

About the Author and the Ministry

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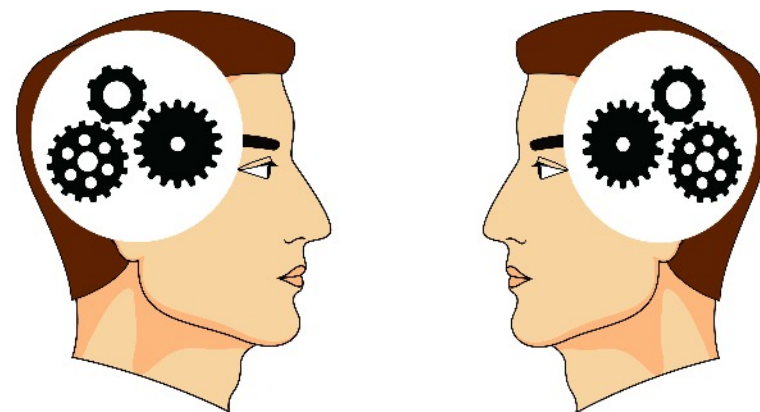
Terry is the author of several books and is involved in a full time ministry of *teaching, informing* and *equipping* the church. He is also editor of a growing worldwide publication '*Diakrisis (Australia)*'.

His ministry includes preaching/teaching and conducting seminars and conferences in a wide range of churches and colleges.

TA Ministries is a non-denominational and non-profit faith ministry founded in 1989 when the book '*To Catholics Whom I Love*' was written by Terry Arnold. This book went through several re-prints and served as a fruitful outreach to Roman Catholics.

In 1996 the ministry became a full-time operation with the introduction of a free newsletter, later named '*Diakrisis (Australia)*'.

Diakrisis is published bi-monthly to *teach, inform* and *equip* the church of Biblical truths and to warn of false teaching. It has also been a valuable reference aid to hundreds of pastors/elders.



A study of

Daniel

(August, 2017)

Daniel 1:1 to Daniel 7:1-8

by

Terry Arnold

Book 1

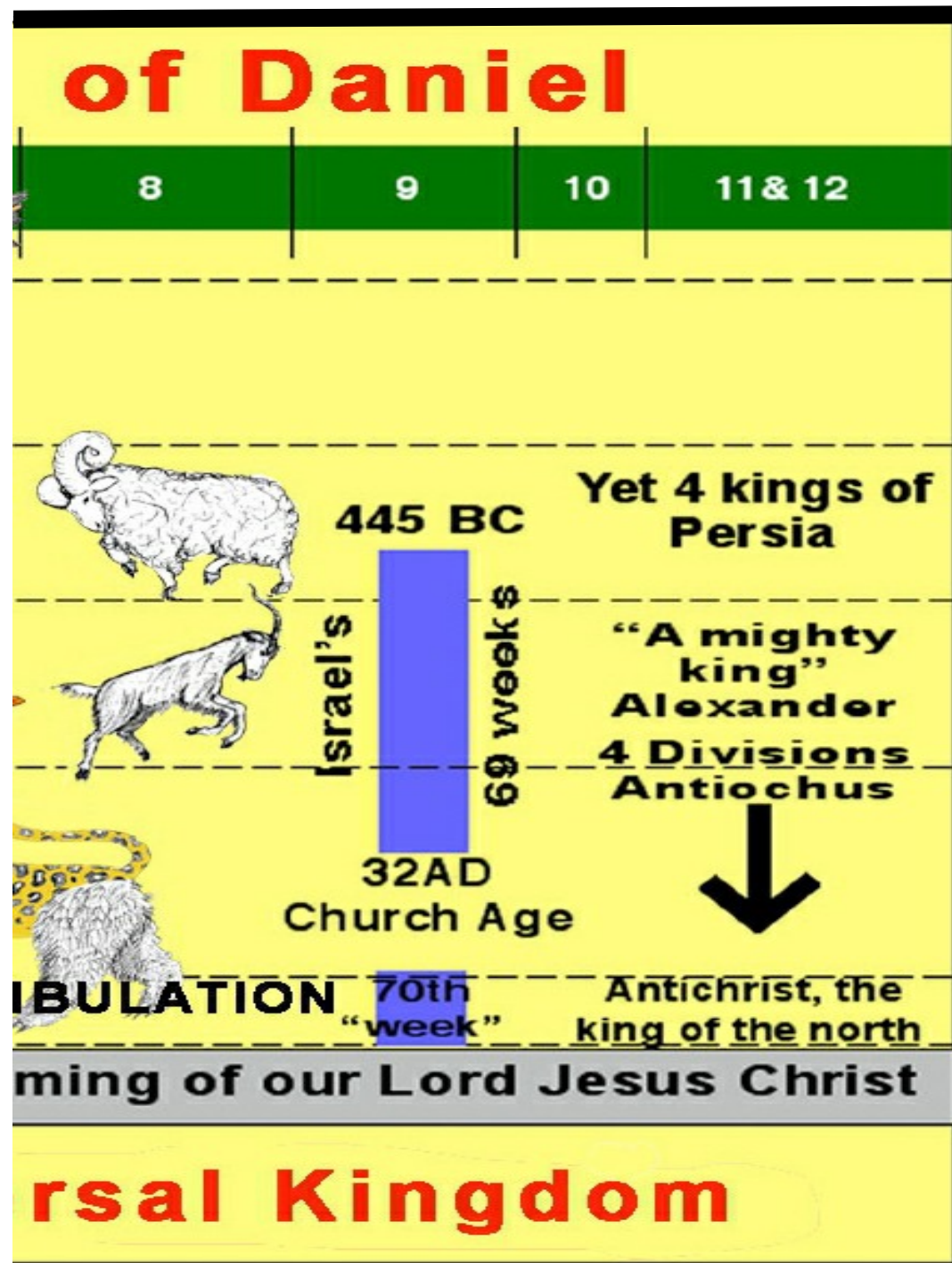


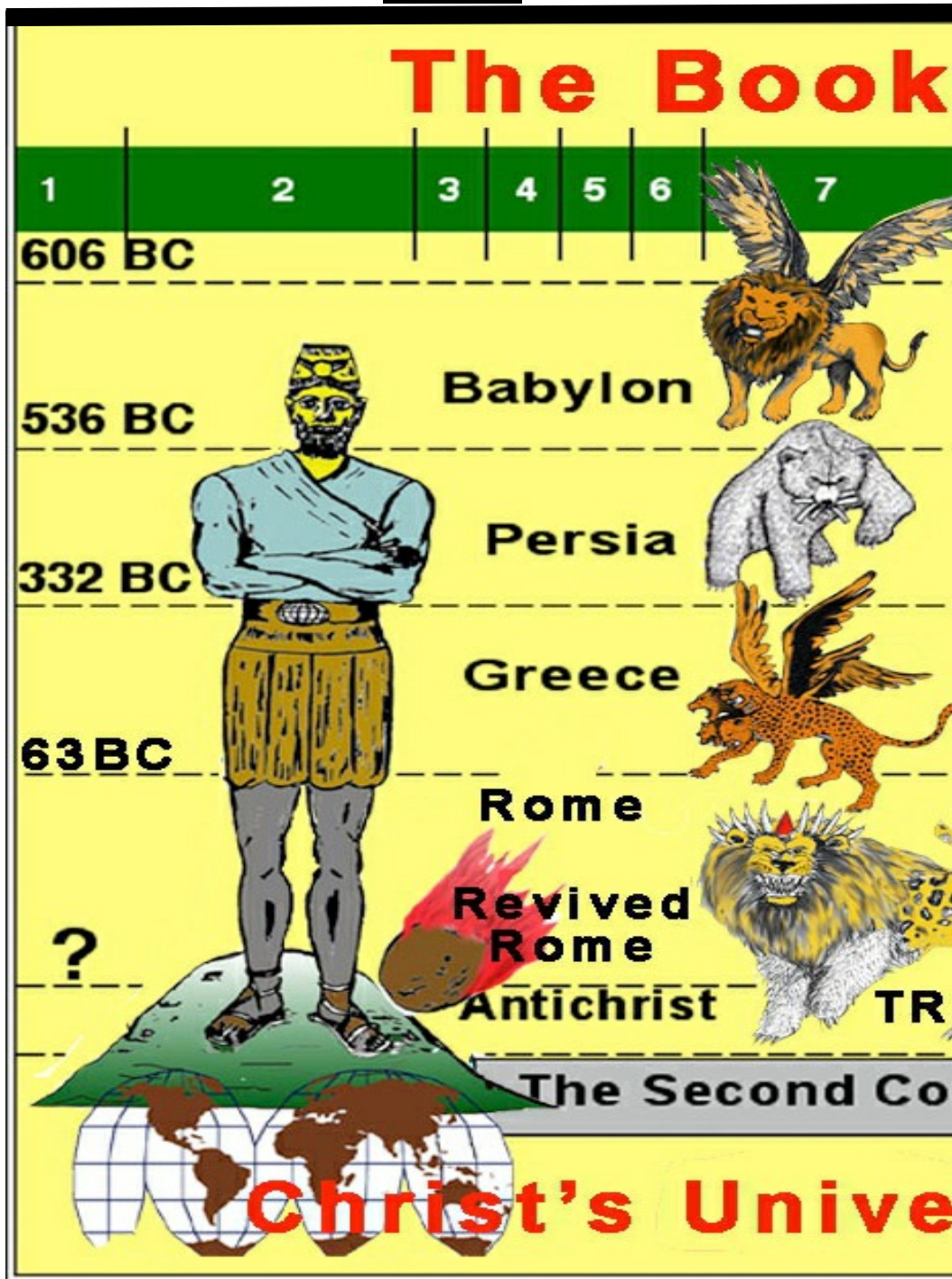
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Index

Daniel 1:1-7	P. 3
Daniel 1:8-16	P. 6
Daniel 1:17-21	P. 9
Daniel 2:1-12	P. 12
Image Daniel 2 Figure of Man from dream	P. 14
Daniel 2:13-23	P. 17
Daniel 2:24-30	P. 20
Daniel 2:31-45	P. 23
Daniel 2:46-49	P. 27
Daniel 3:1-7	P. 30
Daniel 3:8-19	P. 33
Daniel 3:20-30	P. 36
Daniel 4:1-28 - the Second Dream	P. 39
Daniel 4:29-37	P. 42
Daniel 5:1-31	P. 46
Daniel 6:1-9	P. 49
Daniel 6:10-28	P. 52
Charts / Images	P. 56
Daniel 7:1-8	P. 58

Daniel 1:1-7

Intro:

Daniel was a nobleman of Israel who was taken to Babylon in the first deportation (approx. 605 B.C.) God used him as a prophet, his last dated prophecy being made in 536 B.C. The overall theme of the book arguably could be the *sovereignty of God*. The book describes current and future world conflicts in which God's control over all events is demonstrated.

The things portrayed in the book are quite similar to the book of Revelation (much of Revelation has mention in Daniel).

Daniel was primarily written for Israel. It encouraged Israel that God had not forgotten Israel (as they were in captivity) and that he had an order and control of future events.

Ch.1 - History of the prophet.

Ch.2-12 History of Gentile kingdoms up to the end times.

Read: 1:1-7

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

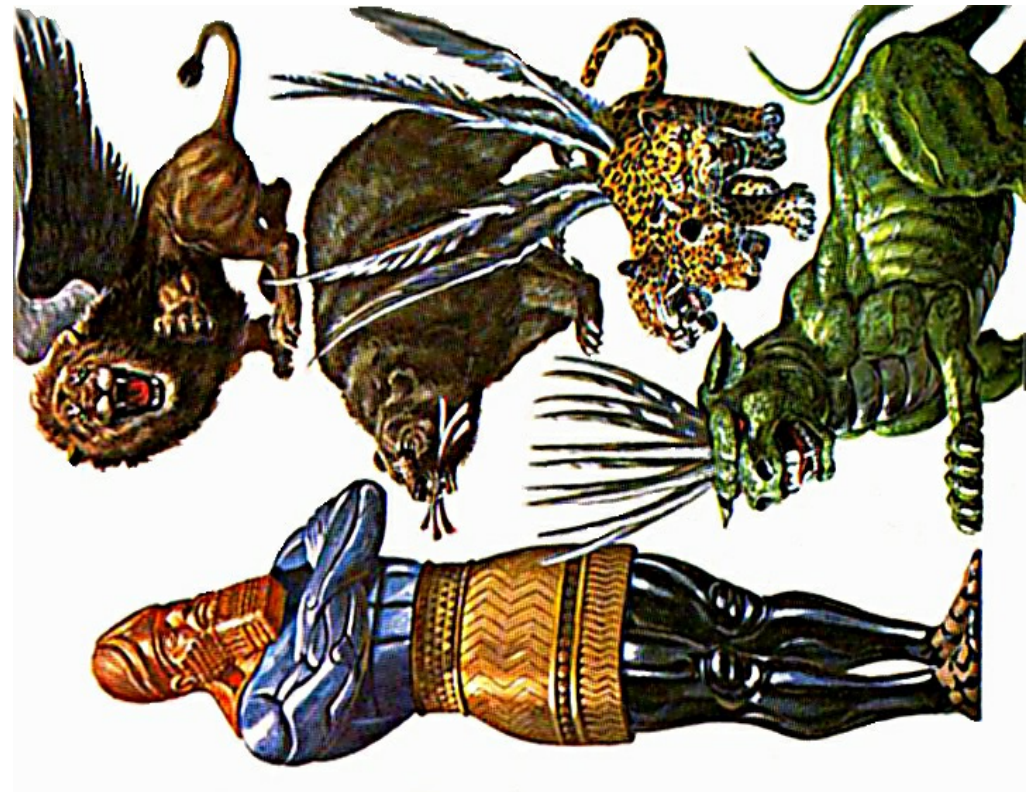
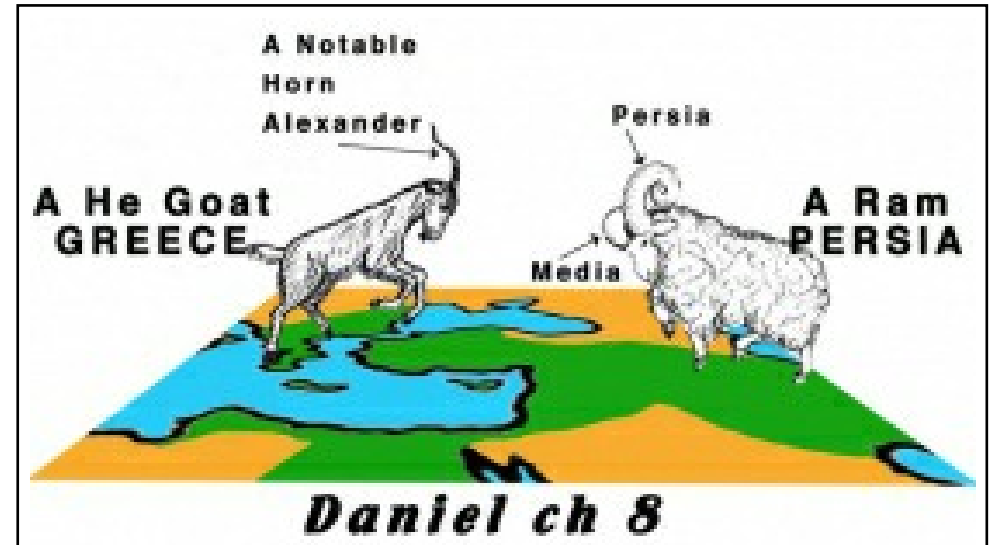
King Nebuchadnezzar ruled Babylon from 605-562 B.C.

- *'third year of the reign of Jehoiakim'* (same as *'fourth year of Jehoiakim'* in Jer.25:1. Difference is two calendars). Jehoiakim was a son of Josiah, who had 'done right' in the sight of the Lord. But Jehoiakim had 'done evil'.

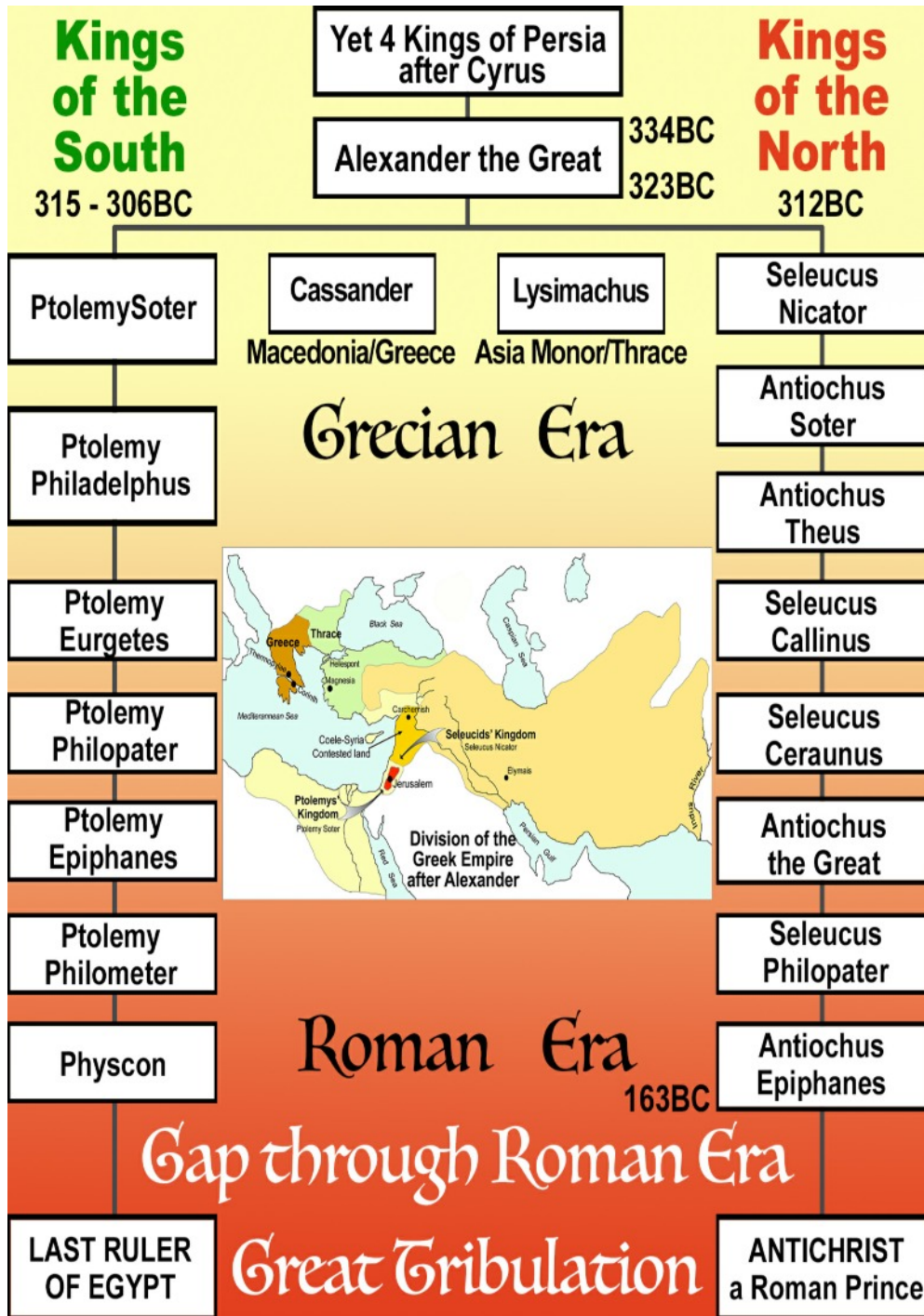
- *'besieged it'* - Read 2Kings 24:1 (2Chr.36:6). This resulted in at least 3 deportations and sieges. This one was about 606 B.C. (and 368 years after the split of the 10 tribes). (The final siege of Jerusalem was with king Zedekiah when the temple was destroyed - 2Kings 25:6-20).

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

Daniel - 2



Daniel - 1



- *'Lord gave Jehoiakim'* - Judgement and captivity had already been promised. Read Jer.25:1- 4; 29:10 - The 'Babylonian captivity'.

- *'part of the vessels of the house of God... into the land of Shinar to the house of his god...'* - spoils of war taken to 'Shinar' (ancient Babylon - Gen.11:2). Part of these 'vessels' were later brought back under Cyrus (Ezr.1:7) and Darius (Ezr.6:5). (Nebuchadnezzar left the Jews to serve him, hence not all the 'vessels' were taken immediately, but in at least three deportations).

- *'The house of his god'* - the temple in Babylon - god Bal. (The Babylonians also worshipped Rach, Shach, Nego. (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have their names from these gods - vs.7).

Vs.3 *'And the king spoke unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children [sons] of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes'.*

- *'eunuchs'* - castrated men who were trusted (they could not have children to threaten the kingly line) and were used to mind the harems of the east. Often they rose to powerful positions.

- *'certain of the children [sons] of Israel'* - probably teenagers to be 'trained'.

Read prophecy of 2Kngs.20:17,18

- *'of the king's seed, and of the princes'* - Daniel and company were probably from a royal family? Read Is.39:6,7.

Vs.4 *'Children in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful 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'.*

- *'no blemish, but well favored'* - no deformities in body, favourable to the eye.

- *'skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science'* - The Hebrews had a great knowledge in music, agriculture, morals, theology, war... The Chaldeans here considered them capable of also learning the Chaldean sciences.

- *‘ability in them to stand in the king’s palace’* - strength of standing... and waiting on the king.

Vs.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’.*

- *‘provision of the king’s meat, and of the wine... three years’* - for the purposes of building them up mentally and physically. To acquire the Chaldean language, sciences, etc.

...The result - **Read Daniel 1:15**

Vs.6,7 *‘Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 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 Abed-nego’*

- *‘Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah’* - these Hebrew names had something of God (*Jah*) in them - Daniel - ‘God is my judge’; Hananiah - ‘The Grace of the Lord’; Mishael - ‘he that is the strong God’; Azariah - ‘The Lord is a help’.

- *‘Belteshazzar... Shadrach... Meshach... Abed-nego’* - Chaldean names of gods and goddesses.

Belteshazzar - the keeper of the hidden treasures of Bal (or Bal’s prince); Shadrach - the inspiration of the sun; Meshach - the goddess Shach, (under which Venus was worshipped); Abed-nego - the servant of the shining fire. (Perhaps attempt here made to have them forget their God of Abraham...).

Summary:

‘Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, took Jerusalem, and carried whom and what he pleased away. [The]...captivity, of seventy years... Nebuchadnezzar ordered that chosen youths should be taught... To make them forget the God of their fathers... the heathen gave them names that savoured of idolatry. It is painful to reflect how often public education tends to corrupt the principles and morals’.

- But ‘train up your children...’.

[Return to index](#)

The antichrist in Revelation is the fulfilment of that in Daniel.

Vs.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'*.

- *'the horns...there came up among them another little horn'* - small beginnings at first. **Read** Rev.13:1 (cp. Dan.7 - Both come out of the sea; both have 10 horns; both speak blasphemous words; both have power for 3.5 years (Dan.7:25; Rev.13:5); both make war with the saints).

- *'before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots'* - **Read** vs.23,24 - *'in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man'* - suggesting intelligence? (Ezek.1:18 Seraphims).

- *'a mouth speaking great things'* - suggesting pride, arrogance. **Read** vs.25

(Many commentators/Reformers believed this to be the Pope (or the Pope the false prophet).

The Pope claims infallibility, power to forgive sins. Various Popes have proclaimed to be *'Christ in office'* *'Most Holy Lord'*, *'High Priest'*, *'mouth of Jesus Christ'*, *'universal bishop'*, etc.).

Read Ps.9:20.

Daniel 1:8-16

Revision: **Read** vs.1-7

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged and took Jerusalem, and carried away the Jews in a 70 year captivity. Chosen men, including Daniel, were selected to serve the king and learn the Chaldean arts and sciences.

Read: 1:8-16

It was prophesied that captives would eat Gentile foods. **Read** Ezek.4:13.

...Daniel chose not to.

- *'purposed in his heart'* - a personal heart felt conviction willed in the mind/conscience (**Read** Jn.8:9; 1Cor.14:24).

- *'not defile himself'* - with unclean foods; and/or food and wine possibly offered to idols.

(The foods may not have been prepared (strangled properly) according to Jewish laws).

...Or perhaps Daniel felt it inappropriate to indulge in the luxuries of the kings delicacies while the other captives did not have these foods?

...**Read** 1Cor.8:4-13 for NT understanding of this concept.

How might we 'defile' ourselves. **Read** Matt.15:18-20; Mk.7:15-23.

- *'he requested'* - not a demand; but with respect; a peaceful request.

Vs.9,10 *'Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love [compassion] with the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who has 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 you make me endanger my head to the king'*.

- *'God had brought Daniel into favor'* - God's sovereign work.

- *'and tender love [compassion] with the prince of the eunuchs'* - Daniel's character, manners had endeared the eunuch.

Unsaved people can appreciate our character, meekness, kindness, love... **Read** Gen.39:21 - re: Joseph.

- '*you make me endanger my head*' - literally - the eunuch could be beheaded at the king's orders.

Vs.11-13 '*Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 Prove your servants, I beseech you, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before you, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as you see, deal with your servants*'

- '*Melzar*' - an officer under *Ashpenaz*, the '*prince of the eunuchs*' (1:3). Melzar set the food for the captives. (Similar to a butler today?).

- '*Prove your servants... ten days... pulse to eat... water to drink*' - '*prove*' - test, try.

'*Pulse*' - beans, peas in pods; included seeds, vegetables - all foods the common people ate.

- '*Then let our countenances be looked upon*' - the 10 day only experiment (which the eunuchs saw no harm in?).

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

- '*proved them ten days*' - tested/tried them for 10 days.

- '*at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh...*' - Natural cleansing effect?; or miraculous ('*fatter in flesh*')?

Commentary: '*The bloated face, the haggard aspect, the look of folly, the "heaviness of the eye, the disposition to squint, and to see double, and a forcible elevation of the eyebrow to counteract the dropping of the upper eyelid, and preserve the eyes from closing," are all marks which God has appointed to betray and expose the life of indulgence*'. (Barnes)

Our natures may be at times moved to indulgences, the luxuries, delicacies of life... amusements, entertainments...?

- '*four heads*' - when Alexander died June 3rd, 323BC, his kingdom was divided into 4 parts, 4 generals (Thrace, Bithynia under Lysimachus; Syria and East under Seleucus; Egypt under Ptolemy Soter; and Macedonia under Cassander).

- '*dominion was given to it*' - given by God. (Alexander with 30,000 men overcame Darius with 600,000 in swift time).

Vs.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 broke 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*'.

- '*a fourth beast*' - Rome. (No animal description as such here). Rome succeeded Medo-Persian empires/nations between 146-30 BC. and then ruled till about 476 AD.

- '*dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly*' - with exceeding military might.

- '*great iron teeth: it devoured and broke in pieces...stamped the residue with the feet of it*'.

- destructive and it subdued nations.

- '*diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns*' - Horns are symbols of power; kings or kingdoms. (Some say 10 kings were 10 divisions of Roman empire. Others say it is 10 kingdoms conquered). Most believe the 10 horns correspond with the ten 'toes' in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. **Read** Dan.2:41.

This Roman Empire has 3 stages: beast stage; 10 horns stage; and finally the 'little horn'. The image interpretation in Dan.2 has not been completed in history yet - **Read** 2:44,45 - '*in the days of these kings*' fixes the time when a kingdom of God on earth will be set up (symbolized by the 'toes' of the image?) and cited in many scriptures (Zech.14:1-9; Mic.4:1-7; Job.19:25; Ps.2:6; 72:11; Is.11:9-; Zech.2:11). The gap in chronology is obvious. The Roman empire was still in existence at Christ's first coming. In some way Rome has to be revived in the last days for these events to be fulfilled. The kingdom of God does not come until after Antichrist is destroyed (Dan. 7:20-22,25-27). John lived under unified Roman rule and was told one king was yet to come (Rev.17:10-12).



Priorities. Daniel's priority was holiness to the lord. **Read** Matt.6:33; Col.3:2 **Read** Dt.8:3

Summary:

'The interest we think we make for ourselves, we must acknowledge to be God's gift. Daniel was still firm to his religion. Whatever they called him, he still held fast the spirit of an Israelite. These youths scrupled concerning the meat, lest it should be sinful.

When God's people are in Babylon they need take special care that they partake not of her sins. It is much to the praise of young people, not to covet or seek the delights of sense. Those who would excel in wisdom and piety, must learn betimes to keep the body under. Daniel avoided defiling himself with sin; and we should more fear that than any outward trouble. It is easier to keep temptation at a distance, than to resist it when near. And we cannot better improve our interest in any with whom we have found favour, than to use it to keep us from sin.

People will not believe the benefit of avoiding excess, and of a spare diet, nor how much they contribute to the health of the body, unless they try. Conscientious temperance will always do more, even for the comfort of this life, than sinful indulgence'.

Daniel 1:17-21

Revision: **Read** vs.8-16

Read: 1:17-21

Vs.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'*.

Note: *'God gave them...'* - **Read** Ex.31:2,3; Nu.12:6; James 1:17.

- *'knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom'* - not of the magic arts, astrology of the Chaldeans; but probably of *'learning and wisdom'*.

Commentary: *'Although there was a clear separation between the sacred and the profane. But he needed to be deeply versed in the Chaldean wisdom, as formerly Moses was in the wisdom of Egypt (Acts 7:22), so as to be able to put to shame the wisdom of this world by the hidden wisdom of God'*.

- *'Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams'* - as extra to above. He had visions of the future; ability to interpret dreams from God.

[About 'dreams': The natural process of dreams (theoretical): During REM stage of sleep - Dreams are believed to process/encode, transfer data from a temporary memory store to the long-term memory store. Dreams function to erase loose unconnected sensory impressions; or ideas not fully developed during waking hours. It is believed dreams sweep away unnecessary memories and connections from the day... like the cleaning-up operations of computers ('de-frag', etc)...].

Daniel's dream interpretation and visions were recorded as the Word of God to us. Prophets and apostles had this gifting also (**Read** Heb.1:1,2). We now do not have dreams as further revelation from God or additions to word of God.

We now have a *'more sure word...the prophecy of the scripture'* (2Pet.1:19,20) and a *'faith once delivered'* (Jude 3).

Vs.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'*.

which he went from insanity and as an animal to become sane and more humane?; or could refer to the nation as a whole having changed over time from its ferocity?

Vs.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'*.

- *'another beast, a second, like to a bear'* - Medo-Persian kingdom. Its armies were renowned for being large and slow moving.

- *'It raised up itself on one side'* - perhaps standing on hindfeet, with forepart raised as bears (a similar engraved figure was found on a stone in Babylon (Munter, *Religion d. Babyl.* P.112) - described as *'kneeling on the right forefoot, and is in the act of rising on the left foot'*).

Commentary: *'This position would naturally denote a kingdom that had been quiet and at rest, but that was now rousing itself deliberately for some purpose, as of conquest or war - as the bear that had been couching down would rise when hungry, or when going forth for prey'*. The lopsided appearance could also refer to the Persians gaining control over the Medes?

- *'it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it'* - it was devouring nations (Lydia, Babylon, Egypt were conquered); or some think 3 kings that followed Darius the mede: Cyrus, Ahasuerus, and Darius?

- *'they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh'* - This kingdom was noted for its desire to conquer more and more; and for its cruelty (**Read** Is.13:17).

Vs.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'*.

- *'another, like a leopard'* - Greece. Alexander the great swiftly conquered 11,000 miles from Greece to India in about 12 years.

- *'four wings of a fowl'* - a fast animal with wings.

Daniel 7:1-8

Read vs.1-8

Intro: Here a vision similar to Nebuchadnezzar's dream (ch.2 - 50 years beforehand). Ch.2 vision has kingdoms represented by *metals*; ch.7 vision is same represented by *animals*.

Vs.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'***.

- ***'first year of Belshazzar'*** - approx. 553BC. Last of Babylonian kings. Daniel is approx. 65- 70 years old.

- ***'a dream and visions of his head upon his bed'*** - in sleep (vs.2 ***'in my vision by night'***).

Vs.2 ***'Daniel spoke and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea'***.

- ***'the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea'*** - *'winds of the heaven strove'* shows a confusion with winds driven by God. *'The great sea'* is the Mediterranean sea (each of the empires bordered the Mediterranean Sea); or the nations (vs.3; **Read** Is.17:12,13; Rev.17:1,15).

Vs.3,4 ***'And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 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 to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it'***.

- ***'four great beasts'*** - 4 kingdoms, not all at once but after each other (vs.6,17 and ch.2).

- ***'first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings'*** - Babylon - in existence at the time. A ferocious lion. Winged lions were national symbol of ancient Babylon. Sculptures showed these in entrances to palaces. Babylon is represented by a lion and an eagle (**Read** Jer.4:7; 50:17; Ezek.17:3,12).

- ***'the wings thereof were plucked... 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'*** - could refer to Nebuchadnezzar's 7 year checking/punishment after

- ***'Now at the end of the days'*** - 3 years - **Read** Dan.1:5. Commentators cite this as 3401 AM and 603 BC.

Vs.19,20 ***'And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm'***.

- ***'none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah'*** - Due to God's gifting and the personal discipline, training temperance of the characters? They obeyed God without resorting to reasoning or rationalising there own circumstances... they trusted, obeyed within the sovereignty of God.

Commentary: *'They were among strangers, far away from the homes of their youth, and surrounded by the allurements of a great city. Everything was done which could be done to induce them to 'forget' their own land and the religion of their fathers'*.

- ***'in all matters of wisdom and understanding...'*** - in the matters that the *'magicians and astrologers'* would advise/counsel the king on.

- ***'ten times better than the magicians and astrologers'*** - (some do not believe this to be a literal *'ten times'*). Chaldean magicians and astrologers probably laid claim to the power of looking into future events, explaining mysteries, working enchantments, etc.

Some commentators say they might today be similar to philosophers and astronomers.

Note the sovereignty of God in the gifting of these men for extraordinary times:

Commentary: *'Nebuchadnezzar, unconsciously, and doubtless undesignedly, did a great service to mankind by his purpose to seek out the talent of the Hebrew captives, and giving it an opportunity to expand and to ripen into usefulness. Daniel has taken his place among the prophets and statesmen of the world as a man of rare endowments, and of equally rare integrity of character. He has, under the leading of the Divine Spirit, done more than most other prophets to lift the mysterious veil which shrouds the future... We cannot but admire the arrangements*

of Providence by which this was done...[It] has furnished an illustration of the truth that 'the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord... we have in this chapter an instructive instance of the value of early training in the principles of religion and temperance'.

Read Job.1:8

Comment: Arguably much crime today is due to a lack of *temperance* learned from youth?

Vs.21 '*And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus*' - he lived to see the freedom from the 70 year captivity; the return of the remnant of Judah at the end of the 70 years when King Cyrus (the king of media Persia) was given the proclamation to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. (This is testimony to the sovereignty of God...).

Read Jer.25:11,12; 29:10.

Daniel lived beyond this time - **Read Dan.10:1**

Summary:

'Daniel and his fellows kept to their religion; and God rewarded them with eminence in learning. Pious young persons should endeavour to do better than their fellows in useful things; not for the praise of man, but for the honour of the gospel, and that they may be qualified for usefulness.

And it is well for a country, and for the honour of a prince, when he is able to judge who are best fitted to serve him, and prefers them on that account. Let young men steadily attend to this chapter; and let all remember that God will honour those who honour him, but those who despise him shall be lightly esteemed'.

What is the lesson in Bible accounts depicting death, brutality, slaughter?: The OT has wars, women, infants commanded to be slain; Saul was commanded to kill all and when this was not done at times he was reprimanded by God; Samual took a man and chopped him to pieces; Achan and his family were slaughtered; Sodom and Gommorah; people stoned for homosexuality; fornicators will suffer in Hell...This is the God of the Bible...How do we reconcile these things?

- '*the lions...broke all their bones in pieces* [before]...*the bottom of the den*' - note the contrast between Daniel and the enemies with the lions.

Read vs.25-27 - a new '*decree*' concerning the '*God of Daniel*'. **Read Dan.2:44; 4:2-4,34.** The proof of one living unchangeable God who works signs and with an eternal kingdom.

Read vs.28 - Cyrus the co-ruler/successor of Darius who was instrumental in having captives return to Jerusalem (Ezra 1).

‘...the king...said unto Daniel, Your God whom you serve continually, he will deliver you’ - the king resigns Daniel to his fate?

Read vs.17

- *‘...a stone was...laid upon the mouth...sealed’* - by both the king and the governors. Why? - *‘that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel’*. Like the miracle of the furnace, God’s miracle was to be shown clearly. **Read** Matt.27:65,66.

Read vs.18-20

- *‘...the king...passed the night fasting...his sleep went from him’* - troublesome thoughts.

- *‘the king arose...went in haste unto the den of lions...cried with a lamentable voice...’* - expecting the worse?

- *‘O Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions?’* - note character descriptions (*‘serve continually’*; *‘living God’*).

Read vs.21,22

- *‘O king, live forever’* - he does not revile the king (Dan.2:4).

- *‘My God has sent his angel, and has shut the lions’ mouths...’* - **Read** Ps.34:7; Heb.1:14.

- *‘...as before him innocency was found in me; and also before you...I done no hurt’* - ‘innocent’ of any law under God. **Read** Matt.22:21; 1Pet.2:17; Acts 24:16.

Read vs.23

- *‘because he believed in his God’* - in service; in worship; in faith - he trusted God and to be wholly in his hands whether in life or death. God may not always ‘deliver’. **Read** Heb.11:36-40.

Read vs.24

‘...the king...brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives...’
- Justice and no mercy? The king was now free to do as he wanted. Often serious crimes in Persian and Macedonian cultures were punished on families (especially for those who conspired against kings). **Read** Dt.19:18-21 cp 24:16; Ps.9:16.

Daniel 2:1-12

Revision: Theme of Daniel concerns the times of the Gentile nations.

Outline: Ch.1 - history of the prophet;

Ch.2 - Prophetic history of the Gentiles;

Ch.8-12 - Prophetic history of Israel.

Read: 2:1-12

- Approx. 603 BC *‘Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams’* - in the OT the mention of ‘dreams’ is common (Genesis, Kings, Numbers, etc). Prophets were called to interpret.

(Revision: God no longer brings revelation by this means (Heb.1:1,2; 2Pet.1:19-21). Revelation is now *‘once’*, final (Jude 3,4). (The ‘dreams’ of Joel 2:28,29 were fulfilled in book of Acts).

- *‘his spirit was troubled, and his sleep broke from him’* - arguably God stopped him from sleeping so he would either remember the dream or get it interpreted?

[Revision: The science of dreams: a vital part of sleep ‘rythmn’ (REM/deep stages); a soulish outlet; a re-arranging of disconnected thoughts; the overflow of thoughts; the brain’s ‘de-frag’...].

Vs.2 *‘Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king’*.

- *‘magicians’* - scribes, writers of hieroglyphics, sages. They practiced the occult, sorcery, and incantations. **Read** Gen.41:8.

- *‘astrologers’* - can be an enchanter (occurs only in Daniel).

- *‘sorcerers’* - lit. ‘whisperer’. They used magic songs, words, incantations, witchcraft. Always in worship of other gods (Ex.7:11; 22:18; Deut.18:10; 2Chr.33:6; Dan.2:2; Mal.3:5). **Read** Ex.7:11.

- *‘the Chaldeans’* - these might have been other learned men in arts and sciences. They were distinguished from the other peoples in the 120 provinces in Babylon.

DANIEL 2

FIGURE OF A MAN



HEAD OF GOLD
KINGDOM OF BABYLON

CHEST & ARMS
OF SILVER
KINGDOM OF MEDES
& PERSIANS

Persia... in the persecution of Christians, 344 AD 'An edict... commanded all Christians be thrown into chains and executed. Many belonging to every rank died as martyrs. Among these was an eunuch of the palace, Azades, a man greatly prized by the king... and who the latter was much affected by his death...' (Neander's Church History)

The conflict is often between 'justice' and mercy where one is sacrificed for the other. In some countries 'pardon' is given on grounds of mercy. Justice and mercy are decided sovereignly by the Lord. **Read** Rom.9:15,16. What is our pardon for sin freely offered? (the necessity of atonement)

- '**set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him**' - How? Perhaps looking for loopholes in the law?

- '**Then these men assembled unto the king, and said...no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed**' - Note the '*then*' - after the king had tried to change the events.

Read Est.8:8

Read vs.16

'...they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions' - Commentary: 'Recent discoveries among ruins of Babylon show this punishment... The first from a block of stone... supposed to mark the site of the grand western palace. It represents a lion standing over the body of a prostrate man... The second from an engraved gem, dug from the ruins of Babylon... It exhibits a man standing on two sphinxes, and engaged with two fierce animals... The third is from a block of white marble found near the tomb of Daniel at Susa... with similar representations of a man apparently naked, except a sash round his waist, and a sort of cap on his head. His hands are bound behind him... Two lions in sitting postures appear on either side at the top, each having a paw on the head of the man...'

Apochryphal books cite 7-10 lions which had been daily fed 2 carcasses and 2 sheep but none the day before Daniel was put in the den (Be1:32; Joseph ben Gorion).

Death by lions was often slow compared to the 'fiery furnace'.

Daniel 6:10-28

Revision: Daniel is promoted to the three presidencies of the kingdom. The 120 governors under him look for a way to trap and be rid of him.

Read: 6:10

- *‘his windows being open...’* - open transparency (*‘as he did formerly’*).
- *‘toward Jerusalem...three times a day, and prayed...’* - the temple had been in Jerusalem.

The Jews prayed three times per day towards Jerusalem (the Muslims pray to Mecca, said to be the ‘holiest place’ on earth). **Read** 1Kngs 8:44; Ps.5:7; 55:17 (9am; noon; 3pm).

- *‘as he did formerly’* - Daniel did not change his worship to suit any laws. Consistent character.

Read 6:11-13

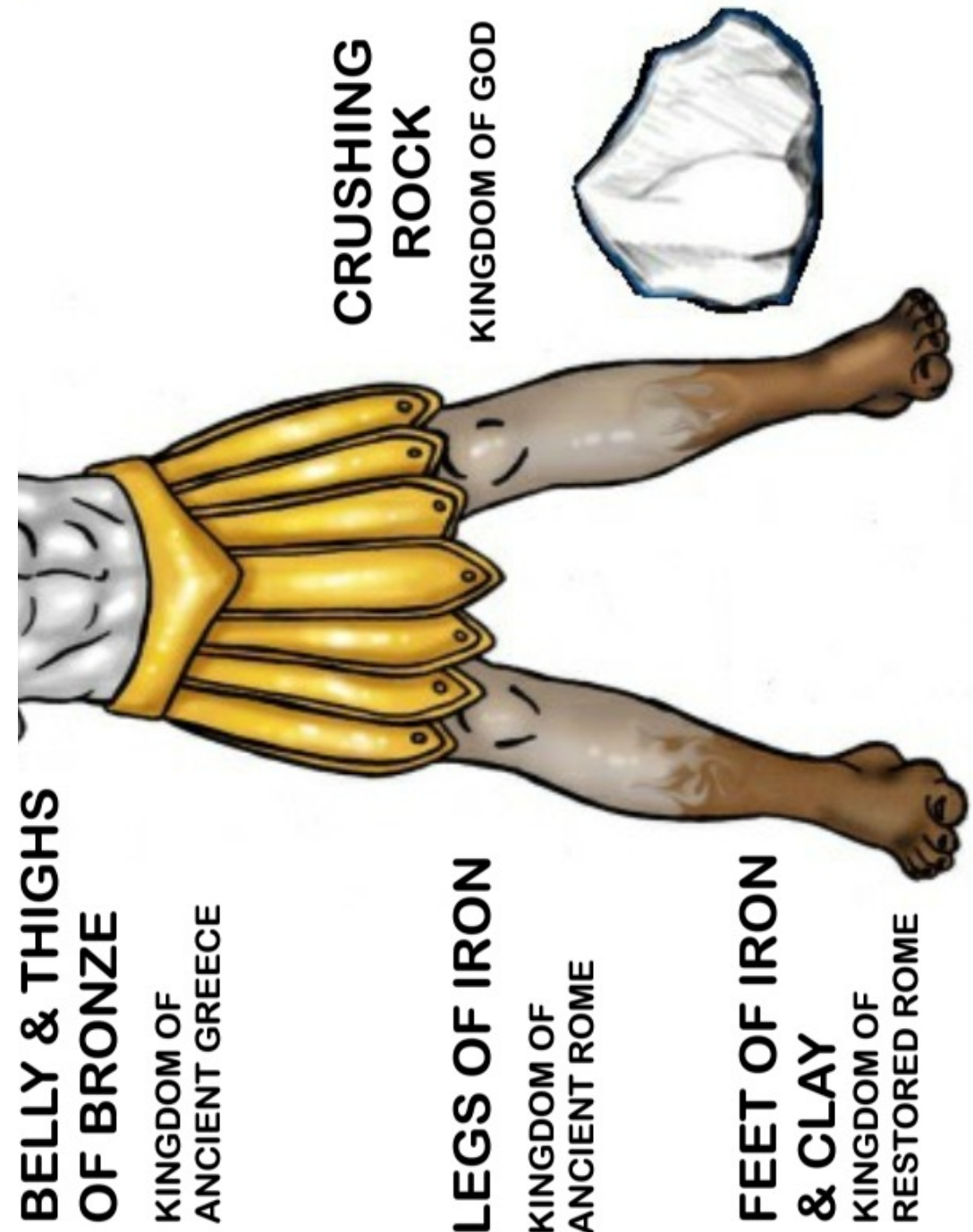
- *‘These men assembled’* - they planned to catch Daniel.
- *‘Have you not signed a decree... according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which alters not’* - the trap is fortified. Such a law could not be revoked even by a king.
- *‘Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah’* - Daniel here seen to be a ‘captive’ rather than the ‘president’ which he was.
- *‘[He] regards not you, O king, nor the decree that you have signed...’* - appealing to the king’s pride, authority?

Read vs.14,15

- *‘Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself’* - he knew he was tricked. **Read** Matt.14:3-9; Pr.29:20. Do we learn from rash behaviour’ and it’s consequences?

He was ‘displeased’ because he realised the mistake of the decree which stopped free religion in his kingdom; because it was unwise of him to have such a decree; because it involved one of his top three men - one of impeccable character according to the king and others.

Commentary: *‘It is no uncommon thing for men to be displeased with themselves when they experience the unexpected consequences of their follies and sins. An instance occurred at a later period in the history of*



Vs.3,4 *'And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream 4 Then spoke the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live forever: tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation'*.

- *'Then spoke the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac'* - 'Chaldee' - a dialect of Hebrew. This section through to ch.7:28 is now in Aramaic (as is Jeremiah 10:11; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26).

Aramaic was the common Gentile language of the day.

Note: the word 'Lord' ('YAHWEH' - Jehovah) does not appear in the Aramaic section here (other expressions are used (4:2,24,37). This section (as is Jer.10) is written to Gentiles.

- *'O king, live forever'* - a common address to kings. Read 1Kngs.1:31. Their aim was to make the king happy.

- *'we will show the interpretation'* - the king's men boasted of hearing from the gods. The king wants the dream itself revealed; but the men want the dream given first and then their interpretation.

Vs.5,6 *'The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if you will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. 6 But if you show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, you shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof'*.

- *'you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill'* - This man (4:17 *'the basest of men'*) and the Babylonians were a cruel race. Read Jer.39:5-7.

- *'houses... made a dunghill'* - a common practise also by the Romans.

- *'you shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor'* - as occurred to Daniel later.

Vs.7-9 *'They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it. 8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that you would gain the time, because you see the thing is gone from me. 9 But if you will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for you have*

Commentary: *'To forbid prayer for thirty days, is, for so long, to rob God of all the tribute he has from man, and to rob man of all the comfort he has in God. Does not every man's heart direct him, when in want or distress, to call upon God? We could not live a day without God; and can men live thirty days without prayer? Yet it is to be feared that those who, without any decree forbidding them, present no hearty, serious petitions to God for more than thirty days together, are far more numerous than those who serve him continually, with humble, thankful hearts.'*

- *'save of you, O king'* - perhaps this appealed to the pride, the vanity of the king?

Vs.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 alters not'*

Commentary: *'It may have occurred to him, or may have been suggested, that this was an effectual way to test the readiness of his subjects to obey and honor him. Some such test, it may have been urged, was not improper, and this would determine what was the spirit of obedience as well as any other'*.

- *'the Medes and Persians, which alters not'* - such decrees were considered as from the gods and demanding an act of obedience and loyalty no matter what. (Many considered the king as the incarnation of the spirit god Ormuzd).

Vs.9 *'Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree'*.

Was Daniel (in his old age) still faithful to his religion...? Does he curtail his devotions/worship to escape the decree?

Commentary: *'To Christ we must turn our eyes. There let the Christian look, there let him pray, in this land of his captivity'*.

[Return to index](#)

Vs.4 *'the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel'* - because a Jew was over them of which were captives in the kingdom?; Because he got more credit than they did, being more exact, diligent, and laborious, faithful, and conscientious?

'they could find... fault; for... he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him' - what a testimony? He was a politician without fault?

Vs.5 *'...We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God'* - Could not find fault in public so looked into his private life. The opposite of what God desires: We are told to 'mind own business'. **Read** 1Thess.4:11,12.

Commentary: *'When they could not get Daniel for treason they looked for impiety'*.

Jesus was put to death, crucified by his own countrymen, for breaking their 'laws', when the secular authorities and God found him innocent.

Commentary: *'It does not become Christians to make bitter complaints, or to indulge in revilings'*.

Can we be blameless in the eyes of the secular authorities, apart from our religion?

Vs.6 *'Then these presidents and princes assembled together'* [aramaic: 'tumultuously'] *to the king...* - in numbers to sway the king. **Read** Ps.2:1-12 (note vs.2).

- *'King Darius, live forever'* - a common greeting to a king (Dan.2:4).

Vs.7 *'All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together...'* - *'all'* - a lie (Daniel was not consulted).

- *'to establish a royal statute... a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of you, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions'* - they would have 30 days to catch Daniel out.

Can one not worship God for 30 days?

prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me the interpretation thereof'.

- *'They answered again'* - delay tactics.

- *'you have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me'* - the king is suspicious of their methods. **Read** Ecc.5:7.

Vs.10,11 *'The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 And it is a rare thing that the king requires, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh'.*

- *'not a man upon the earth that can show'* - they admit this despite them claiming to know the minds of the gods and to reveal secrets? God wants to shame these things and the people.

Vs.12 *'For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon'.*

- *'angry... very furious... commanded to destroy'* - Nebuchadnezzar was famous for this character.

Commentary:

'Men are more eager to ask as to future events, than to learn the way of salvation or the path of duty; yet foreknowledge of future events increases anxiety and trouble. Those who deceived, by pretending to do what they could not do, were sentenced to death...'

The sovereign God is using pagan events here to reveal future kingdoms and events to Israel.

Daniel 2:13-23

Revision:

The wise men could not give or interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream. So all were decreed by the king to be slain. This decree was to include Daniel and his men (vs.13).

Read: 2:13-23

Nebuchadnezzar was a cruel tyrant who when he could not have his way here, commanded death to all 'wise' men, including even innocent bystanders such as Daniel and his companions.

Commentary: *'Those that imposed upon men, in pretending to do what they could not do, are now sentenced to death for not being able to do what they did not pretend to'.*

Vs.14-18 *'Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: 15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. 16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah, his companions: 18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon'.*

- *'Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom'* - this passage shows how one should relate to authority. Daniel acted and requested respectfully, going through the proper channels, even though the authority was pagan and ungodly. [How do we respect authority?].

- *'that he would show the king the interpretation'* - this would be a miracle because it was not just the interpretation but the dream itself being made known. Only a sovereign God could solve this impossibility. He uses pagan events, pagan people, evil kings to bring circumstances to pass.

Daniel pledges the dream and the interpretation. What faith! He has also won the favour of the king to have time.

Daniel 6:1-9

Revision:

Ch.1 - history of the prophet; captivity as promised/prophesied by God in other books. Key verse: **Read** Dan.1:8.

Ch.2-7 history of the Gentile nations. First dream of Nebuchadnezzar - prophecy of Gentile nations. Key verses: **Read** Dan.2:36-45.

Ch.4 Second dream - of judgement on Nebuchadnezzar.

Ch.5 The handwriting on the wall - prophecy of judgement, defeat of Babylonian empire and second kingdom (from the first dream) - the Medes and Persians rule.

Key characters in Daniel so far: Jehovah God, Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius...

Read Dan.6:1-9

Darius the Mede is now the ruler having defeated the Babylonians. **Read** Dan.5:31. Daniel had been captive for nearly 70 years and so was well into his eighties in age.

Vs.1 *'...Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes...'* - (tablets found state the same as 'governers')

Vs.2 *'over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first'* - The princes *'gave account'* to these three presidents, including Daniel.

- *'the king should have no damage'* - to have no trouble; or probably also referring to taxes being given to the king. **Read** Ezra 4:13.

Vs.3 *'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'* - testimony to the unsaved.

Read 1Thess.3:12; 1Pet.2:12-17. The king also would benefit in reputation and report by having such an honest man as Daniel run his affairs?

- *'an excellent spirit'* - not meaning the Holy Spirit but an expression of character, conduct.

The Bible warns of judgement upon sinners, the wrath to come (Matt.3:7; 1Thess.1;10).. At death every sinners's days are 'numbered', 'weighed' and judged ('divided'). Their abode will be with the Devil and his angels.

We have the 'writing on the wall' now in Scripture. With the Holy Spirit it will show the depravity of sin and human nature (Rom.ch.1-3), bring to light the sins, failings of our flesh, 'dividing' the spirit and flesh (**Read** Heb.4;12).

[Return to index](#)

- ***'made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:'*** - he engages his companions in prayer and a solution. **Read** Est.4:16; Matt.18:19; Acts 12:5.

...He has one night to have an answer.

Vs.19 ***'Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven'***.

- ***'the secret revealed unto Daniel'*** - **Read** Dt.29:29.

- ***'in a night vision'*** - whether asleep or awake we do not know. (The dream and image are not necessarily separate. The dream image is a vision; a vision while awake can be a dreaming. One might be conscious, the other unconscious. The fact that Nebuchadnezzar forgot his dream may well be that it was in an unconscious night dream?).

- ***'Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven'*** - this begins a prayer of praise and thanksgiving...

Vs.20 ***'Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: 21 And he changes the times and the seasons: he removes kings, and sets up kings: he gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: 22 He reveals the deep and secret things: he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. 23 I thank you, and praise you, O you God of my fathers, who has given me wisdom and might, and has made known unto me now what we desired of you: for you have now made known unto us the king's matter'***.

- ***'Blessed be the name of God forever and ever'*** - there are many 'names' for God: El Shaddai (Lord God Almighty); El Elyon (The Most High God); Adonai (Lord, Master); Yahweh (Lord, Jehovah); Jehovah Nissi (The Lord My Banner); Jehovah-Raah (The Lord My Shepherd); Jehovah Rapha (The Lord That Heals); Jehovah Shammah (The Lord Is There); Jehovah Tsidkenu (The Lord Our Righteousness); El Olam (The Everlasting God); Elohim (God); Jehovah Jireh (The Lord Will Provide); Jehovah Shalom (The Lord Is Peace); Jehovah Sabaoth (The Lord of Hosts)...

Each Hebrew name described a character trait of God. The name here could be 'eternal one'.

- ***‘wisdom and might are his’*** - *‘wisdom’* in designing/forming the plan and *‘might’* in carrying it out; *‘Wisdom’* in bringing the dream, its interpretation; and *‘might’* in carrying out the various events thereof. All were predestinated (prior decreed) to occur.

- ***‘And he changes the times and the seasons: he removes kings, and sets up kings:’*** - no changes come to pass by chance, (...including ‘climate change’/‘global warming’?). He puts people into power and takes them out, for He is *‘king of kings and Lord of Lords’* (1Tim.6:15; Rev.17:14; 19:16). **Read** Dan.4:17; Is.46:10.

- ***‘he gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:’*** - we should never be proud of our knowledge. It all comes from God. It must be Gospel based.

- ***‘He reveals the deep and secret things: he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him’*** - he has revealed things to man. His completed revelation is in scripture.

Judgement will reveal all. **Read** Ps.139:11,12; 1Tim.6:16; Jn.1:7.

In this passage God shows a rejection of the divination methods of the Babylonian ‘wise men’ and an acceptance of a God given gift to Daniel - leading to the Spirit of prophecy.

- ***‘I thank you, and praise you, O you God of my fathers’*** - the Jewish fathers.

How thankful should we be for our salvation which has come through Abraham, Israel.

- ***‘who... has made known unto me now what we desired of you’*** - we acknowledge God in all our ways. What was held from the wisest men of Babylon, was given to a young Jewish man in captivity (James 5:16 ***‘...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much’***).

Commentary: *‘Daniel was thankful to God for making known that to him, which saved the lives of himself and his fellows. How much more should we be thankful to God, for making known the great salvation of the soul to those who are not among the worldly wise and prudent!’*.

[Return to index](#)

Commentary: *‘It is he that holds our souls in life, and, if he take away our breath, we die. Our times being in his hand, so is our breath, by which our times are measured... We live by him, live upon him, and cannot live without him. The way of man is not in himself, not at his own command, at his own disposal, but his are all our ways; for our hearts are in his hand, and so are the hearts of all men, even of kings, who seem to act most as free-agents. Our duty to God, in consideration of this dependence; we ought to glorify him, to devote ourselves to his honour and employ ourselves in his service, to make it our care to please him and our business to praise him. Our default in this duty, notwithstanding that dependence; we have not done it; for we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. This is the indictment against Belshazzar; there needs no proof, it is made good by the notorious evidence of the fact, and his own conscience cannot but plead guilty to it. And therefore, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN... ‘he hath numbered, he hath numbered’; that is, God hath certainly, perfectly, and exactly numbered; “he hath weighed”, God hath weighed thee, Belshazzar; “and they divide the kingdom”; that is, the Medes and Persians...’*.

Read vs.24-28

What language? But necessary for Daniel only to interpret. Literally: *‘Mene’* = numbered or reckoned; *‘Tekel’* = weighed; *‘Peres’* = divided or broken. **Read** 1Sam.2:3.

70 years was nearing an end this night...

Read vs.29-31

Daniel was honoured as promised. *‘In that night’* the king was slain. *‘Darius the Median took the kingdom’* (Dan.9:1).

History (as recorded by several Persian and Babylonian records as well as Josephus): The Medes diverted the river, crossed over the river bed under the castle walls and stormed the gates before daylight. The king heard the commotion, ordered someone to investigate, who opened the palace gates. The Medes stormed into the palace. The king drew his sword and was killed that same night. The entire city submitted. The date is believed to be Oct.13th, 539 BC.

Read Is.13:17-22; 45:1; 47:1-15

Application: If you are fighting in war you are alert, ready, discerning. If not one can be unprepared. (Eg. The test of ready fighting men (Judges 7:5); David and adultery (2Sam.11:1)).

‘...read this writing... show 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’ - purple and gold chains were worn by royalty only.
Read Gen.41:42.

Read vs.8,9 ...*‘his lords were astonished’* - dumbfounded.

Read vs.10-12

‘the queen’ - widow of Nebuchadnezzar? Perhaps she still knew Daniel.

- The same words as the previous Nebuchadnezzar. Note the testimony of Daniel.

Read vs.13-16

He either forgot who Daniel was or did not know him (Daniel would now be in his 80’s old). He repeats the testimony from the queen. (He leaves out the word *‘holy’*).

Read vs.17-21

Daniel denies the reward/gifts (and what use would they be in the impending defeat of Babylon?). He would not take monies (as do magicians and enchanters today?).

Daniel gives the king a history lesson (Dan.4:25-33) which he had ignored for nearly 70 years. (But do we learn from history? Did Israel learn from the OT kings and leaders who *‘did evil in the sight of the Lord’*; the early church heresies; from the Reformation; from the church leaders who have and are now falling in apostasy and open sins?...).

He testifies of the pride, punishment, insanity, restoration of the king’s father and the absolute sovereign power of the one God of heaven and earthly kingdoms, who *‘appoints over it whomsoever he will’*. **Read** Pr.16;18; Acts 12:21-23.

Read vs.22,23

The judgement to Belshazzar and from *‘the God in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, have you not glorified’*.

Commentary: *‘That is, he has power to control you in all your ways. You can go nowhere without his permission... ‘A man’s heart devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps’. None of us can take a step without his permission... How little is this recognized! How few feel it when they go out and come in; when they go forth to their employments; when they start on a voyage or journey; when they propose to return to their homes!’*.
Read Jer.10:23; Acts 17:28.

Daniel 2:24-30

Revision:

Captivity of 70 years; Daniel and friends were chosen to serve the King of Babylon; the miracle of foods; King has a dream and his wise men cannot interpret. The king imposes the death sentence for all wise men including Daniel. God gives the dream and interpretation to Daniel. Lives will be saved and the future of the world’s nations will be told.

Read: 2:24-30

Vs.24,25 *‘Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation. 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’*

- *‘Daniel went in unto Arioch’* - Daniel had to go through the right channels to get to the king.

- *‘Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon’* - Arioch was the executioner.

- *‘he... said... Destroy not the wise men of Babylon:’* - Daniel saw the injustice. God has mercy to the saved and the unsaved alike on this earth.
Read Matt.5:4,5.

- *‘...I will show unto the king the interpretation’* - because God had already shown it to Daniel after prayer.

- *‘Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste’* - note the word *‘haste’*. Arioch wanted to stay the executions.

- *‘I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation’* - *‘I have found’* - it was not uncommon for such king’s men to gain favour with the king by uplifting themselves?

- Daniel had gained the confidence of Arioch; Arioch trusted Daniel.

Vs.26-28 *'The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Are you able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? 27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king has demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; 28 But there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, are these'.*

- *'Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar'* - Read Dan.1:7 - the Chaldean name of a god - 'the keeper of the hidden treasures of Bal' (or Bal's prince).

- *'make known unto me the dream... and the interpretation thereof?'*
- Nebuchadnezzar gets straight to the point; but Daniel takes the time to introduce His God... and prepare him for the dream and the interpretation thereof.

- *'Daniel answered... the secret which the king has demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king;'* - the word *'soothsayers'* is from a root word meaning 'to cut off' and referred to that which is 'cut into parts'. They often cut up animals, looked at their entrails and made judgements on the future; Astrologers divided the heavens into parts and divide future things, guessing at men's destinies from the position of the stars at one's birth.

Daniel's point is: yet none of these people could help the king.

- Daniel takes this occasion to show the difference between his God and the gods of the Babylonian wise men. God's way is to confound the wise (including the Babylonian 'wisest' men) and use the 'weak' things (even a teenager from Israel obedient to God). Read 1Cor.1:27-31.

- *'But there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets'* - as opposed to the gods, only one *'God in Heaven'* can reveal such things. Read Amos 3:7.

[Today there are magicians, soothsayers, 'prophets' in the church who predict the future *outside and extra* to what God has said in scripture]

Daniel 5:1-31

Read Daniel 5 vs.1-4

- *'Belshazzar the king'* - (not the same name as Belteshazzar - Daniel) but Nabonidus, a successor (grandson of Nebuchadnezzar). For centuries the book of Daniel was believed to be fiction by liberals, until archaeology (1920's) proved the Bible accounts/names. Nebuchadnezzar's son was elsewhere in the kingdom ruling. His son was Nabonidus - this is why the king could only offer Daniel a *'third rulership in the kingdom'* (5:16). Nebuchadnezzar is called King Belshazzar's *'father'* (5:18) - a common practice for sons in line (Read 2Sam.9:7; Matt.1:1; Jer.27:7).

- *'feast to a thousand of his lords... drank wine before the thousand... commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem... concubines, might drink therein'* - For 70 nearly years the vessels had been kept sacred. Belshazzar understood the sacredness. He likely knew of the prophecies from his fathers and of the judgement (vs.22). Perhaps he intentionally defied that here with the idolatry? ...('Concubines' - lower class than the wives (2Sam.5:13). Their purpose here was for orgy).

Vs.4 *'They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone'* - History says that while this was occurring the Medes were only miles away ready to assault the city. But Babylon was assumed to be impregnable with its river and walls...

Read vs.5,6

- *'fingers of a man's hand... wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall'* - no thunderous voice but an unattached hand, writing in the light of candles on the palace wall!

- *'The king's countenance was changed... thoughts troubled him... joints of his loins [back] were loosed...knees smote one against another'* - common effect of great fear. Read Nah.2:10.

When a sinner is made to feel the effects of sin such conviction occurs in the mind and heart.

Read vs.7,8

'...bring in the astrologers... Chaldeans... soothsayers... wise men...' - as in Dan.2:2; 4:7.

- ***‘works are truth, and his ways judgment’*** - Read Dt.32:4; Rev.15:3
- ***‘and those that walk in pride he is able to abase’*** - His sovereignty.

How careful we ought to be, not to do any thing to provoke God? *‘God resists the proud’* (James 4:6). Commentary: *‘When men are brought to honour God, by confession of sin and acknowledging his sovereignty, then, and not till then, they may expect that God will honour them; not only restore them to the dignity they lost by the sin of the first Adam, but add excellent majesty to them, from the righteousness and grace of the Second Adam... he Lord knows how to abase those that walk in pride, but gives grace and consolation to the humble, broken-hearted sinner who calls upon Him’*

[Return to index](#)



- ***‘and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days’*** - ‘latter days’ or ‘last days’ is shown in various scriptures to be a (long) period of time (Read Is.2:1-4; Mic.4:1-7; Heb.1:2).

Vs.29,30 ***‘As for you, O king, your thoughts came into your mind upon your bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that reveals secrets makes known to you what shall come to pass. 30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that you might know the thoughts of your heart’***.

- ***‘this secret’*** - Read Dt.29:29; Matt.13:35; Rom.16:25.

- ***‘this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living’*** - Commentary: *‘Here is an absolute and total disclaimer of the idea that it was in any sense, or in any way, on account of his own superiority in wisdom. All the knowledge which he had in the case was to be traced entirely to God’*. Read Acts 3:11,12.

- ***‘but for their sakes...and that you might know the thoughts of your heart’*** - the dream and interpretation would be for the deliverance of the wise men and captives; for the king; but also for us - mankind. One of the outcomes is... Read Dan.2:47.

Summary:

‘Daniel takes away the king’s opinion of his magicians and soothsayers. The insufficiency of creatures should drive us to the all-sufficiency of the Creator. There is One who can do that for us, and make known that to us, which none on earth can, particularly the work of redemption, and the secret designs of God’s love to us therein. Daniel confirmed the king in his opinion, that the dream was of great consequence, relating to the affairs and changes of this lower world. Let those whom God has highly favoured and honoured, lay aside all opinion of their own wisdom and worthiness, that the Lord alone may be praised for the good they have and do’.

[Return to index](#)

Daniel 2:31-45

Revision: Prophetic Babylonian captivity **Read** Jer.27:4-14. Nebuchadnezzar's dream interpreted.

Read: 2:31-36

'The one image (divided into 5 sections) deals with four world empires and world history. Most, if not all scholars, accept that the 4 kingdoms (vs.39) are: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome - each overthrowing the previous. The value of the materials in each part of the image decreases from head to foot. The final kingdom will be brittle and unstable - made up of partly strong nations and partly weak. (Some believe this could be the EU today).

Vs.37,38 ***'You, O king, are a king of kings: for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven has he given into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all. You are this head of gold'***.

- Note: ***'given you a kingdom, power... strength... glory... given into your hand... made you ruler'***.

- ***'You are this head of gold'*** - the Babylonish empire, the 1st and greatest. [*'gold'* - Is.14:4].

Vs.39 ***'And after you shall arise another [second] kingdom inferior to you, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth'*** - the 2nd kingdom - Medo-Persian empire under Cyrus (the *'breast and his arms of silver'* - vs.32,45). Approx.538-333bc. Some say the two arms may represent Persia and Mede (Cyrus' father was a Persian and mother a Mede).

The 3rd kingdom - the Macedonian empire under Alexander the Great and successors (vs.32,45 - *'his belly and his thighs of brass'*). The Greeks were distinguished by their 'brass' armour. The two 'thighs' might denote the successors (the Selucidae/Lagidae; the Syrian/Egyptian kings).

This Greek empire is elsewhere similarly referred to by Daniel (8:21 - 'the king of Grecia'; see also 10:20; 11:2-4). The book of Macabees (1Mac.1:1-3) also documents this kingdom.

- ***'I blessed the most High... praised... honored him... dominion is an everlasting dominion...'***

Vs.35 ***'And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing...'***
- Man/his reputation is *'nothing'* under God.

- ***'he does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth'*** - total power and control over all that is in Heaven and every human on earth. He uses to accomplish his plans.
Read Is.40:15.

- ***'none can stay his hand'*** - none can prevent divine purposes, even despite opposition.

- ***'or say unto him, What do you [what have you done]?' - He is the 'Potter'; we the 'clay'.*** **Read** Job.9:12; Rom.9:17-23.

Are we prepared for: loss of all possessions?; wife/husband/children/family?; reason?; Health?; death? What is your 'palace'? No human can guard against these?...

Vs.36 ***'At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counselors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me'***.

- ***'At the same time my reason returned'*** - instant sanity as there was instant insanity.

- ***'the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me'*** - **Read** 4:26.

- ***'I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me'*** - He gained (*'was added'*) in the kingdom. Similar to Job.42:12 (**Read**).

Vs.37 ***'Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment...'***

- ***'praise and extol and honor the King of heaven...'*** - a true convert?

Tradition says he died within 1 year and on deathbed he foretold the defeat of Babylon by Cyrus.

- ***‘body was wet with the dew of heaven’*** - lying in the earth each night without clothing.

- ***‘his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws’*** - insanity.

Some believe he was literally metamorphosed into an animal (stories of half ox/half lion). Some think ‘lycanthropy’ - thinking as animals or wolves (documented in asylums). The hair and nails growing could be due to neglect. Sun and weather can deform both and give appearance of an ‘eagle’. The description also adds weight to the ‘seven times’ being a literal 7 years long.

Vs.34,35 ***‘And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that lives forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he does 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 do you [what have you done]?’***

- ***‘I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven’*** - first sign of sane reasoning returning. (There are many cases of mental insanity where people when they return to sanity return to the thoughts of events just before insanity came. The insanity period is like an interval of thought.

Cases occur where there is no physical reason. Others occur after physical injury. *‘A patient had been long an inmate of an insane apartment... Rhode Island. He was a seaman, and had been injured on the head when his vessel was in a naval engagement... It was supposed that his brain permanently affected. For many years he was idiotic, with no hope of his recovery. It was at length suggested that the operation of trepanning should be performed, and the very instant that the bone was raised from its pressure on the brain, he exclaimed, ‘Has she struck’ The whole interval of time was obliterated from his memory’.* (Barnes) Nebuchadnezzar at the very instant when reason returned looked up to the place from where the voice had seemed to come 7 years before.

- ***‘mine understanding returned unto me’*** - he knew he had been insane. (Commentators date this time as 3442 A.M.; before Christ 563; the 42nd year of his reign; after which he lived 1 year, reigning from the death of his father 45 years in total).

The Gospel, Septuagint (OT in Greek) and the NT were introduced through the language of this nation (Koine Greek). The Jewish people were also spared annihilation by Alexander’s protection.

Vs.40-43 ***‘And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things: and as iron that breaks all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas you saw 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 you saw the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas you saw 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’.***

- ***‘fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron’*** - Roman Empire 129 BC-476 AD. ‘Iron’ has always been used for tools to beat down/subdue materials.

- ***‘kingdom shall be divided’*** (Hence the 2 legs). In 285 AD into two branches - capitals Constantinople in East; Rome in West. The Roman Empire covered much of Europe.

- ***‘iron mixed with miry clay’***- the Roman empire disintegrated over the years. It was weakened by invasions and intermingling of cultures (Goths, Huns, vandals, etc).

Read Dan.7:23-28 - part of this is obviously future.

Vs.44,45 ***‘And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Forasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure’.***

- ***‘And in the days of these kings’*** - this fixes the time relative to other predicted events, when a kingdom of God on earth will be set up. It will be *‘in the days of those kings’* - the ten kings (Dan.7:24-27) symbolized by the toes of the image. This did not exist at Christ’s first coming as the Roman empire was still in existence; nor has it existed since.

The kingdom depicted in 2:42 and 7:24 is finally destroyed and given to the saints at Christ's return (vs.44 & 27 respectively). **Read** Dan.7:14,17; Rev.11:15

- Many believe Rome is revived in the last days and consists of 'ten kings' which fall under the power of the antichrist of Ch.7 ('*Ten kings*' are mentioned in Dan.7:17-24 (**Read**) and Rev.13 & 17:12 - referring to similar future events and with the same terms 'ten horns', the antichrist and false prophet; the 'mark of the beast'; 'ten kings', etc). Arguably there is no history for the 'ten kings' as yet which precede the coming of the antichrist in Daniel. The ten horns revealed to Daniel in the OT are identical to the ten horns revealed to John in the NT (Rev.12:3; 13:1; 17:3,7,12,16). In the book of Revelation, the ten horns and the 'beast' are future to John's day (Rev.17:12). The kingdom of God does not come until after Antichrist is destroyed (Dan. 7:20- 22,25-27). John lived under unified Roman rule and was told one king was to come (Rev.17:10).

[Some also argue that Rome never disappeared totally - it morphed into ecclesiastical Rome. Her popes ruled kings, countries, nations. Her inquisitions lasted 600 years. Rev.17 has a woman 'Mystery Babylon' which 'sits on many waters ('peoples' vs.15); has ruled kings; colours are 'scarlet and purple'; has martyred millions; is connected with 'ten kings'; and sits on '7 mountains'].

- '*the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands*' - this leads to the last kingdom - Messiah's reign on earth (Zech.14:1-9; Mic.4:1-7; Job.19:25; Ps.2:6; 72:11; Is.11:9-; Zech.2:11).

Christ is often referred to as a 'stone' (**Read** Ps.118:22/Acts 4:11; Is.28:16; 1Pet.2:7,8).

- '*without hands*' - heavenly - God will do this, not man made.

- '*it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold*' - the falling of the stone to the feet of the image is *after* Christ at His first advent, for the 4th kingdom was not then divided - no 'toes' were in existence (**Read** vs.44).

- The crushing of the image by the stone shows Christ's reign ends human rule. **Read** Ps.2:9. (Some spiritualise this 'stone' and 'mountain' (vs.35) as the 'Gospel age spreading over the earth'. (But why interpret the rest of the image as kingdoms and then spiritualise the last kingdom?).

Daniel 4:29-37

Revision: A second dream foretells judgement by God upon Nebuchadnezzar. The king was convicted of God but lacked repentance. His pride came up after one year...

Read Vs.29,30

After just 12 months... vs.30 '*The king spoke... Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?*' - the king had built a new palace (8 miles circumference) separate to an old one (4 miles circumference). It was a wonder of the world at that time. Its outer wall embraced 6-8 miles; within were two walls, a great tower, three brazen gates. The palace was decorated with statues of men, animals, vessels of gold, silver, luxuries, spoils of wars. There were hanging gardens a wonder of the world. Babylon was flat, so an artificial mountain was made 400 ft. on each side with terraces with walls 22ft in thickness. From the nearby Euphrates water was drawn. All that remains now is a mound...

Read Vs.31,32

- '*While the word was in the king's mouth... The kingdom is departed from you*' - everything gone in a moment! **Read** Lk.12:18-21. This prophesied in several places (eg. **Read** Is.14:4,16).

Vs.32 '*And they shall drive you from men and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field*' - repeats Dan.4:25. They drove him out of the palace and he joined the animals in the fields.

- '*eat grass as oxen*' - his reason, habits were as the wild animals.

- '*seven times shall pass over you*' - a fixed amount, not indefinite. Seven seasons will '*pass over*' from above (7 years: Dan.7:25; 12:7; Rev.12:14).

- '*until you know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will*' - God made it 7 years for this to occur - then suddenly the king was taken out of insanity.

Vs.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*'.

- ***‘the king saw a watcher’*** - an angel or the name of one of the king’s heathen gods.

- ***‘till seven times pass over’*** - *‘times’* is years. **Read** Dan.7:25; 12:7; Rev.12:14.

- ***‘till you know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will’*** - **Read** Dan.2:38; Jer.27:6-8; Rom.13:1; Ps.75:6,7.

Commentary: *‘The dead know it, that have gone to the world of spirits, the world of retribution; they know that the Most High rules; but the living must be made to know it and lay it to heart, that they may make their peace with God before it be too late’.*

Vs.26 ***‘And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; your kingdom shall be sure unto you, after that you shall have known that the heavens do rule’.***

- ***‘leave the stump of his roots in the earth’*** - not wholly dead. (The king was restored after insanity).

Vs.27,28 ***‘Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto you, and break off your sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of your tranquillity. 28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar’.***

- ***‘break off your sins... iniquities’*** - reform the pride, intemperance, tyranny, oppression, etc. One year was given him (vs.29). Later *‘all’* the dream came upon the king.

The king was convicted of God but lacked repentance. Note the longsuffering of God. A warning to all not to think of continuing while they forget God, or lift up or harden their hearts against God. Everlasting misery will be escaped by all who repent and turn to God.

However, this Gospel age has simply not occurred to the *‘whole earth’*; the action of the stone is not a positive Gospel age but negative (a crushing/judgement); the Roman Empire was not destroyed at the first coming but continued for many centuries; there have not been *‘10 kings’* at one time...).

- The 4 kingdoms have come and gone; but the last kingdom is yet to be completed. The gap in the chronology is obvious. (This is dealt with later in Daniel ch.9).

Summary:

The image represents kingdoms of the earth which have come and gone and are to come: Gold head - Babylonian empire; silver breast/arms - Persian/Medes; brass belly/thighs - Grecian empire (Alexander); iron legs/feet - Roman empire. A stone is cut out *‘without hands’*, to bring about the future everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ to replace the kingdoms of the world.

Daniel 2:46-49

Revision:

Read: 2:31-45

The dream interpreted: The image represents the kingdoms of the earth which have come and gone and are to come: Gold head - Babylonian (Chaldean) empire; silver breast/arms - Persian/ Medes; brass belly/thighs - Grecian empire (Alexander); iron legs/feet - Roman empire and future; and then the kingdom of the God of Heaven.

They all influence Israel/the Jews.

The Roman empire branches into ten kingdoms (toes) in a weak mixture of iron and clay.

A stone is cut out 'without hands', to bring about the future everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ which will replace the kingdoms of the world.

The purpose of the dream was to assert God as sovereign ruler over affairs, even pagan affairs.

Read: 2:46-49

Vs.46,47 *'Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshiped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him. 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 you could reveal this secret'*

- *'fell upon his face, and worshiped Daniel'* - an immediate reaction/conviction by the king who realised the power of Daniel's God. The word (prophecy) of God is a powerful tool in conviction of hearts. **Read** 1Cor.14:23-25.

We are not told of Daniel's response to this 'worship'. (We assume he did not accept it, considering his stand already taken - Daniel had already chosen not to be defiled with the king's food and later refused to worship the king's statue and then was thrown into a lions den).

Others in the Bible refused any such honour or worship (**Read** Acts 10:25,26; 14:11-15; Rev.22:8,9).

- *'magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers'* - *'magicians'* - scribes, writers of hieroglyphics, sages who practiced the occult, sorcery, incantations; *'astrologers'* - enchanters (only in Daniel); *'sorcerers'* - lit. 'whisperer'. They used magic songs, words, incantations, witchcraft in worship to gods; *'Chaldeans'* - distinguished men in arts, sciences.

Isaiah foretold judgement to Babylon and mentioned these evils: **Read** Is.47:12,13.

Babylon and other nations did not change their gods; but Israel did. **Read** Jer.2:11.

Vs.8,9 *'But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying 9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no secret troubles you, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.'*

- *'Belteshazzar'* - **Read** Dan.1:7

- *'in whom is the spirit of the holy gods...master of the magicians...the spirit of the holy gods is in you...'* - probably not the Holy Spirit here for this is heathen language. **Read** Dan.5:11.

Read Vs.10-18 The dream:

Read Vs.19-25 The interpretation:

- *'was astonished for one hour'* - amazed; overwhelmed (*'hour'* in Arabic can be a moment or 1 hour).

- *'the dream be to them that hate you'* - court language. Daniel did not wish this for the king.

- *'the tree'* - is the king and his kingdom. Nations and men are depicted as trees (**Read** Ez.31:3). Interesting history: The king boasted cutting cedar trees (inscriptions tell this), yet he would be cut down himself.

- *'reached unto heaven'* - **Read** Is.14:14.

- *'leaves...fruit...meat for all...'* - the success, extent of the kingdom with many nations included.

Daniel 4:1-28 - the Second Dream

Vs.1-3 *'Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 2 I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God has wrought toward me. 3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation'*.

- *'signs and wonders that the high God has wrought'* - miracles came in clusters (Moses: Ex.7:3; Dt.4:34; 13:1; 34:11; Elijah, Elisha; Daniel; Jesus/apostles - proving Messiahship). They were *'signs'* because they point to, are tokens of, something as authentication.

(End time signs are always said to be *'lying'*, false (Matt.12:39; 24:24; 2Thess.2:9; Rev.13:13).

- *'how mighty are his wonders'* - **Read** Ps.72:18; 86:10.

- *'his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation'* - The kingdom to come is the Lord's promise to David (**Read** Dan.2:44; 2Sam.7:16; Ps.89:35-37). The king realises his kingdom is unstable and not forever? He acknowledges God's kingdom? Was he a follower of the one Jehovah God?... **Read** Dan.4:29,30.

Vs.4 *'I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace'* - He had now reigned about 40 years after having victories over many nations such as Egypt, Syria...

Vs.5-7 *'I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 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. 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'*.

- *'bring in all the wise men'* - as with Pharaoh (**Read** Gen.41:8). Daniel was not called first by God's providence so the king would be stripped of his own aids and again God would be overall?

- *'offer an oblation'* - not a bloody sacrifice as demanded and only accepted by the true God, but an offering similar to that which they offered to other gods. (Cain offered an unbloody sacrifice and was condemned).

- *'and sweet odors unto him'* - incense as was offered to gods. Daniel's God only accepted bloody sacrifices as a *'sweet odor'*.

- *'your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings'* - Nebuchadnezzar realised that God was more powerful than all the Babylonian gods they worshiped in Babylon (Dan.3:28,29).

This did not make him a believer in the God of Israel. Conviction does not always lead to Repentance. Repentance is not just conviction; Conviction is not conversion. It may not necessarily change the person or bring them to repentance.

...But he was *convicted* to acknowledge the power thereof, even to stating *'your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings'*.

This description is exactly what God claims to be: **Read** Rev.17:14; 19:16; 1Tim.6:15.

There were others who acknowledged God but did not believe. (Herod feared John the Baptist as a prophet and realised John's God. Pharaoh saw and realised the power of God in miracles... But miracles will not change hearts *'dead in sin'*).

The pagans believed that if a nation's gods were stronger, they would defeat other nations with lesser gods. So, the God of Israel was seen here as a mighty God of Heaven to be superior to the other gods in Babylon.

...The king was however still a polytheist. Subsequent events (Dan.3 &4) showed He still believed in many gods and was an idolater.

- *'your God is... a revealer of secrets'* - **Read** Dt.29:29; Amos 3:7 Dan.2:28,29.

Vs.48,49 *'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. 49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king'*.

- '*The king made Daniel a great man...*' - Daniel was lifted from the state of a captive facing execution to being most highly honoured by the king. God had honoured his humility and obedience.

Read Matt.18:4; 23:12; James 4:6,10; 1Pet.5:6.

- '[Nebuchadnezzar] *gave him many great gifts*' - as promised.
Read Dan.2:6.

- '*made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon*'.

- This was ordained by God. This would also have been most advantageous for the rest of his companions and the captives? What future sovereign plan can you see as foreseen by God here?

Vs.49 '*Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king*'.

- Daniel did not forget his brethren. They had prayed with him and supported him; stood with him before the king and passed the miraculous abstinence test (Dan.1:3,4; 11-17; 18,19). Daniel requested that they also be elevated.

- '*the province of Babylon*' - Babylon; not the entire empire which included many provinces.

- '*Daniel sat in the gate of the king*' - Daniel was now the chief officer in the palace. People now had to go through the trusted Daniel to get to the king.

Summary:

Commentary: '*It is our business to direct attention to the Lord, as the Author and Giver of every good gift. Many have thoughts of the Divine power and majesty, who do not think of serving God themselves. But all should strive, that God may be glorified, and the best interests of mankind furthered*'.

- an '*angel*' (Aramaic '*angel*' used for deity). **Read** Dan.6:22; Ps.34:7; 91:11,12; Job 1:6; 38:7.

or (D) It was the preincarnate Christ but not recognised by Nebuchadnezzar as such.

Vs.26,27

- '*you servants of the most high God*' - the God above all the king's gods. He calls him *their* God *not his*. **Read** Acts 16:16-18 - a similar situation.

- '*princes, governors... captains.... king's counselors, being gathered together, saw...*' - The testimony and witnesses was sure and large in number.

- '*saw... bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them*' - every aspect miraculous. (The Babylonians worshipped the Sun god; fire)...But are miracles sufficient to convince, convert?

Vs.28,29

- '*Blessed be the God of Shadrach... who has sent his angel... delivered his servants... changed the king's word, yielded their bodies...*' - 2nd acknowledgment of the true God s being worthy of '*worship*' by the Hebrews because of deliverance, overriding a king...

- '*his servants that trusted in him*' - from consistent faith; obedience.

- '*no other God that can deliver after this sort*' - he acknowledges unique power. **Read** Ps.76:10.

In countries where 'restriction', why is Christianity growing?

(A) To show the indestructible power of Christ.

(B) Training/purifying for Heaven.

(C) To diffuse/spread/show the faith.

Vs.30 '*Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach... Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon*' - some say over the Jews only.

Lessons: We accept governments as given by God; but obey God above man. When we choose one we must take the consequences.

- *'the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men...'*
- the executioners needed to get close to the furnace door to 'cast' the prisoners in. They died. (Apocryphal books say flames were 49 cubits above (RC bibles add this and a song in). That language was not in Aramaic).

- *'slew those men'* - an act of God.
- *'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace'* - they 'fell' and were still 'bound'.

Vs.24,25

- *'The king was astonished'* - lit. wondered/amazement.
- *'Did not we cast three men bound into... the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king'* - they bear testimony further to the miracle that there were 'three' put in the fire.

- *'I see four men loose'* - furnace could be viewed. Now not 3 men but 4; no longer 3 'bound'.

- *'walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt'*

- Miracle: 1. Four persons, not three.

2. No one was 'bound'

3. All were 'walking' unhurt, unaffected by a heat 7 times normal

4. The 4th person was god like.

- *'and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God'* - who is the 4th person?...

(A) The preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ? Daniel uses 'Son of man' (**Read** Dan.7:13).

This speaks of the 'Son of man' receiving glory, power that belongs only to God. Christ quoted these two verses in answer to the chief priest when asked if He was Christ, Son of God (Mk.14:62).

or (B) A 'son' of one of their gods? Babylonians believed their gods had sons.

or (C) *An angel*. Jews believed this (Paul & Silas rescued by angel). The king did not know Daniel's God; believed in Daniel's God only being higher than other gods. No evidence that 'Son of God' was his title then? Hebrew translation has 'a Son of God' not 'the Son of God'. **Read** vs.28

Daniel 3:1-7

Revision:

The king's dream interpreted: The image represents the kingdoms of the earth which have come and gone and are to come. The Roman empire branch into ten kingdoms (toes) in a weak mixture of iron and clay. A stone is cut out 'without hands', to bring about the future everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ which will replace the kingdoms of the world.

The purpose of the dream was to assert God as sovereign ruler over affairs, even pagan affairs.

The king admits Daniel's God is more powerful than all the other Babylonian Gods and bestows favour on Daniel in his kingdom.

Read: 3:1-7

Vs.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'*.

- *'made an image of gold'* - [Septuagint says 13 years after the dream?]
- is this the image from the dream?; or an image of a Babylonian god (Bel) or one of the many false gods of Babylon to be worshipped?
Read Is.46:1,6. (Some commentators believe it could have been Nebuchadnezzar's father?).

Commentary: *'The temple of Bel or Belus, in Babylon, stood until the time of Xerxes; but on his return from the Grecian expedition, he demolished the whole of it, and laid it in rubbish, having first plundered it of its immense riches. Among the spoils which he took from the temple, are mentioned several images and statues of massive gold...'*

Similarly, in the end the false prophet (2nd beast) will command worship to an image connected with mystical Babylon: **Read** Rev.13:12-15.

- *'of gold'* - probably not solid gold but gold plated as was common and because of the size? **Read** Is.40:19.

- *'height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits'* - 27.5m high by 2.8m wide.

- *'he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon'* - a plain to the southeast of Babylon centre.

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

- *'princes... governors... captains... judges... treasurers... counselors* [counselors had access to the king]...*sheriffs* [civil magistrates]...*all the rulers* [of the various provinces]' - these words were originally in Aramaic so exact meanings are arguably difficult to ascertain.

- *'stood before the image'* - in an act of devotion for the 'dedication'.

Vs.4,5 *'Then a herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, 5 That at what time you hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.'*

- *'a herald cried aloud'* - similar to a town crier; the word 'Gospel' comes from the idea of a herald of good news from a king's representative.

- *'it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages'* - all provinces, cultures, languages, including the Jews.

- *'cornet* [a blowing horn], *flute, harp, sackbut* [similar to a harp or a 4 stringed instrument, the sound being on a high sharp key], *psaltery* [stringed instrument triangle shaped; probably struck with a plectrum; similar to David's harp], *dulcimer* [some think a kind of tamborine or small drum; others believe it was like a bagpipe], *and all kinds of music'* - original names in Aramaic, hence difficult to ascertain exactly what these instruments were?

Daniel 3:20-30

Revision: The king's dream interpreted: The image represents kingdoms of the earth which have come and are to come. The future final kingdom of our Jesus Christ will replace all.

The purpose of the dream was to assert God as sovereign ruler over affairs, even pagan affairs.

The king sets up an image and 'impossible' situation for Daniel... to worship another god...

Read: 3:19-30

Vs.19-21

- *'he commanded the most mighty men'* - the best/strongest. Read 2Sam.23:8-16.

- *'to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego... burning fiery furnace... seven times more ...heated'* - God will have this miracle undisputed!

- *'burning fiery furnace'* - Like a Limekiln - opening at top, bottom; stairway. But what of martyrs tortured/burned by Roman church? What of Hell itself and the fire (Matt.18:8; 25:41,46; Mk.3:29; 2Thess.1:9; Heb.6:2; Jude 1:7) where *'the worm dies not'* (3 times with the phrase *'the fire is not quenched'* (Mk.9:44,46,48; Is.66:24) - where people with immortal bodies 'tormented' with *'wailing... weeping, gnashing of teeth'* (6 times Matt.8:12; 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Lk.13:28). People who take the *'mark of the beast'* shall *'suffer'* and be *'tormented'* in *'fire and brimstone... forever and ever'* (Rev.14:10,11). All those who don't *'know Jesus Christ'* or *'obey the Gospel'* *'shall be punished with everlasting destruction...'* (2Thess.1:9). **Read** Matt.25:46.

- *'he commanded... to cast them into the burning fiery furnace'* - cruelty of the king again.

- *'bound in their coats, their hosen* [trousers], *and their hats, and their other garments...'* - The miracle was to be most effective considering clothes would have made them consume slower.

Vs.22,23

- *'The king's commandment was urgent'* - no time was given for the men to prepare for death.

Summary: *‘True devotion calms the spirit, quiets and softens it, but superstition and devotion to false gods inflame men’s passions. The matter is put into a little compass, Turn, or burn. Proud men are still ready to say, as Nebuchadnezzar, Who is the Lord, that I should fear his power? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not hesitate whether they should comply or not. Life or death were not to be considered. Those that would avoid sin, must not parley with temptation when that to which we are allured or affrighted is manifestly evil. Stand not to pause about it, but say, as Christ did, Get thee behind me, Satan. They did not contrive an evasive answer, when a direct answer was expected. Those who make their duty their main care, need not be anxious or fearful concerning the event... If He be for us, we need not fear what man can do unto us. God will deliver us, either from death or in death. They must obey God rather than man; they must rather suffer than sin; and must not do evil that good may come... Fear of man and love of the world, especially want of faith, make men yield to temptation, while a firm persuasion of the truth will deliver them from denying Christ, or being ashamed of him. We are to be meek in our replies, but we must be decided that we will obey God rather than man.*

Let Nebuchadnezzar heat his furnace as hot as he can, a few minutes will finish the torment of those cast into it; but hell-fire tortures, and yet does not kill’.

Music often accompanied pagan worship and had the effect of raising sensual feelings. [Music can be an aid in worship. However, today music often plays a big part in ‘worship’ so called, and often to the incitement of the flesh rather than the mind and the spirit?].

- **‘you fall down and worship the golden image’** - the only religion that could not do this was Judaism? They worshipped only one God and believed all other gods were false and to worship any other gods was idolatry and severely judged by their one God.

[Today there are religions which ‘fall down’ and pay homage to images/statues, including some who claim to be ‘christian’].

Vs.6 ‘And whoso falls not down and worships shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace’.

Commentary: *‘These are the two dangerous weapons, which Satan used to fight against the children of God, the consent of the multitude, and the cruelty of the punishment. For even though some feared God, yet the multitude who consented to the wickedness persuaded them: and here the King required not an inward consent, but an outward gesture, that the Jews might by little and little learn to forget their true religion’.*

Today Satan uses similar weapons?: The consent of the multitude in secularism; pragmatism; and persecution.

Vs.7 ‘Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up’.

- **‘at that time’** - at the time when the music was to sound, all everywhere were to either go to the image or perhaps where they are to kneel and worship.

But what will the Jews do?...What will God require?

Daniel 3:8-19

Revision: The king's dream interpreted: The image represents the kingdoms of the earth which have come, gone and are to come. The future final kingdom of our Jesus Christ will replace these.

The purpose of the dream was to assert God as sovereign ruler over affairs, even pagan affairs.

Many years later the king sets up an image and another 'impossible' situation for Daniel...

Read: 3:8-19

- '*Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews*' - '*certain Jews*' (vs.12) - the three men, not Daniel (perhaps because he was too high in office and/or elsewhere?).

- '*O king, live forever*' - Dan.2:4 same expression. Flattery? Perhaps similar to Acts 24:2,3 (Tertullus accusing Paul before Felix and with flattery).

- '*You, O king, have made a decree*' - they want the king to carry out this decree with its death sentence. **Read** Jer.18;18-20 ('*have not regarded you: they serve not your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up*').

The death sentence (Dan.3:4-6): '*whoso falls not down and worships... cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace*'.

- '*...have not regarded you: they serve not your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up*' - appealing to the king's pride.

Vs.13-15 '*Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not you serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15 Now if you be ready that at what time you hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if you worship not, you 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?*'.

- Rather than a death sentence immediately, the king gives them another opportunity to conform.

Vs.16-18 '*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer you in this matter. 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 your hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up*'.

Note the respectful manner of reply by Daniel. No flattery; no insults.

- '*we are not careful to answer you in this matter*' - as the magicians were when they stalled the king in interpreting the dream (2:8 - to '*gain time*').

- '*If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us...but if not*' - '*if it be so...but if not*' - true belief in the sovereignty of God. God is able to deliver; God is free to deliver *or not deliver*.

Nebuchadnezzar thought similar to a king Sennacherib and Pharaoh who challenged all the gods (**Read** Is.36: 1,18-20; Ex.5:2). Had Nebuchadnezzar forgot Dan.2:47? (**Read**)

- '*We will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up*' - they calmly committed everything to God. **Read** Is.43:2; Job.13:15; Matt.10:19,20,28; Rev.7:14.

Vs.19 '*Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his face [facial expression] was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spoke, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated*'.

- '*full of fury, and the form of his face [facial expression] was changed*' - Nebuchadnezzar was famous for his anger, pride...

- '*heat the furnace*' - one of the methods of execution and torture. **Read** Jer.29:22.

- '*seven times more than it was wont to be heated*' - 'seven' is said to be the 'perfect number'.

- i.e. here as hot as it can be. What will Daniel and the believers do? What could God do?