



“The righteous . . . shall grow
like a cedar in Lebanon”

Psalm 92:12

Reading Companion
to the Book of
Daniel

*“So they read in the book in the law of God . . .
and caused them to understand the reading”*

Nehemiah 8:8

By
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Preface

The contents of this book are the essence of a course joyfully taught in a Bible College setting in South Africa many years ago. We have kept the class divisions used in the course in order to make these materials more easily usable for further class teaching, Bible study, or Sunday School. Therefore on the following Contents page you will find listed both the 20 class portions as well as the 12 chapters of the book of Daniel.

In the book of Daniel not only do we find the essential framework for all Bible prophecy, but it is a wonderful study on sound Christian character as well. God speaks to and through saints who are resolute in their determination to not compromise with evil. And the impact of such lives carries far! What a vital message for the church of our day.

*“He that hath an ear, let him hear
what the Spirit saith unto the churches”*

Bill Daniels

Our **Reading Companions** are simple commentaries, covering various books of the Bible, providing easy to follow help in understanding what you read in your Bible, without becoming overly technical. These Bible study books are earnestly taught, practically applied, and have been a blessing to many.

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As well as; “Through the Beloved Book of Books
A Survey of the New Testament”

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“That the living may
know that the Most
High ruleth in the
kingdom of men”

(Dan. 4:17)

Class 1 – Introduction

It does not take a theology degree to recognize the great emphasis upon prophecy (future things) in God's Book of books. But there is something else quite evident. Good people believe in many a very different view with regards to prophecy. And they're all using the Bible to demonstrate their case. The study of future things is a vital one or the Lord would not have given so much attention to it, yet clearly it's a study requiring a great deal of caution if we would build our view straight and true. I believe the sound foundation for a correct view of future things is laid right here in the study we are currently lined up on. The Old Testament (O.T.) book of Daniel forms the basis for understanding and properly placing most all of the rest of prophetic truth. To go wrong here at the footer is invariably to end wrong. If you miss on this book you're going to have a great deal of trouble keeping everything else straight. Thus it's a very important work we do together in this course of study.

Background

Daniel was a young Jewish man carried off from Judah to captivity in Babylon by king Nebuchadnezzar. In the introduction to the Bible

Knowledge Commentary on Daniel an interesting background is given of the surrounding history;

- The empire of Assyria had dominated the east for many years.
- Then Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, fell to Babylon in the late (early?) 600's B.C.
- Many Assyrians fled to the city of Haran to the west making another stand there.
- Two years later Babylon attacked and defeated them again.
- The Assyrians turned to Egypt for help.
- As Pharaoh Neco of Egypt led his army to their aid, King Josiah of Judah came out against him and was killed, his army defeated (II Chron. 35:20-24).
- Assyria and Egypt were unsuccessful against Babylon.
- A few years later Babylon defeated Egypt at Carchemish, and then took Palestine into her fold in 605/606 B.C. under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar.
- It seems Daniel and friends were taken with other captives to Babylon at this first attack

upon Judah and Jerusalem.

- Thus began the 70-year captivity of the Lord's people in Babylon (Jer. 25:11-12), Cyrus only allowing their return to Jerusalem in 536 B.C.
- Responding to rebellion in Judah under Jehoiachin, Nebuchadnezzar returned, again defeated Jerusalem, and many more captives were taken to Babylon. Ezekiel the prophet was apparently taken with this 2nd deportation (Ezek. 1:1-3; II Chron. 36:6-10).
- Trouble again arose with Jerusalem, bringing Nebuchadnezzar back to finish the job in 588 B.C. The city was flattened this time and the temple burned. Again more captives were taken.

Daniel was probably a teenager at the time of his capture (1:4, 15, *"youths"*). He was taken from among *"the king's seed, and of the princes; Children (youths) in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans"* (1:3-4). Daniel was trained and placed among the counsellors of King Nebuchadnezzar. Through God's blessing and wisdom he quickly rose

to a place of leadership, becoming one of the most prominent men of Jewish history. Daniel served under four rulers; Nebuchadnezzar & Belshazzar of Babylon, and Darius & Cyrus of Medo-Persia. Over a span of 7 decades he served as Nebuchadnezzar's chief ruler and governor over the wise men (2:48), as third ruler over the land under Belshazzar (5:29), and as leader over the whole realm under Darius (6:1-3). Daniel's ministry was entirely in Babylon and continued throughout the 70 years of captivity, a longer ministry than any other O.T. prophet. The record of events in the book of Daniel extends to the 3rd year of Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire. Daniel would have been pushing 90 years of age by that time. Throughout his faithful life he became known as a man of firm conviction (1:8-16), prayer (6:10), and clearest insight (5:14).

The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were ministering as well during the early years of Daniel's ministry, Jeremiah in Judah and Ezekiel in Babylon.

Though Daniel's book was partly an historical record of his life, of much greater importance are the many prophetic revelations recorded by him within its pages.

The folly of higher criticism has raised question

marks all over this vital book, expressing doubts over Daniel's authorship, over just how valid his prophecies are, questioning when he actually wrote (thus whether he wrote prophetically before the events or historically after the fact, fraudulently presenting his writings as prophecy), and even suggesting he never existed. But consider that Ezekiel made reference to Daniel (Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3, written while Daniel served in the king's court in Babylon), and Jesus cast no shadow of doubt over Daniel or his message, speaking clearly of "*Daniel the prophet*" (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14). *The Bible stands or falls together!*

Purpose

The main purposes of the book are;

- To comfort the hearts of God's people in their chastening, with assurances concerning the future.
- To reveal the framework of God's program right up to the 2nd coming of Christ.

It was a dark hour in the history of the nation of Israel. They faced the horror of defeat and captivity because of their stubbornly unfaithful disobedience toward their God. Those solid pillars of the city of Jerusalem and Solomon's beautiful temple were

gone. The way of worship God gave to them was impossible without the temple and altar, which were no more. Those who understood and mourned for the offence of their sin may well have wondered if they had offended the Lord away, such that they could no longer hope for His special interest into the future (as some perhaps wonder among the Jews today). Peter must have felt the same after his three-times denial of Jesus. “I’ve offended Him whom I love! I’ve denied Him again and again! Perhaps it’s just too late! Perhaps this is for keeps, and I can no longer hope for His care!” As when the Shulamite was too slow in responding to her lover’s approach, and then he was gone and she didn’t know where to find him! (Song of Sol. 6:2-6). But God’s answer through the message of this book was “NO!” This was not the case. God still cared for His covenant people. He was still working in their behalf. Still working mightily over the affairs of men and their kingdoms to bring about His purposes for His people. Though they had fallen they were not utterly cast down. The book of Esther similarly expresses the Lord’s protective care of His people, even outside their Promised Land. How persistently pursuing is the love of God!! As stubborn as the Lord’s covenant people were in their rejection of Him, so the Lord meets their stubbornness with His stubbornly tenacious loving-kindness. Though Israel has at

times fallen to the very depths of wickedness, as seen in Ezekiel 8ff, and in the betrayal and murder of their own Messiah, yet still the Lord resolutely persists in His commitment to those people, and will remain so committed into the ages of the ages. Though God's people had so resisted Him throughout their wilderness wanderings, yet Balaam proclaimed of the Lord, *"He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him"* (Num. 23:21). It's a lesson on the truth of eternal security (Jn. 10:27-31). Our God simply does not let go of those who are His.

Theme

The theme shining throughout Daniel's book is that there is a Most High God in heaven who rules! (2:28, 21; 5:21) Though in Israel's crushing and captivity through Babylon all seemed quite out of control, the Lord's message through Daniel is that there is no moment on history's timeline outside of His control. This was the unforgettable lesson learned by Babylon's king in chapter 4, *"... that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men"* (vs. 17, 25, 32). *"He doeth according to His will"* (4:35).

Distinctives

God's revelation through Daniel gives a broad outline of God's programme, from Nebuchadnezzar's day until Christ's return. Again, the outline given ahead of time expresses control. In fact Daniel's prophecy provides the key to understanding the "Olivet Discourse" (Matt. 24-25), Thessalonians, Revelation, with all biblical prophecy. Jesus referred to "*the times of the Gentiles*", and of Jerusalem trodden down until that time be fulfilled (Lk. 21:24). Paul spoke of the same when pointing to that coming day when "*the fullness of the Gentiles be come in*" (Rom. 11:25). They refer to the continuing era of Gentile occupation or dominance over Jerusalem, beginning with Israel's captivity in Babylon and ending with Christ's millennial kingdom established at His return. Daniel's prophecy lays out the span of "*the times of the Gentiles*" from beginning to end, with six kingdoms described, one following after the other;

- **Babylon**

- Head of gold (2:32, 37-38).
- Lion with eagle's wings (7:4).

- **Medo-Persia**

- Breast & arms of silver (2:32, 39).
- Bear (7:5).

- Ram with two horns (8:3-4, 20).
- 11:2.
- **Greece**
 - Belly & thighs of brass (2:32, 39).
 - Winged leopard with four heads (7:6).
 - Angry he-goat (8:5-14, 21-25).
 - Kings of north & south (11:3-35).
- **Rome**
 - Legs of iron (2:33, 40).
 - Dreadful & terrible beast (7:7).
- **Antichrist's** brief but brutal rule
 - Feet & toes of mixed iron and clay (2:33; 41-43).
 - Little horn (7:8, 11, 20, 24-26).
 - *"Prince that shall come"* (9:26-27).
 - Wilful king (11:36-45).
- **Christ's kingdom**
 - Stone cut without hands (2:34-35, 44-45).
 - Son of Man (7:9-10, 13-14, 18, 22, 27).

Some of Daniel's prophecies are so detailed they give

the impression of looking back on history. Thus his writings have been called “prophetic history”.

Daniel is well known for his prophecy of the 70 weeks in chapter 9;

- The timing of the Lord’s renewed work with the nation of Israel is given in 9:24-25 (Nehemiah’s day).
- Christ’s 1st coming is anticipated in 9:26, as well as His death and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- The “parenthesis” period of the church age can be discerned in 9:26.
- The yet remaining 70th “week”, or 7-year tribulation period is described in 9:27 (compare Matt. 24 & Rev. 6-18).

We find in Daniel a great deal of revelation, both in type and direct description, of the coming *antichrist* and his dealings.

The doctrine of *angels* is very prominent in Daniel’s book, with both Gabriel and Michael named and active.

The doctrine of *man* is evident as well, with a clear

view of human depravity, God's righteous judgment upon sin, and the possibility of His grace.

There were two languages involved in the original writing of the book;

- Hebrew (1:1-2:3 & 8:1-12:13). These portions are more related to the nation of Israel.
- Aramaic (2:4-7:28). This section presents prophesy more related to the Gentile world.

Survey

Chapter 1 – Purposed, Proved, & Prospered.

We immediately learn of the commitment that set apart Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, & Azariah. They refused to compromise their standards before their God, even to preserve their own lives (1:8-16). God honoured their righteous resolve (1:15-16). He not only *preserved* them from death but *prospered* them above all others (1:17-21).

Chapter 2 – Dream-Reader.

To save his life and the lives of all of the wise men in Babylon, Daniel asked and received opportunity to relate and interpret the king's dream. Compare Joseph before Pharaoh in Egypt (Gen. 41). The result is a beginning of God's revelation of His plan for the

ages. Beginning here from a broader perspective, moving later to greater detail.

Chapter 3 – Pyro-Persecution.

Daniel spoke in chapter 2 of a great prophetic statue, with only the head of gold depicting Nebuchadnezzar. The king, in his prideful lust for immortal prominence, produced a great statue *all of gold!* In demanding worship of it he demanded worship of himself. Again, their righteous resolve is seen in their refusal to bow!

Chapter 4 – Proud Made Humble.

Nebuchadnezzar bowed at last to “*the Most High God*”. Proof of his heart change is seen in his public letter acknowledging his humiliating encounter with the Most High (4:1-3).

Chapter 5 – Weighed & Found Wanting.

When the Lord wrote on the wall for Belshazzar with the “*fingers of a man’s hand*” the wise men could not interpret. So the Queen mother advised it was time to call for Daniel. Daniel announced the end for Babylon, because “*you knew all this*” (5:22). God holds us responsible for what He knows we know!

Chapter 6 – Lock-Jawed Lions.

In the conspiracy against First President Daniel God

turned the tables, making the conspirators lion lunch. Daniel showed the same firm conviction of his youth, refusing still to compromise no matter what the cost. What a towering testimony when the only handle your enemies can grasp is your love for God (6:4-5).

Chapter 7 – Vision of Four Beasts.

Greater detail on God’s plan for the ages, with sharpening focus upon antichrist (*“little horn”*).

Chapter 8 – Vision of Ram & He-Goat.

Picturing the Medo-Persian Empire conquered by Greece (named). As in chapter 7 there is special focus upon one particular king, which becomes a type of antichrist.

Chapter 9 – Vision of 70 “Weeks”.

In the midst of Daniel’s great prayer of national confession and petition Gabriel arrived with answers concerning the future. The timeframe for Gentile rule until Messiah is laid out, and the church age can be discerned.

Chapter 10 – Strengthened by a Stranger.

Chapter 11 – Kings of North & South.

Great detail is given of internal skirmishing within

the Grecian Empire over control of Palestine. Again, one particular Grecian ruler rises out of the text (Antiochus IV Epiphanes) and then from vs. 36 the focus seems to extend beyond him to the one he foreshadows in the coming antichrist.

Chapter 12 – End of the Age Details.

Class 2 – Daniel 1:1-21

Chapter 1 – Purposed, Proved, & Prospered

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem and took it in the days of King Jehoiakim of Judah. We find the record of it in the historical books of II Kings (24:1-2) & II Chronicles (36:5-7). There were many things God was working in that move. As always, He is accomplishing His purposes all the way around with every move He makes. One of those purposes was to bring His punishment upon the wicked king of Judah. King Jehoiakim was the eldest son of godly King Josiah, but he was nothing like his father. This was the king who didn't appreciate the words of warning God sent through His prophet and spokesman, Jeremiah. So when the scroll of Jeremiah's writing was read in the king's presence, he took out his pen knife and personally cut it up portion by portion and threw the pieces into the fire (Jer. 36). Nobody treats the Lord or his words that way and gets away with it. And so this "tragedy" of Judah's defeat and captivity was partly God's answer to King Jehoiakim. How a man handles God's words is what Daniel chapter 1 is all about. Daniel was the contrast of men like Jehoiakim.

Nebuchadnezzar took many captives back to

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

Dan 1:2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

Babylon, young Daniel among them. We know little of Daniel's background. I wish we could know more. But the Lord didn't see it as important or we would have more. The vital issue, and therefore the detail coming down to us, is that Daniel became a man God could use. And the means by which he became such a useable vessel is found in this first chapter of his blessed book. It is the making of a man of God.

1:1-7 – The Setting.

Vs. 2 – We're told twice of Nebuchadnezzar's presentation of the temple vessels to the "*house of his god*". These "*vessels of the house of God*" would have included such items as the golden altar of incense, table of showbread, and candelabra, as well as the bowls, snuffers, basins, spoons, and other sacred utensils (I Ki. 7:48-50). There was no shining idol to represent the Lord. What else but to put the sacred

temple utensils at the feet of their gods? Nebuchadnezzar's victory was considered the victory of his god(s). These sacred things were taken as a trophy, as tokens of dominance. "Hey, look whose god is bigger!" Remember the captured ark of the Lord deposited in the temple of Dagon in the days of Eli (I Sam. 5). But the truth is stated at the beginning of vs. 2. "*The Lord gave*", both defeat to Judah and the temple vessels to Babylon. The so-called "gods" of Babylon took nothing. There was no victory over the Lord, though it may have appeared that way to the watching world. The Lord is willing to allow the appearance of His defeat for a time. He knows who He is and what He's doing and that all will be quite evident in the end. No need in Him to maintain an image. Even as Jesus felt no need to hold onto the outward form of who He is when coming to earth as a man (Phil. 2). The cause of this event was not the Lord's weakness, for He "*doeth according to His will . . . among the inhabitants of the earth*" (4:35). The Lord was strong to keep His word in bringing upon Israel what He had repeatedly warned He would do through His prophets. It was really a matter of the weakness of His people in their sin and run-away idolatry (II Ki. 21:3-5; II Chron. 28:2-3). That nation of the Lord would have been untouchable, no matter how strong Babylon became, had they walked with their God. This we see illustrated in Samson, who

was untouchable as long as the Spirit of God was upon him.

Much of the reason for this defeat and captivity was the Lord keeping His word concerning failure to keep the land Sabbath (II Chron. 36:20-21; Jer. 25:9-12; 29:10). He had declared to His people from the beginning that every 7th year the land was to have its rest. Yet for 490 years in the land they had ignored the Lord's words on this score. Again, the very opposite to the theme of this chapter and of Daniel's life. Seemed for a long time like the nation was getting away with it too. Until Babylon arrived on their doorstep painted for war, and it suddenly became quite clear that they were getting away with nothing after all. "*Be not deceived, God is not mocked.*" It's a natural thing for men to think this way when not hearing directly from God for a time, to think He will never really track our subtle disobediences, to think we will never answer for our neglect of the details of His words to us. And then suddenly we're standing before Him and the entire point of concern is what we did with His words. Nobody dishonours the Lord or ignores His words and gets away with it. A man's sin finds him out eventually. And so, in their unbridled idolatry, God's rebellious children were taken to the very mother of idolatry, to Babylon. In their stubborn evil they were

Dan 1:3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

Dan 1:4 Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

taken to the very fountainhead of evil. It seems the Lord was saying in essence, “If you are going to be so obstinate in your choice for wrong, I will put you among your own kind”!

Vs. 3-4 – This interesting policy of King Nebuchadnezzar is no surprise. Isaiah had predicted this very thing years before (Isa. 39:7). These were no ordinary Jewish teenagers, but good looking, bright, intelligent, well-trained children of the Jewish royalty. Again in fulfilment of Isaiah’s very specific words to King Hezekiah, “*of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget*”. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar’s purpose through this policy was to bring together the collective wisdom of many nations. Perhaps he wanted men trained to handle the foreign affairs of their own lands. These young men were to be schooled in all that Babylon was and had to offer. Thus Daniel became as Moses, who

Dan 1:5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

“was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). He rose to a position like Joseph’s, 2nd to the Pharaoh of Egypt. And as young Samuel, the Lord began a great work in him in the early years of his life.

Interesting to note how good looks was and is a matter of importance in the *pagan* world, and there only. Esther’s rise in Persia was through her physical beauty. The world has always valued things very differently than God does.

The term “Chaldean” referred both to the people of Babylon as a whole, and to a particular learned class of wise men (2:2). The Lord will very soon show the weakness of the world’s “wisdom”, and the superiority of His wisdom over all else in chapter 2 when Daniel alone is able to provide the king with the answers he sought.

Vs. 5 – They were not to lack for food under the king’s care during their years of training. But what was

Dan 1:6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

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

meant as a gesture of favour and care, presented a problem to the faithful.

Vs. 6 – Now arising to the forefront among all the other captives we meet Daniel and his three friends. The reason for their rise becomes immediately obvious. Long may have been the list of other names, but we know no others. As always the focus of the Lord's attention follows those faithful to walk with Him. Many the common "Christians" for whom the Lord never shows Himself strong, because their heart is never *"perfect toward Him"* (II Chron. 16:9). Only these four stand out before us, because only these stood out before the Lord. It is to our wisdom to understand why, and of our greater wisdom to follow their good and godly example. The corrupting influence of Babylon was the same as the worldly influence of our own day. *Few* there be who truly shun the evil sway around us to stand out for the Lord, as different, separate, resisting the world's pressures as these did. Named and immortalized

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

they are by the Lord. *Many* there be (the vast majority in fact) who bow to the world's sway, becoming soiled vessels and thus useless to the Lord, left out of His record of champions. Here were *true* champions! And here was a reminder to the Lord's people in that day of national slide to apostasy, that there is always a remnant who refuse the slide. Always there will be some among those who call themselves the Lord's, who really are His with a whole heart. Understand how chapter 1 must come before chapter 2. Before one can be a mouthpiece for the Lord his devotion to the Lord must be uncompromising and unquestioned.

Vs. 7 – The purpose of the name change was to further claim these young men for the gods and service of Babylon, further removing them from their old people, religion, and culture, further making them Babylonian. Compare the same with Joseph in Egypt (Gen. 41:45) and Esther in Persia (Est. 2:7). But though such an outward change be forced upon them, the true Lord of glory held the hearts of these

men, an inward yieldedness none could touch from the outside.

1:8-16 – Daniel’s Devotion.

Vs. 8 – Though these men were graced to be so spared and blessed by the king, presented with an opportunity above all others among the captives, their good fortune represented a problem for the conscientious. It appears the foods offered did not meet the requirements of the Mosaic Law in some way. We’re not told what aspect of the law was violated (with blood, unclean animals, etc.). The problem seemed to relate to the flesh of animals since the solution involved “*pulse*” (vs. 16), literally “sown things” or planted things, i.e. vegetables. Perhaps it was that the foods were openly dedicated to the gods of Babylon. To eat would perhaps recognize their false gods (I Cor. 8), thus continuing and supporting idolatry, one of the major causes bringing on this captivity. The particular details of offence are not given. Left in doubt because it doesn’t matter. Lest we be given to assessing the merits of that decree against this one, whether this or that was valid cause for this stand or not. It didn’t matter which decree or how “small” an issue it might have been. The concern simply related to the violation of *something* the Lord had decreed. That’s all of it. That’s all that

mattered. It was a question of the conscience, whether to offend the conscience or not, “*for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*” (Rom. 14:23). It was a question of how they would handle the Lord’s spoken words, to the smallest detail. Would one ignore it because of the threat involved, and thus “*defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat*”? Would they make an issue out of something those around them considered a non-issue? Surely *to live* is of greater importance most would have argued! But “*man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*”. Man is to live by the words of God’s lips. And if obeying God means going hungry, or even death itself, so be it! Oh but surely the Lord must recognize that they did not have a choice! Right? The Lord had allowed their captivity under this king. The king had spoken concerning their food. They simply had no choice! Many would have so reasoned their way out of conviction. It was a moment! A *determining* moment in the lives of these young men.

The question was whether to live or die;
To quit the Lord or make a try.

It was a moment of decision that set Daniel and friends apart from and above all the others who proved willing to compromise on such a “small matter”. Yet again, national failure to keep the law

of their God was what put His people there in the first place. It was no small matter! It is never a small matter to live by the words of God. Never an insignificant move to leave or neglect them. I'm sure some such ponderings were in all of Daniel's thoughts. It was a situation much like Joseph faced in Potiphar's house (Gen. 39). A test of his faithfulness in a foreign land. How can one ever advance in a pagan environment while clinging to the Lord's principles of right? How can one progress in the business world while clinging to the same? Truth is, how can one advance before the Lord without faithfulness in the small matters of obedience? One faithful in the little things can be trusted with much. One willing to cheat on the smaller issues of obedience will never be entrusted with greater things. As Harry Ironside said, "Anything that defiles the conscience breaks the link of communion with God and hinders our advance in spiritual things . . . God does not commonly impart his secrets to careless men, but to those who are devoted to His interests." Paul's earnest counsel to his young friend Timothy was to be careful to *hold "faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck"* (I Tim. 1:19). A trampled conscience leads on to a shipwrecked faith. To soil the conscience is to tip the spiritual tilt downward.

Dan 1:9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

“But Daniel . . .” (vs. 8) – Obviously Daniel was the driving influence here, with his three friends willing to follow his good example. His simple resolve was as the apostles before the Jewish leaders, *“We ought to obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29). And Daniel was immediately rewarded with three likeminded friends who stood with him in that resolve. How good the Lord to not leave him alone in the decision he must make. Yet one wonders what the response of those friends would have been had there been no Daniel. God was good to them too, to give them a leader. It takes a leader to lead followers who otherwise might falter, one with the courage to just stand up and say, “By God’s grace this is what I’m going to do. Who will join me?”

Notice that though Daniel *“purposed in his heart”* or *“set his heart”*, his approach was not to stubbornly set his heels with ears laid back. There was a graciousness about him that showed a good deal of sense and maturity. Firm conviction does not need to wear belligerence. He wasn’t given to opposing everything, displaying an attitude. He opposed only what he must. We see the result of his right heart in

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

Dan 1:11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

Dan 1:12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

the care of Ashpenaz, the prince of the eunuchs, for Daniel. Even as Joseph always found the favour of men as well (Jacob, Potiphar, prisoner keeper, Pharaoh), because of his integrity before God. Even as Jesus grew *“in favour with God and men”* (Lk. 2:52).

Vs. 10 – The man’s response was reasonable. King Nebuchadnezzar was not a man to be crossed. We’ll see him fly into a rage in chapter 2 and order all the wise men put to death. Life itself was subject to the king’s fancy in the Babylon of that day. So it’s quite understandable that this man should be afraid to do anything contrary to the king’s word. Should Daniel and friends not fare so well physically and it be discovered that Ashpenaz gave the word for them contrary to the king’s commands, it would mean trouble for sure.

Dan 1:13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

Dan 1:14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

Dan 1:15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

Dan 1:16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

Vs. 11-13 – Daniel had a plan. His proposal was reasonable as well. Make it only a ten-day trial. Hardly enough time for a young man's stature to shrivel away such that the king would notice. But enough time for the Lord to show Himself strong in their behalf.

Vs. 14-16 – Test passed. At the end of the prescribed days, upon careful examination, Daniel and friends not only looked better but were fatter than all who ate of the king's allotted food. It was not that they were eating such phenomenally better food. I would not consider this a thumbs-up for vegetarianism. It was the Lord working together with them in their commitment to do right. The Lord moves with power when we honour Him with our resolve to honour His word and will. By the same principle the Lord had

Dan 1:17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

promised to make the 6th year miraculously produce for that man resolved to honour His words by keeping the land Sabbath in the 7th year (Lev. 25). The resolve to do right brought God's evident power and provision for Mr. Right-heart.

1:17-21 – Results of Godly Resolve.

Through their determination to not dishonour the smallest part of the Lord's words, God's blessing was upon them. Don't miss the fact that it was not their more diligent studies, but a matter of what "*God gave them*". Not only did these come to understand all the learning of the Chaldeans, they knew the truth of God beyond it as well. And their grasp of the truth was unaffected by their learning tinged with pagan error, for they had shown themselves uncompromising from the start. You can be sure that all those other boys who had so easily compromised on the matter of the king's food came out the other end of their training having shifted some in their perception of God's truth. No firm hold on right *practice* leads on to no firm hold on right

Dan 1:18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan 1:19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

beliefs, and visa versa. Their trampled consciences in flight from the Lord's perfect will surely led their way, as Jonah's, down, down, down to a shipwrecked faith.

Vs. 18 – It appears the final exam involved a personal interview before the king. And now Nebuchadnezzar himself was impressed with these four, as Pharaoh had been with Joseph. Again, when a man is truly pleasing to the Lord he tends to win the favour of his other authorities as well. *“When a man's ways please the Lord He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him”* (Prov. 16:7). Things work and fall into place when we put the Lord first. *“In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct [level out or make straight] thy paths”* (Prov. 3:6).

Please don't miss the message of this chapter by virtue of its familiarity. Daniel refused to compromise the smallest standard of right *no matter*

Dan 1:20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Dan 1:21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

what the cost! And as a direct result of that resolve he became the focus of God's attention and ours, and a hero in time and eternity. All of those other nameless young men brought over with him fall by the wayside of history through their willingness to so easily let go of God's words. *"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him"* (II Chron. 16:9). In our day, as in Daniel's, the Lord searches the hearts of men for one who will make himself a useable vessel. Nebuchadnezzar's test in this chapter was far less significant than he would have cared to believe. There was a far, far more important test taking place here before the King of kings, one the earthly king never even knew about. Had Daniel not passed *that* seemingly small yet far more vital test, he would have become no prophet of God, no name known and remembered. Daniel went down in history as a man with *"understanding in all visions and dreams"* because he was a man who would not be forced to

think little of the Lord's words or treat them small, because he was a man who determined in his heart to remain separate from sin, separate from all that is opposed to God's heart and way. Joseph followed the same pattern before him, finding special "*understanding . . . in dreams*" from the Lord only after he first proved himself wholly faithful to his God.

Where are the men of like resolve in our day? Why not you and me? It starts with the little things. Is all entirely put right with the Lord in your heart and life right now? Are you currently walking worthy of Him unto all pleasing? Are you walking in the Spirit at this moment, yielded and full of the Spirit as I speak? If not, why not? If not now, when?

Class 3 – Daniel 2:1-23

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

Chapter 2 – Dream-Reader

This chapter records King Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream of kingdoms, both man's and the Son of Man's. To save his life, and the lives of all the wise men in Babylon, Daniel asked and received opportunity to reveal and interpret the king's dream. And the amazing result was a beginning of God's revelation of His plan for the ages. This is one of the key chapters of the Bible. One writer called it "the backbone of biblical prophecy". John Walvoord wrote of Daniel 2; "Few chapters of the Bible are more determinative in establishing both the principle and content of prophecy than this chapter".

2:1-9 – Dream & Demand.

The events here seem to follow closely after the graduation of Daniel and friends from their three years of training. They were perhaps in their late

teens or early twenties at this time.

Vs. 1 – This of course took place in the famously beautiful city of ancient Babylon. Yet don't miss the utter absence of any description of it. Not even a mention! It didn't matter. The Lord knew it would all be a distant memory under tons of dust eventually anyway.

Is there some aspect of your existence you might like to point to as truly attractive or impressive? So what? Is the Lord central to your very being? This is the issue important to Him, and the only thing that lasts. *“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever”* (I Jn. 2:17).

The timing presents a difficulty here, this being *“the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar”*. What about Daniel's three years of school preceding this? It's been suggested that “the Babylonian manner of reckoning a king's reign did not regard the unexpired portion of the last year of the deceased monarch as the first year of the new king, but reserved that designation for the first full year of the new monarch's rule” (Leupold, quoted by Walvoord). In other words Daniel and friends would have begun their schooling upon arrival in Babylon, but

Nebuchadnezzar had just become king in the middle of that same year. The “1st year” of King Nebuchadnezzar’s reign would not have begun, according to their reckoning, until the beginning of the new year, or Daniel’s 2nd year of training. Thus their 3rd year of training would have been during the king’s 2nd full year on the throne, with the events here coming soon after the end of their studies. Don’t be too quick to discredit God’s words over such a seeming discrepancy. To be sure there is some such explanation if we knew all the facts, which we don’t. It’s the Lord who has allowed such slack for the wayward learner to fall to faithlessness. The point is that this very threatening circumstance took place soon after Daniel’s appointment, while still a young man. Yet though still quite young we find in him a level head and trusting heart in the face of real trouble.

As well, have you noticed that we have yet to see a bitter spirit in Daniel? We never do! Though snatched from his home, his land and people left a shattered ruin and he now held captive by the conquerors of his people, yet Daniel ever maintained a positive attitude though having many an outward cause for bitterness. Compare the same with Joseph in Egypt. The Lord had brought what He had said through the prophets He would bring. To respond in

anger would be anger at the Master of circumstances.

Other Parallels between Daniel and Joseph

- Both were captives in a foreign land.
 - Both were sold out to captivity through the unrighteousness of others / “brothers”.
 - Both were faithful from their youth.
 - Both never allowed their hardship to embitter them.
 - Both excelled over the existing “wise men”, gifted of God to interpret the king’s troubling dream.
 - Both were greatly promoted for this.
 - No mention was made of sinful deeds in the life of either man.
-

We’re told the king “*dreamed dreams*”, the plural indicating his troubling dream a recurring thing, as Pharaoh’s dreams of corn and then cattle (Gen. 41:1-8). And as in Pharaoh’s case, it was the Lord bringing this experience toward His purpose.

Dan 2:2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

Dan 2:3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

Nebuchadnezzar recognized these dreams as having great significance, therefore his deep concern over them.

Interesting how commonly the Lord communicated to pagan leaders through dreams or sleeplessness. He warned Abimelech in a dream (Gen. 20). He spoke to Pharaoh through his two dreams (Gen. 41). And even King Ahasuerus's sleeplessness began the events leading to Haman's death and Mordecai's promotion (Esther 6).

Vs. 2-3 – All of the four types of counsellors mentioned here claimed the ability to tell the future by one means or another, in ways beyond the natural. That *all* were called together displays the king's anxious concern over his dreams (vs. 3), hoping their combined abilities would bring him an answer. It may still have been night when the king called them into his presence. Such is life under the whims of an absolute despot.

*Dan 2:4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack,
O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and
we will shew the interpretation.*

*Dan 2:5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The
thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto
me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall
be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a
dunghill.*

Vs. 4 – The response here of the Chaldeans “*in Syriack*” begins the Aramaic portion of the book of Daniel, running through to the end of chapter 7. Aramaic was the language of that land until the time of Alexander the Great of Greece. It was a language similar to Hebrew in some ways. This lengthy section is in Aramaic likely because these chapters mainly focus around Gentile kingdoms into the future and details of Daniel’s day, whereas chapters 8-12 revolve more around effects upon the nation of Israel and kingdoms beyond Babylon, Media, & Persia.

Vs. 5 – “*The thing is gone from me*” – The king’s meaning in this phrase (repeated in vs. 8) is a difficult call. Either he meant “*gone*” in the sense of “departed”, that he had forgotten the dream, it was gone from his memory. Or “gone forth” in the sense that his decree of either punishment or reward had been given, the word already gone out of his mouth that they would be slaughtered for failing his request

or rewarded for success. If in the latter sense then this phrase is to be read together with the words following it. Did he forget his dream or didn't he? Was it a case of a foggy awareness of an important but elusive dream, or was this a test to affirm if his wise men could be trusted to give the true interpretation? The king's obvious anxiousness to know the meaning lends itself to his having simply forgotten. Seems he would be inclined to quickly describe his dream for the interpretation, as Pharaoh did with Joseph. But then vs. 9 seems to indicate he was aware of his dream. And if he meant that he had forgotten, why didn't his counsellors have a go at some sort of answer, even thumb-suck? They appear to be under the impression that the king knew his dream to tell it if he would in vs. 7. So it seems it was a purposeful test by this wily king to assess whether the professed supernatural abilities of his counsellors could be trusted, weeding out the frauds at the beginning of his reign.

The king's warning here was no empty threat. The magnitude of his explosive rage and his willingness to react and his disregard for human life is on display in the next chapter as well. Eastern despots were known for their cruel methods. Understand Nehemiah's "*very sore*" fear in Nehemiah 2:2.

Dan 2:6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

Dan 2:7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

Dan 2:8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

Vs. 6 – Consider the comparison with spiritual leadership before the Lord (James 3:1; I Cor. 3:6-15). A position of greater responsibility gives rise to greater scrutiny, and therefore all the more need for dependence upon the Lord. Yet such a position provides greater opportunity for reward as well. Even so with these men in positions of privilege before the king.

Vs. 7-9 – Round two. The king was adamant. They were stalling for time, hoping for a change in the king's ugly mood, but his mind was made up. He simply would not accept any easy interpretations. Whether it was so when he began this, he was now quite set in his demand for proof of their divine resources. If they could not know the past, how could they know and be trusted for the future?

Dan 2:9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

Dan 2:10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

2:10-13 – Plea & Decree.

In their final plea the wise men mustered all the graciousness they could manage, yet they come across a bit condescending. Not a good approach with such a one as Nebuchadnezzar, but what else could they do? They knew the king's demand was outside of their ability. Their argument;

- No man on earth could do what the king was asking. His demand was “*rare*” (vs. 11) in the sense of difficult or impossible.

No king would ask such a thing, no *reasonable* king that is, aiming subtle criticism at their unreasonable master. But what does an absolute despot care about conventions or what other kings do?

Dan 2:11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.
Dan 2:12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

- Only the gods know such things.
- The gods do not dwell with men.

But wasn't this their claim to fame, access to the gods and their supernatural powers? In their terror they acknowledged before the king their inability to do what they were paid to do. So why keep them on the payroll? Or on the earth for that matter. And with their admission the stage was now set for the entrance of Daniel, and for the true God to be glorified in that land.

Every man must come to just what we see here, to the point of recognizing the futility of human wisdom and earthly resource. Only then is one finally ready for the entrance of God's enlightening revelation. *"The entrance of Thy Words giveth light"* (Ps. 119:130).

Vs. 12-13 – With the king's suspicion of incompetence now confirmed he completely popped

Dan 2:13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

Dan 2:14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon:

his cork!! And with a sweep of the hand he would wipe the land clean of all such “wise men”. *“The wrath of a king is as messengers of death . . . as the roaring of a lion”* (Prov. 16:14; 19:12). Oh the lion of Babylon was roaring!!

Hey, there is a warning here. If God had not intervened some good men would have been lost with the bad through the hair-trigger temper of this man. How many a proverbial baby thrown out with the bath water through a quick temper? *“Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”* (James 1:19).

Vs. 13 – The wise men apparently were not immediately killed before Daniel stepped in. It seems the process of collecting for public execution had begun, and all falling under the broad category of “wise men” were to be included.

2:14-18 – Appeal to King & King of Kings.

Dan 2:15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

Vs. 14-16 – Appeal to the king.

“Arioch the captain of the king’s guard” – The marginal reading in my Bible here is “chief of the executioners or slaughtermen”. Potiphar of Egypt, the *“captain of the guard”* (Gen. 37:36), was in a similar position as the chief henchman. And with the nature of the accusation levelled against Joseph in Genesis 39, and by Potiphar’s own wife, it’s a miracle he did not immediately lose his head. Without Joseph’s reputation as a man of character it might have been so (perhaps Potiphar’s awareness of his wife’s character played a part as well?). Even so here, from a human perspective it seems Daniel’s character saved his life, with the lives of all the wise men. Consider what this Arioch was very aware of;

- The cruelty of his day.
- The heady self-importance of the king.
- The magnitude of the king’s current rage.
- The hastiness of the command (vs. 15).
- The danger in any hesitation.

Dan 2:16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

If the king was so minded to execute his entire cabinet of counsellors, a foot-dragging executioner would be an easy addition. Ashpenaz had already expressed his fear of this king in a much less fiery day (1:10). Nebuchadnezzar was not a monarch to be crossed. Yet see how Arioch proves a willing comrade to Daniel, taking the time to explain to a man already condemned and as good as dead, even daring to help Daniel get access to the king, as he must have done, with the king in such an ugly mood. Why? Obviously Daniel had won something of the same sentiment with this man as with the prince of the eunuchs (1:9). *Character!* Daniel grew in favour with man as he grew in favour with God.

Vs. 16 – Note as well that even though the king was so upset with all his wise men, he too was willing to listen to young Daniel, even giving him what he would not give the others – time. Of course this was not a king ruled by precedent or the opinions of others. If he refused time to the one and gave to the other that was his choice. Such a one was untroubled by accusations of inconsistency. But I

Dan 2:17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

have a notion there was a mutual esteem developing already between this king and this young counsellor. *“The king’s favour is toward a wise servant”* (Prov. 14:35). *“Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right”* (Prov. 16:13). After all, of primary concern to the king was finding the meaning of those troubling dreams. To empty the land of every wise man was surely an end of that hope. There was something about Daniel’s calm assurance that his God was able to help. There was honest integrity in him, and the sweet savour of his good reputation went before him.

A man who stands for right without compromise communicates trustworthiness. Perhaps the king was even remembering his 1:19-20 meeting with this young man, and a bit sorry now for his rash decree, now dawning on him that it would include Daniel as well. King Darius will later find his anguished heart pinched in such a bind as well (6:14, 18-20). Nebuchadnezzar’s advantage was that for him there were no binding limitations. He could simply do as he wished at any point. And if he chose to spare

Dan 2:18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel, even after his angry decree, that was his free choice.

Vs. 17-18 – Appeal to the King of kings – Here was the reason Daniel wanted time, that they might pray together for the Lord’s revelation of the dream and its interpretation. And here we see *power* through united prayer. As the Spirit was prayed down with power through a church crying out together with one accord in Acts 1 & 2. As the church praying together and finding great boldness in Acts 4. As the church praying down Peter’s deliverance in Acts 12. As Paul & Silas praying into the night and finding miraculous answers in Acts 16. Picture these four men kneeling and pleading together through the night. This was no minor crisis. Their lives were at stake! Yet there appears to be no panic in them. No thought of attempted flight. They were fully believing that God could meet their need, for had they not already seen Him work in their bodies through their resolve in chapter 1? One thing leads to another. Small victories lead on to greater. One situation faced with

uncompromising righteousness grants the courage to face the next challenge with and for the Lord. A David who trusts God for the lion and then the bear is ready to face his Goliath. A Hudson Taylor who learned to believe God for His provision in his own homeland could expect God's care in China. Daniel and friends had already shown themselves fully prepared to give their lives for the Lord (as they will show again in chapters 3 & 6). In their kind of heart, instead of panic there was faith in believing prayer, believing the Lord could and would do whatever He chose, He who is the only true absolute sovereign ruler. They understood what the Apostle Paul would later put into words; *"Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 4:6-7).

Please don't miss how united, direct, specific, urgent prayer, prayed from hearts of uncompromising righteousness, won the victory that night. *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"* (James 5:16). And please don't miss a proper response to crisis. *Prayer!* They prayed *first!*

2:19-23 – Answer & Adoration.

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

Dan 2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

Vs. 19 – That very night the answer came to Daniel in a vision. They certainly carried on praying into the night until they had God’s answer. Daniel had pled before the *king* and his request was granted. Then he pled before the *King of kings* and again, request granted! Power with men and God!

Vs. 20-23 – How Daniel’s heart overflowed, leading now in a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. Far beyond just the sparing of their lives, this was joy in God’s affirmation, and the assurance of their God *for* them. In vs. 20-22 it’s 3rd person, referring to “*He . . . He . . . He*”, recounting all the wonder of what the Lord is and does for us. Then in vs. 23 Daniel’s words turn to 2nd person, his heart overflowing with thanksgiving to his God. His prayer, like a hymn of praise, is all about God’s wisdom and power. His exultant words chase the theme of the dream in fact, the theme of the book and of the whole Bible – God’s all-powerful, all-seeing, sovereign control over the affairs of men.

Dan 2:21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Dan 2:22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

“Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever” (vs. 20) – God’s name represents His nature as revealed in His Word. Names such as Allah and Krishna cannot refer to the true God, for they express gods of a very different nature, defined in the writings of men, gods that are no gods in fact.

“He changeth the times and seasons” (vs. 21). Earthly kings have power for change only as God allows, for *“the powers that be are ordained of God”* (Rom. 13:1), and *“the king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it withersoever He will”* (Prov. 21:1). Contrast the *“little horn”* of chapter 7 who shall *“think to change times and laws”* (vs. 25), thinking to take God’s place as Sovereign. Nebuchadnezzar will fall to a bit of the same in chapter 3.

“He giveth wisdom unto the wise” (vs. 21) – In one night the Lord made Solomon into a man of vast wisdom (I Ki. 3:12). *“If any man lack wisdom, let him*

Dan 2:23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

ask of God . . . and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

Vs. 23 – “*we . . . us*” – Though the revelation was given directly to Daniel, with appropriate modesty he includes his friends with him. It was a result of their joint prayers, not his individually. This is a humble modesty we see throughout Daniel’s life, particularly in chapter 9 as he joins himself with the sin of his nation. Daniel’s successes could easily have gone to his head, but never once does he claim any wisdom from himself, always from his God. Again a similarity with Joseph.

“But there is a God in heaven
that revealeth secrets,
and maketh known . . .
what shall be in the latter days”

(Dan. 2:28)

Class 4 – Daniel 2:24-49

Dan 2:24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

Dan 2:25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

2:24-35 – Presentation of Dream.

Vs. 24-25 – Daniel presented to the king. Commentators tend to be pretty quick with the obvious on the surface here, pointing out the subtle dishonesty in this chief executioner in ascribing the find to himself before the king (“*I have found a man*”). And there is that. Arioch did no searching in the king’s behalf. Daniel handed this to him. It would appear Arioch was attempting to get as much credit for himself as he could out of the circumstance. After all, there were “*gifts and rewards and great honour*” riding on this (vs. 6). It’s a reminder of man’s nature to subtly shade the truth to his own advantage (as the words of the chief captain in Acts 23:27). The wisdom of Proverbs warns against any dishonest

tendency. One on the list of seven things abominable to the Lord is “*a false witness that speaketh lies*” (6:19). And the prominent idea behind the Hebrew word translated “*false*” there is to colour or shade the truth. A witness who shades the truth, who fails to just tell it straight, is an abomination to the Lord! This is not the way for us. “*Remove from me the way of lying*” the Psalmist prayed (Ps. 119:29). Same word behind the English. “Lord, please don’t let me be one who in any way tampers with the truth”.

On the other hand Arioch’s response was an obvious indication as well that he had great confidence in Daniel. Otherwise this was a risky gamble. Hear him announce with confidence a man who “*will make known unto the king the interpretation*”. And this based only on Daniel’s word! Daniel could only have been a man of his word, a man whose word could be trusted. What if he failed? Arioch would stand in the same bad light before the king. Remember, the king was in a killing mood! But again, Daniel was the kind of man to take a chance on it seems.

As well understand what Daniel was perhaps doing here in taking this to the king through Arioch. Though the king’s executioner owed Daniel nothing, he had taken the time to explain things (vs. 15), and had perhaps helped organize opportunity for Daniel

Dan 2:26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

to ask time from the king. Now Daniel returns favour for favour in granting Arioch involvement in the answer. Daniel was making important friends and he was taking care of them.

Vs. 26-28 – Inquiry & answers. Obviously the main focus of the king’s question is whether Daniel could reveal the dream, for he knew if he could do that then he could give its meaning. As well, this was a testing time for the king’s wise men. It was necessary to subject Daniel to the same test if the king was going to compare apples with apples. But I’d like to picture the king’s heart secretly rooting for this young man, fingers crossed, willing him to succeed. And not just because he wanted the dream’s meaning, but for the same reasons the king’s wife later spoke of Daniel as a man with an *“excellent spirit”* (5:12). For the same reasons King Darius later preferred him above all *“because an excellent spirit was in him”* (6:3). I have a notion Nebuchadnezzar was prepared to give hints here. But he soon discovered to his amazement that he need supply no clues.

Dan 2:27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

Dan 2:28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

As Daniel begins in vs. 27 notice in him the opposite of Arioch. He makes no effort to retain any credits, though attempting to make himself invaluable at such a time might have seemed very useful indeed. Yet Daniel gives all honour to God. He does not fall to the temptation to nurture any idea of supernatural power resident in himself. He disallows the thought of any special wisdom in him above the ordinary (vs. 30). Only that *“there is a God in heaven”* who knows and is able to make known. This is humility’s disclaimer. Compare Peter in Acts 3:12 and Paul in Acts 14:15. Daniel does not fail where King Hezekiah missed his opportunity with the Babylonian ambassadors (II Ki. 20). Understand therefore why Daniel remained so long as God’s spokesman. He was only a channel and would not let himself be seen as anything more. Joseph was wise to respond the same before Pharaoh. Pharaoh said, *“I have heard of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret*

Dan 2:29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.

Dan 2:30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

it” (Gen. 41:15). Joseph quickly responded, “It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace”. And so Joseph too died a contented old man still in a place of honour. Because he did not abuse the place and honours God allowed him. You abuse it, you lose it! For “there is a God in heaven” who knows.

Vs. 29-30 – Purpose of dream. Daniel revealed not only the dream, but the king’s thoughts beforehand as well. Before sleep came the king was thinking on his bed of the future, pondering what was to come of his vast empire. And the dream was given by the Lord in answer, to reveal the future. The Lord in fact gave him much more than he wanted. Through Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is revealed the entire “*times of the Gentiles*” (Lk. 21:24), that period running from Nebuchadnezzar to Antichrist. You see, with their captivity in Babylon the nation of Israel lost much more than just occupation in their land for a time.

*Dan 2:31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image.
This great image, whose brightness was excellent,
stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.*

They have never known independent rule of their entire land since Nebuchadnezzar! The “*times of the Gentiles*” is that long era of Israel’s history when the nations have a hand in ruling their affairs. Babylon’s rule over Palestine led to Medo-Persia’s, then Greece, then Rome. Then the Jewish race was scattered to the four winds. Even in recent decades with their return to their land and an “independent state” they only hold a part of the land and of the governing of it. They don’t even control the whole of their capital city, Jerusalem, nor the most vital piece of real estate on earth for them, the temple site. They still must bow to world sentiment. It will remain so until Christ’s return to earth with the final deliverance He brings. King Nebuchadnezzar began that era and therefore how appropriate that the dream charting the course into the far distant future should come through him.

Vs. 31-35 – Dream revealed. As Daniel began to relate the dream the king’s antenna must surely have shot up. I can picture him utterly awed in the most earnest attention, on the edge of his seat. For from

*Dan 2:32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,
Dan 2:33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.*

Daniel's first words the king knew this man was spot-on! He knew that here was understanding of the secrets of his heart. Here was omniscience. His impression was perhaps something like what the Pharisees felt when Jesus knew and responded to their thoughts as if they had verbalized them. This was absolutely fascinating!

In his dream the king found himself standing before an enormous, dazzlingly brilliant, awesome figure. This terrifying world ruler cringed in awe before this monstrous, overwhelmingly terrible figure. Its form was thus;

- Head – “*fine* [pure] *gold*”.
- Breast & arms – silver.
- Belly & thighs – brass (or bronze).
- Legs – iron.
- Feet – part iron & part clay (or fired clay, pottery).

Dan 2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

Dan 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Note the symbolisms;

- Growing division from single head to multiple limbs and finally ten toes.
- Decreasing material quality from gold to iron and clay.
- Weak in the feet, the strength of metal everywhere except there. The adage “feet of clay” comes from this Bible portion, speaking of a weakness or defect in an otherwise strong person.

Vs. 34 – While the king looked in his dream, a stone was cut out (“*out of the mountain*”, vs. 45) without hands, and like a great missile this stone struck the image with force at its weakest point, its feet, crushing the feet to pieces. Then all the other materials disintegrated to little bits like chaff, and hamba nomoya (gone with the wind). All evidence of

Dan 2:36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.
Dan 2:37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.
Dan 2:38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

the awe-inspiring image was completely removed. The phrase “*no place was found for them*” is an interesting reflection of Rev. 20:11. Then the stone became a great mountain filling the whole earth.

Nebuchadnezzar fully recognized the dream in its every detail, his head nodding in stunned agreement as Daniel spoke each new point. He could not have been more primed and ready to hear its meaning!

2:36-45 – Interpretation of Dream.

Vs. 37-38 – King Nebuchadnezzar, representing the empire of Babylon, is the head of gold. Babylon was called “*the golden city*” (Isa. 14:4). This was likely the first Nebuchadnezzar learned of the God of heaven as the source of his position and power. A bit of a blow perhaps? But he was in no position to differ before this marvellous revelation of the secrets of his heart.

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

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

Vs. 39 – A second and third kingdom to follow are only briefly mentioned. The word “*inferior*” is used, agreeing with the descending quality of materials. History confirms that a confederacy of Media and Persia (essentially the northern and southern portions of modern Iran) conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. This next (2nd) empire is named in 8:20, with the Grecian Empire to follow. Exactly how the following kingdoms decreased in quality is a puzzle. We know it was not a matter of *land* or *size* since each successive empire was bigger than the previous. We know it was not a *time* or *duration* issue since the Medo-Persian Empire lasted over twice as long as the Babylonian. Perhaps this decay speaks of the nature of government. The absolute power of Nebuchadnezzar’s rule diminished to the limited power of the Medo-Persian. Darius (chap. 6) and Ahasuerus (Esther) must be governed by their own decrees, without ability to change them once stamped into effect. Then the form of rule decayed to essentially a democracy in the Roman Empire.

Dan 2:41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

Vs. 40-43 – Greatest emphasis now on the fourth empire, and particularly on the later stages of it. We will see this same interesting focus on the fourth again in chapter 7. We of course know who this fourth empire is, for Rome conquered the Greeks in 63 B.C. Note the things emphasized in this kingdom;

- Its great crushing strength; *“breaketh in pieces”, “subdueth all things”, “breaketh all these”, “break in pieces and bruise”.*
- Great focus on the feet and toes (vs. 41-43). Almost as much attention here as on the entire figure above the feet.
- There is much interest in the nature of the mixed materials, even to the point of repetitiveness.

Vs. 41 – This *“kingdom shall be divided”* in two ways; in its multiple feet and toes, and in its composite material. Quality and strength have fallen right away in the later stage of this kingdom. Partly strong (iron)

Dan 2:42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

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

and partly weak (clay). Many ideas have been presented on the prophetic meanings here. Some things are obvious. There will be some change between the original and final forms of this fourth kingdom, from iron to iron/clay mix. But it is essentially the same kingdom (iron still). Revived Rome? Must be, for this kingdom will be in power still at Christ's return, though changed in some way. And there will be something about the final form of it that will prevent fundamental unity.

So where does our current church age fit into this great figure of Nebuchadnezzar's dream? It does not, for the church was a mystery until New Testament (N.T.) times. This current age falls within the change point from iron legs to composite feet.

Now stand back and look at this image in all of its belittling, terrifying greatness, this figure doomed for sudden, complete, irreversible destruction. What do

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

you see? *A man!!* It's an image of the greatness of *man's* glory and authority, the splendour of man's kingdoms. It's an image to the honour of man in his impressive empires throughout the ages, this coming to its ultimate in "*the man of sin, the son of perdition*" (II Thess. 2). Antichrist and his reign will be the greatest (and worst!) that mankind has ever produced.

Vs. 44-45 – God's kingdom. The stone cut without hands can only represent Jesus Christ in His return to establish His kingdom through the crushing of man's kingdoms (Armageddon). The figure of a rock is often used to refer to Christ or Messiah in the Bible (Ps. 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; I Pet. 2:6-8; I Cor. 10:4). Moses was able to encounter God only by finding refuge in the cleft of the rock (Ex. 33:22). Even so we are able to know God only by first finding refuge in the wounds of Christ. The figure of a mountain is often a symbol of a kingdom in the Bible (Rev. 17:9-10).

Dan 2:45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

“Cut without hands” speaks of what originates in God, not man (Col. 2:11; Mk. 14:58; II Cor. 5:1). When the Lord Jesus Christ shall return from the right hand of the Father as King of kings and Lord of lords He will bring a complete and utter end to the kingdoms of man, filling the earth with His kingdom and presence. Compare the parable of the mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32), and Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14.

N.B. the nature of this final kingdom of Christ;

- It will come in a catastrophic, violent manner. Amillennialism says Christ’s kingdom came quietly and secretly with His death and resurrection. Postmillennialism says it comes progressively. Neither of these fit the picture, for the Bible says it comes *suddenly*.
- It will come as a literal, earthly kingdom, even as the kingdoms it crushes and replaces. Even the symbols of this final kingdom (stone,

mountain) are earthly figures.

- It is “premillennial”, Jesus literally, physically returning to establish His earthly rule.
- It “*shall stand forever*”, “*shall never be destroyed*”. Though Revelation states Christ’s earthly reign will be for 1000 years, the point is that mankind will never be ruled by man again from the point of Christ’s return. This final kingdom will not be left to others as all the previous empires of men. As that great heavenly voice shall proclaim in that day at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, “*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever*” (Rev. 11:15). “*Even so come Lord Jesus*”!!
- All man’s kingdoms and glory shall be consumed in that day.

So all of man’s glory is as worthless chaff (Isa. 40:6-8, “*all flesh is grass*”; Ps. 90; James 1:9; I Pet. 1:24-25). Oh be not slow to leave Sodom! Don’t drag your feet and whinge and pine for the leeks of Egypt! Come out of her My people and be ye separate! Flee to your only hope for true refuge in that Saviour who came to die for you.

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

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

Compare the Bible record of another human giant who in all his splendour and at the pinnacle of his prominence was brought down by a little stone, a stone hurled with supernatural power and direction by Messiah's kingly ancestor, young David.

Don't miss how God's way has always been to first tear down in order to build up. Truth cannot be built in happy community with error, as the world insists.

2:46-49 – Exaltation of Daniel.

Vs. 46-47 – King Nebuchadnezzar was so vastly moved, so utterly overwhelmed by the evident indications of divine input, his emotion vividly portrayed in that great tyrant bowing in honour before this young foreign captive.

“And worshipped Daniel” – Some are quick to criticise Daniel for not refusing worship, as other servants of the Lord (Acts 10:25-26; 14:11ff; Rev.

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

22:8-9; 19:10). But we do not know Daniel's response to this. Have we not already learned enough about the character of the man in his stand for the Lord to know that he would resist such worship? How carefully he has disclaimed all personal merit, giving glory to God (vs. 27-30). The king's words in vs. 47 seem to be in answer to such an unrecorded protest. We're told "*the king answered unto Daniel*", and in answer he acknowledged the greatness of Daniel's *God* above all.

"A God of gods, and a Lord of kings" – Every world power must come to acknowledge this at the last (Rev. 17:14; 19:16). Nebuchadnezzar said it first!

Vs. 48 – So Daniel was exalted to greatness and given many valuable gifts. He was exalted to rule over the province of Babylon and was made the chief governor of all the wise men. And another obscure young Jewish captive arose to great honours and influence in a foreign land. Why? Because, like Joseph, he refused to compromise with wrong. Learn the lesson.

The one who will not compromise will be exalted sooner or later. Here was another reason for the king's dream, to provide the vehicle for Daniel's promotion, the surprising means by which the King of kings might reward him for his faithfulness.

Understand as well how this success and promotion would have been news of great comfort to the Lord's captive people there in Babylon. One of their own boys was near the top. Do you see the Lord's grace shining around the edges of the dark cloud of captivity? Though his people were under the smarting rod of His reproof for their most stubborn evil, yet still He did not leave them without comfort. He is faithful in His care, even in His discipline. He was still with them. This was no back of the hand across the face and stomp away in anger.

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On the Side

On the matter of discipline, let me explain our procedure in disciplining our children;

- When there was an offence we would send the offender to stand by their bed and wait. There was never a question of whether or not they would do this. It gave time for anger to cool to reason if need be.

- We would then bring the paddle. We did not spank with our hand for God said use a “rod”.
- We would begin by explaining, so that there was no doubt as to the why of the punishment.
- Then we would spank the child’s bottom like we meant it (“*thou shalt beat him with the rod*”, Prov. 23:14). These were no mere “smacks”. This was no *play* at punishment.
- If there was crying in rage we would spank again until they cried quietly. In the early days we often would spank for the offence and *again* for the rage . . . and again . . . and again . . . Harsh you say? We have the rest of our days on earth to live with the results. “*Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul*” (Prov. 29:17).
- Then we would lay aside the paddle and hold them close, displaying clearly that they could never lose our love, that the pain was brought in love.

Our God is our Example and Instructor in proper discipline.

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Now understand part of the purpose in Daniel’s

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

appointment there in the land of captivity. It was the Lord's hug after the hiding. He is faithful to His own. He was caring for them. Though He deal hard with us in His righteous chastening, His child can never lose His love.

Vs. 49 – Again, Daniel in his fairness did not forget his friends.

Class 5 – Daniel 3:1-18

Dan 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

Chapter 3 – Tried and Found Trusting

Though King Nebuchadnezzar was greatly stunned by the Lord's amazing revelation through His servant Daniel in chapter 2, the impression was short-lived and obviously only superficial. It's one thing to be impressed with the Lord or with His truth or miraculous power in our head. It's quite another thing to be moved to true repentance, faith, and submission in our heart. Nebuchadnezzar was not there yet.

3:1-7 – Dedication and Decree.

Vs. 1 – The king's image was all of gold. The impressive image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 related God's revelation of the changing kingdoms of men from Babylon's time until Christ's return. The empire changes are seen in the changing

materials of the statue, from head of gold to feet of iron and clay, making up the figure of a man. Here now was the king's response to that dream, where the head of gold represented himself as king of Babylon. Would God suggest only the head of gold? Nebuchadnezzar would dare to make the entire figure of gold! Would God indicate this kingdom to be replaced? Nebuchadnezzar demands by this symbolism that his reign be immortal, running all the way through. "O king, *live forever*" they flatteringly said of him (vs. 9), and so he would proclaim of himself! Oh there is arrogance here, reminiscent of the ancient rebellion of this place called Babylon (Gen. 11). In fact this "*plain of Dura*" may well have been the very same site of the ancient "*plain in the land of Shinar*" (Gen. 11:2) where the first rebellion of Babylon took place. As if Nebuchadnezzar would now change God's program, forcing His divine hand, making his own kingdom eternal. As if his own decree would sideline God's! This was all about what the king did in defiance of God's program. Note the continual point made of this image being what "*Nebuchadnezzar the king made . . . set up*" (11 times in vs. 1-18). Compare the same focus on the manmade nature of Jeroboam's false religion (I Ki. 12:28-33). Perhaps it was this feature that stirred defiance in Daniel's three friends more than any other. To bow to this image was to join the

king in his lying celebration of his self-proclaimed dominance over God's revealed will. It was to admit Nebuchadnezzar bigger than God. This proud man had some things to learn! Daniel understood the truth of 2:21, but the king did not. Not yet! Such self-exaltation of man above the purposes of God is characteristic of these *"times of the Gentiles"*. The same will distinguish antichrist at the end of this era more than any other man, *"who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped"* (II Thess. 2:4), who *"shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god"* (Dan. 11:36).

That this image was *"of gold"* could not mean it was solid gold. It's doubtful there would have been enough gold in all the world at that time to make up such a huge statue. Compare "the golden altar" of the tabernacle, referred to as "golden", yet made of wood overlaid with gold (Ex. 39:38). This figure was likely of similar construction. Compare the reference to gold overlaid idols in Isaiah 40:19 & Jeremiah 10:3-9.

The image was *"threescore cubits"* tall *"and the breadth thereof six cubits"*. A "score" is an old term meaning 20. Thus "threescore" is $3 \times 20 = 60$. A cubit was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet or 450-500 mm. (the length of the arm from the tip of the middle finger to the

Dan 3:2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Dan 3:3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

point of the elbow). So this figure was at least 30 meters tall, and about 3 meters wide, its height comparable to a 10-story building. And though not specifically stated, we must assume this figure to be that of a *man*, as in the king's dream. In fact it was likely the splitting image of the king himself. It seems Nebuchadnezzar was attempting by this towering figure to give the impression of the awesome stature of the great image in his dream (2:31), perhaps now extending that majestic splendour to himself.

The proportions of this statue are rather odd, being 10 to 1, height to width. Much too slim. A normal man would be proportioned more to the tune of 4 to 1. Perhaps the "*breadth*" measure was the thickness from chest to back rather than shoulder to shoulder. Or there may have been a sizeable plinth or pedestal involved as well.

*Dan 3:4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is
commanded, O people, nations, and languages,
Dan 3:5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet,
flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of
musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image
that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:*

The dimensions are interestingly expressed in sixes (60 x 6). Even so the end time world ruler (whom King Nebuchadnezzar pre-figures) with his image, coming at the other end of *“the times of the Gentiles”*, will be expressed in sixes as well (Rev. 13:18). Perhaps there is a clue here as to what the 666 of antichrist represents? Something to do with the dimensions of his image, as Nebuchadnezzar’s?

Vs. 2-3 – Every leader of the empire was gathered to the dedication of the image.

Vs. 4-6 – A herald proclaimed in no uncertain terms the king’s decree concerning this image. When the band began to play every knee and heart had better bow, or it was the *“burning fiery furnace”*. All the gathered leaders representing their people were to fall prostrate before the image in an attitude of worship. Fall or fire, bow or burn!

Why this worship on cue, and with a musical call to

*Dan 3:6 And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall
the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery
furnace.*

worship? There seems to have been a unison or solidarity aspect here, a demand that all be *united* in honour of kingdom, monarch, and gods, and all at the same moment. Not a single soul was allowed to be exempt. To abstain was perhaps considered an attitude of hostility toward the national family, political loyalty in some way bound up together with religious loyalty. Certainly the unison factor would make any abstainer rather conspicuous. Abstention of Christians from joining the popular push of honouring the power and gods of Rome was what moved Emperor Nero to his severe persecution of Christians as well. Nonparticipation of any was superstitiously considered a bad omen, bringing the anger of the gods upon the nation. Nobody likes those who refuse to join with the common cause and popular sentiment. Again, it's the nature of these "*times of the Gentiles*". This particular twist of pagan religion has often raised its ugly head to devour some among God's children since Nebuchadnezzar's day. The catholic inquisition an ugly example. Even so our modern society is enraged by the refusal of faithful believers to bow to the popular god of

Dan 3:7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Dan 3:8 Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.

religious tolerance. There will come a day when all tolerance of such intolerance will come to an end.

Vs. 6 – The “furnace” was likely some sort of kiln, with opening at the top for smoke to exit and a door at the bottom for feeding and working with the fire. Perhaps it had been used for the fashioning of this great figure of focus, thus its availability.

Vs. 7 – “Therefore . . .”. The people of the world sadly live in that “therefore”, placidly responding without principle to whatever is forced upon them. To maintain their comforts and safety here on earth their only concern. “Hey whatever keeps me out of trouble is good enough for me!” But we who know the Lord are a people of principle. We are to live according to what pleases the Lord, not what pleases men.

3:8-12 – Accusation of Daniel’s Friends.

*Dan 3:9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar,
O king, live for ever.*

*Dan 3:10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man
that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp,
sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of
musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:*

An obvious question arises as to where Daniel was, and why he was not accused as well. If he were there, clearly he would not, yea *could* not have bowed to this image. We must remember that all the wise men owed their lives to Daniel. He likely maintained something of a hero status even among them. Daniel may very well have been present and unbowing but not accused for this reason. But these friends of his were a different story. Though from among the foreign captives, they were holding positions of honour which the nationals would have looked upon with envy. The locals likely resented sharing power with these Jews to whom they were not beholden in any way as they were to Daniel. The whole affair smells of a set-up. One wonders if tattling Chaldeans had a hand in this procedure as with Darius in chapter 6, perhaps organizing this dedication for a time when Daniel was out of town.

A mark against these three friends as well would

Dan 3:11 And whoso falleth not down and worshipping, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Dan 3:12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

have been their evident difference from everybody else, not worshipping the same gods as all others, not honouring king and kingdom as the rest. They were foreign in more than just nationality. The world is quick to sense and resent the difference in God's own children. *"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you"* (Jn. 15:19). *"They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them"* (I Jn. 4:5).

Vs. 12 – The accusation levelled at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego was their refusal to honour;

- The king or his words.
- The king's gods.
- The king's image.

So what does one have to do to be conspicuous?

Absolutely nothing! They just stood resolute. One need only to fail to join the sheep line of the world's demand or expectation, and they will soon have a sighting on you as one foreign to their way.

On the Side

We cannot help but see in this first king of “*the times of the Gentiles*” foreshadowings of antichrist, the final ruler of this era of Gentile dominance over the Promised Land;

- Both are world rulers.
- There's an image involved in both cases (Rev. 13).
- There is a forced bowing of the masses to this image, in some sense expressing worship of the man after whom the image is made.
- *None* are allowed exemption from this standardized worship (Rev. 13:8, 15).
- The dimensions of the image have to do with sixes, “*the number of a man*” (Rev. 13:18).
- There were faithful Jews standing in resistance against the demand to worship the image here, as the world will yet see in the 144,000 (Rev. 7) and the two witnesses (Rev. 11).

Dan 3:13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

Dan 3:14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

- These witnesses were untouchable by King Nebuchadnezzar, as those sealed ones seem to be off-limits to the coming antichrist (Rev. 7:1-8; 11:5; 14:1-5).
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3:13-15 – Confrontation by the King.

Barely controlling his rage, the king gave them one last chance to obey his decree. He went through it all again upon the possibility (hope?) that perhaps they didn't understand properly. He left no doubts that his decree was an absolute must.

Vs. 15 – *“And who is the God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”* Perhaps the king forgot his words in 2:47, *“Your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings”*. He will be reminded just now! The king will in fact answer his own question a few years later,

Dan 3:15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

recorded in chapter 4. For he speaks there of “*the Most High God*” who “*doeth according to His will . . . and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?*” (vs. 35) Even at this point the king cannot be excused for such a question, having tasted of the Lord’s abilities in chapter 2. His question constitutes a challenge, a shake of the fist. Something like, “Not even *God* can sink this ship that *we* have built!” Something like Pharaoh’s “*Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?!*” (Ex. 5:2) Oh he surely let them go, for he met the LORD! Something like Rabshekah of Assyria arrogantly proclaiming Assyrian power supreme above any possible rescue for King Hezekiah and Jerusalem. “*Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed?*” (Isa. 36:12) “*Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?*” (II Ki. 18:35) He foolishly compared the true God of

Dan 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.
Dan 3:17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

Israel with all of the powerless gods of the nations around! And suddenly all the king's horses and all the king's men could not be put back together again! The Lord let all those other "gods" be crushed before crushing their boastful crusher, that He might show Himself the strongest of all. Oh the arrogance of small man proclaiming his personal powers so great that not even God could stop him! Such words are all invitation and opportunity for the Almighty to bare His strong arm. And of course in this context as well this pompous king of Babylon was proven powerless before the God of heaven.

3:16-18 – Courageous Response.

Vs. 16 – *"We are not careful to answer thee in this matter"* – Perhaps they were saying that they did not feel the need to carefully answer the king, since they knew he would have his answer from God. And they had no plans of changing their stance. Both sides stood equally resolved in their purpose.

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

Vs. 17-18 – Their response;

- God is quite capable of delivering us from any ol' furnace. This in answer to the king's "*Who is that God that shall deliver you?*"
- God will certainly deliver us from the king's hand one way or another, whether by life or death. Their "*but if not*" (vs. 18) displays their understanding that sometimes the Lord's deliverance is through death. As Peter delivered from prison and James delivered to heaven in Acts 12. As Paul victoriously proclaimed before his martyrdom, "*And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom*" (II Tim. 4:18).
- Regardless of what *God* would do, they knew what *they* must do! Only the one true God would they serve and worship. And their service of the Lord was not dependent upon His service of them.

There was in them such remarkable unhesitating

decisiveness. They were demanding no miraculous deliverance from God, merely stating their firm stand, come what may! They were in essence saying with Job, “*Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him*” (Job 13:15). It was the Lord’s grace working in them to give them such admirable resolve in the face of such fearful circumstances. These resolute saints did not yet know what the Lord would do, what was to become of them, yet their story has now become one of the greatest accounts of history. Their stand would have been a whole lot easier had they known what the outcome would be. But on the front end of the event it must have been a frightening place to be standing. Yet stand they must, and stand they did, daring to defy the king of Babylon, *daring to be different* from all the mindless multitudes of men who just did what they were told. I I can well imagine their feelings of self-consciousness, all eyes upon them, scorning them. Maybe it seemed like they were *always* fighting the system, *always* standing opposed. But stand they must. Perhaps they wondered if some might think they were just doing this for attention. Typical nonconformist types! Just expressing their unruly defiance of all authority! But it was for the Lord that they stood. They were honestly honouring His highest authority. And how many others of the Lord’s people through the centuries have been moved to stand for God in some

similar situation through the sterling example in courage of these faithful young men?

Nebuchadnezzar was enraged at small men who would dare to resist his will. He had yet to see that he himself (small man) was in fact handling the *Lord* in the same way, demanding through the entire image of gold that his Babylon be the only empire, when God had proclaimed them only the first of many. How often we are angered by traits in others, which express our own way with the Lord if we would stop to think it through fairly.

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Ponder Points

We are called to obedience to our government, and this by God's own command (Rom. 13), until the day our government insists we do something against our God or conscience. Then we too must stand in defiance (Acts 5:29; 4:19). When our government would try to guide our worship or limit the scope of the message we preach they must be resisted, for they too are small men before the Lord of glory. This regardless of the personal cost, even at threat of death itself. It should be no surprise to us when we too are cast to the fiery furnace of persecution for our faith. "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial

which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” (I Pet. 4:12). Rather “rejoice and be exceeding glad,” Jesus said (Matt. 5:12).

The easy way will always be to follow along with the crowd, doing nothing to stand out as different, and coming up with many a seemingly valid reason for doing so (like, “we won’t ever reach anybody if standing opposed, different, scorned, spurned, making ourselves a hated class”). But these men are in the Book of books,. their lives and courage recorded and placed on a pedestal for all ages, promoted not only by the king but by the King of kings! To choose the way of greater ease at the expense of God’s honour is to sideline yourself as far as the Lord is concerned.

“Lo, I see four men loose,
walking in the midst of the fire,
and they have no hurt;
and the form of the fourth
is like the son of God”

(Dan. 3:25)

Class 6 – Daniel 3:19-30

In our consideration of the first half of chapter 3 we saw;

- King Nebuchadnezzar's construction of a huge image, all of gold. It seems he was attempting to assert his will over God's purpose revealed in his dream of chapter 2, that only the *head* be of gold, that Babylon be only the first of several world empires during these "*times of the Gentiles*".
- The dedication of that image with all of the leaders of the empire involved.
- The forced worship of the image, with threat of the furnace for anyone refusing.
- The accusation and confrontation of Daniel's three friends.
- Their bold stand for the Lord, defying this world ruler in simply refusing to bow to the king's image.

In their courageous faith God's men left no uncertainties as to where they stood and what they would and would not do. They would not serve Babylon's false gods! They would bow to none but

Dan 3:19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

the true God of heaven! This was an obvious for them. What else could they do if they would be faithful to God? Do you remember how the great 10 Commandments of God begin? *“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God”* (Ex. 20:3-5). Every excuse for compromise is fully answered in *“Thus saith the Lord”*. Since the God of heaven had expressed His will they would stand on it, come what may! Praise God for such brave men of faith! I thank my God for recording it, that such men might stand beside us when we are called upon to risk our comforts and lives for God’s truth.

3:19-23 – The King’s Response.

Vs. 19 – *“Full of fury”* – Nebuchadnezzar was utterly overwhelmed with it. It seems this proud king could

not possibly have been more enraged with these men who would so dare to resist his will, and so publicly. His rage was so complete that his face was twisted with it.

“Heat the furnace one seven times more” – The absolute ultimate inferno. Nebuchadnezzar would have the furnace to match his own blazing temper.

On the Side

Do you see how in rage a man’s reason goes right out the window? What would this superheating accomplish, except perhaps to kill a bit quicker? A mercy! Whether hot, hotter, or hottest the fire would kill. Greater heat would not increase their pain, which seems to be the idea in the king’s distorted reasoning, as contorted as his face in his complete abandon to anger.

Proverbs chase;

“He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly” (Prov. 14:17).

“He that is hasty [short] of spirit exalteth folly” (14:29).

“The discretion of a man deferreth his anger” (19:11).

“A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment” (19:19).

Dan 3:20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

Dan 3:21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Dan 3:22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

“Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous” (27:4).

“A furious man aboundeth in transgression” (29:22).

God’s wisdom has much to say on the subject. Unrighteous, uncontrolled anger always makes a man appear small and foolish. And it makes him a danger to innocent folks around him, as we soon discover here.

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Vs. 20 – The “*most mighty men*” in the king’s army were given the task of binding the offenders and throwing them into the furnace. That the king’s strongest men were so assigned ensured that the task would be done, that there might be no effective resisting of the king’s purpose. It’s a little reminder that the only thing proud men can muster is human

Dan 3:23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Dan 3:24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

Dan 3:25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

strength. Antichrist will attempt the same, gathering the combined armies of earth against the Lord at Armageddon, throwing a mass of humanity at God. What else? There too the greatest collection ever of human strength will prove powerless against the Lord of glory.

Vs. 22 – N.B. how the foolishness of rage only served to jeopardize the lives of others. The king lost some of his “*most mighty men*” here. I wonder if he ever later grieved for these losses forced by his foolish anger.

3:24-27 – God’s Response.

Vs. 24-25 – Nebuchadnezzar had obviously seated himself in such a way that he could satisfy his rage in watching through the furnace door as these

offenders folded into charred crisps in the flames. Therefore he was the first to see that somehow this did not happen! In a moment he was on his feet “*astonied*”! Likely the whole crowd rising with him to follow his earnest gaze. And then he was asking the obvious in his bewildered amazement, not believing what he was seeing. “Didn’t we throw three men in there? Weren’t they bound? But I’m seeing *four*! And they’re walking around loose in there! Not bound! Not crumpling in the intense heat! I don’t see any of the harm coming to them I was expecting.” Instead of the hoped for pain and trauma, he saw complete liberty, the men making no effort to get out! As if they were quite happy to stay in there with that mysterious fourth one.

“The form of the fourth is like the Son of God” – The Lord here used this pagan king as His own mouthpiece in his astonishment, just as He used Balaam to bless and make accurate prophecy concerning His people (Num. 23-24), and as He used the godless Jewish leaders to express the meaning of Christ’s death (Jn. 11:49-52). It’s a hard call whether Nebuchadnezzar fully understood what he was saying, but it’s likely he hit the nail on the head in referring to this One as *“the Son of God”*. This mysterious figure in the flames with His faithful ones could only have been the Lord Jesus Christ in

another earthly appearance before He came as a man (pre-incarnate) through His virgin birth.

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On the Side

Consider this appearance as a pre-figure of Christ's later coming as Saviour of man;

- To be *with* us in our earthly affliction, for Jesus is “Emmanuel” or “God with us”. God rescues by His presence.
- To bring the rescue of redemption to all who receive or stand with Him.

“When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee . . . I will be with thee” (Isa. 43:1-2). It is so worth landing in the fearful fiery furnace of earthly affliction to know the Lord's special nearness there. He walked together with them through it and delivered them out of it victorious, even lifting them to great honour and His name to the highest through their experience there. All win-win from what appeared such terrifying loss at the first.

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Dan 3:26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

Vs. 26 – “*Ye servants of the Most High God*” – The king’s words are rich with meaning here. Behind the English is the Chaldean version of the great Hebrew name of God, El-Elyon or “Most High God”. In so referring to the Lord by this name King Nebuchadnezzar was again putting the Lord above all the gods of Babylon, as his words to Daniel in 2:47, “*Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods*”. In fact the most frequent occurrence of this name El Elyon is found here in the book of Daniel. This name first occurs in the Bible when Melchizedek was introduced to Abraham as “*priest of the Most High God*” (Gen. 14:18). The most outstanding characteristic of El Elyon stated there is that He is “*Possessor of heaven and earth*”. He is the One who owns all and to whom all glory is due. Abraham was not really the hero in defeating the confederacy of eastern kings there in Genesis 14 because the Most High God gave him that victory. King Nebuchadnezzar was coming to acknowledge the same. He had sacked Jerusalem thinking this a victory for his gods. He had placed the temple

Dan 3:27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

implements in the house of his gods as trophies of Babylon's power over Israel and her God (1:2). But this pagan king is slowly coming to admit the truth of it, that *"the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand"*. The Most High God handed him this victory.

Vs. 27 – All the rulers of the kingdom were there to witness the truth of this astounding, unquestioned miracle of God. The combined national audience Nebuchadnezzar had gathered for his honour God turned instead to display His own glory. This same turn has happened repeatedly throughout history, Armageddon to be the ultimate of it.

There was no evidence on these faithful three that their hair or clothing was touched in the least by the intense flames. No smouldering sandals or singed eyelashes. Not even the smell of the fire was upon them. They were absolutely untouched in any way by the fire. Only the ropes with which they had been bound, those symbols of Nebuchadnezzar's imagined

power over them, had been burned away.

Perhaps we could see in this a picture of God's own children in this world. God's saints are unbound and unhurt, finding both liberty and comfort in Christ, though dwelling right in the very flames of trouble. The saved are delivered in Christ from the "*fear of death*" by which they were "*all their lifetime subject to bondage*" (Heb. 2:15). What power does a raging king hold over those who have no fear of death? What power can small man exert against the saints of God when God Himself overrides human rage and meets them in the fire? "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me*" (Ps. 23:4). "*Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt . . . stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and Thy right hand shall save me*" (Ps. 138:7).

On the Side

As a matter of interest, the apocryphal writings make two additions here to Daniel chapter 3, called the "Prayer of Azariah" and the "Song of the Three Children". The first is a humble prayer of confession and request for deliverance put into the mouth of Azariah or Abednego while in the midst of the fire.

Dan 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

The second is a song of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord supposedly sung by the three while walking about in the flames. This song attained a measure of prominence in the early church, being adopted into their hymnbook, a canticle known as the “Benedicite”. In these apocryphal writings it’s suggested that while the men were in the furnace the king’s servants continued to stoke the flames “with rosin, pitch, tow, and small wood; so that the flame streamed forth above the furnace forty and nine cubits” (over 22 meters). It seems these proposed additions to Daniel were written later, during the era of the Maccabees within the 400 “silent years” between the Old and New Testament times. Writings not to be included among the inspired text of the Old Testament.

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3:28-30 – God and His Men Exalted.

Vs. 28 – The king blessed the God of these brave men for sending His “*angel*” or messenger to their aid and for the deliverance He gave to His trusting servants. And he blessed the men for changing “*the king’s word*” or altering his command by their refusal to bow to his intimidation, and for their courageously exclusive devotion to their God, such that they would even yield their bodies to death. Don’t miss the massively powerful testimony of men who simply, consistently did what they *always* did, what they *had* to do, live to God’s honour!

Such words from the king demonstrate an incredible turn of heart in him from his previous pride. He’s learning. Suddenly he was allowing that God’s decrees should be obeyed over his own. We cannot be faulted for our momentary hopefulness, for there seems now to be a measure of genuine repentance in Nebuchadnezzar. This combined with his recognition of “the Most High God” gives encouraging indications. But again we are met with disappointment upon discovering in the next chapter that there was still no true heart turn to the Lord in him. Still only surface change. Still not to the core of the man, even after so stunning a miracle as this. A genuine heart turn comes not through miracles, but through the will to simply believe God.

So it is in our own dealings with people. Some are immediate in their belief in Jesus, the reality of their faith ever after demonstrated in a walk worthy of the Lord, as the believers won through Paul's ministry at Thessalonica (I Thess. 1:5-8). Some, as this man, are much more steeped in pride, needing a bigger tug to nudge them into the harbour of faith, and requiring much more patience. Some, as here, show hopeful signs of true salvation, only to later reveal themselves as impressed by the Lord but not pressed to faith, having found no entrance into the household of God. How patient the Lord with this man. A patience not yet rewarded with Nebuchadnezzar's true conversion. Yet a patience that will yet be rewarded.

This highlights the Lord's other purpose for these "*times of the Gentiles*", with their characteristic dominance of the nations over His people. See here God's gracious purpose in putting His people among the nations, resulting in some among them coming to faith. He began right here with this first head of this new era, showing at the outset one of His purposes for this time, to call out from among the Gentiles a people for His name. It is to be a time of Gentile dominance, but as well a time of Gentile opportunity and harvest. It's a reminder of my wonderful God of grace. A reminder of His stated purpose from Abraham's day to bless "*all families of*

Dan 3:29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

earth” in him (Gen. 12:3). So He begins here to bless even Babylon’s proud king through these three sons of Abraham. As with Jonah and the sailors on the sea, God’s judgment poured out upon His unfaithful sons sets the stage for the revelation of Himself to the world through His people.

How patient we too must be with stubbornly resistant souls. The Lord knows how to deal with such in His time, bringing this proud king to confrontation after confrontation, lower and lower he was brought until finally he was willing to completely let go of his pride in truth, and cast himself at last upon the Lord alone as his only trust. How good the Lord to relentlessly press a man to repentance and faith.

Vs. 29 – Consider how huge an encouragement this public decree would have been to the Jewish people in Babylon. It was the Lord lifting the spirit of His beleaguered people, leading them, helping them to

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

never return to the idolatry that put them there in Babylon. This was a hugely positive encouragement away from idolatry, even as their captivity was a negative encouragement toward the same.

Vs. 30 – Glory follows suffering (I Pet. 5:1, 10-11; Heb. 12:1-2). N.B that decisive devotion to the Lord’s will again won favour with men as well as with God (chap. 1; Prov. 16:7). Why do men compromise on God’s will except in an effort to please men? Yet, though it does not seem to make sense on the surface, the surest way to win the respect of men in the long run is to ever be careful to maintain God’s favour in the present.

Ponder Points

Understand what was happening here at this beginning of *“the times of the Gentiles”*. As the Lord often does at the beginning of some new approach or programme in His dealing with man, He sets a precedent at the outset, establishing the tone for the era. Even so with the smoking and quaking of Mt.

Sinai (Ex. 19-20). So with the deaths of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10), and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). Though from Nebuchadnezzar's day this would be an age when Gentiles hold dominance over the land and people of Israel, yet the Lord here makes the point that He remains the One in control throughout. Though it might seem at times that the Lord has lost control; though it may seem that other gods are holding sway during this era (or just anti-god sentiment), the *"Most High God"* effectively pressed the point from the start that at no time has it been or will it ever be so. He alone is the *"God of gods, and a Lord of kings"*. Even as the world enters into the final stages of the last days of Antichrist's reign at the end of this age, from the beginning of his rise his days have long since already been numbered, given variously in days (1260 days, Rev. 11:3; 12:6), months (*"forty and two months"*, Rev. 11:2; 13:5), and symbols (*"a time and times and the dividing of time"*, Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14; 11:9 & 11). The numbering of antichrist's days of dominance points to the same. The Most High God still holds the reins, setting the limit of man's existence. *"For at the time appointed the end shall be"* (Dan. 8:19).

As well this is an assurance to God's people, that come what may every eventuality is only through the Lord's allowance. World empires, though they seem

invincible, are not the true movers and shakers. The Most High God is the Doer, allowing what He allows for His purposes.

Thus King Nebuchadnezzar's proud attitude and reign represent Gentile power during this "*times of the Gentiles*", and especially the power of Antichrist in the closing days of this era. Even so this supernatural deliverance of these three Jewish servants of God represents;

- The miraculous preservation of the nation of Israel from Gentile oppression throughout this time.
- The supernatural deliverance of Israel from the most fiery trials ever during the days of Antichrist's dominance at the end of the age (Rev. 12), though his power will appear irresistible.
- God's faithfulness to His own, even when under His rod of reproof.
- God's readiness to rescue every soul putting his trust in Him.
- The shaky "dominion" of "*the god of this age*" working through human kings and kingdoms.

“Let his heart
be changed from man’s,
and let a beast’s heart
be given unto him”

(Dan. 4:16)

Class 7 – Daniel 4:1-18

Dan 4:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

Dan 4:2 I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

Chapter 4 – Proud Made Humble

4:1-3 – King’s Introductory Comments.

This is such a phenomenal chapter when we consider what it is. On the whole this is a letter written by King Nebuchadnezzar himself to all the people of earth. And he wrote with one purpose in mind, to testify of the marvel of Daniel’s God. Here is the king’s personal testimony of the Lord’s working in his life, bringing him it seems into the rest of genuine faith. None of this proclamation concerns Nebuchadnezzar’s greatness, only his baseness. For the proud king had been brought down by the Lord to the level of a beast and now he’s telling the world about it. This public letter from the world ruler is all about the splendour of “*the high God*”, and the king’s humiliating encounter with Him. Oriental kings did

Dan 4:3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

not make it a practice to publicize their embarrassments. But to properly testify of the Lord required the king's self-abasing and he does not hedge on that. Having learned well from the example of his chief counsellor, there is not even a touch of glory-sharing here either. What he wrote took greatest humility. Oh there is at last hopeful evidence here of a genuine change of heart in Nebuchadnezzar. Is this the testimony of a saved man? I sincerely hope so. That the Lord would later depict this king and his kingdom as a beast changed to a man in 7:4 adds to my hope of Nebuchadnezzar's salvation.

Vs. 3 – *“His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation”* – At last Nebuchadnezzar attributed to the Lord the eternal dominion that is rightly His, what this king in fact had tried to claim for himself through his image all of gold in chapter 3. This everlasting kingdom of God is in the sense of His sovereign rule over all of His creation (Ps. 145:13).

Dan 4:4 I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:

4:4-7 – Failure of the Wise Men.

Vs. 4 – “*At rest . . . and flourishing*” – Here was Nebuchadnezzar’s condition before being confronted with his second troubling dream. His military conquests appear to have been largely completed by that time and successful. He was without worries or wants. Secure and satisfied from an earthly perspective. Being without human rival, he held in his lap all that this world can offer a man. Nebuchadnezzar was involved at that time with his great building programme, turning Babylon into the most impressive city in the world. The word translated “*flourishing*” here literally means “green”, picking up on the representation of himself in the dream to come, as thriving like a great and spreading green tree. Such a term speaks as well of a man’s view of his situation when doing fine in the world. Man sees himself as flourishing when he has much or most of his wants supplied down here. But *true* thriving can only be when a soul is blooming before the Lord. The picture of a flourishing tree is a common one in God’s Word, but more expressive of the results of a right relation to the God of heaven

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

than of earthly prosperity (Ps. 1:1-3; 52:8; Ps. 92:12; Jer. 17:7-8).

Vs. 5 – Into the king’s earthly peace and prosperity intruded another frightening dream, which brought great distress to Nebuchadnezzar. God’s message always does this in a world at peace and prospering. The gospel of God comes with promise of peace with God for the receiver, and warning of judgment for rejecters. It’s a message meant to throw a spanner in the works of a man’s otherwise comfortable existence. For though one might be at peace with the world, if he has not peace with God he in truth has *no peace at all!* God’s message comes to confront and condemn and expose our sin, and ultimately to lead us through to repentance and faith. Only then does one at last come to true and lasting peace in Jesus Christ. Only through the troubled waters of confrontation and a proper dealing with our sin do we come to the safe harbour and haven of rest in Jesus. As the mariners were so terribly troubled with Jonah on the sea. It had to be so for them to recognize the bankruptcy of their own false gods and

the reality of the only true God. How well the troubled waters of that sea picture the inwardly troubled soul of the unsaved (Isa. 57:20-21). See the Lord's grace in this trouble He now brings to Nebuchadnezzar. This second dream came as a warning to the king that his sin and pride were going to bring him to grief. His superficial security was a fool's gold of false refuge. As Christ's parable of the prospering farmer in Luke 12 (vs. 15-21) told of a foolish man who thought his ease and comfort was based on his earthly wealth. As Paul's end-times warning in I Thessalonians 5:3 of the days just before God's judgment falls, when the world will be talking "*peace and safety*" then as well. No soul is truly safe until safe in his Saviour. Better that we be troubled through God's faithful confrontation in this life, that our separation from Him might be exposed and dealt with. Better this than everlasting separation from God in the eternal trouble and torment of hell! Praise God He does not leave us to rest in the bliss of ignorance and relative peace here. As the physiotherapist must force the movement of painful joints today for the good and comfort of his patient tomorrow. As the doctor must bring the agony of a re-break to a badly set bone, lest there be lasting trouble into the future. As the surgeon must scrape and clean the raw flesh of the burn patient until proper skin forms, or there will always be torment.

Better the healing effects of momentary torment now for the lasting restoration it can bring. Better that the Lord remove a man's peace now with the bad news of His sure coming judgment upon sin, that true peace might be found in Jesus Christ. Have you personally come to this rest my friend? Do you have such a testimony of God so dealing with you, bringing you down that you might finally look up?

Again, see how faithfully the Lord deals with this lofty king. He revealed Himself and spoke to Nebuchadnezzar very powerfully through the first troubling dream of chapter 2. But in his pride this man continued on in his self-willed way, building an image all of gold, thinking to change God's purpose. The Lord then spoke to Nebuchadnezzar again through the testimony and deliverance of the three in the furnace of chapter 3. But again the king refused the Lord's counsel, continuing in his pride. Now the Lord came to him again with a worrisome warning, aimed at leading this man to *"break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor"* (4:27). But alas, blinded by his arrogant self-will Nebuchadnezzar plunges on with no true repentance of heart. Only to run himself right into all that God had warned of here, in the most excruciating humiliation of his life. And finally

Dan 4:6 Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.

Dan 4:7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

this man will be brought to the end of himself, and a beginning with God. The Lord is faithful to warn wayward man, and faithful to do as He warned. *“He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”* (Prov. 29:1).

Vs. 6-7 – No reason is given why Daniel was not a part of this first wave of wise men. But the result of it was that the stage was again set for Daniel’s God-given success in the context of the failure of worldly wisdom. Again we observe with the king the empty weakness of all human means in contrast to the true power of God. This dream, like the first in chapter 2, was a message from the Lord, therefore the unenlightened hearts of unsaved counsellors would not have the software to read it. Only through God’s enlightening work in a truly redeemed and righteous soul can one discern the meaning of God’s message (I Cor. 2:14-15). Though King Nebuchadnezzar had

Dan 4:8 But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying,

Dan 4:9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

everything, he had nothing. In reality he was a desperately poor man, until the day he at last bowed his heart and received the true “*God of gods*”.

4:8-18 – Daniel Hears the Dream.

Vs. 8 – “*In whom is the spirit of the holy gods*” – The word translated “god” here is grammatically plural, and can actually be read either “God”, “god” or “gods”, depending on the context. So it’s a hard call whether this should be translated singular, “god/God”, or plural, “gods”. Was this man understanding Daniel’s God properly, or was he still thinking of God in the way of Babylon’s many gods? It does seem that Nebuchadnezzar came to faith in the true faith in God through this event, and thus would be taught of Him. As well, he speaks of God truly as the one “*High God*” (vs. 2) and the “*Most High*” (vs. 34) throughout this chapter.

Dan 4:10 Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

Dan 4:11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

Dan 4:12 The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

“No secret troubleth thee” – No mystery was too difficult for Daniel to discern through the Lord’s help.

Vs. 10-17 – The dream described;

- The king saw in his dream a tree standing in a central place of prominence “*in the midst of the earth*”.
- The tree towered in height (vs. 10).
- Though already huge, the king saw as the tree grew in size and strength (vs. 11), until its height “*reached unto the heaven*” and the spread of its branches “*to the end of all the earth*”.
- The tree was full of attractive leaves and fruit, such that all creatures found shade, shelter, and sustenance in and under it (vs. 12). It’s a

Dan 4:13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;

Dan 4:14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

picture of the world of that day finding protection and provision within the great empire of Babylon.

- Suddenly “*a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven*”. This holy heavenly being could only be an angel of God, though not called such here. It’s intriguing that this angel should be termed “*a watcher*”. Perhaps referring to God’s good angels as those ever sleeplessly watching in attendance to the Lord’s every command (Ps. 103:20-21). As well, God’s angels seem ever to watch over “*them who shall be heirs of salvation*” (Heb. 1:14; Ps. 34:7). Remember the cherubim covered with eyes in Ezekiel’s vision of angels (Ezek. 1:18). Likely the very same heavenly beings are seen in Revelation 4:8, who are “*full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*”.
- This one brought command to destroy the tree

Dan 4:15 Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

Dan 4:16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

in a most complete way (vs. 13-14); cut down, branches lopped off, leaves shaken off, fruit scattered, all sheltered creatures chased away.

- Yet the stump with its roots was to be banded and left (vs. 15). It's not clear exactly what the hoops of iron and brass placed around the stump represent. But the obvious indication is that the life of the tree would be preserved though its glory was completely removed. The stump was then left to stand among the field grass, on a level with beasts living out in the elements.
- The focus remaining upon the stump, it's as if it now takes on personhood in vs. 16, its "heart" changing from a man's to that of an animal.
- This change was to last for "seven times", likely indicating a period of seven years. The first mention in this book of a seven of years.

Dan 4:17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

Vs. 17 – “*By the decree of the watchers . . . by the word of the holy ones*” – The reference seems to be to a council of angels issuing God’s decree concerning this proud king of Babylon. This perhaps a glimpse into the arrangement of earthly kingdoms under the administration of angels or councils of such, good angels under God, and evil angels under Satan. Compare “*the prince of the kingdom of Persia*” withstanding the angelic messenger sent to Daniel in 10:13 (also vs. 20). Compare Michael appointed over Israel in 12:1.

“*To the intent*” – The purpose of these events;

- That all who live “*may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men*”. That the Lord is sovereign over all His creation.
- That all may know that the Most High gives earthly dominion “*to whomsoever He will*”. That the Lord “*removeth kings, and setteth up kings*” (2:21). That even “*the basest of men*” might be elevated to rule. Perhaps

Dan 4:18 This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

Nebuchadnezzar in his newfound humility would put himself in this category? Certainly Daniel and Joseph were examples of such (I Sam. 2:7-8; Ps. 113:7-8; Lk. 1:52).

Earthly elevation is not ultimately sourced from earth (nobility, ability, property, etc.). Every rise and fall among men is sourced wholly in *God's will*. Nebuchadnezzar is going to see a living object lesson of this in his own experience.

Vs. 18 – The most troubling aspect of the king's dream was perhaps the recognition that it likely related to him. Whatever might be the meaning of that tree, cutting it down and chopping it up certainly did not sound a cheerful theme. He did well to be so troubled, for it did in fact relate to him personally. Even so the world of men do well to be troubled by the Lord's message "*of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*" (Jn. 16:8), for this word from God relates to every man personally. Is

your soul troubled or triumphant? Have you found true peace and rest in the Saviour?

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

Class 8 – Daniel 4:19-37

Dan 4:19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

Chapter 4 – Proud Made Humble

4:19-27 – Dream Interpreted & Applied.

Vs. 19 – “*Then Daniel . . . was astonished for one hour*” – Upon hearing the king’s dream the meaning was immediately clear to Daniel. He was overwhelmed with the solemn significance of it and struck silent for a period of time. We can well imagine how difficult these tense moments must have been for the king. Perhaps there was a measure of fear in Daniel to bring bad news to such a man. It could be a dangerous business. Remember how Nehemiah was “*sore afraid*” when the king even just noticed that he was sad in the king’s presence (Neh. 2). Such kings wanted no subjects around them showing any unhappiness with the king or his service. Neither did

such egotistical sovereigns want counsellors around given to bad news. Remember King Ahab's 400 "prophets of the Lord" with mouths full of happy, lying encouragements for the king to do all they knew he wanted to do (I Ki. 22). And Micaiah, that one true prophet of God willing to frankly speak the truth to the king, was retrieved from and returned to prison. Remember Jeremiah imprisoned for boldly speaking the Lord's assurance that Jerusalem would fall to Babylon. Moral of the story – say what the king wants to hear and you avoid a wagonload of trouble. It didn't tend to be a healthy thing to be the bearer of bad news to such men.

But I believe there was something other than fear behind Daniel's distress here. A child of God whose heart is right loves like God loves. Such a one is able to love even a prickly old buzzard like Nebuchadnezzar. I think Daniel genuinely cared for this man. And with the king's assurance that his counsellor was free to speak what was on his troubled heart, Daniel spoke his sincere wish without flattery, *"My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies"*. "Would to God it were your enemies to suffer what you must face". Daniel honestly wished for the king's best and despised the task of telling him what he must now tell him. It was as young

Dan 4:20 The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;

Dan 4:21 Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

Dan 4:22 It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

Samuel's hesitancy to pass on to Eli word of the Lord's coming judgment (I Sam. 3). The wrong-hearted tend to hate, because unchecked sin has the unfortunate effect of chilling love (Matt. 24:12). Right hearts love, and share in the joys and distresses of others. Daniel was as perplexed to receive this sad word as he knew the king would be. Yet I wonder if there wasn't a glimmer of hope in him even then, knowing that such a humbling trial might be the very thing needed to finally bring Nebuchadnezzar to true faith. It's likely Daniel was praying for the soul of this man, secretly wondering now if this might be the answer to his prayer on the way.

Vs. 20-22 – *"It is thou, O king"* – The spreading tree did indeed represent King Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. Though there was danger and pain in the saying of it, Daniel said it in a forthright manner, in

Dan 4:23 And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

Dan 4:24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king;

Dan 4:25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

no way hedging on the Lord's message. We too must be willing to say the hard thing if we would benefit others and honour our God. Nobody ever helped anybody by shading the Lord's clear words to a softer hue.

Vs. 24-25 – Proud Nebuchadnezzar was actually to be driven out from the normal existence of a man to live as an animal of the field. This was to continue until he came to understand that it is the Lord who rules over the affairs of men on earth, until he acknowledged that he had what he had because “*the Most High*” allowed it. And that same exalted One can just as easily take it away if and when He wishes.

Dan 4:26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

Dan 4:27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

Vs. 26 – The stump left and banded spoke of the kingdom graciously kept for Nebuchadnezzar, and of the king's eventual return to his former position. The obvious indication was that Nebuchadnezzar would indeed come to recognize the Lord properly at last, and though brought low to some type of animal existence, he would be restored to his right mind. Do you see that banded stump as a token of God's grace? He did not have to restore this man to his former place upon his turning. Nebuchadnezzar would finally come to true treasure upon his repentance, but the Lord in His grace planned to restore him to his kingdom and earthly privileges as well.

Vs. 27 – Prophecy applied. Daniel carefully pressed the king to appropriate response in light of God's warning. If he would replace his sins with righteousness and his iniquities with mercy there was hope of continued peace for the king, or at least

avoidance of the judgment lined up against him. Daniel spoke of appropriate *heart* change displayed in appropriate *life* change.

Man is in the same condition today and in every age. Only through right attention to God's words of warning and promise, leading to right responses inward and outward, is there hope of missing God's coming judgment. Are you listening? Daniel was probably not pointing to particular wrongs in the king's life, just that he was a proud, selfish sinner, as every man, needing to come to repentance before the Lord and faith in God for the salvation only He can give.

The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) makes a very unfortunate translation here, which apparently the Latin Vulgate follows, the translation behind the Catholic Douay version. Daniel's counsel to the king here reads as follows in the Septuagint;

"Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and thine iniquities by compassion on the poor".

This becomes support for the Catholic view of sins paid off through our good works. But we do not atone or find forgiveness for our sins by our alms or

Dan 4:28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

mercy deeds or by any good works. This is not God's way of cleansing from sin (Rom. 4:5; Gal. 2:16; Titus 3:5). The point here is the inward heart change reflected in "*works meet for repentance*", even as we see in the people of Nineveh through Jonah's preaching. Their inward repentance showed outwardly. True repentance does!

4:28-33 – Dream Come True.

Vs. 28 – "*All this came upon the king*" – None of what God had spoken fell short of coming to pass as He said. God works what He warns. God performs what He promises. Throughout eternity mankind shall know and affirm the truth of those faithful words – *As He Said!* For all things always come to pass just in this way. Did the Lord warn Adam that in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit he would die? So it happened just *as He said!* Adam died spiritually in that moment and physically with time. Did the Lord warn that the world of Noah's day would perish in a Flood? And did it happen? Yes, just *as He said!* Did the Lord warn the nation of Israel of captivity if they would not listen to His words through His prophets?

Dan 4:29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

Dan 4:30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

As He said! And does the Lord now warn every soul on earth of His certain judgment upon all refusing to hear and believe upon Jesus Christ? (Jn. 3:18; 5:24)

Vs. 29-30 – “*At the end of twelve months*” – Again behold the grace of God! It’s written in every line. None could possibly argue that the Lord never gave Nebuchadnezzar time to turn. Even as the Lord gave the people of earth 120 years in the days of Noah. Always He gives a soul time to either turn to Him or settle into rejection. Not because He’s slack, for “*the Lord is not slack concerning His promise*”, but because He “*is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (II Pet. 3:9). Man tends to read the Lord’s delays in the wrong way, as clearance to continue in his sinful way (Eccl. 8:11). Since the judgment *did* not immediately come, perhaps the king began to think it *would* not come, an empty threat. But no threat of the Lord has *ever* been empty. *As He said!*

Dan 4:31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.
Dan 4:32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar was up on the flat roof of his magnificent palace, looking out over the splendour of Babylon. The transforming of that city into the most beautiful on earth was one of the primary interests of this king. Only one of the features of this great work was the famous hanging gardens of Semiramis; planted on the roof of a building, perhaps in the sight of the palace, considered one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. The history coming down to us confirms the Babylon of that day was indeed very impressive. And in that moment, looking out over the wonder of what he had built, Nebuchadnezzar's pride soared to the heights as he spoke to himself words of great boasting. It was all about what "***I*** have built . . . by the might of ***my*** power, and for the honour of ***my*** majesty". Not a thought to God's enabling or honour or majesty.

Vs. 31-32 – The words had not even cleared the

Dan 4:33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

king's lips before heaven spoke his judgment. God doesn't waste around when His longsuffering is at last pressed to the limit. Folks sometimes present the Lord as poised with a big stick, ready to strike our every wrong move. One might get the impression of that here. Like the axe dropped the moment the king's prideful thoughts jelled into words. But this was only after many months, offering greatest opportunity for right response, and after much revelation of the Lord's words and power. This now happened suddenly to Nebuchadnezzar as well that there might be no question in him of the reason for what fell upon him.

Vs. 33 – “*The thing fulfilled*” – Note the interesting added features of the king's hair “*grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws*”. Actual physical changes seem to have taken place in the king's body.

What man has ever been shunted so far, so suddenly between complete opposite ends of the spectrum?

From the supreme height of human honours, to the lowest level to which any man could ever be abased. From the highest man could ever imagine for himself, as absolute world ruler, from exceptional human intelligence, to the level of a beast with the mind of an ox!

Again, don't miss how very *suddenly* the Lord brought this all about. The Lord is quite able to thoroughly humble a man in a moment. Again, "*he, that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*" (Prov. 29:1). Hear it again, and hear it this time!

Perhaps the strangest aspect of this account is that the king was not taken out in his weakened, vulnerable condition. The "king" grazing in the fields with the cattle was an assassination asking for a happening. It's very likely that the king's chief counsellor, Daniel, stepped into the role as head of state and the king's protector at that time. Jew at the helm of this great empire holding Israel captive perhaps? Daniel would have been careful to communicate to those concerned that though this fall happened according to prophecy, there was prophecy of the king's restoration in time as well. God's words, so despised and ignored by this king, now became his protection in his weakness!

Dan 4:34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

4:34-37 – The King Restored.

In subtle indication of the king's mental absence during his ordeal, the descriptive account of vs. 28-33 is related in third person, as if another told the king's story. But with his mind restored, Nebuchadnezzar himself takes up the narrative again in vs. 34, speaking now in first person.

Vs. 34 – *“I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven”* – Here was the moment of the man restored, the moment the “beast” at last lifted his eyes to the Lord and was restored to his human faculties. Compare Jonah's deliverance from lowest humiliation when he finally lifted his heart to the Lord from the fish's belly. And this moment of turning in the king was followed immediately with his mouth full of praise to *“the Most High”*. Again, compare Jonah chapter 2, so full of snippets from the Psalms in Jonah's prayer of praise to the Lord. The moment Jonah at last looked up he was praising as

Dan 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Dan 4:36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

well. The moment any and every soul finally, genuinely recognizes and acknowledges the Lord, is the moment true understanding dawns. And the mark of a soul truly turned to the Lord and miraculously restored by Him is *praise* to the God of mercy and grace.

Vs. 35 – The only true God, who alone has eternal self-existence, who is *everything*, can look upon the inhabitants of His creation and esteem them “*as nothing*”. Compare Isaiah 40. He alone is the Absolute Ruler, both of heaven and of earth. “*None can stay*” or stop or slap away His hand. Even the greatest among men is subject to the Sovereign Creator of men.

Vs. 36 – Having been fully restored to his senses, the man was then fully restored to his position as king.

Dan 4:37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Both senses and status graciously handed back to him by the Lord. And being so restored, Nebuchadnezzar was in the position to do as we see him now doing in this chapter, to proclaim the glory of *“the Most High”* from never a more public platform. A position of which he wasted no time in taking fullest advantage.

Vs. 37 – *“Praise and extol and honour”* – It’s as if the king’s words fell short in fully expressing himself in exaltation of the Lord. Though God had dealt so hard with him, he acknowledges that it was only fair. His works are truth, His ways are judgment or just. He is good! Nebuchadnezzar had been the one walking in pride, and this he freely admits, with thanks to the Lord for so dealing with him and showing him. It’s a good sign of a heart put right to see a response like this. Unlike the stubborn people of Israel, this man at last turned *“unto Him that smiteth”* him and was blessed (Isa. 9:13).

Ponder Points

Consider this great work of God in Nebuchadnezzar as a testimony to the power of Daniel's godly example. As well it was likely an outward evidence of Daniel's prayers for this man.

Consider the parallels in the image of man's greatness in the glory of his empires in the king's first dream of chapter 2. As Nebuchadnezzar, that great image too was suddenly brought down to the "*the chaff of the summer threshingfloors*" (2:35), through the Lord's visitation from heaven. Only those willing to turn, as Nebuchadnezzar, from their prideful unbelief will enter into the joy of their Lord (Matt. 25:31-46). The rest must face the same judgment from on high, and "*shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal*" (Matt. 25:46).

“They drank wine,
and praised the gods of
gold, and of silver, of
brass, of iron, of wood,
and of stone”

(Dan. 5:4)

Class 9 – Daniel 5:1-16

Chapter 5 – Arrogance Answered.

This chapter marks the end of the first kingdom (head of gold) of King Nebuchadnezzar's chapter 2 dream. The setting here is many years down the road from the previous chapter. Much had happened since the events of chapter 4;

- Daniel had become an old man, into his eighties by this time. He had already recorded his two prophetic dreams of chapters 7 & 8, though those details are placed later in his account.
- King Nebuchadnezzar was gone, having died over twenty years prior.
- Three or so other kings had enjoyed their brief day in the sun.
- Nabonidus currently reigned over the empire of Babylon, with his "son", Belshazzar, co-reigning. Belshazzar's power extended perhaps only over the city of Babylon. I've read that Nabonidus was a bit of a wandering nut case, always off looking for some new truth or god. Belshazzar may have served as the acting king in the father's frequent absences. It seems this

Dan 5:1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar may have been an actual son of Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 2), perhaps becoming the adopted son of Nabonidus through his marriage to a widow of Nebuchadnezzar. Or it may be that he was Nebuchadnezzar's grandson through Nabonidus' marriage to a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. Much uncertainty here.

- The confederacy of the Medes and Persians had grown strong, and they were even then knocking at the gates of Babylon. It's believed that Nabonidus may have already been captured by Cyrus the Persian, with most of the rest of the empire. The city of Babylon was likely under siege as we come into the events of this chapter.

5:1-4 – Feast of a Fool.

Vs. 1 – “*Belshazzar the king*” – Another of the many interesting run-ins with Bible criticism revolves around this man. The Bible stood alone for many a long century in naming Belshazzar as a king over

Babylon, with no confirmation in literature or recorded history outside of the Bible that such a man ever even existed. This of course gave Bible critics, particularly those doubting the validity of the book of Daniel, fuel for their flame-throwers. Then in 1860 the “Nabonidus Cylinder” was discovered, and lo and behold there was found secular confirmation of Belshazzar, son of Nabonidus. Additional evidence has since been discovered, such that the existence of Belshazzar can no longer be questioned. The quarrelling critics simply shifted their attentions to the next question of whether Belshazzar ever served as king. Archaeologists are still digging. Sigh! There will always be cause to doubt God’s pure words for the one who *must* find cause. There’s a lesson here for us. There is danger in doubting before all the facts are in.

“And drank wine” – Interesting how the false religions of earth, sourced in Babylon, are often pictured as a cup of intoxicating drink. The “MYSTERY” of “BABYLON THE GREAT” makes *“the inhabitants of the earth . . . drunk with the wine of her fornication”* (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 14:8; 17:1-6; 18:3). Lubrication with wine seems a key aspect of her false religion.

The king was making toasts before *“a thousand of his lords”*. This whole event was a confident boast of the

impossibility of taking the imperial city. Babylon was very well defended. Some have perhaps exaggerated her fortifications, but still they were indeed impressive;

- The walled portion of the city was huge, 30 kms or more around.
- The wall was high and thick. One historian suggested a double wall with moat in between.
- There were a great many towers, more than 30 meters high, at intervals along the wall for defence.
- Many great bronze gates effectively shut off entrance into the city.
- The Euphrates River flowed under the walls through the city, providing ample water supply.

Therefore their great confidence in spite of menacing advances by the Medes & Persians. The people of Babylon considered it laughable that their impressive shell could ever be cracked. They had means within the walls to outlast a siege for years. So they were having a big party, laughing at their would-be invaders, trying to convince themselves that they were not worried at all about the gathering threat outside their walls. Besides, was it not true

Dan 5:2 Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

that *their* gods had proven themselves stronger than every god of the surrounding nations, even the God of Israel? So it was a time for praising their gods for their successes. Then, to their arrogant laughter at the Medes & Persians this king dared to add defiance of the God of Israel.

Vs. 2-4 – “*Whiles he tasted the wine*” – Made bold by the influence of alcohol, the king took the fatal step over the edge. How many have followed him over some similar precipice under the same influence? Belshazzar remembered those temple vessels and commanded them to be brought for use in their drinking to the honour of their gods, adding the true God to their mockery! These were “*the vessels of the house of God*”, which “*his father Nebuchadnezzar*” had put “*into the treasure house of his god*” (1:2). This was no shortage of cups, but an intentional slam against the “weak” God of Israel in honour of the “victorious” gods of Babylon. This was a wilful denial of God’s clear revelations of Himself in Nebuchadnezzar’s day. It was a purposeful

Dan 5:3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

Dan 5:4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

desecration of things sacred, marking the end of God's tolerance of Babylon. The Lord explained through Ezekiel (36:20-24) that His deliverance of Israel out of captivity was not for their sakes but *"for Mine holy name's sake"*, because His name *"was profaned among the heathen"*. Here was the point where the Lord's patience ran out with Babylon.

As well Belshazzar's act was in direct defiance of that law of the kingdom decreed by Nebuchadnezzar, assigning mutilation to any who dared speak against the God of Israel (3:29). Belshazzar knew what he was doing, for he later admitted that he knew of Daniel, and of the Lord's dealings with his father (vs. 14-16). He was an arrogant young fool, trying to drum up courage in an hour of insecurity. Trying to show himself big. Quite capable of entertaining his lords, but without the energy or intelligence of a Nebuchadnezzar. King Nebuchadnezzar had his opportunities by God's grace. But his opportunities were also Belshazzar's, for the lessons touched close

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

enough to him for his learning as well. The Lord does not have to repeat the lessons for every soul in every generation. His faithful work in another, known and understood, is considered enough to make one responsible. The Lord knows what we know. This is what the testimony of the Bible is all about, the experiences of others recorded and made known. The Lord's work in Nebuchadnezzar was all the "Bible" this near descendent needed, and the one he rejected.

"His father Nebuchadnezzar" – In Chaldean as in Hebrew there is no dedicated term for "grandfather". This could just as easily refer to Nebuchadnezzar as this man's *grandfather*, as Jeremiah implies in Jeremiah 27:7. In the same way the term "son" can refer to a much more distant descendant than only the immediate (Matt. 1:1).

5:5-9 – Answer of Fear.

Vs. 5 – *"In the same hour"* – Again, the Lord does not waste around when the fearful hour for His judgment

Dan 5:6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

comes, that there might be no doubt as to the reason for what follows. Compare 4:31.

Can you picture those “*fingers of a man’s hand*”, without connection to a body, suddenly appearing in the full view of the king (“*and the king saw*”)? Then the fingers were moving as if belonging to a body, writing into the plaster of the wall “*over against the candlestick*” or candelabra (perhaps the one from the temple?). The Lord put it where it could best be seen. What a terrifying scene it must have been! The true God etched His message of judgment into the wall in the same way He wrote the Ten Commandments into the stone tablets on the mount. In the same way the kings of Babylon were given to writing the record of their exploits and victories permanently into the masonry of their palaces, that all might ever be reminded of their greatness. Now the *end* of king and kingdom were written there too. All eyes followed the king’s startled gaze as the fingers wrote, and then apparently disappeared with the job completed. This was no private reproof, but as public as the sin. “*Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may*

Dan 5:7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

fear” (I Tim. 5:20).

Vs. 6 – Physical effects upon the king;

- His *“countenance was changed”* – From rosy pink to sheet white, jaw hit the table, eyes wide and bulging.
- *“His thoughts troubled him”* – To put it lightly. He was absolutely overwhelmed with terror!
- *“The joints of his loins were loosed”* – Bladder control *“loosed”* with joints perhaps?
- *“His knees smote one against another”* – To the extent it was a noticeable (audible?) thing.

This man just totally lost all semblance of composure. He was not so drunk he could not appreciate what was happening. Thus not so drunk that he did not know what he was doing in mocking God. Not so drunk that he could not be held accountable. God does not buy the “but I was

Dan 5:8 Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

drunk!” line, in one’s effort to excuse his evil. With the walls of inhibition down through drink, what’s at the core of a man tends to come out. Hatred for the God of Israel came to the surface of this man.

Vs. 7 – Can you hear the king’s voice break as he screams for the immediate presence of all his wise men? Above all else he *must* know the meaning of this message. As with Nebuchadnezzar’s chapter 4 dream, Belshazzar must have suspected it was no good sign, for his own conscience joined in accusing him of his blasphemy against God.

His offered reward of “*third ruler in the kingdom*” helps confirm Belshazzar’s co-regency with Nabonidus. The best Belshazzar could offer as second ruler under Nabonidus was third place. And small enough “rewards” these were, considering the circumstances. Shades of Jeremiah’s young relative coming to sell him land even while Babylon was lining up to take all (Jer. 32).

Vs. 8-9 – Third time pathetic for the worthless wise

Dan 5:9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

men of Babylon. Wise though men may profess to be, God's writing is a closed book to the unsaved soul. How easily God is able to close off a man's understanding, again setting the stage for Daniel's entrance and answers, as in chapters 2 & 4. Their inability only contributed to the king's desperation, for at that point he seemed all out of options.

Even while their mocking laughter still echoed in the royal halls, look who suddenly shows Himself in perfect control now. Again, how deftly and quickly the Lord can turn the table. He is the One who laughs at the last when the fear of mocking mankind "*cometh as desolation*" (Ps. 2; Prov. 1:24-33). There just were not going to be any further opportunities for Belshazzar as there were for his father. It's a snapshot here of the world's helpless confusion and turmoil without God's man and message. Where are God's men of this day to bring God's message to the absolute confusion of a world in turmoil?

5:10-16 – Daniel Invited to the Party.

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

Dan 5:11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

Vs. 10-12 – “*The queen*”, upon hearing the commotion in the banqueting hall, made her entrance. There is as much uncertainty about who this woman was as how Belshazzar fit into the royal family;

- Mother of Belshazzar, wife of Nabonidus, widow of either Nebuchadnezzar or his son?
- Wife of Nabonidus, daughter of Nebuchadnezzar?
- Grandmother of Belshazzar, widow of Nebuchadnezzar?

Her words display firsthand knowledge of God’s working in Nebuchadnezzar, and of the trustworthy words of Daniel.

Dan 5:12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

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

“O king, live for ever” – It was God mocking now, for He made a charade of such words of human flattery for such a one. Far from *“for ever”*, this king would not even see the light of another day!

Her description of Daniel sounds a bit like Nebuchadnezzar’s, and was quite complementary in suggesting him as the man for the job. How do people of the world describe you and me in our absence?

“An excellent spirit” – Not just great, but gracious.

Vs. 13-16 – Daniel brought and briefed – The details of vs. 13 were not mentioned by the queen, displaying Belshazzar’s own awareness of this old counsellor. This king therefore must have been very much aware as well of how God had worked through

Dan 5:14 I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

Dan 5:15 And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing:

Daniel in his father's life. Nobody could have forgotten what God did in giving Nebuchadnezzar's dream and interpretation, and in that fiery furnace incident on the plain of Dura. The latter could not have been more public, before "*all the rulers of the provinces*". This was not a matter of ignorance on this son's part, but a purposeful rejection of the direction Nebuchadnezzar chose in his later years. Belshazzar did not *want* to look to the Lord for answers. His attitude may have played a part in Daniel's retirement from duties and the king's failure to call him at the first. He did not prefer to look to that captive Jew his father so foolishly elevated. He did not want to appeal to a non-Chaldean, but through circumstance God forced him to it anyway. As with the evolutionist, it's not that this king did not know or understand to look to the Lord for the answers, it is that he *refused* to find the answers there. A matter of the will, not of the intellect.

Dan 5:16 And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

It's often only when brought to such an extreme place as this that the rejecting soul is finally willing to listen to God. As with King Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4. As with Jonah and those sailors on the crashing sea. As with Saul of Tarsus, struck blind on the Damascus road. As with the countless multitudes saved out of the horrors of the coming Tribulation period (Rev. 7). Praise God for such extreme conditions and for His willingness to bring them. A man is often just not ready to hear until he comes up against it. Even this pig-headed king was made willing to listen through such means. But alas, for this one it was just too late! Will you be fool enough to let it come to such a moment? Too late to turn to the Lord? Too late to bow at last, as Nebuchadnezzar was wise to do?

“And thou . . .
hast not humbled thine heart,
though thou knewest all this”

(Dan. 5:22)

Class 10 – Daniel 5:17-31

In our consideration of the first half of chapter 5 we came in on King Belshazzar of Babylon holding “*a great feast to a thousand of his lords*”. The confederacy of the Medes & Persians was on the march, perhaps outside the royal city even then. But those within the city walls were trusting their defences and provisions. Belshazzar then dared in their drinking to bring God’s temple vessels for use in honouring “*the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone*” (vs. 4). Immediately then “*the fingers of a man’s hand*” appeared and etched a message onto the palace wall, which the wise men were unable to read. “*The queen*” then pointed to Nebuchadnezzar’s old counsellor, Daniel, as one proven quite capable to unravel such knots. Daniel was fetched, flattered, and promised reward for interpreting the writing. We come into the account now just as this wise old man of God begins to speak in reply to this somewhat sobered king and crowd. With Belshazzar’s desperate need to know the meaning of the writing Daniel had him fairly stretched over the barrel. Well, God did the stretching. Daniel had only to deliver on the message. And in characteristic style he did not fail to take full advantage of the situation, putting it to the king in no uncertain terms.

5:17-24 – Daniel’s Banquet Hall Sermon.

Things to note as Daniel begins to speak;

- His complete composure and confidence in a context of complete insecurity.
- His calm peace, so out of place in this doomed city and troubled palace.
- The starkly contrasting purity of a wise and godly old man before a brutish, selfish king, as full of himself and his wine as he was of guilt.
- The boldness of a man standing for right, facing a man in the wrong. “*The righteous are bold as a lion*” (Prov. 28:1).
- Though speaking God’s reproof to a king, Daniel appears utterly without fear of man. He feared God and none else.
- There was a measure of reproof in his even being there before this crowd, who had been led into blasphemy and caught red-handed.
- An evident rest in him upon the sure words of God, that this kingdom must indeed fall, for God had spoken.
- Yet there is nothing bitter or impolite in his manner.

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

Vs. 17 – Though it was a “no thanks” on the worthless rewards, Daniel began by graciously assuring the king that he would give him the reading he wanted. The message of the Lord through His spokesman was not to be given for reward or “*filthy lucre*”. Daniel would speak because as the Lord’s servant he had a message for the king from the Lord. He would do what was his to do out of service for God and man, not in an effort to gain the king’s favour. These rewards would come to him anyway (vs. 29), for all the good they were. But God’s man affirms here that God was the One taking care of him (vs. 23), and to Him would he look as the One who promotes and demotes men (vs. 21; 2:21; 4:17). Daniel was displaying in a practical way the message of God to these kings, and the theme of the book – the Most High rules. He would not be dependent upon a royal rogue like Belshazzar. Though there is no disrespect in Daniel here, we seem to sense more an attitude of *tolerance* for this king, compared to the evident sympathy he had for Nebuchadnezzar, and even for King Darius to follow (6:20-21).

Dan 5:18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour:

Dan 5:19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

With Daniel's promise that the king would have a reading of the writing the king was all ears. Thus all were quite prepared to hear the powerful little sermon to follow. It's called "*redeeming the time*", buying up those opportunities to speak for the Lord in days of evil (Eph. 5:16).

Vs. 18 – The vital point – "*The Most High God gave*" Nebuchadnezzar all that he had. Though perhaps born well, and likely a very intelligent and talented man, his rise to world rule could not be attributed to such human qualities or circumstances. Nor could the honours be credited to the gods of Babylon, as Nebuchadnezzar thought at first. This was all of the lesson so effectively pressed by the Lord upon Babylon's first king, and learned well. It is the lesson of wise humility *every* soul must learn if they would know blessing from the God of heaven (Ps. 2).

Vs. 19 – The Lord made Nebuchadnezzar a little

Dan 5:20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

Dan 5:21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

Dan 5:22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;

earthly image of His own sovereign rule.

Vs. 20-21 – Though Nebuchadnezzar was a supreme ruler on earth he was no absolute sovereign. A big boss, but not the biggest. For when he got a bit too big for his boots the Lord proved quite able to take him down for a time, “*till he knew that the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men*”. Our God is the One who makes appointments as He sees fit. Every blessing from His hand is made or missed on this lesson learned or spurned.

Vs. 22 – “*Thou knewest all this*” – Here is the condemning factor in Belshazzar’s unhappy case. Knowledge increases responsibility. His was no mistake through ignorance, but the *intentional denial* of the Lord’s very obvious visitation of his father. The

Dan 5:23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

Lord knew what Belshazzar knew, that this son of Nebuchadnezzar was fully aware of these things. Yet this awareness was not allowed to have its proper result in him, to lead his heart to genuine humility before *“the Lord of heaven”*. Quite the opposite in fact! His knowledge made it all the more condemning that he would dare so abuse the Lord’s sacred vessels. At every point the Lord knows what we know, and therefore all for which we can be held accountable (Rom. 1:19-21). This truth would seem to apply to infants and those mentally incapable of processing knowledge. The Lord knows the point where one understands enough to make a choice of whom he will serve.

Vs. 23 – The prophet of God did not have to be there to know what they were doing in lifting themselves up *“against the Lord of heaven”*. It was fair and faithful rebuke;

Dan 5:24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

Dan 5:25 And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

- Not timidly whispered in the king's ear, but boldly announced to all, for all were involved and equally doomed.
- In no way indistinct about their wrong.
- With simple, straightforward, clear, and accurate words.
- With no bitter undertones of hatred.

"The God in whose hand thy breath is", reveals dependence far greater even than a newborn infant's complete reliance upon its parents. Compare Jeremiah 10:23.

5:25-28 – Writing Read and Interpreted.

Vs. 25 – The reading. Now at last we learn what was actually etched into the wall by those fearful fingers. When brought directly across into English letters (likely only the consonants were written) the words were;

*Dan 5:26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE;
God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.
Dan 5:27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and
art found wanting.*

MĒ'·NĒ, MĒ'·NĒ, TĒ'·KĒL, Ū·PHĀR'·SĪN

Daniel began by doing what the wise men could not, reading the strange words. It's an uncertainty why the king's counsellors could not even get this far, except that the Lord reserved the honours for Daniel.

Vs. 26-28 – The interpretation. At this point the ideas of commentators as to the exact meaning of these words tend to fly in every direction like shrapnel from an exploded hand grenade. We do well to simply follow the lead of God's prophet here.

These are all passive participles of various verbs;

- MENE – “numbered” or “reviewed”. Doubled for emphasis. God had *most certainly* numbered Belshazzar's kingdom, his number even then being called.

TEKEL – “weighed”. God had weighed Belshazzar as if in a balance, finding him worthless. *“To be laid in the balance, they are*

Dan 5:28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Dan 5:29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

altogether lighter than vanity” (Ps. 62:9).

- PERES – “divided”. The UPHARSIN of vs. 25 is another form of the same. The prefixed U means “and”, with PHARSIN the plural form of PERES. The kingdom of Babylon was already divided (away) in the two directions of the Medes and Persians. There is perhaps a subtle reference here to “Persia”, a word which comes of the same root.

The Lord’s message was utterly blunt;

“Your number is up! No more days! You’ve been weighed and found deficient! Therefore you have become the spoil of the Medes & Persians!”

5:29-31 – Promises Fulfilled.

Promises were then fulfilled on both sides. Belshazzar did for Daniel as he promised anyway, and all came to pass as Daniel had warned as well.

Dan 5:30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

Vs. 29 – Daniel was restored to a similar position as under King Nebuchadnezzar. A position he would continue to hold under Darius. Our faithfulness to the Lord often brings rewards in *this* life as well as in the next, though it's not always so.

John Walvoord points out how well these rewards from Belshazzar bestowed upon Daniel picture all earthly honours; short-lived, having a surface appearance of worth only, actually holding no real meaning or significance (I Jn. 2:15-17). Daniel's true treasure was held in trust with the Lord, whom he was persuaded was able to keep that which he had "*committed unto Him against that day*" (II Tim. 1:12). To have God's blessing by far exceeds every conceivable earthly treasure! To have Jesus as your own Saviour is to find the pearl of greatest price, well worth selling everything to attain!

Vs. 30 – "*In that night*" – It seems Daniel's prophecy was in the process of being fulfilled even as he spoke it. The suddenness of God's judgment, both pronounced and fulfilled, is the most solemn testimony to all men in every age of the grave danger

of not heeding the message of God.

Historians (Herodotus & Xenophon) have laid out in some detail the account of the taking of Babylon by “*Cyrus the Persian*”. Apparently he divided the bulk of his army in two and positioned them at the points where the Euphrates flowed into and out of the city under the wall, leaving them with careful instruction that they were to make their entry when the river depth had dropped enough for them to wade under the wall. He then took a small division of men up the river to a place where it flowed past a lake or swamp area and proceeded to dig a canal, diverting the water of the river out of its main channel. By this means the troops went under, sloshing through the now shallow Euphrates, and stormed the city. The Lord was likely alluding to this tactic in Isaiah 44:27-28, where Cyrus was actually named by God’s prophet over two centuries prior to these events. Apparently the river was walled on both sides all the way through the city as well. If Babylon had been alert they could have barred all gates from the river along the river walls and set a trap for their attackers, wiping them out from the tops of the walls. But they were caught by surprise, because it was the time of an annual religious feast. So all were busy drinking to their gods throughout the whole city, not just in the royal banqueting hall, the city helplessly

consumed with pleasure and drunkenness. The army of Cyrus walked right into the royal palace where the events of this chapter took place, and Belshazzar met his end *that very night*, just as God's prophet had warned.

In fact Babylon's utter destruction was as the prophets of God had repeatedly said of old. In Isaiah 13:17-22 God proclaimed that Babylon would be handled by the Medes & Persians as mercilessly as they had dealt with Judah (Lam. 5:11-13; Ps. 137:8-9), her children dashed against the stones (vs. 15-18). The "*glory*", "*beauty*", & "*excellency*" of Babylon, that "*head of gold*", would come finally to a desolate wasteland, like Sodom and Gomorrah (vs. 19-22). In Isaiah 21:1-10 God's prophet cheered Persia ("*Elam*") and Media on to the attack, going on to describe the horrific experience of those within the city, both before and during its defeat. The Lord barged into the riotous revelry of that "*night of my pleasure*", where they were saying "*prepare the table . . . eat, drink*", and turned it "*into fear unto me*" (vs. 3-5). Then at last the shocking finality of reality was known to all the world with the stunned exclamation, "*Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground*" (Isa. 21:9). All of her offensive idolatry was completely crushed under feet. Through Jeremiah as well

Dan 5:31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

(51:33-58) the Lord clearly explained the way of Babylon's defeat. *"I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men"* (vs. 57). And this because *"it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols"* (Jer. 50: 29-39). The final fall of Babylon features yet further in God's prophecy in Revelation 17 & 18.

Vs. 31 – *"Darius the Median took the kingdom"* – History attributes this victory over Babylon to Cyrus alone. This name "Darius" is nowhere else associated with the destruction of Babylon, much as the name "Belshazzar" was missing in history until the discoveries of the late 1800's onward. Cyrus of course is not without mention by Daniel (1:21; 6:21; 10:1), and by the prophet Isaiah as well (44:28; 45:1). But the identity of this *"Darius the Median"* and how he relates to Cyrus remains a difficult puzzle. Some hold that Cyrus and Darius were blood relation though ruling over the separate nations. It may be that in the confederacy of the Medes & Persians Darius was one of Cyrus' generals, or the military leader storming the city, and then *"was made king"* (9:1) over the kingdom, in some sense ruling in behalf

of Cyrus, perhaps over the area connected with the city of Babylon. Again such uncertainties are happy cause for fault-finders. Will such uncertainties as this become cause for you to find fault and walk away from the Book of God? Or will you wait with me? With the prophet Habakkuk in the days of his uncertainty, *“I will . . . watch to see what He will say unto me”* (Hab. 2:1).

Ponder Points

Consider how the world as a whole commonly makes their boast of great and impressive abilities and glories and strong defences, even as this pagan city of Babylon. Yet when their number comes up, in a moment it can all come tumbling down. No man is wise to place his confidence here in this life. Only in *“the Most High God”* is there a true and lasting tower of defence, sure to hold up at the last. Daniel was wise to trust in that tower over any earthly defences or honours.

Do you see how Daniel continued on, untouched and even greatly honoured, right into the next kingdom? It’s a picture perhaps of the true child of God preserved through *“unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen”* (II Tim. 4:18).

Class 11 – Daniel 6:1-28

Dan 6:1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

Chapter 6 – Lock-Jawed Lions

Here is another on the list of most well known stories of the Bible, together with the rescue from the furnace of chapter 3. In a cruel conspiracy aimed at First President Daniel the table was turned on the conspirators who instead became lion lunch. Though Daniel was an old man at this point, he shows the same firm conviction of his youth, refusing still to compromise regardless of personal costs. We discover the source or supply of such life-long uncompromising commitment to the Lord in this chapter as well, in the example of a man of prayer.

6:1-3 – Daniel Favoured.

Vs. 1 – Though there is much uncertainty around the identity of this Darius and his relation to Cyrus, we trust the validity of the Bible record until all information has come in.

Dan 6:2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.

Dan 6:3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

Vs. 2 – The function of the presidents over the many princes was something of a policing role, to ensure that *“the king should have no damage”* or loss. In other words they were to ensure that all tax monies were properly channelled to the appropriate coffer. For princes who were determined to use their position for self-enrichment, presidents who could not be bribed were a must!

Vs. 3 – Daniel’s *“excellent spirit”* was the cause of his preference above all others. Integrity shows and stands out all the more in the context of corruption. Darius’ specific purpose was to have under him men he could trust, or at least whose dishonesty could be effectively contained. Daniel was evidently such a man to be trusted. Must a believer be willing to compromise on what’s right in order to attain success or promotions in this world? It does not appear so. Daniel tended to ride the crest all of his life, yet with a spotless character. God’s promise

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

stands, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

Daniel’s bold and accurate prophecy of Babylon’s fall (chap. 5) would have spoken highly for him as well.

6:4-9 – Trap of Treachery.

Vs. 4-5 – This gracious old man of God now stood in the way of those over the kingdom with darker motives and interests, and his favour before the king stirred their jealousy. Men of unfaltering integrity will *always* be found blocking the way of the wicked, and hated for it. As the prophets Elijah and Micaiah stood in the way of Ahab’s easy practice of perversion, and were hated for it (I Ki. 21:20; 22:8). Though evil men may be never so clever in a world of subtle intrigue, yet they are never so clever as the Lord of glory, whom the righteous serve. Daniel need not be more clever than his enemies here.

Dan 6:5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

Dan 6:6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

Behold the duplicity of men so given to corruption, now searching for some sign of it in Daniel to use against him. And what a supreme compliment that such men who well understood corruption through personal experience could not detect the least scent of it on Daniel. What a towering testimony when the only handle your enemies can get a hold of is your love for God. Since they could find no regulation broken by Daniel, their only alternative was to *create* one he was sure to offend.

Do you see here the great value in carefully doing right in every detail? Men who know corruption know what to look for in their thoughtful assessment of your affairs. And you can be sure they're watching with interest if they know you claim to be a Christian. Men of the world who are stained with sin are quick to perceive ugly stains on your character, stains your adoring fans may never think to expect or look for. The day will come when we will be thankful for every choice to do right, down to the smallest detail.

Dan 6:7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

Dan 6:8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Vs. 6-7 – Do you see how even Daniel’s enemies knew he would move according to his conscience, even at risk of life? This confidence in Daniel’s character was the backbone of their decree. One of Daniel’s finest traits was his refusal to compromise on what he considered right before his God, and these scoundrels would attempt to use this as a trap against him.

“That whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee” – Their proposed decree likely referred to religious requests. Medo-Persian kings were considered the earthly representatives of their chief god. Perhaps this was something of a test, as Nebuchadnezzar’s in chapter 3, to assess the loyalty of all to the new king.

Vs. 8-9 – This gathering of all princes and presidents (minus Daniel) would have made a very strong

Dan 6:9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

impression upon Darius (stronger than it should have);

- Implying a unanimous decision among them. Suggesting solidarity and urgency.
- Carrying strong flattery. Putting Darius up close to the gods in their estimation, and expressing a united loyalty to him.
- This all perhaps made some superficial sense in their view of the king's priestly role.

Somehow it slipped the king's attention that Daniel, his chief president, was not among these who came to him. Somehow in the heady significance of the moment it slipped the king's attention that Daniel would have no part of such a decree in his devotion to his God. The point is *Darius didn't think!* In fact it appears he purposely was not given time to think it through. The whole atmosphere of the moment was engineered to move him to favourable support of their proposed decree on the spot. In essence the king was forced and used by these conspiring men. Only after it was too late did he realize this. Darius

comes across as a rather weak-willed man.

There are warnings here in our own decision-making process. Store it away in the ready-reference of your heart somewhere;

- Unanimity is no authority! The minority have often been in the right, the majority in the wrong. Compare Elijah vs. Ahab's 450 prophets of Baal in I Kings 18. Compare Micaiah vs. Ahab's 400 prophets "*of the LORD*" in I Kings 22. Compare the handful of believers in Jesus among the whole rejecting nation of Israel.
- Flattery is not to be *welcomed*. It is to be a *warning*! Every con artist knows how to stroke your ego or greed in using you for his/her own end. The harlot of Proverbs 7 caught her simple victim and kissed him as if with genuine affection, telling him he was her one and only, the very one she had been looking for (vs. 13-15). All part of baiting him into her deadly trap.
- No important decision is so urgent that you cannot sleep on it. Wisdom often comes only with time for due consideration and prayer.
- The Bible repeatedly proclaims safety "*in*

Dan 6:9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

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

multitude of counsellors” (Prov. 11:14; 12:15; 15:22; 20:18; 24:6). Get qualified input from others before any and every weighty decision.

So “*Darius signed the writing and the decree*” that could not be changed “*according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not*”. This was a peculiar characteristic of this second kingdom, that even the king himself became the servant of his own unalterable laws (Est. 1:19; 8:8). We begin to see a diminishing of the power of central government from the previous kingdom, the head of gold now diminished in value to the breast of silver.

6:10-11 – Prayer & Discovery.

Daniel’s response is as we might expect based on what we have seen in him so far. For him life was much less important than honouring God, a horrible death much preferred over God’s disfavour.

“When Daniel knew that the writing was signed” – By the time he heard of it the law was already established and thus too late for any attempt to counter the regulation, just as the conspirators designed.

“His windows being open . . . toward Jerusalem” – The praying of the Jews *“toward their land”* while in captivity was in accordance with Solomon’s counsel in prayer (II Chron. 6:34-39). All the godly among them longed before the Lord for the day when proper worship of the Lord would be restored in their Promised Land.

“As he did aforetime” – Daniel’s actions were no purposeful flaunt of the decree. The point is Daniel simply carried on with his practice of prayer as always, from his youth.

Concerning Daniel’s prayer life;

- It was a regular habit. The First President opened, ordered, and ended his day in a fixed habit of prayer, and spending time in God’s Word as well (9:2). Communion with God was no *side* issue, but the *central* concern of this man’s life. It has been well said, “if we don’t have *times* for prayer, we won’t have *time* for prayer”. Compare David’s three times a day

prayer habit (*“evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray”*, Ps. 55:16-17). Compare Abraham’s early morning prayer time and place (Gen. 19:27). Compare Christ’s morning habit of *“rising up a great while before day”* for prayer (Mk. 1:35).

- Daniel’s prayer life held priority over his job position, and even *over life itself*! He would not give up prayer to save his life! Though with all the time demands his administrative position would involve, Daniel made time for prayer.
- Don’t miss the connection between prayer and the powerfully godly testimony of this man. Here is perhaps the central secret of Daniel’s consistently godly life, and perhaps a key reason why he was so *“greatly beloved”* of God and angels (9:23; 10:11, 19). Don’t miss the connection!

Note what Daniel did *not* do in response to this new regulation;

- He did not begin to fight or petition for change in government regulation, rallying for religious freedoms. He just quietly acted according to his conscience, though such actions were now quite illegal.

- He did not bitterly gripe about the change. As always, we hear never a word of complaint from his lips.
- He did not seek to emigrate to a land where he could be free to practice his religion. He just freely practiced his religion anyway, though now against the law.
- He did not make a big public issue of his conscientious objections, taking the “injustice” to the newspapers. He simply ignored the law, making no slightest change in his normal practice.
- He displays no inward debate whether he would continue to pray to the Lord and do so in the same manner as always. There was simply no question of compliance with such a law in any way.
- He really did nothing different and yet got into trouble for it. As with his three friends in chapter 3, a child of God need do nothing to get into flaming trouble in Satan’s domain.

How then do we respond to laws aimed at prying us away from biblical belief and practice? We don’t! Such laws were made to be ignored by God’s faithful ones. When our government insists that by law we

Dan 6:11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

Dan 6:12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

must acknowledge homosexuality as a valid alternative life style, or refrain from implying other religions wrong, or consider abortion a woman's free choice, or refrain from the use of the rod with our children, we "respond" by simply continuing to walk according to our conscience and God's eternal words.

Vs. 11 – Seems they knew where and when to find Daniel in prayer before the Lord. We probably would be surprised what the world knows about our devotions. And how could these men have known that their decree would be such an effective trap for Daniel, that they would find him praying anyway? Obviously even Daniel's enemies were aware of the unshakable bond between this man and his God.

6:12-17 – Charged & Condemned.

Vs. 12 – They first confirmed with the king that the

*Dan 6:13 Then answered they and said before the king,
That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of
Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that
thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a
day.*

*Dan 6:14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was
sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on
Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going
down of the sun to deliver him.*

new regulation was indeed a fixed thing.

Vs. 13-14 – In that fateful moment when they voiced Daniel’s name I suspect it hit like a steam train as it came clear to the king what this was all about. Where Nebuchadnezzar’s response was only rage at Daniel’s friends in a similar moment (3:10-13), Darius was overwhelmed with disappointment for being so hasty and so stupidly taken (Prov. 29:20). His mind was now given only to desperate thoughts of Daniel’s deliverance. He knew himself for a fool in that moment, thoroughly conned by these subtle underlings, as Eve by Satan in the garden. Darius likely saw through to something of the reasons behind their actions as well. But he was just as trapped as Daniel by his own signature! Darius laboured all that afternoon, desperate to find some legal loophole for releasing Daniel, stalling for time. But his men were back in the evening to force his

Dan 6:15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

Dan 6:16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

hand in the execution of the decree. There could be no resisting “*the law of the Medes and Persians*”, which “*may not be changed*”.

Vs. 16-17 – Daniel in the Den. Darius simply had no choice, yet see how he held out hope in Daniel’s God now in his desperation. It would not be the only time a man of the world found himself hoping in the true God when every earthly resource had failed.

“*Thy God whom thou servest continually*” – Daniel had made an impact on this king in his relentless loyalty to the Lord, his unceasing service never more evident than in *this* circumstance. Even at threat of a most terrifying form of death Daniel’s devotion to his God ever remained a continual thing. And for Daniel’s faithfulness Darius earnestly hoped for his safety. Could it be that even this pagan king was adding *prayer* to his hope in Daniel’s God that night?

Dan 6:17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

Dan 6:18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

Dan 6:19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

Dan 6:20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

“The den of lions” – This would have been a large pit with small opening at ground level, and low wall encircling the opening. With the sealing of the stone over the lion’s den there was absolutely nothing any man could do in Daniel’s behalf, setting the stage of course for *God’s* doing.

6:18-23 – Daniel Delivered.

Vs. 18-20 – Interesting the response in Darius that fitful night. Perhaps it was a surprise even to him just how much he cared for that old prophet of Israel’s God. He could tolerate none of his normal evening entertainments. He could not eat. He could not sleep. Before the sun was up the king was up and running to the lions den. And there *“he cried*

Dan 6:21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

with a lamentable voice . . . O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?” Rather a dumb question really. It could only be “yes” or silence. But the man was beside himself with distress at this point. The “*lamentable voice*” expressed the king’s anguished doubts, for a part of him expected only dismal silence. Yet his early anxious coming displayed his flickering hope for the best. There is emphasis in his words on Daniel’s faithful service, indicating this was perhaps the crux of the king’s argument before the Lord in Daniel’s behalf all the long night. Notice that he spoke of “*the living God*” as opposed to lifeless idols, as if there had been a change in this man’s perception of the true God during that torturous night. The distant accounts of the Lord’s deliverances and dealings with the kings of Babylon perhaps took on new reality for Darius, shoring up his hope for Daniel’s safety. Though approaching that den of death with gravest doubts, how earnestly he hoped for exactly what he was met with, the calm, confident, courteous response of Daniel from the pit.

Dan 6:22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

Vs. 21-22 – How easily Daniel might have entertained anger for Darius's weakness at his expense. But again, never the bitter response in God's man, even for greatest injustice.

Note the remarkable contrast between Daniel, at perfect ease in a place that could scarcely be more threatening, yet in the centre of God's will, while Darius passed the night in the safety and comforts of his royal palace, turning down luxuries in perfect torment of soul. *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee"* (Isa. 26:3). *"There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked"* (Isa. 57:21). Compromise may often appear the safest bet, the easiest way, uneasily moving according to the influence of our society. But true safety can only be found in the centre of God's will, even though His will leads us into the lion's den! For there the Lord stood together with His servant (3:25; Isa. 43:2).

As always Daniel gave glory to God through his angel. As well he allowed that his sparing testified of his innocence of any harmful intent toward God or the

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

Dan 6:24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

king.

Vs. 23 – “*Exceeding glad for him*” – Hey I think I see tears of joy and relief on those royal cheeks. Men were likely haled out of bed much earlier than they pleased that morning with the king’s booming command to haul Daniel out of that pit at once. We can well imagine their amazement when they had that old saint up and standing before them and could find not the least scratch on him, not even the stink of lion’s breath. We’re informed in Heb. 11:33 that “*through faith*” God’s man “*stopped the mouths of lions*” that night.

6:24-28 – Destruction & Decree.

Vs. 24 – For a moment it was like the old days under Nebuchadnezzar again. No counsels. No decrees.

Dan 6:25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

Dan 6:26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

Just the king's sharp word and the job was done! This judgment likely fell only on those who led in the plot against Daniel, not upon all of the presidents and princes. Harsh but fair was this judgment upon the conspirators. But why their families included? Persian law decreed the whole family to be sharers in the guilt of one. The Law of Moses taught otherwise (Deut. 24:16; II Ki. 14:6). It's a harsh reminder that our evil choices affect our whole family.

We now discover that the disinterest of those lions in Daniel was not the natural result of full bellies. It's obvious they were hungry enough! This was indeed the *supernatural* deliverance of God Almighty.

Vs. 25-27 – Darius' decree sent to "*every dominion of my kingdom*" was similar to Nebuchadnezzar's decree and public letter in support of the Most High God in chapters 3 & 4. In fact this one goes even farther than Nebuchadnezzar's demand that none "*speak*

Dan 6:27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

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

anything amiss against” God, commanding even that “men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel”.

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Ponder Points

God can do anything!! Even what is utterly against nature. He is quite able to deliver His people, showing His control;

- In chapter 1 over physical health.
- In chapter 2 over secrets.
- In chapter 3 over fire.
- In chapter 4 & 5 over position.
- Now in chapter 6 over the animal kingdom. Compare the ravens bringing food for Elijah in I Kings 17:6.

It’s a reminder that God will shut the mouth of Satan, that “*roaring lion*” who is ever “*seeking whom he may devour*”.

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”.

“I beheld till the thrones
were cast down,
and the Ancient of days did sit”

(Dan. 7:9)

Class 12 – Daniel 7:1-14

Chapter 7 – Dream of Destinies

The first verses of both chapters 7 & 8 place these two revelations somewhere between the events of chapters 4 & 5, when Daniel was perhaps in his late 60's. Daniel's vision of chapter 7 covers the same ground as King Nebuchadnezzar's chapter 2 dream, but with much greater detail. God's later prophecies often expand upon the broader outlook of earlier revelations, adding finer details. The book of Revelation is God's prophecy finished, with the greatest detail of all, building upon the careful foundation and framework of former revelations. In some ways chapter 7 is God's commentary on chapter 2. Note the contrasts between chapters 2 & 7;

<u>Chapter 2</u>	<u>Chapter 7</u>
Heathen king is vehicle of revelation	Godly prophet is vehicle
Interpreted by a righteous man	Interpreted by an angel
Imposing, brilliant image of a man, of precious metals	Animals! The last a vision of horror

Man's viewpoint
(glorious/imposing)

God's viewpoint
(beastly/depraved)

Surface splendour

Inward essence

Though proud man glories in the comparative greatness of his human strengths and creativity and splendour, God esteems mankind, alienated from Him, to be more comparable to the level of a beast (Ps. 22:12; 49:20; Hos. 4:16). Remember how when Nebuchadnezzar lifted himself up in pride, God in that moment made him into something like an animal (Dan. 4:30-31). Compare God's term for Antichrist in Revelation 13. That man who will be the very epitome of human pride God simply calls "*the beast*". God often draws back the veil to reveal life in real terms, His terms. A man's communion with God in humble, willing submission to Him is what elevates him and establishes his human dignity. The moment a man tries to exalt himself in prideful independence from God, he sinks to the level of a brute. The way up is down (Phil. 2), for "*he who would be chief among you, let him be your servant*". The way down is up. The higher a man seeks to ascend, the lower he brings himself. Compare Isaiah 14:12-15 & Luke 10:18.

7:1-8 – Four Great Beasts.

Dan 7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

Dan 7:2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

Dan 7:3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

Vs. 1 – Though Daniel had interpreted two of God’s dreams of revelation for King Nebuchadnezzar, this is now the first of four revelatory dreams or visions or visitations given directly to him.

Vs. 2 – “*The great sea*” is interpreted as the earth or the people of earth in vs. 17. The nations of men are commonly likened to the restless sea (Isa. 17:12-13; 60:5; Rev. 17:15). Even so the coming “*beast*” of Revelation 13 shall “*rise up out of the sea*” of humanity (vs. 1). Compare Christ’s parable of the dragnet in Matthew 13:47-50.

“*The four winds of heaven strove*” – Pictured here is heaven’s work upon humanity, bringing about earthly empires of which proud man thought *himself* the author. Again a reminder that it’s God at the helm of every earthly eventuality (2:21; 4:35).

Vs. 3 – Four earthly kingdoms arise from the mass of

Dan 7:4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

humanity through the workings of “*the winds of heaven*”, kingdoms represented as beasts, and all very different one from the other.

Vs. 4 – The first beast is Babylon.

“*Like a lion*” with “*eagle’s wings*” – The powerful lion and swift eagle were both symbols of Babylon (Jer. 4:7 & 13; Ezek. 17:3, 7, & 12; Isa. 46:11; Lam. 4:19). Walvoord states that “winged lions guarded the gates of the royal palaces of the Babylonians”.

As Daniel was observing this first creature, its wings were plucked, it was lifted and made to stand up as a man, and was given a man’s heart. This can only describe King Nebuchadnezzar’s chapter 4 experience through which he was at last brought to humble dependence and worship of the true God. As long as that proud king relied on his own strength he forfeited the true dignity of a man, being counted among God-rejecting beasts. The moment he at last looked up (4:34) he arose from a beast’s heart (4:16)

Dan 7:5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

to true human dignity. Of all the great and impressive things Nebuchadnezzar did in his days on earth, his one truly great move was to bow in humility before the Lord! The world's way of thinking is the very opposite, that a man only really becomes a man when independent and with a measure of personal majesty. God says man only leaves beasthood and stands up to manhood when he acknowledges *God's* majesty and submits in humble dependence.

Vs. 5 – The second beast is Medo-Persia (named in 8:20).

“Like a bear” – Powerful and ferocious, but less majestic than a lion, awkward and slower than a winged lion.

“Raised up itself on one side” – One side raised higher than the other. In the confederacy of the Medes & Persians, the latter were the larger, stronger, and more aggressive nation. Compare the unequal horns

Dan 7:6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

of the ram in 8:3 & 20.

“Three ribs in the mouth” – Likely a reference to the kingdoms conquered by this nation, i.e. Babylon, Egypt, and Lydia (Asia Minor). The Medo-Persian Empire reached to the very doorstep of Europe.

Vs. 6 – The third beast is Greece (named in 8:21).

“Like a leopard” – A smaller animal than both previous, but expressing speed, agility, and cunning.

“Upon the back of it four wings of a fowl” – The wings underscore the idea of speed. Alexander the Great of Macedon became famous for incredible speed and energy in conquering. The swiftness of his military movements were quite unique in the ancient world. Within a handful of years he with his small, highly trained army marched eastward conquering the whole of the vast Medo-Persian Empire and beyond, from Africa to India. Alexander perfected a method called the “phalanx”, in which his troops would

Dan 7:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

march in a close and deep formation, with interlocking shields held above and on all sides. By this means they formed a moving box, which was impervious to the devastating effects of the opposing archers, and helped to get his army in close to deal directly with the enemy infantry.

“The beast had also four heads” – Alexander did not live long to enjoy his fame. He died of complications from malaria while setting up the seat of his kingdom in Babylon. His vast empire was eventually divided between his four generals (8:8 & 22).

Vs. 7-8 – The fourth beast can be none other than the Roman Empire following Greece. Though strangely the identity of this kingdom is a disputed point among scholars of a more liberal leaning who tend to read these verses as further on Greece. This fourth is not likened to any known animal, but rather is indescribably terrible and fierce. Its iron teeth correspond to the material of the legs of the image in

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

chapter 2. Note the things greatly emphasized;

- The devouring, crushing strength of this beast (vs. 7).
- It's difference in some way from all others (vs. 7, 19, 23).
- The beast itself is greatly in focus. There are nearly as many words describing this one as the combined description of all three preceding kingdoms, just as we saw in chapter 2. Obviously this is the one of particular interest as God sees it, the one He would have us spend time on.

“It had ten horns” – Compare Revelation 12:3; 13:1. In vs. 24 these ten horns become ten kings *“out of this kingdom . . . that shall arise”* (Rev. 17:12). Again we find the idea of ten at the end of this fourth kingdom, agreeing with the ten toes on the final fringe of King Nebuchadnezzar’s chapter 2 image, before Christ’s kingdom comes to rout and replace

the kingdoms of men.

Vs. 8 – Again we observe a *change* in this kingdom between its first and final forms, from focus on the beast as a whole in vs. 7 to focus on peculiar movements among its horns in vs. 8. This agreeing with the change from legs of iron to feet of iron mingled with clay in Nebuchadnezzar’s image.

Then, as Daniel was considering the horns, “*there came up among them another little horn*”, arising “*among them*”, after the first ten were already established. And with the rise of this new horn, three of the first ten were removed (“*plucked up by the roots*”). This is explained in vs. 24, that “*he shall subdue three kings*” in his “*rise after them*”.

“*Little horn*” – Speaking of a small, insignificant beginning, yet later growing to become in appearance “*more stout [greater] than his fellows*” (vs. 20).

“*Eyes like the eyes of a man*” – Describing insight or intelligence far superior to your average horn (king). This in contrast to “*a man’s heart*” given to Nebuchadnezzar in vs. 4. One can have “*the eyes of a man*” without the nobility of “*a man’s heart*”.

“*A mouth speaking great things*” – To this vs. 25 adds

“great words against the Most High”. Thus this one will not only have a mouth given to blasphemy, but to *“great”* blasphemies. His mouth is a most characteristic feature of this one (vs. 11, 20). Compare 11:36. Compare the N.T. descriptions of the Antichrist of the end times;

- II Thessalonians 2:4 – *“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped”*.
- Revelation 13:5-6 – *“There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies . . . he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven”*. *“A mouth speaking great things”* in Revelation 13:5 is the exact phrasing of Daniel 7:8. Can there be any real doubt that the reference is to the same vile being?

This *“little horn”* of Daniel 7 describes a man who will come to power on a worldwide scale at the close of *“the times of the Gentiles”*. This one is variously described as *“that man of sin”*, *“the son of perdition”* (I Thess. 2:3), *“the beast”* (Rev. 13:2), the *“antichrist”* (I Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3). This one will become the most complete expression of evil and blasphemy, the utter embodiment of *“the mystery of iniquity”*, the like of

Dan 7:9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

which the world has never seen since man's fall into sin. Obviously such descriptions of eyes and mouth relate *a man*, a *king* in fact (vs. 20), further confirming that the other "horns" refer to men as well. Thus we see ten kings ruling in the final stages of the fourth kingdom of Rome.

See **Further Thoughts** at the end of this class portion.

7:9-10 – Ancient of Days.

"Till the thrones were cast down", and man's dominion shall be no more. Compare that great impressive image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream crushed and vanished by the stone of Christ's coming (2:44-45). *"Till"* is the telling word whenever God makes mention of man's earthly rule (vs. 22). Man's days of earthly dominance are numbered, the end already written by the hand of God.

"Ancient of days" – This is God the Father, as opposed to Jesus, *"the Son of Man"* (vs. 13). His

Dan 7:10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

garments and hair of white speak of His purity, eternity, and wisdom.

“His throne was like the fiery flame . . . as burning fire . . . a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him”. Greatest emphasis on fire here, as God is described in His coming to judge the kingdoms of men. Fire often depicts God’s judgment upon man in his sin (Ezek. 1:4, 13-14, 26-28; Rev. 4:5; Mal. 3:2-6). Compare the fire in Christ’s eyes as He comes in judgment upon His church and then the world (Rev. 1:14; 19:12). The scene here appears to describe a judicial act or appointment taking place in heaven before Jesus Christ returns to earth to Armageddon and Antichrist’s destruction. Compare Psalm 2:6, *“yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion”*. If so, then I will be among that raptured innumerable multitude standing before Him there in vs. 10!

“His wheels” – Angazi! Your guess is as good as mine on this interesting feature. We will know when we see Him. Compare the wheels in Ezekiel’s vision of

Dan 7:11 I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

Dan 7:12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

the cherubim (Ezek. 1:15-21).

“The books were opened” – This gives a final hour suggestion to the scene described here. Compare in Revelation 20:12 “the books” of man’s works opened for the final judgment of the lost. God also keeps a careful *“book of remembrance”* of the deeds of the redeemed (Mal. 3:16; II Cor. 5:10).

7:11-12 – Beasts Destroyed.

Vs. 11 – Daniel’s attention is then drawn back to the boasting little horn, in time to see its destruction. We know the end of this one will come at Christ’s return as the New Testament confirms. Compare parallel prophecies in Revelation 19:19-21 & II Thessalonians 2:8.

Vs. 12 – *“Their lives were prolonged for a season and time”* – The three previous kingdoms were different

Dan 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

from the fourth in that they all continued their existence in some sense, each absorbed into the kingdom to follow. But Christ in His return to His kingdom brings the complete and catastrophic destruction of the dominion of fallen man on earth. A completely new and different kind of kingdom it will be, coming down from heaven rather than rising out of the sea of humanity. Compare the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2, with each passing kingdom contributing in a measure still to the united image of man's impressiveness. Yet that image is brought in its entirety to an absolute end with the stone's blow to the feet of clay at the close of the fourth kingdom.

7:13-14 – Son of Man.

“The Son of Man” – Christ claimed this exalted title throughout His earthly ministry. His reference to this prophetic scene in Mark 14:62 is what finally brought His condemnation. Jesus said there, *“ye shall see. . .”*, indicating that His first coming was not

Dan 7:14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

the fulfilment of this. The event was still future at the time of His death.

“With the clouds of heaven” – God’s presence is always marked by clouds (Ex. 13:21-22; 19:9, 16; 40:34-38; I Ki. 8:10-11; Isa. 19:1; Jer. 4:13; Ezek. 10:4). Even so Jesus Christ left and shall return in clouds (Mt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26; Acts 1:9; I Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:7). So let the cloudy days be your brightest O believer in Jesus! All clouds will be cleared in the new heavens, earth, and Jerusalem, when the sin of man is at last fully removed.

Being brought into the presence of the Ancient of days, the Son of Man receives dominion, glory, a kingdom, and the service of all people. And His dominion is everlasting and indestructible (2:44). Compare the many promises of the Father to the Son to this effect in Scripture (Ps. 2:6-9; Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:13; Rev. 11:15).

Further Thoughts

On Daniel's prophecy

As we have seen, the fourth beast or kingdom of Daniel's "*night visions*" had ten horns, representing ten kings. The ideas of king and kingdom were synonymous (7:17 & 23-24; 2:38). These ten horns, being on that 4th beast, arising "*out of this kingdom*" (7:24), show them as being a *part* of that beast. Thus these ten kings in their kingdoms clearly belong to the Roman Empire. In fact, in that they will arise out of the Roman Empire, we understand that they will appear at a *later stage* of that Empire, consistent with the ten toes at the end of the figure of Nebuchadnezzar's chapter 2 dream. So we see here an earlier stage and a later, a ten-kingdom stage. These ten kingdoms will all somehow belong to the Roman Empire, yet will remain separate nations, indicating a 10-nation confederacy united within some later development of the Roman Empire. We note as well that this fourth kingdom of Rome is still standing when Christ returns to establish His earthly kingdom. It is the missing of this change between early and later stages of the Roman Empire that leads to such prophetic perversions as

Amillennialism and Preterism, thinking all prophetic fulfilments concerning Messiah must have taken place while the old Roman Empire stood.

Now remember that Daniel 2 pictured the same division between an early and latter stage of the Roman Empire as well. The last stage (feet) was made up of iron mixed with clay, picturing strength yet with inward division. These materials were mingled, yet do not adhere together completely, as iron and clay cannot properly mix with each other (remember how greatly Daniel stressed this point in 2:41-43). Union without cohesion. As well we see the same concept of ten at the latter end there, with the repeated mention of the toes at the end of the awesome image. Thus there is clear indication from these two portions of a ten-nation federation in some later phase of the Roman Empire. This confederation will be for the strength it offers, yet the combination of the nations involved will not be such that they will lose their own national identity or self-governing ability. They are still counted as separate kingdoms or nations, united, yet not thoroughly mingled as one homogeneous nation.

We know the Roman Empire of the past never consisted of a ten-nation confederacy. Old Rome would conquer a nation and then absorb it into the

empire as a Roman province. Therefore the indication can only be that this later, ten-nation confederacy stage is yet to come and will be some sort of revived empire of Rome, in power when Christ returns.

On History

(From an article by Dr. Renald Showers entitled “Europe and 1992”).

Some three hundred years after the Roman Empire fell (western half) in 476 A.D., Charlemagne of the Franks took much of the area of the old Roman Empire, or central Europe (France, Germany, Italy, etc.). As a result, in the year 800 A.D. Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne with the interesting title, “*Emperor of the Romans*”. Still that region of the world was deemed the area of old Rome. Charlemagne’s empire fell apart after his death in 814 A.D.

Then came the Saxon Kings, Otto I (“the Great”), then Otto’s II & III. They took much of central Europe for Germany as well, including Italy. Under these German rulers was established what became known as the “*Holy Roman Empire*”, an empire lasting in some form or another right up until the beginning of the 1800’s. The concept of this empire was a reinstitution of the Roman Empire over some of the

nations of Europe. It was the purpose of Otto III to restore the glories of ancient Rome.

Then came the French conqueror, Napoleon Bonaparte, who in the early 1800's longed for a restoration of a form of Roman imperialism. He wanted to be an emperor with kings ruling under him. Napoleon was a military genius, conquering basically the whole of what had been the European side of the Roman Empire. Only the successes of the British naval fleet under Lord Nelson kept him from including Britain in his domain. It was Napoleon's wish as well to reunite Europe into an unbreakable federation. He referred to such a union as "*a United States of Europe*". In 1804 he crowned himself "Emperor" over his growing empire, and referred to himself as "*a Roman Emperor, in the best line of the Caesars*". He became concerned when his first wife, Josephine, bore him no children. So he divorced her, remarried, had a son, named him Napoleon as well, and titled his new son "*King of Rome*". Of course as we know, Waterloo was the end of his dreams in 1815.

Then came Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor of Germany, who conquered France in 1870. They called the newly extended German domain the "Second Reich" (or empire), for they considered the

old Holy Roman Empire under the Otto's to be the "First Reich". The second was deemed a revival of the first. The new German head began to be called the "Kaiser" (German for Caesar), even as the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire had been called before him. The Second Reich of course ended when Germany surrendered to the allied forces in World War I (1918). And as we know it was Hitler's purpose to establish the "Third Reich", which dream of course ended with World War II. Again, the dream was of a revived Rome.

So there has long been a desire to reunite the European area of the old empire of the Caesars, in essence to re-establish the Roman Empire. Between WWI and WWII a movement began, of which Winston Churchill was a part, to establish a "United States of Europe". Mussolini, the Italian ruler, was quite determined that such a union be centred in what he referred to as "*the fated hills of Rome*". The idea of a United States of Europe was considered a happy solution by many in America in the 1940's during the Truman administration, with the thought that such a union was perhaps the only hope for lasting peace in Western Europe. After the ravages of WWII new momentum was understandably added to the drive for European union. Delegates met formally with that purpose in mind in 1948. The European

Economic Community or Common Market came into being at a meeting in Rome in 1957. Target dates were set when each new stage of such unity would come about. And of course as we know, with time that union has taken place and gone much farther than many wanted to go, even with a common currency.

Throughout this age the underlying idea has remained to re-establish the ideal of European unity dating back to Roman times, a constantly recurring theme or dream. There is no doubt that the European Community of our day is something of a return to this, falling basically within the territory of that old Roman domain. The original twelve nations planning to come into the EC essentially make up the area of the western or European half of the old Roman Empire. A united Europe that has every potential and every intention of becoming the next (final?) superpower.

Now look again to Daniel's ancient prophecies of a revived Rome, of a ten-nation confederacy arising in the same region. The comparisons between current events in Europe and what Daniel spoke 2½ millennia ago are absolutely stunning! What modern men consider so terribly clever and unique was spoken by God centuries before! Here is a group of

nations located essentially where ancient Rome was based, and now amazingly, permanently united – common head, market, currency, etc. Yet all involved are quite determined to maintain their individual, national identities and sovereignty. United for peace and strength is modern Europe, and yet not completely mingled as a single nation, even as clay cannot be completely mingled with iron. N.B. how this amazing union has become centre-stage on the world scene. N.B. a united Europe now on the rise to a place of world dominance. Behold the developing fulfilment of the centuries-old dream of so many key European leaders since Rome ruled the world;

- Charlemagne, the “*Emperor of the Romans*”.
- The German “*Holy Roman Empire*”.
- Napoleon’s dream of “*a United States of Europe*”, crowning himself “*a Roman Emperor, in the best line of the Caesars*”, crowning his son “*King of Rome*”.
- The German *revival* of the Holy Roman Empire in their “*Second Reich*”, with their ruling “*Kaisers*” or Caesars.

What else but a developing revival of Rome according to Daniel’s prophecy?! All is aligning for the “*little*

horn” to arise among ten kings making up old Rome. What really stands in the way of Christ’s return for His church in the Rapture? The stage is essentially set!! Watch now for some earth-shaking event that will reduce the confederacy to ten nations.

And the kingdom and dominion,
and the greatness of the kingdom
under the whole heaven,
shall be given to the people
of the saints of the Most High,
whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom

(Daniel 7:27)

Class 13 – Daniel 7:15-28

Dan 7:15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

Dan 7:16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

In the first half of Daniel 7 we learn of Daniel's dream of 4 great beasts arising "*up from the sea*". These beasts clearly describe the same four earthly kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2, the four empires of "*the times of the Gentiles*" before Christ's return to His kingdom. Now in the last half of this great prophetic chapter the prophet seeks and finds the meaning of his dream.

7:15-18 – General Interpretation.

Vs. 15 – Daniel was distressed. Compare Nebuchadnezzar's greatest concern with the mystery of his dream in 2:1, and Pharaoh's troubled spirit with his in Gen. 41:8. God often brings something good to birth through the pangs of anguished suffering.

Vs. 16 – Daniel asked one "*that stood by*". No clues

Dan 7:17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.

Dan 7:18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

to the identity of this one in the immediate context. That he knew to interpret Daniel's troubling dream pegs him as a messenger from God. Obviously he was on hand from God to bring Daniel the answers. Wider context points to the angel Gabriel perhaps (8:16; 9:21).

Vs. 17-18 – Here is the broad summary of the dream's meaning; 4 great beasts = 4 kings = 4 kingdoms (vs. 23; 8:20-21). These can only be the successive kingdoms of Babylon (lion/eagle), Medo-Persia (bear), Greece (winged leopard), and Rome (terrible beast).

“Out of the earth” = *“up from the sea”* (vs. 3). Compare Revelation 13:1.

“But the saints . . .” – The meaning of this word *“saint”* comes clearer in the New Testament. It refers to all who are set apart as belonging to the Lord by faith, the saved of all ages. These, with *“the Son of Man”*, *“shall take the kingdom”*. Compare the many

passages describing the coming and conquest of Christ with His saints;

- Deuteronomy 33:2 – *“The LORD came . . . with ten thousands of saints”*.
- Zechariah 14:5 – *“And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee”*.
- I Thessalonians 3:13 – *“. . . the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints”*.
- I Thessalonians 4:14 – *“. . . them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him”*.
- Jude 14 – *“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints”*.
- Revelation 19:14 – *“And the armies which were in heaven followed Him”*.

This army returning with Christ will include God’s holy angels as well (Matt. 24:30-31; II Thess. 1:7).

This taking of the kingdom by the saints does not refer to the church’s gradual conquest of a godless world, leading on finally to Christ’s return, as the Post-Millennial view would teach. Such a view cannot be made to agree with that crushing *“stone that smote the image”* in chapter 2. That stone being *“cut without hands”* will not arise from earth but

Dan 7:19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

Dan 7:20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.

descends from heaven.

7:19-27 – Details on 4th Kingdom.

Vs. 19-22 – Daniel seemed to understand the first 3 beasts, and thus had no query concerning them. Only the puzzling 4th beast troubled him. In his request Daniel recounts what he saw, adding a few details not mentioned earlier;

- “*Nails of brass*” (vs. 19).
- Little horn now appearing stronger than the other horns (vs. 20).
- Little horn making war with and prevailing against the saints (vs. 21).

This “*little*” king will rise to prominence among his fellows, becoming noted for his persecution of the

Dan 7:21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;

Dan 7:22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

saints of God. He will indeed be successful in trampling God's children under feet for a time. Compare Revelation 11:7; 13:7; 17:6.

Vs. 22 – This one will prevail only “*until*” Jesus returns to His kingdom (vs. 25). Christ's kingdom is until *nothing*, but is “*even for ever and ever*”, whereas Antichrist's kingdom is only “*until the Ancient of days*” comes. Compare vs. 9; 2:34; 9:27; 11:36.

Even so every person who chooses the world and its way over the will of God has chosen that which is limited by the same “*until*”, that which “*passeth away, and the lust thereof*”. “*But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever*” (I Jn. 2:17).

“*Judgment was given to the saints*” – Compare the Bible emphasis on the role of believers in the administration of Christ's coming kingdom;

- I Corinthians 6:2 – “*Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?*”

Dan 7:23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

- Revelation 1:5-6 – *“Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father”.*
- Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:29-30; Revelation 20:4 & 6; 2:26; 3:21.

Perhaps the thought is here as well of judgment executed in behalf of the saints; those trampled on earth now vindicated at last; the righteous who have been oppressed by the world given rule in the end.

Vs. 23-27 – Meaning of 4th beast given.

Vs. 23 – It’s plainly stated that the 4th beast is the 4th kingdom, or Rome.

“Upon earth” – A reminder that these are kingdoms that *“arise out of earth”* (vs. 17). And though Christ’s kingdom shall descend from above, it *“shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom”* (vs. 17). This is clear indication that Christ’s kingdom will also be

“upon earth”. Remember how we saw no change in thought through every successive kingdom of earth in chapter 2, including Christ’s reign pictured by the stone. Therefore His kingdom cannot only be the rule of God in the new heavens and earth described in Revelation 21-22. Nor can it merely refer to a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men or centred in heaven. We see a continuum of political, earthly kingdoms of men, until these are ended and replaced by God’s sovereign rule on earth.

“Shall devour the whole earth” – The Roman Empire was greater in extent than any of the previous three, yet its influence did not touch *“the whole earth”*. See now how the sway of this 4th kingdom goes worldwide as the attention moves to the little horn. It’s a common approach of biblical prophecy to mingle a more local fulfilment or focus with one more distant or hidden, the immediate shimmering beyond to reveal glimpses of things future or greater;

- In Ezekiel 28 as the Lord spoke *“a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus”*, it soon becomes obvious He speaks of and to Satan as well, the evil spirit behind the man on the ground.
- The same seems true in the Lord’s description of that old dragon Leviathan in Job 41, *“king over all the children of pride”*.

- The “*seed*” of the woman in Genesis 3 looks beyond the righteous line of her seed or descendants to the supreme “*Seed, which is Christ*” (Gal. 3:16).

Even so here. Attention to the Roman Empire that replaced Greece quickly reaches beyond to focus upon details of the final stage of that kingdom yet to come, in the reign of the ultimate dragon-man, the “*little horn*” or Antichrist. Compare again the description in Revelation 13:7-8, of “*the beast*” to come, “*and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life*”. This will be as King Nebuchadnezzar’s chapter 3 effort to force universal worship, but extended to the ends of the earth. The world dominion Jesus Christ refused to receive from Satan’s hand in His temptation (Matt. 4:8-9) the antichrist will readily accept. What Jesus refused to take wrongly, He will receive forever at the last, and so much more! What the “*man of sin*” will take wrongly he will hold only briefly, only “*until*”. Chase the application through to our own experience. All that *we* take wrongly in sin we hold or enjoy only briefly, *until* judgment falls. And of all that we are willing to give up for the Lord we shall receive the return of “*an hundredfold*” (Matt. 19:29), and that

Dan 7:24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

forever.

“Shall devour the whole earth” – Greatest focus here. The reign of Antichrist will be a terror-driven, terrible conquest, quite able to *“tread down”* and brutally *“break in pieces”* every slightest opposition. Such intimidating tactics shall surely be done in a horrifying, public manner to ward off all resistance. Every man will become a spy within that regime, ready to point the finger to any who does not bow to the beast or his image, as those tattling on Daniel (chap. 6) and on his friends (chap. 3). All will be required to report any hint of resistance in fact, lest they implicate themselves as sympathizers.

Vs. 24 – The 10 horns = 10 kings, answering to the 10 toes of 2:41-42.

“Out of this kingdom” – Out of the 4th kingdom or Rome (revived Roman Empire, or some significant portion of it).

Dan 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

“Another shall arise after them” – Again, great emphasis upon the actions of this later *“little horn”*. He shall arise after the first 10 kings are established. Yet these 10 will be contemporaries, for three of the first shall fall with the rise of this one, bringing 3 of 10 nations under his authority in his initial rise to power, then becoming greater than them all (vs. 20).

“He shall be diverse” – It is this final king then that makes this 4th kingdom so *“diverse”* or different (vs. 7, 19, 23). Different in an *“exceeding dreadful”* way (vs. 19), a rule or era unlike anything the world has ever seen.

Vs. 25 – *“He shall speak great words against the Most High”*. So again, that *“mouth speaking great things”* of vs. 8, 11, & 20 turns out to be blasphemy *“against the Most High”*. Compare 11:36-37, II Thessalonians 2:4, & Revelation 13. This one will not merely substitute his person and authority for Christ’s on earth, but he will actively deny God, Father and Son. *“He [this one] is [the] antichrist, that denieth the*

Father and the Son” (I Jn. 2:22).

“He shall . . . think to change times and laws” – This “*little*” king will imagine he can usurp God’s prerogative (2:21), proclaiming *what* will be done and *when*, putting his own will above God’s times and laws (11:36-37). Even as King Jeroboam so arrogantly set up his own religious times and laws and feast days in Israel (I Ki. 12), seeking to lead the allegiance of God’s people away from the Lord to himself. Yet though this little horn will proclaim himself god of times, God has already set the limit of his time right here.

“Until a time and times and the dividing of time” – This is the first mention of God’s time limit on the days of Antichrist’s fullest power (12:7; Rev. 12:14). In comparing the 1260 days of Revelation 12:6 & 11:3, and the 42 months of Revelation 11:2 & 13:5, it seems wise to interpret this phrase in this way;

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{“time”} = 1 \text{ year} \\ + \text{“times”} = 2 \text{ years} \\ + \text{“the dividing of time”} = \frac{1}{2} \text{ year} \\ \hline 3\frac{1}{2} \text{ years} \end{array}$$

This statement of the little horn’s allotted time not

only displays that the Lord never once loses hold on the reins, but it's also meant as a word of comfort for the anguished tribulation saints over whom this beast shall have oppressive power during his brief day in the sun. Praise God for this little word "*until*" from His mouth, describing the beginning of the end of the "*mystery of iniquity*". Jesus referred to the same in Matthew 24:21-22. How often the limit on this evil one's time is spelled out in God's Word, underscoring the certainty that he, as all evil, will come to his end. There will be an ending! Don't spare much concern for your current situation, difficult though it may be. There will be an ending! You will not face your hardships forever. When your lot becomes seemingly intolerable and oppression never so unfair, there will be an ending! When it seems so wrong that the wicked succeed and prosper, and "*are not in trouble as other men*", "*then understood I their end*" (Ps. 73:17. Compare Ps. 37 theme). They will come to their end! Our God is still the God of times and seasons, and so He will always be. Would you submit to the God of time? Or would you, as Antichrist, seek to demand your own times and seasons?

On the matter of your salvation, God says "*behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*" (II Cor. 6:2). The call of God to salvation

Dan 7:26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

for you, as for every living soul, is NOW! *Right now!!* You have no right to wait even a moment. But wilful man says, “Oh no, not now Lord. Later. Perhaps when I’m old. ***My*** time!”

On the matter of *service*, the call of God for every child of His is NOW! The opportunities are before us even now. “Not now Lord. *My* time!”

When facing the *trials* our God brings our way, we make our demand saying “No longer, Lord! My time! My programme!” When we’re single and want to be married. When we’re in pain and want it to be over. When we’re poor and want to be richer. When life is ending and we want it to continue. How we tend to take on the nature of “the beast”, demanding that our God change His “*times and laws*” concerning us. Serenity is such a rarity in the trials of life, even among those who possess eternal life. Oh my heart! How I am tainted with a touch of Antichrist!

Vs. 26 – “*But the judgment shall sit*” – The court shall be convened. In all of his imagined power, this little

Dan 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

point of focus in the closing days of man's earthly dominion will have no power to resist God's subpoena. God the Father shall sit as Judge. Antichrist's power shall be swiftly removed and he destroyed, as II Thessalonians 2:8 and Revelation 19:20 confirm. The nature of his destruction ("*cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone*", Rev. 19:20) will be the very ultimate of Nebuchadnezzar's treatment of Daniel's faithful friends in chapter 3.

Vs. 27 – Thus begins Christ's millennial reign, through and for His own (vs. 18 & 22). And don't miss the evident venue of this "*kingdom under the whole heaven*". Interesting that this is the very same term used in Genesis 7:19 to describe that worldwide flood of Noah's day when the waters covered all the mountains "*under the whole heaven*". Obviously a very earthly scene! It will clearly be an earthly kingdom, consistent with Daniel's earlier earthy representations of this coming reign of Christ in chapter 2 (stone, mountain, filling earth).

Dan 7:28 Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

“Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom” – This is a view of the whole time of future blessing all together. The N.T. gives greater detail, with the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 20) followed by the new heavens and earth (Rev. 21-22). Compare I Corinthians 15:20-27.

“All dominions shall serve and obey Him” – Jesus Christ will have the voluntary worldwide worship and obedience Satan and Antichrist sought to bring upon themselves by force. All that Satan offered Jesus illegitimately Jesus shall have legitimately and joyfully, and that forever.



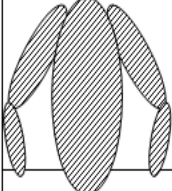



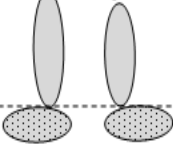



7:28 – Postscript.

This puzzling panoramic prophecy of the times of the Gentiles was so awe inspiring it left the prophet moved and troubled and close-mouthed about his dream, until the day it was appropriate to include these writings among God’s inspired record to man.

The Prophecy of Daniel

Chapter 2

Chapter 7

 <p>BABYLON GOLD</p>	 <p>LION</p>
 <p>SILVER</p>	 <p>BEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised up one side - Three ribs in mouth
 <p>BRASS</p>	<p>LEOPARD</p> 
 <p>IRON</p>	<p>TERRIBLE BEAST !?</p>  <p>FOCUS</p>
 <p>IRON & CLAY</p> <p>Mountain fills Earth</p>	 <p>ANCIENT of DAYS</p>

Summary

Both Nebuchadnezzar's chapter 2 dream and Daniel's here in chapter 7 describe the four kingdom's spanning "*the times of the Gentiles*"; the Babylonian Empire, followed by the Medo-Persian, followed by the Grecian, followed finally by the Roman Empire. Both dreams describe change and special activity of particular focus in the latter stages of the last empire, with feet and toes of iron and clay and ten horns or kings with a very interesting "*little horn*" arising among them. This one notable little horn becomes a persecutor of saints and a blasphemer of God. He grows to become "*more stout*" or stronger than all others. And the days of his prominence are already numbered by God at 3½ years. His evil reign will end with his life at Christ's return to His earthly kingdom.

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Ponder Points

Some believe these prophecies have already been fulfilled in and around Christ's first coming. But this simply cannot be. Where in history have we seen;

- A ten-nation confederacy out of old Rome, or formed on the old foundation of the Roman

Empire?

- A blasphemous, persecuting ruler arising among ten kings/nations, taking out 3 in his rise, his rule then extending worldwide, and his term lasting the specified 3½ years?
- Jesus Christ returning “*in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven*” to the destruction of this final human king and the end of man’s earthly dominion?

Post-Millennialism believes the 4th kingdom is *being conquered* as the saints gradually take dominion of the world. But this does not agree with the suddenness of God’s dominion crushing and replacing man’s.

Amillennialism believes Christ’s kingdom was only ever meant to be a *spiritual* kingdom, in heaven and in the hearts of believers, that there will be no actual earthly reign of Christ. But this does not agree with the evidently earthly nature of God’s kingdom, answering to and ending the earthly empires of men. God’s kingdom and the 4th empire do not run side-by-side in either prophetic scenario of chapter 2 or 7. *The one ends the other!* When Christ the Rock comes the 4th and final kingdom of men will be utterly and permanently destroyed.

Where do we place the current church age in Daniel's timeline? It is simply not there, for the church was a "mystery" largely unrevealed in O.T. This current age of grace and outreach among Gentiles is the result of an *interruption* of God's stated plan for Israel, interrupted by their rejection and murder of their promised Messiah.

“Behold, I will make thee know
what shall be in the last end
of the indignation:
for at the time appointed
the end shall be”

(Dan. 8:19)

Class 14 – Daniel 8:1-27

Chapter 8 – Finale Foreshadowed

God would have us to understand His prophetic portions, such as we find in this book of Daniel. He would not give us His words if He did not mean for us to understand to a large degree. Yet the proper interpretation of prophecy requires careful labour, and a certain subtlety that only the Spirit of God can give. The key here in this 8th chapter of Daniel, the subtlety required to properly interpret this portion, is for us to see described herein a particular ruler out of the closing days of the 3rd empire of Greece, before Christ's first coming. This one becomes a type or foreshadow of that one yet to arise out of the closing days of the 4th empire, before Christ's second coming. Very different men they are, yet both are referred to as "little horns", displaying their association. Now approach this chapter with this in mind and understand it.

8:1-14 – Visions.

Again we begin with a vision, and followed up with interpretations.

Vs. 1-2 – Introduction. From the first verse of this

Dan 8:1 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.

Dan 8:2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

chapter there is a change, unseen in our English versions. Behind the English, the original now shifts back to the Hebrew language from the Aramaic that began in 2:4 and continues to the end of chapter 7. Why this shift? Perhaps because the visions and events of chapters 2-7 relate especially to the first two kingdoms where Aramaic was spoken, and to the unfolding of the broader outline of the “*times of the Gentiles*”. But with chapter 8 the focus narrows from a more worldwide and broad timeline view to that which more directly relates to and affects the nation of Israel.

In comparing 7:1 and 8:1 we see that this vision took place 2 years after that in chapter 7. And again, both chapters 7 & 8 fit chronologically before chapter 5.

Vs. 2 – Though Daniel was in Babylon, yet in his vision he found himself in the palace at Susa or Shushan (KJV). This was one of the Persian royal

Dan 8:3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

cities, more than 350 kilometres east of Babylon. This vision thus becomes prophetic of Babylon's soon fall to Persia, and of this particular city of Shushan destined to become the great capital city of the Medo-Persian Empire. About a hundred years after Daniel's prophecy the Persian king Xerxes built a magnificent palace there, where the events of the book of Esther were centred, and where Nehemiah served as cupbearer to Artaxerxes (see "*in Shushan the palace*", Neh. 1:1; Est. 1:2). Remains of this palace have been found near the modern Iranian village of Shush, where the Karkheh & Dez Rivers are about 20 kilometres apart. The famous "Code of Hammurabi" was found at this ancient site in 1901.

Vs. 3-4 – The Two-horned Ram – Again, *kingdoms* are described in this vision as well, the two kingdoms of Medo-Persia & Greece (vs. 20-21). And again, as seen through the prophet and interpreted by God's angel, these human kingdoms are represented as animals, as in chapter 7. Daniel saw first a ram with two horns. These horns can only picture kings, as in

Dan 8:4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

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

chapter 7 (vs. 24), representing the two-part confederacy of Media & Persia. Persia arose later than the old kingdom of the Medes. They were a people of little note before Cyrus' time, but then they came to exceed Media in prominence. This is the significance of the bear "*raised up . . . on one side*" in 7:5, and now the one horn "*higher than the other*" that "*came up last*". The combination of these two nations proved irresistible for nearly 200 years, until Alexander the Great.

Vs. 4 – Medo-Persia's three main areas of conquest;

- "*Westward*" – Babylon, Mesopotamia, Syria, Asia Minor.
- "*And northward*" – Caspian region.
- "*And southward*" – Judea, Egypt, Libya.

Compare those "*three ribs . . . between the teeth*" of

Dan 8:6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

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

the bear (7:5).

Vs. 5-8 – The He-goat – As Daniel observed, the kingdom of Greece came (vs. 21) *“from the west”* in the form of *“an he goat”*.

“And touched not the ground” – Either describing the great speed of the Grecian conquests, answering to the winged leopard of 7:6 (four years from first victory to completed conquest over Persia, 334-330 B.C.), or depicting the conquering Grecians borne up by heaven, and untouchable by earth until God’s purpose through them was accomplished.

“The fury of his power . . . moved with choler” – Alexander’s conquest was partly Grecian revenge for Persian attacks against Greece at Marathon (490 B.C.) and Salamis (481 B.C.).

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

“He cast him to the ground, and stamped upon him” – The Grecians destroyed only the Persians completely. Other nations they merely subjugated.

“There was none that could deliver the ram” – Not even the immense Persian army (some estimate at more than 2 million) could deliver them from Alexander’s relatively tiny band.

Vs. 8 – Just as the Grecian offensive reached the pinnacle of its strength *“the great horn was broken”* with Alexander’s death at the age of 33. Within months his brother and sons were murdered. Rule over the Grecian Empire was eventually given to *“four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven”*. We’re informed in vs. 22 that these are *“four kingdoms”* which *“shall stand up out of this nation”*, answering to the *“four heads”* of the winged leopard (7:6). It took about 20 years for Alexander’s vast Empire to be divided, but when all was finally settled, 4 of his generals ruled a divided kingdom;

- Cassander, over Macedon, Thessaly, & Greece

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

(Achaia).

- Lysimachus, over Thrace, Bithynia, Cappadocia, east & west of Bosphorus.
- Seleucus over Syria, Babylonia, Media & Persia, and as far east as India.
- Ptolemy over Egypt, Cyprus, Palestine, & Arabia Petrea.

A fifth contender (Antigonus) was knocked out, leaving only four, and displaying the amazing accuracy of God's prophesy.

Compare the progressively increasing detail concerning this third kingdom, as the lens of God's attention zooms in on its influence over Palestine and Jerusalem;

- i. 2:39b (½ verse).
- ii. 7:6 (1 verse).
- iii. 8:5-14 & 21-25 (15 verses).
- iv. 11:3-35 (33 verses).

*Dan 8:10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven;
and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the
ground, and stamped upon them.*

Vs. 9-14 – The “Little Horn” – Now again there arises a “*little horn*”, as in chapter 7. After the pattern set in the previous chapter we know this can only refer to the rise of some later king “*out of one of them*”, out of one of the four horns or kingdoms of Alexander’s divided Empire. The danger many fall into here is to see these two “*little horns*” of chapters 7 & 8 as the same individual, but they are not. Consider the clear contrasts in these two little horns;

Chapter 7

Out of **4th** empire

Arises among 10
kings, 3 uprooted
with rise

Chapter 8

Out of **3rd**

Arises “*out of one
of*” four divisions
of the 3rd empire

There can be no confusing these two kings, for the Lord is quite clear in distinguishing them from one another. Yet we cannot miss the similarities between them;

- Both have an insignificant (“*little*”) beginning.
- Both “*waxed great*” (7:20).

Dan 8:11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.

- Both stand against God and His people (7:25; 8:11-12, 24).
- Both magnify themselves (7:25; 8:11).

“Toward the pleasant land” – When we compare 11:16, 41, & 45 we see that this *“pleasant land”* where the power of this king shall become *“exceeding great”* is the land of Israel. Compare Jeremiah 3:19; Ezekiel 20:6 & 15; Malachi 3:12 where we find this a prophetic name for Israel as well. This king shall exert power southward and eastward and toward Palestine. In vs. 11-14 we see the evil work of this one in desecrating the worship of God in Jerusalem.

Vs. 11-12 – In defiance of *“the Prince of the host”* this king would succeed for a time in forcing the daily sacrifices to cease, in some way “casting down” God’s sanctuary and truth.

History confirms the details of these prophecies. In 175 B.C. the Grecian king Antiochus IV “Epiphanes” came to the throne, through the murder of his own brother, as the 8th king of the Seleucid dynasty

Dan 8:12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

centred in Syria. He ruled for over a decade, turning Palestine into a battleground between Syria and Egypt. Daniel 11 gives the details of the seesawing events between these two branches of the divided empire of Greece. Antiochus IV defeated Egypt in 170 B.C. (*“great toward the south”*, vs. 9), and then put down a Jewish revolt in his return from Egypt with great arrogance, robbing the temple in Jerusalem of everything valuable and massacring many Jews (*“and toward the pleasant land”*). Compare I Maccabees 1:16-28 of the Apocryphal writings. Two years later, with Rome on the rise and standing in his way in Egypt, Antiochus vented his rage on the Jews. He sent his “chief collector” to Jerusalem together with reinforcements, speaking words of peace, “but all was deceit” (I Macc. 1:29ff). They suddenly turned and took Jerusalem, put thousands of Jews to death, plundered and burned the city of David, forbade Jewish practice of the O.T. laws of feasts, Sabbath observance, circumcision and such, put a stop to their sacrifices, set up “the abomination of desolation” (an idol) in the holy place

of the temple, sacrificed a pig on the altar, forced the Jews to eat pig meat at threat of death, etc. Compare vs. 25. This king, like no other king of the *“times of the Gentiles”* before him, sought to stamp out Jewish worship and culture, forcibly replacing it with Greek customs and religion. The compromising Jewish high priest (Jason) began to introduce Greek customs and entertainments in Israel, instituting public venues for wrestling and games, gymnasiums and theatres. Compare II Maccabees 4:7ff. The devout saw these as diversions from the true worship of God. And doesn’t our modern madness over sport, sourced in Greek culture, remain an idolatrous diversion from God’s worship to this day? The Jewish culture was centred on God, as we who are in Christ should be, not on the entertainments of sport, exercise, and theatre.

In Antiochus Epiphanes we see these prophecies fulfilled in the 2nd century B.C., yet that persecuting king serves as a type or foreshadow of the Antichrist to come, who will act toward Israel in a very similar way, but to a much greater degree. This one stood in a place of oppressive dominance over the nation of Israel before Christ’s first coming, just as Antichrist will do in the days before Christ’s return. History confirms that Antiochus IV even sought to exalt himself to divine honours, as Antichrist will indeed

Dan 8:13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

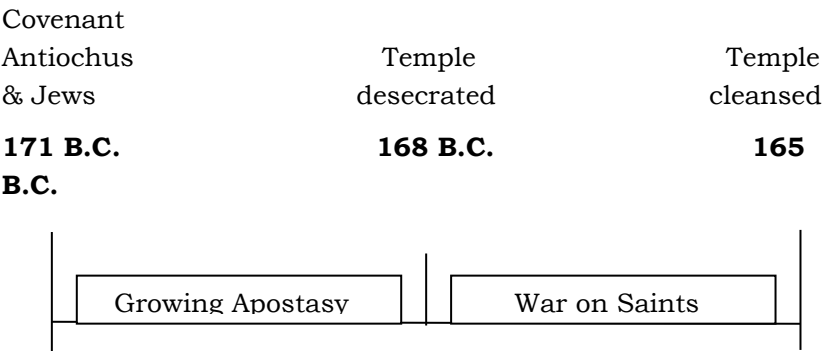
Dan 8:14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

do. While this Grecian king referred to himself as “Epiphanes”, meaning “the Illustrious One”, the Jews with others who hated him called him “Epimanes”, “the mad one”.

Vs. 13-14 – How long? God always talks time limits when an evil man holds sway. From the time of the temple desecration until its cleansing again would be 2,300 days, or about 6 years and 4½ months. Many have been the suggestions as to the meaning of this period, from sensible to absurd. 7th Day Adventist doctrine for example strangely concludes that days must symbolize years here. So they suggest this 2,300 “years” must refer to that period beginning in 457 B.C. when the Jews were given freedom to rebuild Jerusalem, and thus ending in 1844. As a result they came to believe Jesus would return on 22nd October of that year. Of course they were quite shattered when He did not cooperate. But they deftly solved their dilemma by concluding that Jesus must

have entered into the heavenly Holy of Holies on that date. And Christ’s supposed purpose for so entering the Holy place of the heavenly temple gave rise to their false views of investigative judgment with a resulting works salvation. A clear example of incautious and thus dangerous interpretations of prophecy.

It’s far more likely that this time period refers to some portion of Antiochus’ reign. Perhaps the period beginning in 171 B.C. when Antiochus made a covenant of peace with some of the compromising Jews (I Macc. 1:11-15). The period then ended in 165 B.C., when the temple was cleansed and restored. Thus the events were as follows;



The events under Antiochus amazingly approximate what we’re going to see under the “*prince that shall come*” in chapter 9. The two little horns have parallel

Dan 8:15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.

Dan 8:16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.

careers and last essentially the same length of time. Thus the type or foreshadow in Antiochus (chap. 8) is placed between two prominent prophesies of the antitype in Antichrist (chaps. 7 & 9).

8:15-27 – Interpretations.

Vs. 15-19 – Gabriel Appointed to Interpret.

Vs. 15-16 – God speaks to the “*man*”, Gabriel, instructing him to make Daniel understand what he had seen. Gabriel is the first angel ever named in the Bible. The only other angel named, outside of Satan, is Michael (10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). We see Gabriel again in 9:21 & Luke 1 (vs. 19 & 26). He appears to be God’s messenger, delivering His special communications to men.

Vs. 17 – Daniel was terrified of this heavenly being, falling on his face as into a deep sleep as Gabriel

Dan 8:17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

Dan 8:18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright.

Dan 8:19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

began to speak. Don't miss the focus upon "*the end*" here in God's words through His angel;

- "*For at the time of the end shall be the vision*" (vs. 17).
- "*In the last end of the indignation . . . the end shall be*" (vs. 19).

There is here a clear pointer to the end of things, the end of the age. In the more local, partial fulfilment in Antiochus we are meant to see the suggestion of the final, complete fulfilment in Antichrist.

Vs. 19 – "*The last end of the indignation*" – Referring to God's anger and final, severe dealing with Israel for their sin. Compare the similar thought in 11:36. As God used the chastening rod of Assyria (Isa. 10:5 & 25), and as He raised up Babylon (Habakkuk 1:6)

Dan 8:20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.

Dan 8:21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

Dan 8:22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

and Antiochus IV, so He will use Antichrist at the last. And as those chastening rods of God of the past came to their end, so the Lord comforts His people here with the assurance that that last indignation will come to an end as well. Compare 9:27; 11:27; 11:35-36; 12:7; Habakkuk 2:3.

Vs. 20-22 – Meaning of Ram & He-goat.

Vs. 22 – “*But not in his power*” – The Grecian Empire united under an absolute ruler was stronger than when later divided under four.

Vs. 23-25 – Meaning of the Little Horn – This is now further description of Antiochus, the madman of the Grecian Empire. Yet don’t miss the hazy image of Antichrist looming in the distant background. Again we see that leaning-beyond quality so typical of prophetic writings, speaking in a nearer more local sense, yet carrying the reader to the realization of

Dan 8:23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

Dan 8:24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

Dan 8:25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

something bigger, something beyond what we started with. Concerning Antiochus/Antichrist;

- He would arise *“in the latter time of their kingdom”*, i.e. in the closing days of Grecian (and Roman) rule (vs. 22).
- *“When transgressors are come to the full”* – He would arise as punishment upon God’s people for the fullness of their sin and compromise. And there could be no greater evil than when they embrace that *“man of sin”* (see Jn. 5:43).
- *“Fierce countenance . . . understanding dark sentences”* – He would be boldly intimidating and supremely intelligent (7:8).
- His power would be great, but the source of his power would be outside of himself, referring to

Satan. Even as Antichrist's power shall be sourced in what *"the dragon gave him"* (Rev. 13:2).

- With utmost success he would destroy and dominate God's people. *"And it was given unto him [antichrist] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them"* (Rev. 13:7).
- *"He shall cause craft to prosper in his hand"* – He would make subtle deception his most valuable weapon.
- *"He shall magnify himself in his heart"* – And this *"against the Most High"* (7:25) or *"Prince of princes"*.
- The pretence of peace he would use as a trap of treachery. Compare 9:27 & I Maccabees 1:30; II Maccabees 5:24-26.
- *"But he shall be broken without hand"* – His defeat would not be through the hand of man. In the case of Antiochus, a rather sudden death through a nasty disease involving ulcers and worms. In the case of Antichrist, he will be crushed at the pinnacle of his power by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in His return (the stone cut without hands).

Vs. 26-27 – Postscript.

Dan 8:26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

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

“Shut up the vision; for it shall be for many days” – Alas, Daniel would largely not be able to understand the vision in his day. Its full meaning would only be flung open far into the future. What was hidden in Daniel’s time only more fully came to light when John wrote the book of Revelation and Paul II Thessalonians 2. God’s purpose in recording these prophecies was more for the benefit of future generations than for Daniel’s understanding at that time. Oh how that man of God wanted more, wanted to understand *all!* Compare I Peter 1:10-11. And oh how much more we are privileged to have. How much more responsible!

Perhaps *“shut up”* in the sense of “seal up” or preserve, i.e. in written form?

Vs. 27 – Daniel was overwhelmed and ill through this vision and interpretation. He was physically spent in bringing this word from God to birth into the world, though it did not really benefit him much personally. Yet how greatly future generations have benefitted

through Daniel's words, though Daniel himself had to live on in a measure of frustration without most of the meaning in his own day. It's a bit like the child of God or preacher who spends himself in proclaiming the truth, wishing for more visible evidence or fruit, yet seeing little (as Noah). Even if our lives lived for God were a mere burning match, and then burnt out, yet leaving a few glowing embers behind, fanned by the Spirit wind, bursting forth at last to set the world ablaze with a holy flame. What a pleasure! We walk by faith and obedience in this world, not by sight.

Class 15 – Daniel 9:1-19

Chapter 9 – Seventy “Sevens”

In chapter 9 of Daniel’s book the world empires we’ve seen so much of almost entirely drop from our sight, as attention turns to Israel’s hope through her promised Messiah. We’re coming to some of the most precise prophecies in all the Book of God. Prominent themes in this chapter are the failures, punishments, and restorations of God’s people. The nation of Israel was held captive at that time for their stubborn rebellion against their God. Daniel was then reminded through his Bible reading that God had long before told how long that captivity would last, and that the end was coming due. So the response of Daniel’s heart was confession of their sin as a nation for their rejection of their God that put them there in captivity. Then the great prophecy Daniel receives through Gabriel in reply to his cry speaks of an Israel of later years doing it all over again, rejecting their God again, even to the extent of cutting off or killing their Messiah (vs. 26). And God’s response would again be the destruction of their city (vs. 26), implying their dispersion. Then an even more future punishment is alluded to on a much larger scale, through the trap of a future false messiah with whom Israel will fall into illicit relation

in the last days. How they will come to wish they never saw the day they joined in agreement with that one! But that coming antichrist, like his foreshadow in Antiochus Epiphanes, will again be given to them in punishment for their compromise with evil, for their choice of the dark messiah over *“the Sun of righteousness”*, for their choice, as Adam, to reject the right tree and choose instead the wrong. Yet still the ultimate complete restoration of God’s people can be seen beyond all the mess of their failures (vs. 24), just as Daniel saw them on the verge of restoration from the mess of their failure in his own day, soon to be restored to their land. Do you see it? Failure under David’s dynasty led to their captivity in Babylon, yet they were restored to their land after 70 years. That’s here in this chapter. Failure in Jesus’ day led to their true Messiah murdered, city destroyed, and dispersion in 70 A.D., yet temple and sacrifice will be restored. That’s here in this chapter as well. Failure again at the end of this age will lead to the nation’s embracing of the false messiah, and to trouble such as the world has never seen. Yet again, and finally, Israel will be restored to their God forever at Christ’s return to their rescue (Rev. 19; Zech. 12:10ff). This receives mention here also. It’s like seeing off into the distance three successive mountain peaks, each more distant and vague than the closer.

Dan 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

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

The vision in this chapter of Israel's coming true Messiah stands between two warning visions of the false messiah, either in foreshadow or fulfilment in chapters 8 and 11.

9:1-2 – Daniel Understands.

Vs. 1 – Note that in chronological order, chapter 5 fits between chapters 8 & 9. The date of this prophecy would have perhaps fallen in the year 537 B.C., one year before Cyrus the Persian gave the Jews freedom to return to Jerusalem, and 69 years after their captivity began in 606 B.C.

Vs. 2 – “*Understood by books*” – The occasion giving rise to the priceless prophecy recorded in this chapter is now given. Daniel was reading in the book of Jeremiah the prophet. Again, another glimpse into reasons for the godly character of this man of God. Daniel was a man of the Book. He was a student of

prophecy, especially of those things the Lord had spoken concerning his own people. And through his reading of the Word, God brought Daniel to understand *wonderful things*.

Note that God did not need to reveal this new understanding to Daniel directly by dream or vision as previously (chap. 7 & 8), for what He now wanted to show Daniel was already written in the book of the prophets, already revealed through Jeremiah. In our current age we hold in our hands the *fullness* of God's words, completed the day John added the book of Revelation. So in the same way it is through the Bible that the Lord speaks to us today, just as we see Him revealing His truth to Daniel here. No need for prophets and visions when the prophecy is already complete!

In Daniel's reading he came to realize "*the number of years*" of "*the desolations of Jerusalem*". Jeremiah, when prophesying in the final days before Jerusalem's fall to Nebuchadnezzar, had stated that Israel's captivity would involve 70 years (Jer. 25:8-12 & 29:10). Why this specific time? Because God from the start had commanded the nation of Israel to keep a land Sabbath every 7th year (Lev. 25:1-7, 20-23). But they wilfully neglected to do this throughout their 490 years in their Promised Land (II Chron.

36:21; Lev. 26:34-35). So God removed them from their land and gave the land every one of the Sabbath years His people refused to give.

$$490 \text{ years} \div 7 = 70 \text{ years}$$

It has been well said that God may not pay at the end of every day, but at the end of the day He pays! God will bring everything level. Nothing slips by Him, either of a positive or negative nature. He sees and remembers all. It's something for *us* to remember. The Lord will repay you and me for our every wrong and right toward Him and others as well.

So the nation of Israel at last had come to the end of their specified days. Daniel was too old by this time to return to Jerusalem, though I'm sure he wished he could. But he lived to see them go. He had that blessing from the Lord, to see His words fulfilled. It was in "*the first year of Cyrus king of Persia*" (Ez. 1:1) that they went, and Daniel lived at least until "*the third year of Cyrus king of Persia*" (Dan. 10:1).

Now before we go any further, there is a vital principle of Bible interpretation to be gleaned here through the example of this old saint of God. The Bible itself must be our guide in how to approach or read or interpret the Bible. And it's portions like this

that make things quite plain for us. Those who are of an Amillennial view of things future believe among other things that there will be no 1000-year (millennium) reign of Christ on earth (“a” of negation + millennium = amillennial = no 1000-year reign). Such folks come to a portion like Revelation 20 where the Lord through the Apostle John spoke repeatedly of a 1000-year reign and they conclude that John must have been speaking in some symbolic or allegorical sort of way. After all it’s *only* John who speaks of this, and *only* there in Revelation do we find the *only* place in the whole Bible where such a reign of Christ is limited by years. So this 1000 years must have some subtle signification beyond a literal, normal sort of meaning they would tell us. They might suggest further that we need to be particularly careful when interpreting the meaning of *numbers* in the Bible, for numbers often seem to hold symbolic meaning beyond the obvious surface sense (6 the number of a man, Revelation 13, and 7 the number of perfection, etc.). By 1000 years we are probably just meant to understand it as a very long time period, without any strict temporal sense we’re told. Folks such as these might suggest further that the book of Revelation is a prophetic, apocalyptic sort of writing, and thus given to symbolisms and dodgy meanings.

Now look well at Daniel's example here in this chapter and receive instruction. Daniel was reading in Jeremiah and "*understood by books*" a 70-year captivity. How did he interpret this time period? Well, he read and understood it quite literally, didn't he. Oh? But did he not realize that *only* the prophet Jeremiah spoke of this specific limit in years on Israel's captivity? Apparently this made not the least bit of difference. And Jeremiah mentioned this period of years only 3 times in his book, while Revelation 20 refers to Christ's 1000-year reign 6 times in so many verses!! Was this aged saint so naïve as to not recognize the subtleties involved in interpreting numbers or prophetic portions in God's words as he read in Jeremiah's book of prophecy? Look well here my friend. God made no corrections on the normal, literal way Daniel read Jeremiah. One conclusion becomes absolutely clear, with no fair latitude for questioning as I see it. If Daniel were reading Revelation 20, he would read it as an actual, literal 1000-year reign of Christ to come. History has certainly proven Daniel's simple interpretive method correct. When men begin to explain away the clear, normal reading of the Bible, hey the warning lights should be flashing! We are taught by God to tend to accept His statements at face value.

9:3-19 – Daniel's Prayer.

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

Daniel was so encouraged by God's promises coming to fulfilment that he turned immediately to prayer in confession and intercession for his people. Consider elsewhere the interconnection between God's words and prayer;

- Jer. 15:16 – *“Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart”*. What did Jeremiah experience in finding and consuming God's words? Joy and rejoicing. What happened next? It moved his heart to prayer, for this verse is the prophet's resulting prayer. Let your reading of God's words move your heart to the same.
- Jer. 33:3 – *“Call unto Me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which Thou knowest not”*. Jeremiah's prayer would lead to his learning *“great and mighty”* unknown things.

Vs. 3-15 – National Confession. Daniel is all concentrated focus in prayer, with his face set firmly

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

Dan 9:5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

Dan 9:6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

“unto the Lord”, denying himself food in fasting to show his refusal to be diverted by any pleasure in his earnest quest after the Lord. Here is one of the finest examples of intercessory prayer in all the Word of God. Compare the similarities in the prayers of Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 1 & 9. On either side of the release of Israel from captivity God raised up men of understanding in prayer. Daniel begins his prayer by confessing before the Lord the sins of his people, including himself (*“we”*, *“us”*) in their national wrong. There is no hesitation to freely admit and deal with personal sin in one whose heart is right, as this man’s. Daniel’s prayer consists of 12 verses of confession (4-15) followed by 4 verses of petition. A ratio of 3 to 1. Perhaps we too should be 3 times more inclined to confess our sin to the Lord than to ask His aid?

Dan 9:7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

Dan 9:8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

Dan 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

Daniel is one of the few major Old Testament characters to whom no sin is ever ascribed, yet though a righteous man Daniel joined hands with his rebellious people in his prayer. Over 32 times in the course of his prayer he humbly associated himself with the sins of his people. We are all sinners. Not one of us has the right and freedom to point a finger to the sins of others without a keen awareness of our own position as pardoned sinners (Gal. 6:1).

In his prayer Daniel reviews the rebellious history of his people. He exposed their evil repetitively and from every possible angle;

- “*We have sinned against Thee*” (vs. 5, 8, 11, 15). The Hebrew word behind the English reflects the sense of missing the mark or the blameworthy failure of coming short of a

Dan 9:10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

Dan 9:11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

standard.

- *“Have committed iniquity”* (vs. 5). The sense here is of the depraved perversity or twisted nature of the sinner.
- *“Have done wickedly”* (vs. 5, 15). The word used here speaks of the troubled confusion caused by evil-doing and doers both within and without. Agitated and agitating to others.
- *“Have rebelled against Him”* (vs. 5, 9). More than just refusal to submit, this attitude actively moves against the Lord.
- Have departed from God’s words (vs. 5). They turned the shoulder, departing from any semblance of following the Lord.
- Have refused to hear or obey God’s voice through His *“servants the prophets”* (vs. 6, 10-11). The wilful ignoring of God’s words.

Dan 9:12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

Dan 9:13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

- *“Have trespassed against Thee”* (vs. 7). This speaks of sin’s breach of trust or unfaithful treachery.
- *“Have transgressed Thy law”* (vs. 11). Crossed the line of right, entering into that which is forbidden.

Daniel relates their evil in every conceivable way, and how this extended to every social level (vs. 7-8), including *“all Israel”* (vs. 11). As well, Daniel speaks to the Lord of things happening over *7 decades* prior. See how he did not assume *time* the healer of the offences of his people against their God. God forgets neither our good nor our evil if never dealt with properly before Him. With Him, time sweeps no wrong under the carpet. Only sincere, repentant confession of sin, as displayed here, removes sin from the child of God *“as far as the east is from the*

Dan 9:14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

Dan 9:15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

west” (I Jn. 1:9; Ps. 103:12). God had revealed to Israel through Moses the principle upon which He would deal with them in Deuteronomy 28-30 (the cursings and blessings). This is what Daniel refers to in vs. 11-13. See how God had faithfully kept His words in bringing the curse He had so solemnly promised He would bring upon them in their failure. *God does what He says!!* He does *all* that He says, both blessing for obedience or cursing for disobedience (Lev. 26). If He has warned, He will most certainly follow through on His warning. If He has promised, He will surely keep it. Now look again at John 3:16, and understand that it is not just a sweet verse, but clear summary of what God will do with mankind, both to the saving or perishing of a soul. *“Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.”*

Vs. 14 – Behold the responses of a right heart under God’s punishment. “You are so absolutely right to punish us as You have done”. Compare Nehemiah

Dan 9:16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Dan 9:17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

9:33. There is no bitter complaint here, as on the tongue of the world's first murderer (Gen. 4). There is no moan of unfairness. It's the difference between right and wrong hearts when confronted with wrong done. Those with unrepentant hearts only lash out with bitterness when confronted or punished. Compare Revelation 9:20-21; 16:9, 11, 21.

Vs. 16-19 – National Petition. Now God's man pleads in behalf of his people and city. On what basis could Daniel expect God's positive response? He pleads in hope upon God's promise in II Chronicles 7:14. Daniel knew the need for confession of sin before blessing could ever come. He pleads in hope upon the promise he had just read in Jeremiah of a captivity lasting only 70 years, and even the promise of a return to the land to rebuild their destroyed temple. Compare Jeremiah 29:10-14; 30:10-24; Isaiah 44:28. Daniel based his plea on God's own

Dan 9:18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

Dan 9:19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

sure words of promise. He was holding those promises up before the Lord, humbly, graciously holding Him to His words, though recognizing the unworthiness of his people for the least of God's grace. Daniel asks of the Lord;

- That His just anger might be turned away from His people (vs. 16). Again, he's quick to acknowledge the *fairness* of God's wrath.
- That He might remove Israel's reproach among the nations (vs. 16).
- That He might hear and see and return to show His care again for His people in their desolate condition (vs. 17-18). His plea is in no way based on their deserving, but only upon God's "*great mercies*" (vs. 18).
- That He might restore His own name and fame in restoring that people and city "*called by thy name*" (vs. 18-19).

- That they might have His forgiveness (vs. 19).

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Ponder Point

Daniel knew the place of prayer in God's fulfilment of prophecy. He acknowledged God's sovereignty in not failing in the least to do exactly as He had said, and yet he recognized God's sovereignty to be conditional upon human response in faith and prayer. God's sovereignty never makes the human response of prayer a pointless effort. One might conclude, "Oh what's the use! God's going to do what God is going to do anyway!" No! God in His sovereign control has somehow allowed freedom for man to express his will. As well, when God is about to do what God is going to do He raises up faithful souls to pray it in!

Class 16 – Daniel 9:20-27

Dan 9:20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

Dan 9:21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

9:20-23 – Gabriel’s Presence.

Vs. 20-21 – “*Whiles I was speaking*” – This is repeated in vs. 21, underscoring the answer given even before the prayer was completed. Compare Isaiah 65:24; Psalm 32:5. God actually interrupted Daniel’s prayer with the answer!

Even as he began to pray
The answer then sped on its way.

As his hoary head did bow
God’s messenger is coming now.

When one sets himself to pray as this man, with a heart as we see in this man, the powers of heaven are mustered and the answer sent on swift wing.

“Whom I had seen” – Gabriel had been God’s interpreter of Daniel’s previous vision (8:15-16), and was likely that *“one . . . that stood by”* with answers to Daniel’s chapter 7 vision as well (7:16ff).

“About the time of the evening oblation” – This refers to one of the required daily sacrifices in the law, which the priests were to perform continually *“throughout your generations”* (Ex. 29:38-43). The time of this “evening” sacrifice was the 9th hour or 3:00 p.m. Now of course, without the tabernacle or temple there had been no proper evening oblation for 70 years. Daniel would have remembered as a young boy the smoke of this daily sacrifice rising over the temple at this hour each day. With time it became *“the hour of prayer”* (Acts 3:1), when the prayers of the faithful ascended with the smoke of that evening burning. It was a continual, visual reminder that God graciously accepts a sinful people and hears their prayers on the basis of sacrifice. Daniel was still observing that time of prayer and worship long decades after the daily sacrifice had ceased. Behold the beauty of a life-long walk with God. This was likely one of the three daily times Daniel read from his Bible (vs. 2) and lifted his heart to the Lord (6:10). Though the holy city and temple of his people were long gone, Daniel never forgot God’s worship and appointed times, speaking here of rites long

Dan 9:22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

Dan 9:23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

abolished as if still in use. How appropriate for Gabriel to bring the answers at such a time;

- During Daniel's quiet time.
- Bringing a message of Messiah's coming and death at the very same hour when Messiah would one day be "*cut off*" (Matt. 27:46-50). At that same "*hour of prayer*" Jesus cried "*into Thy hands I commend My spirit*".
- At the same hour when it was Elijah's turn to pray to the true God in his contest with the prophets of Baal in the days of Israel's decline under King Ahab (I Ki. 18:36-37).

Vs. 23 – "*Thou art greatly beloved*" – This godly old saint was an object of God's delight (10:11, 19). Compare this same angel's words of announcement to Mary, "*thou that art highly favoured*" (Lk. 1:28). Compare the Apostle John, apocalyptic prophet of the New Testament, as that "*disciple whom Jesus*

loved". God reserves His greatest gifts and opportunities and communicates His greatest truths to those who love Him most (Jn. 14:21-23). Such are men who *search* after an understanding of His words as Daniel, and who weep over His words sealed as John "*wept much*" (Rev. 5:3-4). Such are men who *MUST* understand every last jot and tittle, who are that passionate about "*every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*", who live on His words as a man lives on bread.

9:24-27 – Gabriel's Prophecy.

We come now to four absolutely vital verses, the very heart and soul of this book of prophecy, and one of the key prophetic portions of the entire Old Testament. Don't lose sight of the fact that this great revelation came in answer to prayer, as a direct result of humble, believing, confessing, repenting, petitioning prayer.

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Preview Summary

Vs. 24 – The broad perspective of the whole time period of the 70 sevens, giving the *period* of time, *people* and *place* of focus, and *purposes* to be fulfilled.

Dan 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Vs. 25 – Main events of the first 69 sevens.

Vs. 26 – Events between the 69th & 70th seven.

Vs. 27 – Events within the final 70th seven of years.

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Vs. 24 – “*Seventy weeks are determined*” – The Hebrew word translated “*weeks*” here is literally “sevens”. Whether of days or years is not specified. It’s translation as “*weeks*” (King James Version), implying a period of seven *days*, could lead to confusion. Clearly the reference is to seventy sevens (490) of *years*. A handful of because’s;

- Because Daniel was thinking in terms of *years* in the immediate context (vs. 2).
- Because in fact he was thinking in terms of *490 years*, their 70-year captivity for their years (490) in the Promised Land without keeping the land Sabbaths every 7th year (II Chron. 36:20-21).

- Because 490 *days* was much too short a time for the prophesied purposes of vs. 24 to be fulfilled.
- Because the exact same Hebrew word is used in 10:2, but qualified with “of days”, literally “three sevens *of days*” there, implying a meaning other than days here in 9:24.

“Upon thy people and upon thy holy city” – No reference to world or church history here, but only to Israel’s history. Gabriel refers to focus particularly upon the city of Jerusalem, the “*holy city*” of Daniel’s people.

The Lord gives in this verse six important purposes of God to be completed during these 490 years determined upon Israel. The first three have to do with Israel’s sin. The second three have to do with her promised kingdom. The basis for the first three is provided in the cross of Christ. But all six will only be fully accomplished in Christ’s return to earth. God’s six great purposes determined upon Israel;

- *“To finish the transgression”* – *“Transgression”* in the sense of turning or breaking away. To finally put an end to Israel’s sin of rebelliously turning away from God (Zech. 12:9ff).
- *“To make an end of sins”* – Israel’s sins finally,

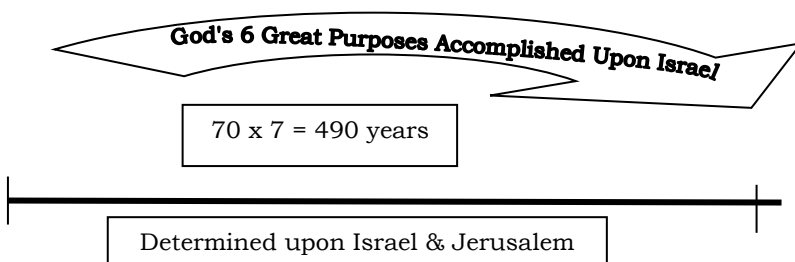
fully dealt with and forgiven.

- *“To make reconciliation for iniquity”* – The basis for Israel’s (man’s) reconciliation to God was laid in Christ’s death. The actual application to Israel as a nation only takes place at Christ’s return, Israel’s ultimate Yom Kippur.
- *“To bring in everlasting righteousness”* – Again, the basis for this was established at Calvary, but there will be no complete application of it to Israel until Christ comes again. N.B. the prominence of righteousness in prophecies of Christ’s coming kingdom (Isa. 9:7; 11:2-5; 60:21; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16; Jesus is Melchizedek, “King of righteousness”, Heb. 7:1-2).
- *“To seal up the vision and prophecy”* – To finish up by fulfilment what has been predicted of Israel’s King and kingdom.
- *“To anoint the most Holy”* – Referring perhaps to the consecration of the most holy place of the millennial temple, or to Jesus enthroned as King of kings in His earthly kingdom.

The combination of these six great purposes is what God will accomplish in the nation of Israel during the specified seventy sevens or 490 years.

Dan 9:25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Thus vs. 24 in picture form;



No designated beginning or ending points.

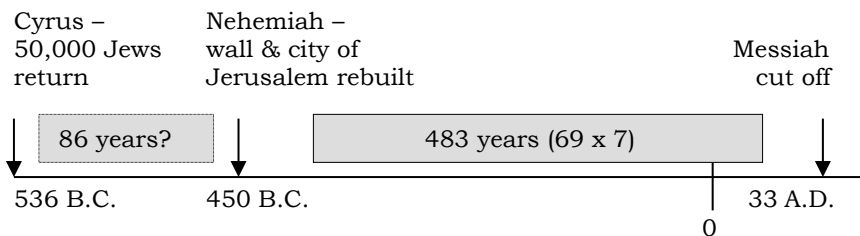
Vs. 25 – “*The commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem*” – Now we have a beginning. Some consider this “*commandment*” to be Cyrus’s decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple in 536 B.C. But only the decree of Artaxerxes given to Nehemiah in the mid four hundreds B.C. (81-86 years later) related specifically to rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, “*the street . . . and the wall, even in troublous times*”. There are difficulties in pinpointing the exact date of this decree of Artaxerxes, but it seems it was somewhere around 445-450 B.C. So this verse refers to the same

Dan 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

time period, giving this decree as the starting point and running up until the presentation of Messiah to the nation of Israel, a period of “*seven weeks* [sevens], *and threescore and two weeks* [sevens]”;

$$(7 \times 7) + (62 \times 7) = 49 + 434 = 483 \text{ years}$$

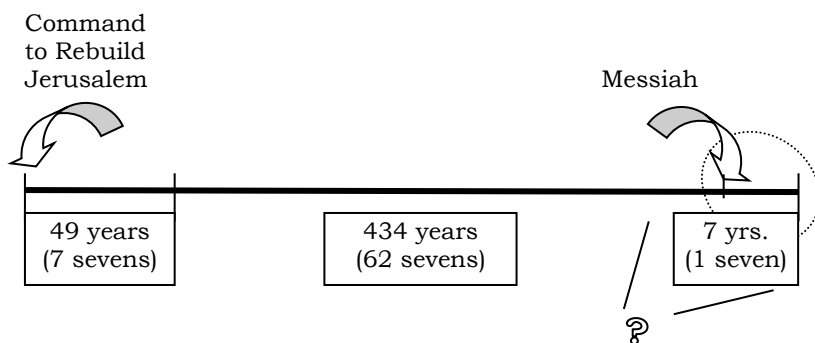
No reason is given for the strange division between the first seven sevens and the following 62, making up 69 sevens, or 483 years. Obviously there remains *one seven* of years outstanding.



Alva McClain, in his little book “Daniel’s Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks”, presents a fascinating study of a possible chronology, which suggests this period of

483 years running from 1st Nissan 445 B.C. to 10th Nissan 32 A.D., the very day of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Regardless of the exact dates and details, the Jewish nation had no excuse for not expecting their Messiah in the very era in which He appeared.

So, vs. 25 pictured;



Vs. 26 – The focus now narrows further to events *between* the 69th and 70th seven.

“After threescore and two weeks” – In the Hebrew there’s a definite article (“the”) here, literally “after the threescore and two sevens”, after the 62. *“After”* the second, larger block of time, two key events are predicted;

- **First**, *“Messiah [shall] be cut off”* – Speaking of

death by active killing rather than passive dying (Gen. 9:11; Jer. 11:19). Israel's Messiah would be living at the end of the 69th seven of years, but would then be killed sometime after.

- **Second**, “*the city*” of Jerusalem would be destroyed. This was a prominent theme on Christ's tongue during His final passion week (Mt. 21:33-44; 22:7; 23:37-24:2; Lk. 23:27ff).

Did you notice that the one outstanding seven of years remains unmentioned? This will only be brought into view in the next verse. Thus these two key events seem to fall within a time gap between the 69th and 70th seven of years, “*after*” the 69th yet before the last 70th. This of course must then express an era when God's focus of attention would be turned from Israel, for only seventy sevens of years “*are determined upon thy people and thy holy city*”; 69 until Messiah is presented to Israel and the 1 remaining seven coming up in vs. 27. These events after Messiah's presentation suggest a “time-out” period for the nation of Israel when God's focus would in fact be elsewhere. This must be an era of an undisclosed time length, a gap of at least 38 years, for this was the time between Christ's death (32 A.D.) and Jerusalem's destruction (70 A.D.). Of course with the advantage of hindsight we now understand this as the beginning of the current church age, an

era when God's attentions are turned to the Gentile world "*to take out of them a people for His name*" (Acts 15:14). Compare Matthew 21:43 and Romans 11:25-26, where this temporary turn is predicted by Jesus and affirmed by Paul.

Now a more "literal" reading might naturally expect the 70th seven of years to follow immediately after the 69th, the one flowing straight into the other. In fact some insist that we have departed from a normal, literal approach to the Bible if we speak of a time gap between. But think with me for a moment. Did God promise to deliver Israel from Egypt and into their Promised Land, to bring them out that He might bring them in? Yes He did. And did He keep that promise to them quite literally? Yes, of course He did. Now remember that Israel interrupted God's plan to bring them into their Promised Land, through their stubborn refusal to enter at first. And that interruption resulted in forty years of wilderness wandering while all who voted no at Kadesh Barnea died. Did that faithless no vote and 40-year delay in any way cancel God's literal keeping of His promise? No, with time He still put them in the land as He had said He would. God's promise was not *voided* by their rebellion, only *avoided* for a time. The same is true presently. Israel's faithless rejection of their Messiah has not voided God's 6 great purposes for

national Israel (vs. 24). *He promised!!* Their choice only avoided those purposes for a time, giving the Gentile nations a chance to find and receive Israel's rejected Messiah and Saviour.

"But not for Himself" – The marginal note here reads, "and shall have nothing". Literally in the Hebrew, "and there is not to Him". Messiah would not receive at that time what was His by right as the Son of God. There would be no kingdom at that time. Not voided, only avoided for a time.

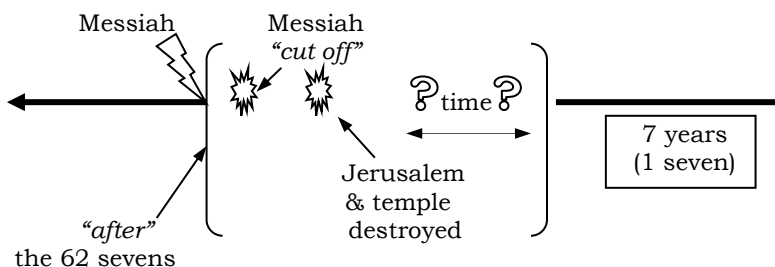
"The people of the prince that shall come" – Read carefully now. We know from history that the Romans under Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem *"and the sanctuary"* in 70 A.D. But this "prince" mentioned here cannot be Titus. He with the army of the old Roman Empire must be *"the people"*, they who flattened Jerusalem. Do you see how this *"prince that shall come"* from this people must refer to one who is *future* from the Roman Empire of history past? It seems clear that this *"prince"* must refer to the same we have seen in the earlier visions of the book, the same *"little horn"* of chapter 7 arising out of Rome (revived) in the last days. We need the help of the larger context of Daniel's book here. Of course the New Testament books of II Thessalonians and Revelation confirm the latter day rise of this

Dan 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

“man of sin” as well.

“The end thereof shall be with a flood” – A torrent or outpouring, picturing perhaps the suddenness with which everything would be swept away from Israel through the overflowing army of Titus.

So vs. 25-26 are completely fulfilled already, except for the continuing wars and desolations. In these the Jewish people are currently embroiled, always have been, and will continue to be right up until Christ’s 2nd coming. Again, let’s put vs. 26 in picture form;



Vs. 27 – Now our attention is turned to the one remaining item of concern. There remains still that last “seven” of years yet unaccounted for. This is the “week” or seven mentioned here, before which someone will confirm a covenant with “*many*”. Obvious questions immediately present themselves, demanding answers;

- Who is this “*he*” that “*shall confirm the covenant*”? This is a conspicuous little pronoun, found 3 times in this verse.
- And what covenant?
- And who are the “*many*” with whom “*he*” shall confirm this covenant?

Two possibilities on the who of the “*he*”;

- The coming “*prince*” of revived Rome (vs. 26).
- “*Messiah the Prince*” (vs. 25).

The normal rule of grammar would be to look back to the nearest or most recent possibility (antecedent), taking us to this “*prince that shall come*” of vs. 26. It seems the actions here are again those of the coming Antichrist. “*He [antichrist] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [seven]*”. Here is now the remaining seven of years determined upon Daniel’s people and city. Thus the focus of God’s attention

turns back to national Israel during these closing seven years of the age, and the “*many*” must then refer to a representative body of the Jewish people. The “*little horn*” shall enter into a seven-year covenant with Israel. This covenant appears to be an agreement of a peaceable nature at first (11:21 & 24). But then something drastic happens “*in the midst* [middle] *of the week* [seven]”. And suddenly the 3½-year period, which we have already considered in 7:25 and see so much of in Revelation, snaps into focus again! At this mid-point of the seven this “*prince*” or political ruler “*shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease*”. He will suddenly put a stop to all temple sacrifices, which obviously must bring an end to his covenant of peace with Israel.

Now understand that this of course assumes a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, with daily sacrifices resumed there. Sacrifices have been stopped since the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. Perhaps the benefit of a rebuilt temple reflects something of the conditions of the covenant this one will make with the Jews. A rebuilt temple of God will be a *necessity* for this coming world prince as well. For he comes with plans for God’s temple as the place of his own throne, as Paul reveals in II Thessalonians 2:4. Understand that this all follows the foreshadow God has given in Daniel 8 in Antiochus Epiphanes of the

third empire of Greece. Remember how he too desecrated the temple with a pagan idol, called “the abomination of desolation” in the book of Maccabees. But Antichrist, the fulfilment of the foreshadow, will place his own vile, blasphemous presence *“in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God”*. This will be the moment he throws off every restraint (or covenant) to *“exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods”* (11:36). These treacherous events begin at the mid-point of that last seven of years. Events yet future in Jesus’ day when He predicted *“the abomination of desolation”* in Matthew 24:15. The terms are very similar here in 9:27.

“The overspreading of abominations” – Likely refers to the same shocking desolation of the temple through Antichrist’s defiling presence there, by means of which *“he shall make it [God’s temple] desolate”*.

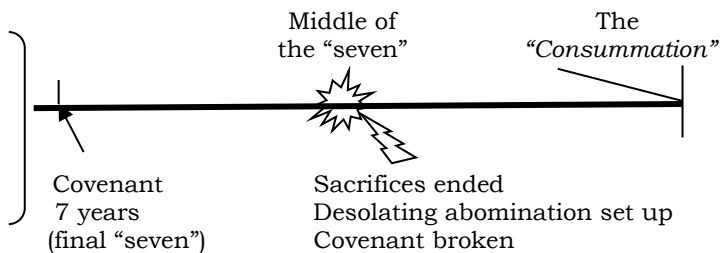
Comparing Revelation 13 we discover that this future, end-times world ruler;

- Will secure absolute political power.
- Will demand world worship.
- Will blaspheme the true God.
- Will persecute God’s people, to the extent of

waging war against them. Thus Christ's strong warning in Matthew 24:15-21.

- Will force the use of a mark (666) "*in their right hand, or in their forehead*" upon all, in an effort to sift out every dissenter on earth.

But again we read that that day of his sway will only be "until the consummation", taking us right back to where we started in vs. 24. The word translated "*to finish*" there comes of the same root as "*consummation*" here. Until God sums it all up and brings it all to a close with Christ's return, bringing deliverance to Israel from the clutches of this final world despot. This dramatic coming and deliverance is pictured from Revelation 19:11. With Christ's return the seventy sevens of years come to an end. Vs. 27 pictured;



Ponder Points

Consider indications of world movement toward God's predictions;

- Registering of every soul with a physical address in the United States rather than a PO box.
- Ever ascending computer and tracing abilities.
- Cashless direction of society, buying only through immediate, direct bank approval (or disapproval).
- Experimentation with microchip implants.
- Continual Jewish hovering and praying over temple site.
- Solidifying European union (old Rome), and world focus there.
- Moves toward world religious union.

The church is not found in Daniel's prophetic scenario, just as Jesus did not mention the church in His Matthew 24 description of Daniel's 70th seven, just as the church does not feature in the Apostle John's description of the same 7-year tribulation period in Revelation 4-19. Because this coming

period will be a return of focus upon Daniel's people and holy city. We conclude therefore that the church must be removed from earth in the Rapture sometime before that final seven of years begins, the beginning of it marked by Antichrist's covenant with Israel.

Since the first 69 sevens of years were fulfilled literally, with the two key events in the gap, how could we not expect the remaining seven to be fulfilled the same?

Class 17 – Daniel 10:1-21

Chapter 10 – Readied for Revelation.

The last three chapters of Daniel are a single piece, expressing the final special revelation given directly to Daniel (the 5th revelation of the book, including Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2). This final revelation to Daniel begins with expanded detail on his vision received in chapter 8, and then follows with further on what was received at the end of chapter 9. Compare Daniel's 1st vision of chapter 7 as an expansion on Nebuchadnezzar's chapter 2 dream. We find a repeated pattern of revelation given, followed by greater detail on the same or some aspect of it. And just as there was a great deal of focus upon a particular *personality* in the closing days of the 4th and 3rd kingdoms in chapters 7 & 8 respectively, even so we shall find the same persons (the little horns) in the spotlight in this final revelation as well. All the visions of this book correlate, covering the same ground but with growing detail.

In chapter 10 we see the arrival of the angelic messenger in response to Daniel's prayer, and the prophet strengthened to receive the revelation to follow in chapters 11 & 12. So the whole of chapter 10 is an introduction to what follows.

Dan 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

10:1-9 – Vision of God’s Glory.

Vs. 1 – “*In the third year of Cyrus*” – It was two years after the decree of Cyrus freeing the Jews to return to their land. Some among Daniel’s critics see in this a contradiction of the statement in 1:21 that Daniel “*continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus*”. That we now find him still living “*in the third year of Cyrus*” seems to make a lie of the first word. And so great was the concern that the Septuagint translators actually changed the text here to “the first year” instead of the third, assuming an error. But are we told in 1:21 that Daniel *died* in the first year of Cyrus? The statement is only that he lived even through to that pivotal year when the Jews were at last released. No contradiction! Perhaps the reference is to his continuation in office, that Daniel was finally relieved of his governmental duties in that first year of Cyrus.

“*And he understood*” – In contrast to his inability to understand previous visions (8:27), things were at

Dan 10:2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

Dan 10:3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

last coming clear for Daniel.

Vs. 2-3 – Daniel was fasting and mourning for “*three full weeks*”. Something was bothering this old saint. His concern likely related to his own people and the Lord’s plans for them. Perhaps it was a matter of his inability to understand enough of what he had already seen, and thus he was crying to God for greater clarity. Compare the answer brought to Daniel in vs. 14. A truly righteous soul wants *all* of God’s heart and ways and will and purposes. Compare the Apostle John as another saintly old man weeping over God’s sealed book in Revelation 5:4. Compare the psalmist in Psalm 119:40 hungry and longing for God’s precepts.

Daniel was fasting, but it was not a complete fast. He abstained from his normal diet, consuming only for his basic necessities, avoiding all things pleasant to eat and drink.

Vs. 4-6 – Vision of God.

Dan 10:4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel;

Dan 10:5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

Vs. 4 – This event occurred by “*the great river*”. It was not “*in a vision . . . by the river*”, as in 8:2, but a physical, waking experience this time, as in chapter 9.

“*Which is Hiddekel*” – Judging from Genesis 2:14, this was likely the Tigris. Consider how this seems to locate the Garden of Eden in the area of Babylon. It seems Satan turned that place of man’s initial perfect existence into “*the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*” (Rev. 17:5), the very fountainhead of all things idolatrous and abominable to God. It’s always the way of the evil one to move in on every hotbed of holiness and with time to turn it into a source of sacrilege.

Vs. 5-6 – “*A certain man . . . His body also was like the beryl*” – The Hebrew for “*beryl*” is “*Tarshish*”, apparently referring to Spain, the area from which such yellowish chrysolite or topaz was imported. The description of this “*certain man*” is very similar to John’s vision of Jesus in Revelation 1;

Dan 10:6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Daniel 10

Revelation 1

*“loins girded with
fine gold”*

*“girt about the
paps with a
golden girdle”*

*“His face as the
appearance of
lightening”*

*“His countenance
as the sun shines
in his strength”*

*“His eyes as lamps
of fire”*

*“His eyes were as
a flame of fire”*

*“His arms and feet
like in colour to
polished brass”*

*“His feet like unto
fine brass”*

*“the voice of His
words like the voice
of a multitude”*

*“His voice as the
sound of many
waters”*

The associations are obvious. John's Revelation seems to confirm the Person of Daniel's vision as none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself,

Dan 10:7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

Dan 10:8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

appearing in His glory before He received His physical body (pre-incarnate). Compare the vision of God in Ezekiel 1:26-28.

Vs. 7-9 – Effects of this divine visitation.

Vs. 7 – Though Daniel's associates saw and heard nothing, they were impressed with a sense of great fear that scattered them all from Daniel, seeking cover. The Lord desired to visit only with His "*greatly beloved*". Compare the similar experience of Saul's associates when Jesus confronted him on the Damascus road (Acts 9:7; 22:9). It's a picture perhaps of God communicating with His own children through His words while they are right in the midst of the unhearing, scoffing, denying, fearful unsaved world, for whom God's words are a closed book. Like talking on a telephone while among those who deny telecommunications.

Dan 10:9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

Vs. 8-9 – With the sight of the divine vision Daniel was affected as John was in Revelation 1 before that vision of Christ, falling *“at His feet as dead”*. Daniel just lost all physical strength, and looked it. His *“comeliness”* or appearance was turned to *“corruption”* (disfigured), his healthy colour turned to a deathly pallor (7:28). Being a channel of God’s revelation is by no means an easy office. With the sound of the divine *“voice of His words”* Daniel fell into *“a deep sleep”*, face down on the ground. It is always this way when mortal, lowly, sinful man is confronted with the glory of the Holy One. Compare Joshua 5:14; Isaiah 6:1-5; Ezekiel 1:28; 3:23; Acts 9:4.

Men may think they will boldly stand up to God some day with a mouth full of arguments. But before the majesty of the Almighty all such arguments fold with the knees, with *“every mouth . . . stopped, and all the world . . . guilty before God”* (Rom. 3:19). Stunned speechless, sensing our supreme smallness, and feeling the burden of sin, this is the standard response even of God’s righteous prophets before the

Dan 10:10 And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

Dan 10:11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

Lord of glory.

10:10-21 – Daniel Made Ready to Hear.

Vs. 10 – As John was touched and strengthened in his vision of Jesus, so Daniel here. Except that here the one touching now appears to be some other heavenly being (angel) rather than Jesus Himself as in John’s case (Rev. 1:17). Daniel reports that “*an hand touched me*” and coaxed him up from his face flat on the ground to his hands and knees.

Vs. 11 – “*O Daniel, a man greatly beloved*” – Again, though God “*so loved the world*” in giving His Son, and loves His own children in a special way, yet He has an even more intimate relation to those who choose to walk more closely with to Him (Jn. 14:21-23). David was “*a man after God’s own heart*” (Acts 13:22). Abraham was a “*friend of God*” (James 2:23). Moses knew the privilege of the Lord speaking to him

Dan 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

Dan 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

“face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (Ex. 33:11). John was especially that *“disciple whom Jesus loved”* (Jn. 21:20). Some choose to walk closer to the light and are blessed for it.

“Unto thee am I now sent” – This heavenly visitation was all for Daniel. And with the angel’s words Daniel managed to stand shakily upright.

Vs. 12 – Not only had the angel been sent in response to Daniel’s words, but he had been sent by God over three weeks prior. *“From the first day”* Daniel had set himself to pray God had heard and responded.

Vs. 13 – Interesting the reason for the delay now given by the angel. This *“prince of the kingdom of Persia”* must certainly be a demonic being from among those *“rulers of the darkness of this world”* Paul spoke of in Ephesians 6:12. That this being was not on God’s side is evident in that he stood against

this angel carrying God's answer to Daniel. That this enemy was an angel is evident in that he was powerful enough to intercept God's mighty messenger for 21 days. This "prince" appears to be a demon ruler over the kingdom of Persia, one who was apparently seeking to use that human empire in opposition to God's purposes on earth. This one was a dark version of the angel Michael, who seems to serve in a guardian role over the nation of Israel (12:1; Rev. 12:7). Do you see how that old praying saint on the ground unknowingly stirred a conflict in heavenly realms by his fasting and prayer throughout that period of three weeks? It was a spiritual confrontation so great that it was only resolved when the Lord finally sent Michael, apparently to relieve this first angel that he might continue on his way to Daniel. Michael is an "archangel" (Jude 9) and thus apparently within the highest ranks of God's angels. Intriguing the glimpses we see here of an ongoing spiritual warfare within the spirit realm. Compare vs. 20, where "*the prince of Grecia*" is mentioned as well, apparently referring to the evil angel holding sway over the nation of Greece. And the ongoing nature of this struggle is indicated. This messenger of God must return to the conflict after delivering his message to Daniel. Could we assume there to be angels, both evil and good, over all kingdoms or nations? We have

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

Dan 10:15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

little enough in the Bible about this invisible war waged in the spirit realm, but sufficient to reveal that angels have some significant influence over the affairs of people and nations. Compare Job 1:7; 2:1; Zechariah 3:1-2; Revelation 12. And though such conflicts exist in a spiritual realm they are *no less real* than physical wars fought in the trenches of earth. But we must guard against allowing our imaginations to run too far with such glimpses into actions behind earthly effects, as some do. We find no encouragements in the Bible to pray bindings and blightings upon the evil side in that spiritual struggle or deliverances upon the good side. Daniel was not doing that here. He was merely asking the Lord for answers to the troubling questions of his heart. No guidance do we have from God that His people are to meet such conflict in especially susceptible areas where the struggle supposedly touches more closely to earth with a concerted gathering of prayer warriors. Such bizarre imaginings are the fabrications of those intoxicated with spirits other than God's, "*intruding into those things which he hath*

Dan 10:16 And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

Dan 10:17 For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

Dan 10:18 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head” (Col. 2:18-19).

Vs. 14 – Here is the purpose of the angel’s coming and message. It was given to Daniel to “*understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days*”, prophecy again particularly relating to the nation of Israel (“*thy people*”), and extending to “*the latter days*” or last days. Though the prophecy begins its focus on the nearer side of Israel’s future, it ranges beyond to include details of the final days before Christ’s return as well. Again, we see indication here that Daniel’s mourning related to his wish to know what would become of his people. And God cared enough for His prophet and for His people to give the comfort of understanding through the further revelation to follow.

Dan 10:19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Dan 10:20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

Dan 10:21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

Vs. 15-17 – It’s Daniel’s repeated complaint before this visitor that he simply had “*no strength*” (vs. 8-9). The answer to his concern follows in the remaining verses of this chapter. He is strengthened and readied to hear this new revelation from God. Note the emphasis upon his strengthening in vs. 18-19. The whole process from vs. 8 of Daniel recovering his strength was a gradual thing, and only through God’s three-fold strengthening touch through His messengers (vs. 10, 16, 18).

We’re confronted again with the Lord’s majesty in this passage, in Daniel’s response of overwhelming weakness. Yet we see the tender lovingkindness of the Lord in His care and strengthening touch upon His prophets (Daniel & John).

We can expect great things in store with such a

remarkable introduction.

Class 18 – Daniel 11:1-20

Chapter 11 – From Darius to “*the end*”

Throughout this chapter and continuing into the next we find a stunning revelation directly from the angel we met in chapter 10, giving much greater detail of the period ranging from the 2nd kingdom of Medo-Persia through to the fall of Antichrist’s reign at the end of the 4th kingdom. So surprisingly detailed and accurate is this portion that many have concluded this chapter a record from the *history* side rather than from the angle of *prophecy*. Such interpreters insist that this book of Daniel’s prophecy must have been the product of someone writing within the era of the Maccabees. John Walvoord in his excellent commentary relates how this view runs as far back as the 3rd century, when a philosopher by the name of Porphyry discovered through his research how *exactly* Daniel 11:1-35 parallels history. This man made no claim to be a believer or enlightened by the Spirit. And in his darkened heart he came to the conclusion that such words simply could not have been written as prophecies of yet future events. In his view the only reasonable alternative was that these things must have been recorded in the 2nd century B.C., after the fact, rather than in the 6th century B.C., before the events. This

of course would make this book of Daniel a dishonest effort to pass history off as prophecy. Many who claim to be God's children have since picked up on the "scholarship" of this unsaved man and others like him. From the beginning the main "concern" has been with the detailed accuracy of the prophecy. Why the concern? The only real "proof" such an argument has ever been able to muster is the faithless assumption that such exact prophecy must surely be impossible. But why? Doesn't God know the beginning from the end? All of it? Look to the hundreds of prophetic details written and fulfilled in Christ's first coming. The whole issue is a question of whether your God is omniscient or not. Can He see the future as if the past? Of course He can! He's God! His revelations will be just as detailed as He wants them to be. Are those with greater detail any more difficult for Him than those of a broader nature? The fact that the prophecy corresponds so closely to history should be an incredible confirmation that prophecy, when properly understood, is just as accurate as history. As if travelling and looking ahead through binoculars to the details of where you will be in half an hour's time. All God's prophecy will one day be history. We are wise to understand it that way!

Chapter 11 divides into two major portions, with the

Dan 11:1 Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

turning point between vs. 35 & 36. The first portion gave the nearer future for Daniel's people, relating details of the 3rd earthly empire, coming to great focus again upon the foreshadow in Antiochus IV Epiphanes. A third of the verses of this chapter (vs. 21-35) are devoted to details of this 4th Antiochus of the Grecian Empire. Then the focus suddenly leaps a great gap of centuries between vs. 35 & 36, ranging off into the far future of the last days, and bringing into focus again the fulfilment of the foreshadow in that fearful period and personage just before Christ's return. The "little horn" of the third empire fades into the "little horn" of the fourth and final empire. Over half of the chapter is given to the details of these two key personalities, the type and antitype, the shadow and substance.

11:1-2 – Medo-Persia.

Vs. 1 – That this angel "*stood to confirm and to strengthen*" Darius the Mede may further refer to that conflict in spiritual realms hinted at in the previous chapter (vs. 13 & 20). Where God would release His people through this 2nd empire, the evil one would

Dan 11:2 And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

seek to turn things against their favour. Working through the presidents and princes in chapter 6 Satan sought to poison Darius' heart against Daniel and his people. But the Lord miraculously affirmed Daniel's good favour at that time, thus confirming and strengthening Darius through that event as God's tool in behalf of His people. Again, perhaps an angelic battle is hinted at here behind the amazing events on the ground recorded in chapter 6.

Vs. 2 – This prophecy parallels that in chapter 8 of the ram and the he-goat. The identity of these “*three kings*” is disputed, but “*the fourth*” is clearly Xerxes I, as the Greeks called him, Ahasuerus to the Jews. This was the king and husband of Esther, who reigned 486-465 B.C. Xerxes used his great riches to raise up a vast army of hundreds of thousands, one of the largest armies in the ancient world. He then launched that military missile at Greece in 480 B.C., because he hated and wanted Greece, and because he would avenge his father's defeat before a smaller Grecian force at the Battle of Marathon ten

years before. It seems likely this endeavour took place between the 1st and 2nd chapters of the book of Esther. The planning and funding of this move was likely the purpose of the “*great feast unto all his princes*” of Esther 1, where Vashti refused to dance to the music. The need to comfort the king through harem building then in Esther 2 was likely a result of his great military failure on this expedition, for it was indeed a complete disaster! The Persian navy was thoroughly thumped by the Greeks in 480 B.C. The warships of those days were long, slim galleys, powered by both sail and oarsmen. They were fitted with heavy wooden battering rams on the nose at water level. Thus the object of sea battles then was a case of bumper-cars, seeking to sink enemy boats by ramming. Obviously the side floating the most ships would tend to come out on top, under normal conditions. When the Greek and Persian navies faced each other, Persia brought over 700 ships, Greece only 300. But Themistocles, the noted statesman of Athens at that time, having the home-court advantage, chose Salamis as the point of conflict. Salamis is a large island off the coast of Athens, shaped something like a backward “C” or crescent, forming a large bay that’s narrowed at the entrance. Themistocles sent word to Xerxes through one posing as a sympathizer that the entire Greek navy was in the bay of Salamis and would soon be

leaving. If he wanted to sink the whole lot at once he'd better hurry. He did! In fact Xerxes had his army cart his royal throne up to a hilltop overlooking the bay entrance so he could watch the show. He was there to see row upon row of Persian ships round the point to meet the Greek navy at the mouth of the bay. He watched as the well-trained Greeks relentlessly rammed the Persian ships. Watched as ships were split and overturned and men drowned and oars and masts snapped. Watched as the narrow channel soon became a death-trap as more and more Persian ships surged into the quagmire, got entangled with each other, rammed each other, while the Greeks kept skilfully hammering from the inside. Watched as hundreds of Persian ships were lost. Watched as his great impressive fleet was defeated before his eyes, the remaining half turning at last to flee to safer waters. It was the first well-attested sea battle on record. Greece considered it their very finest hour! It did not go so well for Xerxes' army either, for they were defeated by the Greeks the following year. The Persians just never fared well in battle against Greece. Xerxes never recovered. About all he accomplished across the Aegean was to stir the enduring hatred of the Greeks against his people. Thus when Alexander later returned the visit upon Persia he came with a score to settle. Remember that he-goat "*moved with choler*" in 8:7?

Dan 11:3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

Dan 11:4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

Here he comes in vs. 3-4!

11:3-35 – Greece.

Vs. 3-4 – Pictured here is a great ruler whose kingdom is broken as soon as he “*shall stand up*”. This can be none other than Alexander the Great, who died in his prime at the pinnacle of power. Read these verses together with 8:5-8.

“*And not to his posterity*” – As we considered in chapter 8, Alexander’s sons were murdered after his death. His vast kingdom, from Greece to India, was eventually divided to four of his generals, “*toward the four winds*”;

- Cassander, over Macedon, Thessaly, & Greece (Achaia).
- Lysimachus, over Thrace, Bithynia, Cappadocia, east & west of Bosphorus.

Dan 11:5 And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.

- Seleucus over Syria, Babylonia, Media & Persia, and as far east as India.
- Ptolemy over Egypt, Cyprus, Palestine, & Arabia Petrea.

We have already seen this four-way division in the four-headed leopard of 7:6 and in the “*four notable*” horns replacing the broken “*great horn*” of 8:8. How exactly God does what He says! His words are believable because He is the careful Keeper of them.

“*Nor according to his dominion which he ruled*” – The glory and strength of Alexander’s central rule was lost through the many years of internal struggle for supremacy between the divided portions of his empire.

Vs. 5-20 – Various other Grecian rulers – Though Alexander’s kingdom was divided in four directions, only *two* feature now in the remaining verses of this chapter, those “*north*” and “*south*” of Palestine. That which is of particular importance to the Lord is

Dan 11:6 And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

always what relates to Israel. Therefore the shift in focus here. The nation of Israel now fell between the Syria-based kingdom of the Seleucids to the north, their successive kings repeatedly referred to as “*the king of the north*”, and the Egypt-based kingdom of the Ptolemies to the south, “*the king of the south*”. Israel tended to be pulled back and forth as these two kingdoms vied for dominance and for control over Palestine through the following centuries. God’s prophecy is characteristically selective here. Not every ruler is mentioned.

Vs. 5 – The first king to rule over the Egyptian end of Alexander’s divided kingdom was Ptolemy I Soter, the first “*king of the south*”. The first king mentioned over Syria was Seleucus I Nicator.

Vs. 6 – “*In the end of years*” – It’s many years later as we come to this verse. A generation has been skipped, Antiochus I, son of the first Syrian king

Dan 11:7 But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:

Seleucus I, is passed without mention. His son, Antiochus II Theos is the focus now, with Ptolemy II Philadelphus ruling in Egypt. Though these two kings on opposite ends of Israel began in conflict, they came at last to peace and alliance in 250 B.C., an alliance strengthened by the marriage of Ptolemy's daughter, Berenice, with Antiochus II. The problem was that Antiochus already had a wife, his first wife, Laodice. But Ptolemy fairly demanded this new marriage to his daughter, and the divorce that would make it possible. Two years later Ptolemy II died down south, and Antiochus promptly divorced Berenice and remarried his first wife. But Laodice no longer trusted this weak, vacillating husband of hers and sorted him out with poison. She promptly followed this up with the deaths of Berenice and her little boy. And then Laodice put her own son, Seleucus II Callinicus on the throne in the north. So, with the deaths of all involved in the alliance, the whole agreement saga came to nothing, as prophesied in vs. 6.

Dan 11:8 And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north.

Dan 11:9 So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

Vs. 7-9 – “Out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up”. This “one” was Ptolemy III Euergetes. This 3rd Ptolemy was the new king of the south, son of Ptolemy II and brother of the murdered Berenice. This new Ptolemy marched north with his army to avenge the death of his sister and little nephew. His campaign proved extremely successful. He defeated the Syrian army, put Laodice to death, left her son to reign, and carried away from the Syrian kingdom a vast wealth of silver (40,000 talents), and some 2,500 “gods” or idols. Some of these idols were the very images Persia had carried away when conquering Egypt 3 centuries before. Ptolemy III received his second name, “Euergetes” or “Benefactor”, from the ecstatic people of Egypt upon his return in victory, for restoring to them at last their long lost gods, and for the great wealth he brought. Sure was a good thing for those “gods” that there was a human “Benefactor” to rescue them, hey? This Ptolemy outlived Laodice’s son to the north (Seleucus II) by about six years.

Dan 11:10 But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress.

Dan 11:11 And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

Vs. 10-12 – “*But his sons shall be stirred up*” – These are the two sons of Seleucus II. The older was Seleucus III and the younger Antiochus III the Great. Together they organized an army. But the older was soon killed in battle in Asia Minor and the throne fell to Antiochus III.

Don't miss the careful detail even in the plural of the two brothers changing to singular in vs. 10. Antiochus went to work recovering the Syrian territory lost to Egypt by his father, and through repeated campaigns managed to push Egypt right back to their southernmost stronghold of Palestine. For the first time the land of Palestine was briefly in *Syrian* hands. Ptolemy IV Philopater, ruling Egypt at that time, was a bit of a lazy thing. But with Syria pressing so close he was finally angered enough to take action. He collected his army of 70,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry, and 73 elephants and met Antiochus

Dan 11:12 And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it.

Dan 11:13 For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

III with his 62,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 102 elephants. Antiochus was soundly defeated, losing his entire army, and was himself nearly captured. Palestine once more belonged to Egypt. Ptolemy IV was quite proud of his victory, but due to his lazy love of ease he failed to follow through with further conquest to the north. It was all his for the taking! This failure cost him his popularity with his own people, such that his rule ended up even weaker than before his stunning victory. There followed over a decade of peace between north and south. Ptolemy IV died mysteriously, and Antiochus III turned his attentions to conquests in the east, which proved quite successful.

Vs. 13-19 – “*The king of the north shall return*” – Antiochus III was back! Through his successful eastern campaigns this 3rd Antiochus was greatly enriched and strengthened. Fourteen years after his defeat to Ptolemy IV he returned for another try with

Dan 11:14 And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

Dan 11:15 So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

an army “*greater than the former*”. Upon his father’s death Ptolemy V Epiphanes had come to the throne of Egypt at the tender age of 4 years. In this second assault on Egypt Antiochus III found help from Philip V of Macedonia, from some dissenters among the Egyptians, and as well from some among the Jews who were dissatisfied with Egyptian rule and looking for deliverance. But deliverance from Egyptian dominance meant Syrian dominance, which would prove far, far worse for Israel in the years ahead. It would not be quite the rosy rescue promised on the surface.

Understand the picture and foreshadow here. The Jewish people despised Egyptian rule, joining their hand rather with Syria against Egypt. The result of it was to soon find themselves under the murderous madman of Syria, Antiochus IV. After the same manner the Jewish people later refused submission to the Son of God and their Messiah, in spite of His

Dan 11:16 But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

Dan 11:17 He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.

most obvious proofs of who His is. And instead they will embrace Satan's "christ" in the end, only to find this far from the rosy relation promised at the first as well. For he will prove to be the very opposite of peace, the very ultimate madman. Got what they wanted, lost what they had!

Egypt could "*not withstand*" Antiochus and friends this time. Palestine was taken from Egyptian dominance, never to return. Syria's king at last stood "*in the glorious land*". Standing now in a position of greater strength, and thinking ultimately to take all of Egypt, Antiochus proposed the marriage of his daughter Cleopatra to young Ptolemy V, then still in primary school (7-10 years old?). This Cleopatra was the great, great grandmother of that famous Egyptian queen of the same name, who was the mistress of Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony.

Dan 11:18 After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him.

Dan 11:19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

Dan 11:20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.

“Corrupting her” (vs. 17) – Perhaps the sense here is “to corrupt”, suggesting purpose. It seems the intention of Antiochus was for his daughter to be a Trojan Horse, working toward *his* ends from within Egypt. Instead she did *“not stand on his side”*, but chose rather to stand with her husband.

Vs. 18-19 – *“After this he shall turn his face unto the isles”* – Turning at last from his designs upon Egypt, Antiochus the Great then poured his energies into taking the islands of the Aegean from Greece. He saw some successes there until he was confronted by a rising Rome, resulting in the loss of much of his own territory. Antiochus returned in shame to Syria and died soon after.

Vs. 20 – *“Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes”* – The campaigns of Antiochus left the Syrian

kingdom cash-strapped and under the thumb of Rome, to whom they were now obliged to pay a yearly tribute of 1000 talents. Seleucus IV Philopater, son of Antiochus, had no alternative but to raise funds through the taxation of all within his domain, including Israel. Seleucus sent his tax collector, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem with the intention of stripping the temple of funds, but Seleucus died suddenly and mysteriously soon after his money collector was sent. Some suspect poisoning.

The scene is now set for that “*vile person*” to come, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The handwriting was already on the wall of history with Rome then on the rise. Perhaps feeling a bit like a caged rat, this infamous Syrian king would pour out his rage upon the people of God. Even as Satan at the end shall sense the relentless, unstoppable advance of God’s sure prophetic words pressing on to fulfilment, tolling out his doom. He too will pour out his bitter rage upon all that is called by God’s name through the earthly vehicle of Antichrist. God surely means that we see the parallels here between these two “little horns”.

“And the king shall do
according to his will;
and he shall exalt himself,
and magnify himself
above every god,
and shall speak marvellous things
against the God of gods”

(Dan. 11:36)

Class 19 – Daniel 11:21-45

We have begun to consider the angel's communication to Daniel of things to come as chapter 11 opens, his exceedingly detailed revelation spilling over into chapter 12 as well. The angel began with the then current Medo-Persian Empire in vs. 2, giving a summary of Xerxes I and his efforts against Greece. He then followed in vs. 3-4 with the rise of the 3rd empire over the Middle East with the same four-way division of Alexander's conquest we saw in chapter's 7 & 8. Then in vs. 5-20 the focus is narrowed to two of those divisions of the Grecian Empire on the two ends of the Promised Land, Syria and Egypt. The various Syrian rulers were named either Seleucus or Antiochus, *"the king of the north"*, and the various Egyptian rulers were all named Ptolemy, *"the king of the south"*. What the angel related to Daniel prophetically could just as easily be read as a historical account. The details are that accurate. The record of struggles between these two branches of the Grecian Empire left us in vs. 20 with the death of Seleucus IV, son of Antiochus III the Great in the north. Ptolemy V (with Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus III) was still ruling in the south. And so the stage is set for the rise of the *"vile person"*, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This one is the

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

“*little horn*” of chapter 8, predicted to arise out of the 3rd empire of Greece. We find such tremendous focus on this one now (vs. 21-35), because of the way he so bitterly turned on the nation of Israel, violating her temple, worship, laws, and customs. And because in so doing he becomes a type or foreshadow of the final “*little horn*” or world ruler at the close of the 4th world empire. That one who will follow in the pattern of Antiochus, but much more extensively. This is Antichrist, who shall also “*think to change times and laws*”. And God’s people “*shall be given into his hand*” for 3½ years “*until*” the moment of Christ’s return (7:25).

11:3-35 – Greece.

Vs. 3-4 – Alexander’s kingdom divided to “*the four winds*”.

Vs. 5-20 – Various other Grecian rulers.

Vs. 21-35 – Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

*Dan 11:22 And with the arms of a flood shall they be
overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea,
also the prince of the covenant.*

*Dan 11:23 And after the league made with him he shall
work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become
strong with a small people.*

Vs. 21 – *“In his estate shall stand up a vile person”* – Upon the death of Seleucus IV, the *“raiser of taxes”* of vs. 20, one of his sons would have been next in line to the throne. But instead Antiochus IV, brother of Seleucus, secured rule of the troubled kingdom of Syria through sly craft and *“flatteries”*, taking *“the honour of the kingdom”* neither given to him nor his by right. This characterized the way of this one throughout his reign from 175 to 164 B.C., a lust for power and little regard for propriety or integrity in securing it. This 4th Antiochus took the title of his brother-in-law down south, calling himself *“Epiphanes”*, Illustrious or Glorious One.

Vs. 22 – The broken *“prince of the covenant”* likely refers to Onias, the high priest at Jerusalem, whose murder was ordered by Antiochus in 172 B.C. This order was carried out by Onias’ own brother, who stood partly in agreement with Syrian rule.

Vs. 23 – *“The league made with”* Antiochus involved

Dan 11:24 He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.

Dan 11:25 And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.

Egypt. The new king of the south by this time was Cleopatra's son, Ptolemy VI Philometer, nephew of Antiochus IV. Yet in spite of blood relation Antiochus wanted control of Egypt and began working toward that end through subtlety and deception.

Vs. 24 – “*He shall scatter among them . . .*” – Having no legitimate right to the throne, Antiochus gained popularity among his people through a distribution of wealth. The writer of I Maccabees mentions his habit of giving lavish gifts, abounding in this “*above the kings that were before him*” (I Macc. 3:30). As well, he took measures to weaken fortified cities (“*strongholds*”) within his domain, that he not be stabbed in the back through internal revolt while campaigning abroad.

Vs. 25-27 – All subtleties aside, Antiochus raised up

Dan 11:26 Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.

Dan 11:27 And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.

Dan 11:28 Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

“a great army” against his own flesh and blood to the south. Ptolemy VI met him with an even larger army (*“very great and mighty”*), but some of Ptolemy’s own leaders plotted *“devices against him”*, and Egypt was defeated with a great slaughter. Some in Egypt made Ptolemy’s brother, Ptolemy VII Euergetes, king in the city of Alexandria. There followed a time of cat-&-mouse involving Antiochus and Ptolemy VI. Faking friendship. Thinking deception. Each attempting to use the other to gain control over all of Egypt. But the city of Alexandria stood strong under Ptolemy VII. Antiochus eventually placed Ptolemy VI as king again at Memphis and headed for home. But upon his return north, the two brothers worked out a united co-rule over Egypt.

Vs. 28 – *“Then shall he return into his land with great riches”* – Antiochus took much wealth home with him

Dan 11:29 At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

Dan 11:30 For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

from Egypt. In passing back through Judea he began to display his attitude toward the Jews and their religion in his brutal handling of a minor Jewish revolt, killing and enslaving many and arrogantly stripping the temple of every table, altar, lamp, vessel, and ornament of gold or silver, adding the temple wealth to his plunder. He even carried away the temple veil (I Macc. 1:20-28).

Vs. 29-30 – Final campaign against Egypt. Upon hearing of the peaceful partnership of the two sons of Cleopatra, Antiochus went after Egypt again. It was 168 B.C. To his misfortune, and the great sorrow of Israel, it just was not going to be a victory for Antiochus like before.

Vs. 30 – “*The ships of Chittim*” or Cyprus refers to the intervention of Rome as Antiochus was besieging Alexandria. Rome met Syria’s king with the demand that he leave Egypt at once or face the wrath of Rome.

Dan 11:31 And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

Dan 11:32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

When Antiochus balked, it's said that the Roman consul, Gaius Popillius Laenas, drew a circle in the sand around the Syrian king and demanded an answer before he left that circle. Antiochus unhappily decided to do as he was told, not wanting to risk war with Rome at that time.

Vs. 30-35 – Campaign against Israel. His humiliation before Rome pointed up his smallness compared to the lie of his grand self-opinion and plans. Antiochus was only ever a “little horn” from the start. He was not going to be master of the Mediterranean as he might have hoped.

Vs. 30-32 – In response to his defeat before Rome, Antiochus turned and vented his rage upon the Jewish people. Compare in Rev. 12, Satan's similar response when cast out of heaven at the mid-point of the 70th seven. Antiochus declared the Jewish ceremonies and practice of the Law of Moses and

Dan 11:33 And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.
Dan 11:34 Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

sacrifices to be illegal. He became quite determined to replace the Jewish culture with Greek, and through force caused them to cease the practice of their religion. He set up an idol of a pagan god in the holy place of the temple. This is “*the abomination that maketh desolate*” of vs. 31. Jesus used the same term in Matthew 24:15, yet He was pointing ahead, warning His people of the day when Antichrist will exalt himself as god and seat himself in the same holy place (II Thess. 2:4). Antiochus offered a pig on the brazen altar and forced pagan practices upon the Jews. He found many among the Jews who were sympathetic to his Hellenising demands (“*them that forsake the holy covenant*”). These compromising Jews, corrupted “*by flatteries*”, were willing, or willing to be made willing to lend their help in his evil purposes, even among the priests. Compare 8:23-25, speaking of the same period and person. Again, this phase of Antiochus’ rule is prophetic of the “*great tribulation*” to come through Antichrist, predicted in Matthew 24:21.

Dan 11:35 And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

Vs. 32-35 – *“But the people that do know their God”* – Here is now the resistance movement. Many faithful Jews rose up in resistance to these forced reforms and a great many thousands lost their lives in the conflict. This resistance movement of course refers to the era of the successful Maccabean revolt (I Macc. 1:44-54; II Macc. 6:1-6).

Don’t miss here how God refers to those who bow to the paganising influence of human government as *“them that forsake the holy covenant”* (vs. 30), *“such as do wickedly against the covenant”* (vs. 32), and *“corrupt”* (vs. 32). The contrast is seen in those who resist the corrupting influence of evil government; *“the people that do know their God”* (vs. 32), *“they that understand”* (vs. 33), and *“them of understanding”* (vs. 35). The principle applies to us today as well. God never meant for His faithful ones to sheepishly bow to the godless demands of society or government. We too may be called upon to give our lives in our stand for the truth. For this we must be willing, with all the family of the faithful who *“know*

their God”.

Vs. 35 – *“To try them, and to purge”* – God used the evil purposes of an evil man to accomplish His purging purpose, separating true believers among His people from false, the wheat from the chaff. While Antiochus (with Satan behind him) was quite determined to weaken and destroy the faithful from among the Jews, he really only contributed to their purifying and strengthening. The glory of God fills and falls upon the purified nucleus more than the larger mixed multitude. The actions of Antiochus only served to unmix the multitude. God will use Satan’s efforts through Antichrist in the same way.

“The time of the end” – Again the reminder of God’s control. When His *“time of the end”* comes, it all comes to an end. Compare vs.45.

All of the precise details of these prophecies have long since been fulfilled quite literally according to a normal reading of the words. We are led to the simple understanding that all that now follows will of course be fulfilled in the very same way. It’s a conclusion that is wise in its simplicity, wise with the wisdom of God. For we follow where His mental path leads us, like sheep following the leading of their Shepherd.

Allow nobody to beguile you from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus, no matter how clever they or their arguments may seem. Clever arguments impress only the proud. Keep a tight noose on your pride and you will be less likely to be taken by a clever line.

11:36-45 – Antichrist of the Last Days.

There is an evident shift of focus with vs. 36 from the “*vile person*” so continually referred to as “*he*” and “*him*” through the past 15 verses, now to “*the king*” here in this verse. The focus will remain upon this one throughout the rest of the chapter. Some consider the following verses a continuation on Antiochus IV. But it’s quite clear that some other individual is now before us. Reasons;

- There is a marked departure of the details at this point from what actually happened in the 2nd century B.C.
- The focus remains on this one into chapter 12, where Michael stands up for Israel in a context clearly within the last days. N.B. the connector in 12:1, “*at that time*”. Thus the first two verses of chapter 12 become the key to confirming the who of these remaining verses of chapter 11. This “*king*” can only be one arising in the *last days* before resurrection and

Dan 11:36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

judgment.

- The angel had indeed indicated that what he brought related to Daniel's people "*in the latter days*" (10:14). Antiochus IV cannot be the one still in focus throughout, for his day has certainly come and gone. He's not going to be around in the last days, but the one he foreshadows will.

Vs. 36-37 – His attitude toward God. Remember the prominent features of this coming one mentioned back in chapter 7; his mouth given to blasphemy, and his persecution of all who belong to the Lord. We now see here in this one so consumed with his own will the unwillingness to concede any god greater than himself, speaking incredible things against the true God (II Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13). Where Antiochus worshipped his gods this one will acknowledge no god. But again, note the reminder of who really is God, with the days of his prosperity limited from of old with a "*till*" in vs. 36.

Dan 11:37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

“For that determined shall be done” – While seeming to be utterly in control and unstoppable in that day, this “beast” will unknowingly be busy only with what God had long before *“determined shall be done”*. Never once will this one truly be in control!

“The indignation” perhaps refers to God’s, in pouring out His wrath upon His rebellious people. Or perhaps the reference is to the rage of Antichrist and of the evil one behind him, pouring out their wrath against God and all that is His, not knowing that they are actually doing God’s service even in their rage. God turns even the wrath of man to His ends, to His praise, delivering His judgment through this one to those so worthy of it, sifting out the saints and pressing souls into the kingdom through the vice of circumstance.

“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers” – This does not necessarily refer to the God of the Bible, suggesting this one a Jew as some suppose. He will arise from the Roman Empire, which would seem to make him European.

Dan 11:38 But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

“Nor the desire of women” – In the context of deity denied, this could perhaps refer to the Messiah, that Seed of the woman every Jewish woman wished to bring into the world. This final “king” will have absolutely no regard for any god or messiah, imagining *“a vain thing . . . against the Lord, and against His Anointed”* (Ps. 2).

Vs. 38 – He shall *“honour the god of forces”* – His “god” will be war or military might, the idolizing of human strength. His confidence will rest completely in the material world, not in the spiritual. Perhaps this is partly why the Lord will turn the material world against him in the plagues of Revelation, even as He turned the “gods” of Egypt against them in the 10 plagues of Moses’ day. The completeness of human power and military might is all that Satan can muster through his greatest human king of all time, though again he is but a *“little horn”* from God’s perspective. What a joke his “powers” will prove to be before the Almighty! How exceedingly foolish to attempt to use the combined power of the material world against the Maker of all things material!

Dan 11:39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

Some see comparisons in this “king” with the communist ideology of materialism, atheism, and military might. It is true that Russia may be down, but they are not out, for they still feature in the prophecies of Gog and Magog. From the Lenin School of Political Warfare, Dimitry Z. Manuilsky once said; “War to the hilt between Communism and Capitalism is inevitable. Today, of course, we are not strong enough to attack. Our time will come in twenty to thirty years. To win, we shall need the element of surprise. The bourgeoisie (middle-class) will have to be put to sleep. So we shall begin by launching the most spectacular peace movement on record. There will be electrifying overtures and unheard-of concessions. The Capitalist countries, stupid and decadent, will rejoice to cooperate in their own destruction. They will leap at another chance to be friends. As soon as their guard is down – we shall smash them with our clenched fist (from a publication by John Biggert, Memphis, Tenn). However we are looking at men not ideologies in this entire context. Antichrist, as his type in Antiochus, must be a man. He will be that “*man of sin*”.

Dan 11:40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

Dan 11:41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

Dan 11:42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

Vs. 39-43 – Military movements.

Vs. 39 – We seem to have a description of Antichrist's glory days here, when nothing can hold him back. His dominion and glory will spread abroad. He will reward all who honour him with administrative positions. From vs. 40, the closing days of his term come into focus, "*at the time of the end*". At this winding down point things begin to come apart as advances are made against his rule from south, north, and east, apparently in worldwide rebellion against his rule. All leads up to a final world war centred around Palestine, this becoming the gathering to Armageddon to which Christ will return in power (Rev. 19). These verses seem to indicate that Antichrist will remain dominant and victorious to the end. Only the areas of Edom, Moab, and Ammon will somehow escape his crushing rule (vs.

Dan 11:43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

Dan 11:44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

Dan 11:45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

41). This is presumably “*the wilderness*” area where a remnant of Israel will be protected and “*nourished for a time, times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent*” (Rev. 12:14).

Vs. 44 – “*Tidings from the east*” – Likely referring to the huge army coming from the east, referred to as well in Revelation 9:16 & 16:12ff.

Vs. 45 – He will have himself positioned “*between the seas*” (Dead, Red, Mediterranean, & Galilee) in the city of Jerusalem when “*he shall come to his end*” with Christ’s return. He with his false prophet will then at last be “*cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone*” (Rev. 19:20).

God does what He says!

“And many of them that sleep
in the dust of the earth shall awake,
some to everlasting life,
and some to shame
and everlasting contempt”

(Dan 12:2)

Class 20 – Daniel 12:1-13

Dan 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Chapter 12 – Last Days

The focus upon the time of the end in the last 10 verses of chapter 11 continues into this final chapter of Daniel. The angel still speaks his detailed revelation to Daniel of things to come, describing the great tribulation and beyond, and particularly as it relates to Israel.

12:1 – During the Tribulation.

N.B. the three aspects of this verse in Israel's *protector, peril, and preservation.*

“*At that time*” – Twice this phrase is found in this verse, tying these end-time events with the end of chapter 11. In those last days of greatest threat upon Israel Michael their “*great prince*” shall stand in their

behalf (10:13, 21). Again, a reference here to the spiritual conflict behind earthly scenes. God will not leave His people without an adequate defender in that day. It's a reminder of God's behind-the-scenes care for His own, through His *"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"* (Heb. 1:14). It's an active care that we do not even see. In fact a personal care we cannot know about apart from God's special revelation. Compare the other side of this very same final conflict in Revelation 12.

"There shall be a time of trouble" – The phrasing here is very similar to Christ's words in Matthew 24:21; *"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."* Clearly Christ's words there were patterned after these. There can be no doubt that these two portions refer to the same closing events of *"the times of the Gentiles"*. Compare similar words in Jeremiah 30:7; *"Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it"*. *"Jacob's trouble"* the prophet calls it. A time of trouble upon *Jacob's* people, the nation of Israel. This again serves to confirm that era as the yet outstanding seven of years *"determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city"* (9:24). Again, a time when God's focus will

return to national Israel. The church therefore must be removed before this shift of attention back to Israel. It will be a time of trouble like Israel has never seen. It will be an attempt to destroy the nation with a level of energy, power, and cunning like they have never before faced. Far worse than that brought by any Haman, Antiochus, Hitler, or Arafat. But as we saw concerning that final world ruler in the previous verse, “*he shall come to his end*” quite suddenly, and there will be no help for him. Remember that smiting stone of Daniel 2 and the scene of fiery judgment in Daniel 7. Combined with Antichrist’s efforts during that era will be wave after wave of God’s judgments (seal, trumpet, and bowl) poured out upon earth as described in Revelation. Nothing the world has ever seen can even compare with the experiences of that coming day. Only by God’s help through Michael and other angels will any Jew hope to be spared (Rev. 12). In fact Jesus said *no man* would live through that era were it not cut short (Matt. 24).

Don’t miss the fact that national Israel (“*a nation*”) is still in focus here at the end. Her national identity was not lost in the church, as some would have us believe. The angel told Daniel “*thy people shall be delivered*”. Daniel’s people still there in this last event of this age confirms that the Lord is far from finished with Israel as a nation. God will see to it

Dan 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

that a remnant of the Jews will be preserved through the terror of those days. Zechariah 13:7-9 gives the number of this remnant to be 1/3 of the entire population then living, and then follows with a description of the final struggle around the city of Jerusalem in Zechariah 14. There at the end of Zechariah 13 we see the same thought as in Daniel 11:35 under Antiochus. The fires of persecution are sifting, purging fires. Compare Malachi 3:1-6.

Only those “*found written in the book*” will be spared. This seems to be a book of all who are true believers among the Jews, who have come at last to repentance and faith in Christ as their Messiah (Zech. 12:10-14; 13:1). Or perhaps the angel refers to the “book of life”, that written roll of *all* who will enter the eternal rest and joy of God’s presence. Every soul whose name is “*not found written*” in this book will ultimately be “*cast into the lake of fire*” (Rev. 20:12, 15).

12:2-3 – After the Tribulation.

Dan 12:3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Vs. 2 – Question: Is the resurrection mentioned here to be one, great general resurrection of all the dead at the same time as some teach? Answer: No. We must interpret Scripture with Scripture. We must read Daniel 12:2 (and John 5:28-29) in the light of Revelation 20. There will be a resurrection of the saved *“to everlasting life”* when Jesus returns to His kingdom, and there will be a resurrection of the lost *“to shame and everlasting contempt”* at the end of Christ’s earthly kingdom. This verse seems to see the two resurrections as one, as if seeing two peaks of a mountain range lined up. The two peaks are far removed from each other but appear as one when seen in alignment. Revelation 20 then fills in the details of the 1000 years separating those two resurrections. God’s prophecies often seem to put two events together, only later showing them to be separated by time (Isa. 61:1-2; Joel 2:28-31). As well, the *“first resurrection”*, that of the saved, will be made up of church saints in the rapture before the final seven of years, and then the rest of the redeemed (O.T. saints, tribulation saints), both Jews and Gentiles, upon Christ’s return. All of the saved

of all time will then enter together into the millennial kingdom of Christ (Matt. 8:11).

Vs. 3 – Reward. As in the days of Antiochus (11:33), every day has some *“that understand among the people”*. These will see through Satan’s lie and will refuse to accept the Antichrist (II Thess. 2). Being true sheep of the true Shepherd it is His voice they will follow and His alone (Jn. 10:4-5, 14, 27). The redeemed have always *“pleased God”* by their faith in *“things not seen . . . not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them”* (Heb. 11). By their faith in things invisible they show themselves among the wise. And these who understand God will use to lead a following, turning *“many to righteousness”* through their witness. God’s understanders do the same in every age. Though passing through the deep waters of terrible persecutions such faithful ones just carry on and stand firm and bear fruit for God, and they will find their reward in that day of Christ’s return. Compare the fisherman’s crown in I Thessalonians 2:19-20 (Psalm 126:5-6). Revelation 7 confirms the tribulation period as a time of great evangelism, resulting in *“a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues”* who *“washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”* (Rev. 7:9, 14).

Dan 12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Dan 12:5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

Dan 12:6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?

12:4-13 – Closing Instructions.

Vs. 4 – “*Shut up the words, and seal the book*” – Daniel was called upon to preserve these words of prophecy, for their main function would only be “*at that time*” of the latter days.

“*Many shall run to and fro*” – Referring perhaps to the increased mobility, activity, and technology of our modern world before the end times, the industrial and technological revolutions of more recent decades.

Vs. 5-6 – “*Other two*” – Perhaps the same ones as in chapter 10. The angel requests to know “*how long . . . to the end*”. How long must God’s people endure the blazing persecutions of that final end times ruler? People are not the only ones interested in the details of what is to come, for these are “*things the angels*

Dan 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

Dan 12:8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

desire to look into” as well (I Pet. 1:12).

Vs. 7 – Another angel gave the answer, responding with a very solemn declaration that the days of the evil one’s power over God’s people “*shall be a time, times, and an half*”, the same 3½ year period mentioned earlier in 7:25. It is that time period from the breaking of the little horn’s “*covenant with many . . . in the midst of the seven*” (9:27) to the end, the last half of Daniel’s 70th seven.

“*To scatter the power of the holy people*” – Through the terrible trauma of this final stretch of years Israel will finally come to the end of themselves. Forsaking every human trust with their power thoroughly scattered they will at last trust themselves wholly to God’s power for their deliverance.

Vs. 8 – Still Daniel did not fully understand and

Dan 12:9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

wished to know more. He longed to know *what event* would bring these horrors to a finish. What would bring that final world ruler “*to his end*” (11:45)? Babylon met their Medo-Persia. Medo-Persia would meet their Alexander. What could that crushing stone bringing it all to a close represent? But it was not his to know at that time. We of course have a much fuller picture of what’s to come, through John’s Revelation of Jesus Christ. Therefore we know the crowning event on which Daniel was seeking clarity. It will be the 2nd coming of Christ in glory.

Vs. 9-13 – Reply to Daniel.

Vs. 9-10 – Again Daniel was told he could not have the full details. He was only to have what was appropriate to give at that time. He, like us, was not to concern himself with things not revealed. He, like us, must guard himself from running too far with suppositions or falling to conclusions outside the reach of what has been revealed. If he did not have as much as he wanted that was God’s business. There is a progression of revelation with God. Many

Dan 12:10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

prophecies of God only have their fullest benefit for *later* generations. The wise among the saints within the tribulation period will understand it all much better than we do now, when putting completed prophesy together with the current events of their time.

Vs. 10 – Wise and wicked.

“Many shall be purified” – The purpose of the coming great tribulation will not only be to scare the wicked into salvation, but to purify the saints, even to separate the “mixed multitude” from God’s people, the wise from the wicked. God’s congregation when truly purified becomes the most effective tool of evangelism. Purge God’s child and church and souls will be saved by the scores.

“The wicked shall do wickedly” – Another aspect of those closing events of the age is that the unsaved will at last show themselves for what they are. The terrible pressure of circumstances during that time

Dan 12:11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Dan 12:12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

of trouble will force every closet Christian to display his heavenly allegiance and every false professor of Christ to fly the dark banner of his unredeemed soul.

Vs. 11-12 – Two extensions on the time. The starting point here is quite clear. It is marked from the mid-point of that final seven of years, the point when “*the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up*” (9:27), the point when Antichrist fully declares himself, breaking his 7-year covenant with Israel, an event still future in Christ’s day (Matt. 24:15). At that point there will be only 3½ years remaining for Satan’s final world ruler before Christ’s return to his destruction. This same 3½ year period is given in Revelation (11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:5) as 42 months and 1260 days, obviously counting months as 30 days;

30 days per month x 42 months = 1260 days

Yet now the angel speaks of 1290 days, adding

another month in vs. 11. And in vs. 12 blessing is pronounced on those coming to the 1335 days, adding another 45 days or 1½ months to vs. 11's figure. No indication is given as to what these two time extensions represent, except that it will be good for all involved. Obviously these are two points, first one month and then 2½ months, after Christ's return. Many have been the suggestions as to what these two extensions mean. All one can say is that the Bible does point to things taking place after Christ's return;

- Israel gathered and judged (Ezek. 20:34-38; Hosea 2:14ff; Joel 3:1-2).
- Judgment of the Gentiles (Matt. 25:31-46), based upon how they treated the Jews during the tribulation.
- Cleansing of the defiled temple in Jerusalem as in the days of the Maccabees (11:31).
- Rewards and ruling opportunities issued to the faithful (Matt. 25:14-29).

Perhaps these extensions take into account the time required to accomplish these great purposes before Christ's earthly kingdom is officially set up. The special blessing for those there (vs. 12) is that *they will be there*, joyfully entering into Christ's kingdom

Dan 12:13 But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

with all the redeemed. Only the saved will enter. All the lost will be excluded, and will ultimately find their eternal end in the lake of fire (Rev. 20).

Vs. 13 – The Lord does not leave His servant without promise. Though Daniel would “*rest*” in death, he will yet “*stand*” in resurrection at the end of “*the times of the Gentiles*”. Compare Job 19:25-27. And not only would he stand again in resurrection, but he would “*stand in his lot*” or inheritance. God’s faithful shall have their reward.

Ponder Points

Where is America in this whole prophetic story? *It’s not!* If America were wiped out today God’s prophecy would *never even flinch!* All we need is what is north, south, and east of Israel.

Major Themes in Daniel

- Persecution of Jewish saints.
- Victory of God’s kingdom.

- Final world ruler of “*times of the Gentiles*” (Antichrist).

The critical question is where do you stand with the Lord? Where will your soul be when God’s prophecy at last breaks forth into reality? God had given a Saviour in Jesus Christ, and He is the only answer for the dilemma of our sin. Is He your Saviour my friend? Oh hear God’s faithful words to you;

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24)

