Daniel (not “my dream”).

This dream was, indeed, a strange dream. It involved the four beasts shown in Dr. Ironside's chart. Up to now, Daniel has been interpreting the dreams of others. Now he has his own which he proceeds to describe and to explain its meaning. I sure wish I could do that! Note, before we begin, the time. We have now moved back in time to the reign of Belshazzar

Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another.

Daniel 7:2-3 (NASB)

Before we get to the beasts which Daniel saw, let us consider the "four winds of heaven" and "the great sea." As far as the "four winds" are concerned, we have the following.

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.

Revelation 7:1 (NASB)

In this case these may be literal winds but the Hebrew word for "wind" also means "spirit."

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Genesis 1:2 (NASB)

The four spirits (or winds) were "stirring up the sea." The word for "stirring" is found below.

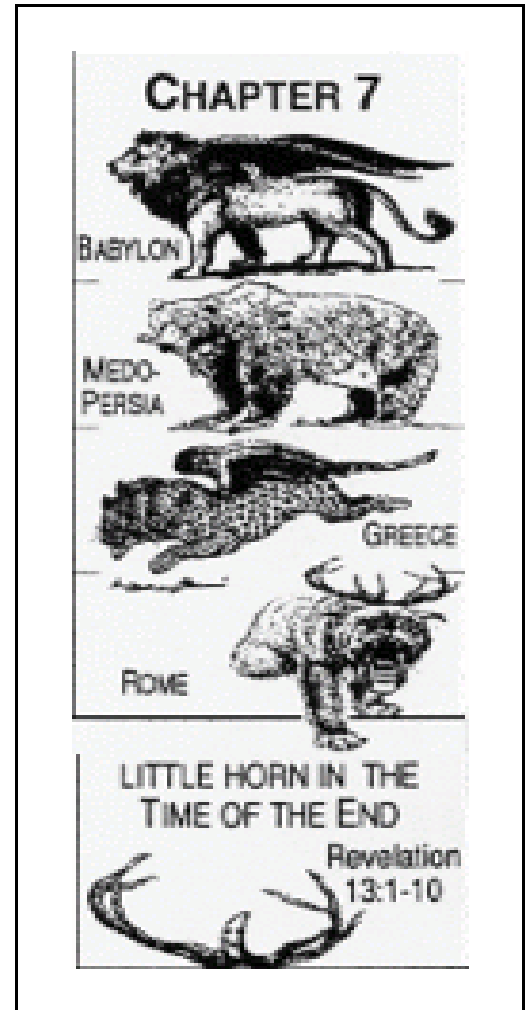
"Or who enclosed the sea with doors When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb;

Job 38:8 (NASB)

The "great sea" is sometimes thought to be the Mediterranean Sea but that is unlikely in this vision. The "great sea" has another connotation.

And he said* to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

Revelation 17:15 (NASB)



Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:11-15 (NASB)

The sea, in this sense represents the vast throngs of people and nations who refuse to acknowledge God or His Son. One reference has,

The restless sea is a frequent biblical image for the nations of the world (Isa. 17:12-13; 57:20; 60:5; Ezek. 26:3; Rev. 13:1; 17:15). Just as the ocean is sometimes stormy, so the nations of the world are sometimes in confusion or even at war; and just as the waves and currents of the ocean are unpredictable, so the course of world history is beyond man's ability to chart or predict. Historians like Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee have attempted to find a pattern to world history, but to no avail. From the human point of view, the nations seem to work out their own destinies, but the invisible winds of God blow over the surface of the water to accomplish His will in His time. If there's one message that is emphasized in the Book of Daniel it's that "the Most High rules in the kingdom of men"

Bible Exposition Commentary

So, out of this mass of the lost, comes four "beasts."

"The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before

it, and it had ten horns. "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

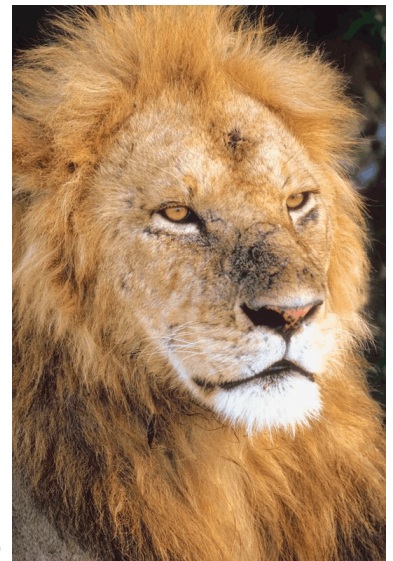
Daniel 7:4-8 (NASB)

In the drawings by Dr. Ironside (above) these four beasts were rather strange.

THE LION

K&D has an interesting view of the first beast.

The first beasts resembled a lion with eagle's wings. At the entrance to a temple at Birs Nimrud there has been found (Layard, Bab. and Nin.) such a symbolical figure, viz., a winged eagle with the head of a man. There have been found also images of winged beasts at Babylon (Münter, Relig. der Bab.). These discoveries may be referred to as evidence that this book was composed in Babylon, and also as explaining the Babylonian colouring of the dream. But the representation of nations and kingdoms by the images of beasts is much more widely spread, and affords the prophetic symbolism the necessary analogues and substrata for the vision



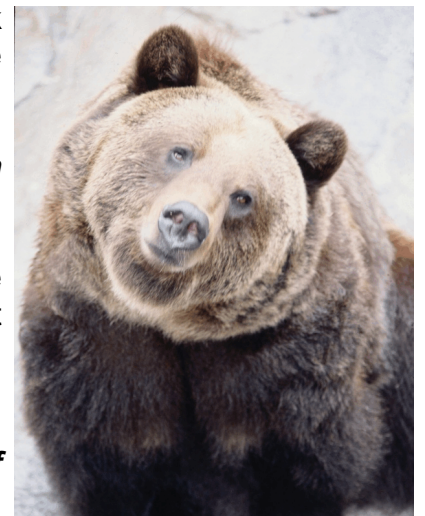
—Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament

The lion is said to be the "King of the beasts" and, certainly, this representation suits the prophetic message it brings. A lion with wings would be a very formidable creature. With the prowling of a lion and the speed of an eagle, it would be a frightening creature.

It would be but, then, its wings were plucked (off). Finally, it stood up on two feet like a man and received the mind of a human (many translations have "heart" but, to the Hebrews, the "heart" was where their thought processes took place). What was the meaning of this beast? Daniel describes the entire dream before he reveals the meaning.

The second was one resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth

Note that the Lion is more ferocious than the bear. Nevertheless, the bear is not to be trifled with. I would be especially careful of a bear that had three ribs in its mouth. The meaning of the ribs will be found when Daniel gives the interpretation.



The third one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads. Like the lion, the leopard had

wings Note that the name “leopard” is a derivative of the word for lion (i.e. “a smaller lion”). Other than the spots, a leopard looks a quite a bit like a lion. John saw such a beast in his Revelation.

And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

Revelation 13:2 (NASB)



In Revelation, all three creatures are part of one composite creature, an interesting fact, but we are not here studying Revelation..

This leopard *had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.* We already noted the lion with its wings. The leopard also had wings - four of them. The leopard is already a swift beast - with wings even more so. What really made it strange was that it had four heads. Regardless of the other qualities of the leopard, having four heads would not be good. It would not be good for any creature.

A fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

The last beast, the fourth one, I do not have a photo of. Daniel did not tell us what kind of animal it was. It was certainly terrifying with its iron teeth (mine are mostly silver and porcelain). Dr. McGee made an interesting comment here.

We all have seen a lion, or a bear, or a panther, but we have never seen a beast like this on land or sea or in the air. This is really an unusual beast. After you have had a night of dreaming about beasts like this, I don't think an aspirin tablet or a sleeping pill would do you any good at all! I think you would be awake the rest of the night.

Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

There is no animal on the face of the earth that has the terrifying look of this beast. There was no beast Daniel could name to describe it. Daniel says it “trampled down the remainder.” Remainder of what? What was left of the previous three beasts. As we shall see, this beast represents the Roman Empire and it's great expansion. There used to be a saying that when around, “The sun never sets on the Roman Empire.” This meant that Rome had provinces in all parts of the globe.

Daniel noted that this beast had ten “horns.” (Not automobile horns).

By metonymy, horn came to symbolize those who had power: political or military. In Mesopotamian art, horns indicate deity and deified kings from

Naram-Sin on. Thus in Daniel 7-8 the horns represent successions of kings or multiple branches of military power.

— Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

This will be explained at length when Daniel interprets the dream. If this is not a bad enough of a nightmare, Daniel continues with, *"While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts."*

We can see some of the sense here. Another person (or kingdom) would arise and eliminate three of the other ten. Which three were eliminated? What were the ten. I think that, perhaps, Dr. McGee was the most honest when he said he didn't know! Some have this,

There are different opinions concerning these ten kings; or rather which they were that constituted this division of the Roman empire. They are reckoned thus:—

- 1. The Roman senate.**
- 2. The Greeks, in Ravenna.**
- 3. The Lombards in Lombardy.**
- 4. The Buns in Hungary.**
- 5. The Alemans, in Germany.**
- 6. The Franks in France.**
- 7. The Burgundians in Burgundy.**
- 8. The Saracens in Africa, and a part of Spain.**
- 9. The Goths, in other parts of Spain.**
- 10. And the Saxons, in Britain.**

— Adam Clarke's Commentary

Again, it is better not to speculate, especially before we see Daniel's interpretation.

"I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.

Daniel 7:9-10 (NASB)

*"I kept looking Until thrones were set up, The KJV has here, **thrones were cast down**. This is a proper translation of the Hebrew but, I suppose, most translators did not think that a fitting translation.*

There is a solemn sitting in judgment by God, and sentence is pronounced. Seats or chairs were placed. ויָמַר , activ. with an indefinite subject: they were

thrown, i.e., they were placed in order quickly, or with a noise. Seats, not merely a throne for God the Judge, but a number of seats for the assembly sitting in judgment with God.

— Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament

The Ancient of Days took His seat. Guess who the “Ancient of Days” might have been!

It was the venerable appearance of old age that was uppermost in the writer's mind. "What Daniel sees is not the eternal God Himself, but an aged man, in whose dignified and impressive form God reveals Himself

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

There are two adjectives to depict him: *His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool.* Have you heard these adjectives before?

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.

Isaiah 1:18 (NASB)

There is only one who satisfies that description except the person who has accepted Christ as Savior. This is God himself. It is rather uncommon to “see” God in the Scriptures. There are many anthropomorphic terms for God, such as the “hand of God,” “the eyes of God,” etc. But here we have the entire personification of God.

The description of God must not be taken literally, because God doesn't have a body, wear clothes, or grow white hair. These things are symbolic of His nature and character: He is eternal, holy, and sovereign.

Bible Exposition Commentary

After the description of God Himself, is the description of His throne. *His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire.*

So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis 3:24 (NASB)

First, realize that a Hebrew word that ends in “im” is (almost always) plural. There was more than one cherub at the entrance to the Garden. Between them was one with a flaming sword which turned in every direction. To turn, wheels must have been involved. The sword would have the same effect as the throne.

The passage should be rendered thus: "And he dwelt between the cherubim at the East of the Garden of Eden and a fierce fire, or Shekinah, unfolding itself to preserve the way of the tree of life."

— Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

This explains the wheels. It was not uncommon for thrones to have wheels so they could be moved about. If you read Ezekiel, you will find all the wheels you need!

So, Daniel observed God sitting on His throne.

A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened. We find the same description from John.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

Revelation 5:11-12 (NASB)

There is no question (at least, in my mind) that we are looking at the judgement seat of Christ which will end this period in God's plan.

"Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.

Daniel 7:11-12 (NASB)

Daniel must have really "been into" this dream by now. He "kept looking." The "boastful words" from the little horn. The horrible beast which Daniel saw was then destroyed, by fire. The "rest of the beasts" (the first three), the remnant of them, were allowed to continue in their weakened states. This was for an "appointed" period of time. More on this when Daniel gives the interpretation.

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom

is one Which will not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13-14 (NASB)

Daniel then saw one like the “Son of Man.” This was not just Daniel’s interpretation,

"And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

Matthew 24:30 (NASB)

And He said* to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

John 1:51 (NASB)

When Christ takes his seat on the throne, He will have absolute power. *And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him.* Note only will his power be world-wide, it will also be everlasting.

"As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. "I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:

Daniel 7:15-16 (NASB)

By this time Daniel was quite confused. For this reason he did the right thing - he asked questions. My tentmaking career was in engineering. The most important thing and Engineer learns is how to ask questions and whom to ask them of.

In order to find an answer to his questions, the prophet “approached one of those standing there.” Since angels were standing in the presence of the Ancient of Days ready to serve him (cf. v. 10) and since in the Bible angels often interpret visions for mortals (cf. Dan 9:21ff.; 10:10ff.; Zech 1:9ff.; 2:3ff.; Rev 17:7ff.), this probably was an angel, possibly Gabriel (cf. 8:16 and 9:21).

New American Commentary.

Daniel doesn't explain how he could be asleep in his bed and yet be able to speak to an angel standing before the throne of God. Perhaps like Paul, he didn't know if he was in the body or out of the body

Bible Exposition Commentary.

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up

to the third heaven. And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows— was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 (NASB)

John's experience was similar.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

Revelation 1:10-16 (NASB)

So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things. This is similar to the situation with John as recorded below.

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Revelation 4:1 (NASB)

So, now we get to the explanation of this very strange dream.

'These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth. 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.' "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates. "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and

overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

Daniel 7:17-22 (NASB)

As we have been alluding to, and as you may have been equating these to Nebuchadnezzar's statue dream, these four beasts represent four kingdoms, the same four as we saw before. Previously in this chapter we read, *"The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man.* This was the symbol of the Babylonian Empire. When Nebuchadnezzar got too proud, his "wings were clipped," and he was made to live like the beasts of the field. But, eventually, he stood on his feet like a man and continued on with his kingdom. Incidentally, a lion with wings was on the seal of Babylon!

Then we saw the bear or something *resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'* There is little question among Bible scholars and historians that the bear represented the Medio-Persian (double) Empire.

Another beast—like to a bear—This was the Medo-Persian empire, represented here under the symbol of the bear, as the largest species of these animals was found in Media, a mountainous, cold, and rough country, covered with woods. The Medes and Persians are compared to a bear on account of their cruelty and thirst after blood, a bear being a most voracious and cruel animal; the bear is termed by Aristotle an all-devouring animal; and the Medo-Persians are known to have been great robbers and spoilers.

— Adam Clarke's Commentary

The rest of the interpretation is quite difficult. Does the fact that it is raised on two feet refer to the fact that the Median kingdom was less powerful than the Persian? Does it mean it was getting ready to attack? We really can not say. The three ribs in its mouth are also troublesome. The most likely meaning is that it had just finished devouring the last three parts of the Babylonian Empire.

The third beast, the leopard, is a bit easier to interpret.

Four wings of a fowl—The Babylonian empire was represented with two wings; and they sufficiently marked the rapidity of Nebuchadnezzar's conquests; but the Macedonian has here four wings; for nothing, in the history of the world, was equal to the conquests of Alexander, who ran through all the countries from Illyricum and the Adriatic Sea to the Indian Ocean and the River Ganges; and in twelve years subdued part of Europe, and all Asia.

— Adam Clarke's Commentary

The four heads are also easily explained. The Grecian Empire was divided into four parts, each with one of Alexander's four generals in command. The meaning of these three beasts is not terribly

difficult to interpret. The fourth beast? That is another story. Daniel had to have that one explained to him.

"Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

Daniel 7:23-27 (NASB)

We have already noted that the fourth beast represents the Roman Empire. One difference is that it would devour the entire world. I have noted previously the saying that used to go around, "The sun never sets on the British Empire."

Who are the ten kings? Is this a series of kings or are all ten ruling at the same time? The fact that another king would arise and subdue three of the previous ones would indicate that they were contemporaneous.

I could simply say, it really does not matter! Why? Daniel is told that "*they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.*" This is a rather strange way of telling time, to say the least. How do we interpret this?

Some commentators are "quite sure" that this is a period of three and one-half years. Others are not that dogmatic. But we can look at the following:

I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

Daniel 12:7 (NASB)

We have the same expression here. But following this we have:

"How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days! "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

Daniel 12:12-13 (NASB)

If you divide 1335 by 365 the result is about 3.5. Thus this would be 3 and ½ years, corresponding to the above calculation. Why it is not exactly 3½ years is not known. Going to John's account, we have,

"Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

Revelation 11:2 (NASB)

Forty-two months is, of course, 3 ½ years. So it appears that all of these times are the same.

NOTE ON THE MEASUREMENT OF TIME (I.E. THE YEAR)

We use a calendar which consists of 7 31-day months, 4 30-day months and one 28 ¼-day month (February, including leap years) This is pretty close to the actual movement of the Earth around the Sun.

The Israelites used (and still do?) months that alternated between 30 days and 29 days (actually 29 ½ days = a lunar month). If you figure this out, their year would be 354 days long - 11 ¼ days short of a year. No problem - they simply add an extra month when things get too far out of whack.

In prophecy, months are considered to all be 30 days long. A prophetic year would be 5 ¼ days short. In prophecy, this is not considered. Hence, when considering time in prophetic passages, you should usually use a 30 day month.

What this beast and the time period represent is described below.

The fact that the word "time" represented a year was also illustrated in Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32. The similar expression "a time, times and half a time" was indicated in Revelation 12:14, also representing three-and-a-half years. In all these cases the probability was that it referred to the last three-and-a-half years preceding the second coming of Christ to the earth.

The description of the final ruler as one that ruthlessly "crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left" (Dan. 7:19) was characteristic of the Roman Empire historically and was here applied to its final form when it comes to the status of a world dictatorship in the last three-and-a-half years before the Second Coming.

Every Prophecy of the Bible.

This would indicate that the "little horn" is one and the same as the "Antichrist." At this point an important question should be asked. Most of Daniel's prophecies have been literally fulfilled to the nth degree.

"The prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, then that prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent."

Jeremiah 28:9 (NASB)

The test of a true prophet of God is whether his prophecies come to pass or not. In this case, since most of what Daniel has prophesied as come about, we are to assume that the parts that have not yet been fulfilled will, someday, be fulfilled. In addition

"But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed .

Matthew 18:16 (NASB)

Much of Daniel's prophecies that have not yet occurred are very consistent with John's prophecies in Revelation. So, Daniel's dream took him from the day he dreamed it to the time of the second coming of Christ. As we proceed through this book, we shall encounter other important prophetic subjects.

"At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

Daniel 7:28 (NASB)

Daniel ends this chapter in a curious way. He says he "kept the matter" to himself. If so, why are we now reading it? He must have changed his mind (or God changed his mind.)