

The Book of

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# DANIEL



BIBLE STUDY COURSE BY  
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# The Book of Daniel

## *A Judean Is Enslaved in Babylon for 70 Years Prophesying of the Days to Come*

In my visions during the night, I saw among the clouds of Heaven someone like the Son of Man. He came to the Ancient One who has lived for endless years and was presented to him. He was given power, honor, and a Kingdom. People from every province, nation and language were to serve him. His power is an eternal power that will not be taken away. His Kingdom will never be destroyed. **Daniel 7:13-14.**

The story of a Judean prophet exiled in Babylon interpreting dreams of the King and prophesying to the Judean captives of God's plans for his people.

Written and taught by  
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Columbus, Texas, 2021

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## Author's Preface



The Book of Daniel is an unusual book. The events here take place during a most disastrous time in the history of the Kingdom of Judah. The Judeans are captives in Babylon for 70 years, and God's Holy Land is vacant. Yet like the Book of Esther, taking place during the same time, it is a story of God's providence and protection of his Chosen People, even while he is disciplining them for their disobedience.

God is never distant from his Chosen People. He has made a Covenant with their ancestors first through the patriarch Abraham, then with his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob. He brought them out of slavery in Egypt and gave them a beautiful land called Canaan and later called Israel.

But his people deserted their God and worshiped strange gods – gods made of wood and stone. So God was forced to discipline them by sending them away to a pagan land, a land that had developed a religion against God by building the Tower of Babel. After this, the land of Shinar, also called Babylon, developed an extensive religion of magic, astrology, and mythology, building a city sixty miles square with impregnable walls.

It was to this pagan land God sent a remnant of his Chosen People leaving the land promised to the descendants of Abraham vacant for 70 years. Here in Babylon, God's Chosen people had to make a choice. Would they allow themselves to be assimilated into this culture with its magnificent buildings and colorful religion, a culture that had taken over almost all of the known world, or would they remain loyal to the God of Heaven, the one true God who had called Abraham out of a similar culture 1,500 years earlier.

Daniel and his friends remained loyal to God, as did a righteous remnant of the Judeans who were deported. Yet, they were a minority. When the 70 years of the exile were over, God allowed a Persian King Cyrus to conquer Babylon and issue an edict allowing the Judeans to return home. Only a few returned. The vast majority stayed in Babylon.

But to encourage this remnant, God gave Daniel visions of what lay ahead in world history – the plans God had for mankind. And one of these visions was that of a Messiah, an Anointed One, the Son of Man.

Shalom in Jesus,

Rusty

## Notes on this Bible Translation and My Editorial Insertions

The translation used in this study is the *GOD'S WORD* translation. © 1995 by God's Word to the Nations Mission Society (GWT). The GWT translation is an attempt to make the English text of the Bible developed in the 1500's more readable to modern Americans. It is not a paraphrase, but it has retranslated the oldest manuscripts into modern American English at about newspaper level using "closest natural equivalence". The Bible is meant by God to be understood. Therefore, using modern language is essential.

I have used this translation in my teaching since 1996 and have found it very accurate. I love the King James Version and so when there are variances in the GWT, I may insert within the Bible text the original transliterated Hebrew or Greek word in **10-point bold-face type** followed by an English word to help better understand the meaning of the passage. English words added to aid in understanding are also in 10-point type but are not in bold. Lastly, if the original Hebrew or Greek word appears in the Bible 10 times or less, I may also indicate how often it appears (e.g., 10x or 2x, etc.). Here's an example from John 11:33 and the raising of Lazarus involving three Greek words:

<sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who were crying with her were deeply moved *embrimaomai*—groaned 5x *pneuma*—spirit and troubled *tarasso*—agitated.

This has shown me that the GWT translation is remarkable for finding the right meanings to phrases that are often difficult to translate.

## Notes on Font Usage

All text is in the Big Caslon font. Scripture text is in regular 14-point. If I have inserted parallel Scripture quotations, they are also in regular 14-point, but are slightly further indented (.08) than the main Scripture text and are enclosed by brackets [ ]. All Scripture citations are in **12-point bold face**. All my comments and questions to think about are all in regular 12-point.

## Introduction

The Babylonian Empire was huge. King Nebuchadnezzar II reigned from 605 BC to his death in 562 BC – a total of 43 years ruling the known world. He died in Babylon and was succeeded by Amel-Marduk, a younger son, one of the King's six sons.

The former ruling power in the world – the Assyrians – were defeated by the Babylonians at the Battle of Carchemish in 609 BC led by then Crown Prince Nebuchadnezzar II. The Babylonian allies were the Medes, Persians, and Scythians. After the death of his father Nabopolassar in 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar II began ruling as King. He did not die until 562 BC.

In 605 BC he came to Jerusalem, made King Jehoiakim his vassal, seized articles from the Jerusalem Temple and deported some young Judeans from the upper middle class – perhaps from the royal family – to Babylon to train as administrators. One of these was the prophet Daniel, who was about 13 years old.

Because the Judeans revolted against Nebuchadnezzar, making treaties with his enemy Egypt, he returned in 597 BC and deported King Jehoiachin, his mother, and the entire court plus all the tradesmen in Judah, most of the priests, and almost all of the wealthy landowners, leaving a son of King Josiah named Zedekiah as only a puppet governor with the title of King and having only a few advisors.

Zedekiah likewise conspired with Egypt, so Nebuchadnezzar once again returned to Jerusalem in 586 BC, burning the city and the Temple to the ground. He deported King Zedekiah to Babylon after killing his sons in front of him and blinding him. He also deported the remaining Judean people, leaving only a few very poor people in the country. God's Holy Land was virtually vacant of its people.

Daniel was deported from Jerusalem as a teenager from the upper classes. He rose to a high position in Babylon and continued in public office until 538 BC, one year after Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon and issued an edict saying the Judeans could return to Jerusalem. **Daniel 1:21**. His ministry lasted the entire 70 years of the Judean Babylonian captivity from 605 to 535 BC. He apparently died at 85 years of age.

The Book of Daniel was placed in the Writings section of the Hebrew Bible because Daniel ministered to Gentiles as a government official rather than as a preaching prophet. Chapters 1 and 8-12 of the book are written in Hebrew and Chapters 2-7 in Aramaic, the language of the Babylonian Empire. Some scholars claim that many of the prophecies in Daniel date from the time of the Maccabean Revolt 165 BC because they are so accurate and describe in detail the

activities of the Syrian King Antiochus IV Epiphanes, whom the Jews called the Great Satan. However, conservative Bible scholars conclude that Daniel himself wrote all of this book.

Daniel portrays **YHWH** as sovereign and transcendent over humanity. Like Joseph in the Book of Genesis, Daniel attributes his ability to interpret dreams and to prophecy to God. An Aramaic word ***Elahh*** is used to describe God most of the time.

The Book of Daniel is not presented in chronological order. Some say the Aramaic chapters were written for Gentiles and the Hebrew chapters for Judeans. Here are the chapters in chronological order.

Reign of Nebuchadnezzar:

605 - 1 <sup>st</sup> year of reign	Chapter 1	Hebrew
604 - 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of reign	Chapter 2, 3	Aramaic
Unknown time	Chapter 4	Aramaic

Reign of Belshazzar

550 - 1 <sup>st</sup> year of reign	Chapter 7	Aramaic
548 - 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of	Chapter 8	Hebrew
539 - 11 <sup>th</sup> year of reign	Chapter 5	Aramaic

Reign of Darius/Cyrus

539 - 1 <sup>st</sup> year of reign	Chapter 9	Hebrew
Unknown time	Chapter 6	Aramaic
536 -	Chapter 10, 11, 12	Hebrew

Why was the Book of Daniel included in the Bible? To demonstrate that God controls history despite what the human rulers of the world think. God dislikes arrogance and will punish it as he punished King Nebuchadnezzar - one of the most powerful Kings in world history.

The Book also shows that God rewards the loyalty of his Chosen People by giving them insight into God's plans for humanity.



## Pericope One

### Daniel Is Deported to Babylon

1:1 In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah 605 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and attacked it. 2The Lord *adon* handed King Jehoiakim of Judah and some utensils from God's *elohim* Temple over to Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar took the utensils to the temple of his god *elohim* in Babylonia *sin'ar* 8x and put them in the temple treasury.

The word *Lord* appears 29x in Daniel KJV. I translate each original word. The word *God* appears 66x in KJV. I translate each original word. The word *Shinar* for Babylon usually denotes Babylon as a city hostile to God. It appears in **Genesis 10:10** as the city of Nimrod; **Genesis 11:2**, in the Tower of Babel Story; in **Isaiah 11:11**; and in **Zechariah 5:11**.

3The King told Ashpenaz, the chief-of-staff, to bring deport some of the Israelites, the royal family, and the nobility to Babylon. 4They were to be young men who were healthy, good-looking, knowledgeable in all subjects, well-informed, intelligent, and able to serve in the King's palace. They were to be taught the language and literature of the Babylonians.

5The King arranged for them to get a daily allowance of the King's rich food and wine. They were to be trained for three years. After that, they were to serve the King. 6Among these young men were some Judeans: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

The historian Josephus said they were members of the family of later King Zedekiah. **Constable Commentary.** Daniel means: *My Judge is God*. Mishael means: *Who Is What God Is*. Azariah means: *YHWH Has Helped*.

7The chief-of-staff gave them <Babylonian> names: To Daniel he gave the name Belteshazzar. To Hananiah he gave the name Shadrach. To Mishael he gave the name Meshach. And to Azariah he gave the name Abednego.

Belteshazzar means: The god *Bel Is My Prince*. Shadrach means: *Command of Aku*. Abednego means: *Servant of the god Nebo*. Renaming was designed to take their Jewish

identity away. In the Book of Daniel, however, Daniel retains their Jewish names. This apparently demonstrates they retained their Jewish identity as best they could.

## Daniel and His Friends Remain Faithful to God

<sup>8</sup>Daniel made up his mind not to harm himself by eating the King's rich food and drinking the King's wine. So he asked the chief-of-staff for permission not to harm himself in this way.

Daniel was determined to keep himself ritually pure according to Jewish dietary laws in the Torah and thus ate vegetables, avoiding meat sacrificed to pagan gods.

<sup>9</sup>God *'elohim* made the chief-of-staff kind and compassionate toward Daniel.

<sup>10</sup>The chief-of-staff told Daniel: I'm afraid of my master, the King. The King determined what you should eat and drink. If he sees that you look worse than the other young men your age, he would have my head cut off.

<sup>11</sup>The chief-of-staff put a supervisor in charge of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Daniel said to the supervisor: <sup>12</sup>Please test us for ten days. Give us only vegetables to eat and water to drink. <sup>13</sup>Then compare us to the young men who are eating the King's rich food. Decide how to treat us on the basis of how we look.

<sup>14</sup>The supervisor listened to them about this matter and tested them for ten days. <sup>15</sup>After ten days they looked healthier and stronger than the young men who had been eating the King's rich food. <sup>16</sup>So the supervisor took away the King's rich food and wine and gave them vegetables.

<sup>17</sup>God *'elohim* gave these four men knowledge, wisdom, and the ability to understand all kinds of literature. Daniel could also understand all kinds of visions and dreams.

<sup>18</sup>At the end of the three-year training period, the chief-of-staff brought all the young men to Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup>The King talked to them and found no one like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah among all of them. So these four men served the King.

<sup>20</sup> Whenever the King asked them about things that required wisdom and insight, he found that they knew ten times more than all the magicians and psychics in his whole kingdom.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel served the royal palace until the first year of King Cyrus <of Persia> 539 BC.

## COMMENT

Daniel and the other three Judeans were trained for three years to be administrators in King Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. Daniel is the first book in the Bible where God teaches his Chosen People how to live in a pagan land. Daniel and his friends do their best to retain their Jewish identity and follow the laws of the Torah. Surprisingly, they do this successfully and King Nebuchadnezzar finds them *to be ten times better than his Babylonian administrators*.

Daniel will serve for 70 years in the Babylonian palace as a government official. God also sent the prophet Ezekiel to Babylon in 597 BC, although God did not call him as a prophet until 592 BC. Yet it seems he and Daniel did not meet or correspond with each other. Daniel was aware of what the prophet Jeremiah was writing in Jerusalem as he mentions the Seventy Years of Exile Jeremiah prophesied. **Daniel 9:2**. Jeremiah ministered in Jerusalem from 650-586 BC.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did God send the Judeans into exile in Babylon for 70 years? What did he want them to learn?
2. Read **Deuteronomy 28-30**. What did God warn the Judeans about doing and what would be the consequences if they did it?
3. Why did Daniel want to eat vegetables rather than the King's rich food?
4. What does this chapter teach God's people about how to live in a godly way in a pagan environment?

## Pericope Two

### Nebuchadnezzar's Dream about a Statue Made of Four Metals

<sup>2:1</sup> During the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign 604 BC, he had some dreams. He was troubled, but he stayed asleep. <sup>2</sup>The King sent for the magicians, psychics, sorcerers, and astrologers so that they could tell him what he had dreamed. So they came to the King.

### Nebuchadnezzar Demands His Astrologers Tell Him His Dream

<sup>3</sup>The King said to them: I had a dream, and I'm troubled by it. I want to know what the dream was.

Starting at **Daniel 2:4** and continuing to **Daniel 7:28**, the text is written in Aramaic not in Hebrew.

<sup>4</sup>The astrologers spoke to the King in Aramaic: Your Majesty, may you live forever. Tell us the dream and we'll interpret it for you.

<sup>5</sup>The King answered the astrologers: I meant what I said. If you don't tell me the dream and its meaning, you will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be turned into piles of rubble. <sup>6</sup>But if you tell me the dream and its meaning, I will give you gifts, awards, and high honors. Now tell me the dream and its meaning.

<sup>7</sup>Once more they said: Your Majesty, tell us the dream and we'll tell you its meaning. <sup>8</sup>The King replied: I'm sure you're trying to buy some time because you know that I meant what I said. <sup>9</sup>If you don't tell me the dream, you'll all receive the same punishment.

You have agreed among yourselves to make up a phony explanation to give me, hoping that things will change. So tell me the dream. Then I'll know that you can explain its meaning to me.

<sup>10</sup>The astrologers answered the King, No one on earth can tell the King what he asks. No other King, no matter how great and powerful, has ever asked such a thing of any magician, psychic, or astrologer. <sup>11</sup>What you ask is

difficult, Your Majesty. No one can tell what you dreamed except the gods *'elahh*, and they don't live with humans.

This is the Aramaic name for God *'elahh*. It appears 53x in Daniel.

### **Since the Astrologers Can't Tell the King His Dream, He Orders All of them Killed**

<sup>12</sup>This made the King so angry and furious that he gave an order to destroy all the wise advisers in Babylon <sup>13</sup>So a decree was issued that the wise advisers were to be killed. Some men were sent to find Daniel and his friends and kill them.

<sup>14</sup>While Arioch, the captain of the royal guard, was leaving to kill the wise advisers in Babylon, Daniel spoke to him using shrewd judgment. <sup>15</sup>He asked Arioch, the royal official: Why is the King's decree so harsh? So Arioch explained everything to Daniel.

### **Daniel and His Friends Pray to God to Give Them Knowledge of the King's Dream**

<sup>16</sup>Daniel went and asked the King to give him some time so that he could explain the dream's meaning. <sup>17</sup>Then Daniel went home and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah about this matter. <sup>18</sup>He told them to ask the God *'elahh* of Heaven to be merciful and to explain this secret to them so that they would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise advisers in Babylon.

### **God Revealed the Dream to Daniel**

<sup>19</sup>The secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision during the night. So Daniel praised the God *'elahh* of Heaven. <sup>20</sup>He said:

Praise God's *'elahh* name from everlasting to everlasting because he is wise and powerful.

<sup>21</sup>He changes times and periods of history.  
He removes Kings and establishes them.  
He gives wisdom to those who are wise  
and knowledge to those who have insight.

<sup>22</sup>He reveals deeply hidden things.  
He knows what is in the dark,  
and light lives with him.

<sup>23</sup>God *'elabb* of my ancestors, I thank and praise you.  
You gave me wisdom and power.  
You told me the answer to our question.  
You told us what the King wants to know.

<sup>24</sup>Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the King had appointed to destroy Babylon's wise advisers. Daniel told him: Don't destroy Babylon's wise advisers. Take me to the King and I'll explain the dream's meaning to him.

<sup>25</sup>Arioch immediately took Daniel to the King. He told the King: I've found one of the captives from Judah who can explain the dream's meaning to you, Your Majesty.

<sup>26</sup>The King asked Daniel, who had been renamed Belteshazzar: Can you tell me the dream I had and its meaning?

### **Daniel Tells the King that God Has Explained the Meaning of the Dream to Him**

<sup>27</sup>Daniel answered the King: No wise adviser, psychic, magician, or fortuneteller can tell the King this secret. <sup>28</sup>But there is a God *'elabb* in Heaven who reveals secrets. He will tell King Nebuchadnezzar what is going to happen in the days to come.

This is your dream, the vision you had while you were asleep: <sup>29</sup>Your Majesty, while you were lying in bed, thoughts about what would happen in the future came to you. The one who reveals secrets told you what is going to happen. <sup>30</sup>This secret wasn't revealed to me because I'm wiser than anyone else. It was revealed so that you could be told the meaning and so that you would know your innermost thoughts.

## King Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

<sup>31</sup>Your Majesty, you had a vision. You saw a large statue. This statue was very bright. It stood in front of you, and it looked terrifying. <sup>32</sup>The head of this statue was made of fine gold. Its chest and arms were made of silver. Its stomach and hips were made of bronze. <sup>33</sup>Its legs were made of iron. Its feet were made partly of iron and partly of clay.

<sup>34</sup>While you were watching, a stone was cut out, but not by humans. It struck the statue's iron-and-clay feet, and smashed them <sup>35</sup>Then all at once, the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold were smashed. They became like husks on a threshing floor in summer. The wind carried them away, and not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the statue became a large mountain which filled the whole world. <sup>36</sup>This is the dream. Now we'll tell you its meaning.

## The Meaning of the Statute

<sup>37</sup>Your Majesty, you are the greatest King. The God *elabb* of Heaven has given you a kingdom. He has given you power, strength, and honor. <sup>38</sup>He has given you control over people, wild animals, and birds, wherever they live. He has made you ruler of them all. You are the head of gold.

<sup>39</sup>Another kingdom, inferior to yours, will rise to power after you. Then there will be a third kingdom, a kingdom of bronze, that will rule the whole world.

<sup>40</sup>There will also be a fourth kingdom. It will be as strong as iron. Iron smashes and shatters everything. As iron crushes things, this fourth kingdom will smash and crush all the other kingdoms.

<sup>41</sup>You also saw the feet and toes. They were partly potters' clay and partly iron. This means that there will be a divided kingdom which has some of the firmness of iron.

As you saw, iron was mixed with clay. <sup>42</sup>The toes were partly iron and partly clay. Part of the kingdom will be strong, and part will be brittle. <sup>43</sup>As you saw, iron was mixed with clay. So the two parts of the kingdom will mix by

intermarrying, but they will not hold together any more than iron can mix with clay.

### **God Will Establish Another Kingdom**

<sup>44</sup>At the time of those Kings, the God *'elabhh* of Heaven will establish a Kingdom that will never be destroyed. No other people will be permitted to rule it. It will smash all the other kingdoms and put an end to them. But it will be established forever.

<sup>45</sup>This is the stone that you saw cut out from a mountain, but not by humans. It smashed the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold.

The great God *'elabhh* has told you what will happen in the future, Your Majesty. The dream is true and you can trust that this is its meaning.

<sup>46</sup>King Nebuchadnezzar immediately bowed down on the ground in front of Daniel. He ordered that gifts and offerings be given to Daniel. <sup>47</sup>The King said to Daniel: Your God *'elabhh* is truly the greatest of gods *'elabhh*, the Lord *mare*-master Aramaic 4x over kings. He can reveal secrets because you were able to reveal this secret.

### **King Nebuchadnezzar Promotes Daniel as Head Advisor to the King**

<sup>48</sup>Then the King promoted Daniel and gave him many wonderful gifts. Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel Governor of the whole province of Babylon and Head of all Babylon's wise advisers. <sup>49</sup>With the King's permission, Daniel appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to govern the province of Babylon. But Daniel stayed at the King's court.

### **COMMENT**

Nebuchadnezzar is a young man and suspicious that many of his counselors are charlatans or frauds, telling him what he wants to hear instead of the truth. So he demands they tell him what his dream was and what it meant. The Chaldeans repeat twice that no human can do this. So the King orders all of them killed.



But Daniel and his friends pray and then approach the King. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that no human could tell him his dream but God could, the *God of Heaven*. This phrase appears 5x in Daniel, as well as in **Genesis 24:3, 7**; Ezra 9x, Nehemiah 4x, **Psalm 136:26** and **Jonah 1:9**. Daniel is paralleling the actions of Joseph in **Genesis 41:16**: *I can't, but God can give Pharaoh the answer he needs.*

Daniel then goes on to tell the King how his kingdom of Babylon will be succeeded by four Kingdoms.

We know from Chapter 7 that these kingdoms are Persia, then Greece, then Rome, and then by the Kingdom of God. The King saw a statue with a head of gold representing Babylon, chests and arms of silver representing Persia, stomach and hips made of bronze representing Greece, and legs of iron representing Rome. The toes made of partly iron and party clay is a divided kingdom but will not hold together.

Next, a stone not cut with human hands struck the statue and smashed it. Then the stone that struck the statue became a large mountain that filled the whole world. This large mountain is the Kingdom of *the God of Heaven* that will never be destroyed.

As a result of his successful identification and interpretation of the dream, Daniel was promoted. Nebuchadnezzar said to Daniel: *Your God 'elahh is truly the greatest 'elahh of gods 'elahh, the Lord mare' over kings. He can reveal secrets because you were able to reveal the secret.*  
**Daniel 2:47**

In this way Daniel was able to reflect God's glory back to God.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why is Daniel determined to give God the glory for interpreting the dream rather than himself?
2. Why is it a great compliment to the King that his kingdom is made of gold?
3. Nebuchadnezzar may have been told of the prophet Jeremiah's prophecy in Jerusalem:

This is the Lord of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Say this to your masters: I used my great strength and my powerful arm to make the earth along with the people and the animals on it. I give it to anyone I please. Now I have handed all these countries over to *my servant* King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I have even made wild animals serve him. All nations will serve

him, his son, and his grandson until Babylon is defeated. Then many nations and great Kings will make him their slave. **Jeremiah 27:4-7**

What did this prophecy do for King Nebuchadnezzar's ego? How would the King have reacted to the God of Heaven calling the King *his servant*?

4. Why doesn't Nebuchadnezzar ask Daniel why his kingdom of gold will not last but be succeeded by other kingdoms? Also, when would his kingdom end? Would he die before his kingdom ends?

5. Why doesn't Nebuchadnezzar inquire about the Kingdom of God and why it will ultimately succeed the other human kingdoms?

6. Did Jesus indirectly refer to the stone made without hands that will crush other kingdoms when he quoted Isaiah to the scribes and chief priests?

And he shall be for a sanctuary but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel for a gin **bird trap** and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. **Isaiah 8:14 KJV**

Therefore, say I unto you: The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Whosoever shall fall on this stone will be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder. **Matthew 21:43-44 KJV**

## Pericope Three

### Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego Refuse to Worship an Idol

<sup>3:1</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. He set it up in a recessed area in the wall in the province of Babylon

<sup>2</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar sent messengers to assemble the satraps, governors, mayors, military advisers, treasurers, judges, officers, and all the other provincial officials to dedicate the statue he had set up.

<sup>3</sup> Then the satraps, governors, mayors, military advisers, treasurers, judges, officers, and all the other provincial officials assembled to dedicate the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They stood in front of the statue.

### All People Were Ordered to Worship the Gold Statue

<sup>4</sup> The herald called out loudly: People of every province, nation, and language. <sup>5</sup> When you hear the sound of rams' horns, flutes, lyres, harps, and three-stringed harps playing at the same time with all other kinds of instruments, bow down and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. <sup>6</sup> Whoever doesn't bow down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

<sup>7</sup> As soon as they heard the sound of rams' horns, flutes, lyres, harps, and three-stringed harps with all other kinds of instruments, all the people from every province, nation, and language bowed down and worshiped the gold statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

### Astrologers Accused the Jews of Not Worshiping the Statue

<sup>8</sup> After that happened, some astrologers came forward and brought charges against the Jews. <sup>9</sup> They addressed King Nebuchadnezzar: Your Majesty, may you live forever.

<sup>10</sup> Your Majesty, you gave an order that everyone who hears the sound of rams' horns, flutes, lyres, harps, and three-stringed harps playing at the same

time with all other kinds of instruments should bow down and worship the gold statue. <sup>11</sup> <Your order said that> whoever doesn't bow down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace

<sup>12</sup> There are certain Jews whom you appointed to govern the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men didn't obey your order, Your Majesty. They don't honor your gods *'elabb* or worship the statue that you set up.

### **King Nebuchadnezzar Orders the Jews to Worship the Statue**

<sup>13</sup> Then, in a fit of rage and anger, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Immediately, they were brought to the King.

<sup>14</sup> Nebuchadnezzar asked them:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you don't honor my gods *'elabb* or worship the gold statue that I set up? <sup>15</sup> When you hear the sound of the rams' horns, flutes, lyres, harps, and three-stringed harps playing at the same time with all other kinds of instruments, will you bow down and worship the gold statue I made? If you don't worship it, you will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace. What god *'elabb* can save you from my power then?

### **The Jews Refuse to Worship the Statue**

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered King Nebuchadnezzar:

We don't need to answer your last question. <sup>17</sup> If our God *'elabb*, whom we honor, can save us from a blazing furnace and from your power, he will, Your Majesty. <sup>18</sup> But if he doesn't, you should know, Your Majesty, we'll never honor your gods *'elabb* or worship the gold statue that you set up.

### **Nebuchadnezzar Orders the Jews Be Thrown into the Fiery Furnace**

<sup>19</sup> Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with anger toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face turned red. He ordered that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter than normal. <sup>20</sup> He told some soldiers from his

army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego so that they could be thrown into the blazing furnace.

<sup>21</sup>Then the three men were thrown into the blazing furnace. They were wearing their clothes, hats, and other clothing. <sup>22</sup>The King's order was so urgent and the furnace was so extremely hot that the men who carried Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were killed by the flames from the fire.

<sup>23</sup>So these three men — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego — fell into the blazing furnace. They were still tied up.

### **Nebuchadnezzar Sees Four – Not Three Men in the Furnace**

<sup>24</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar was startled. He sprang to his feet. He asked his advisers: Didn't we throw three men into the fire? That's true, Your Majesty, they answered. <sup>25</sup>The King replied: But look, I see *four* men.

They're untied, walking in the middle of the fire and unharmed. The fourth one looks like a son of the gods *'elabb*.

<sup>26</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar went to the door of the blazing furnace and said: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—servants of the Most High *illay*<sub>IOX</sub> God *'elabb* — come out here.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire. <sup>27</sup>The King's satraps, governors, mayors, and advisers gathered around the three men. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies. The hair on their heads wasn't singed, their clothes weren't burned, and they didn't smell of smoke.

<sup>28</sup>Nebuchadnezzar said: Praise the God *'elabb* of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He sent his angel and saved his servants who trusted him. They disobeyed the King and risked their lives so that they would not have to honor or worship any god *'elabb* except their own God *'elabb*.

<sup>29</sup>So I order that people from every province, nation, or language who say anything slanderous about the God *'elabb* of Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego will be torn limb from limb. Their houses will be turned into piles of rubble. No other god *elabb* can rescue like this.

<sup>30</sup>Then the King promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to higher positions in the province of Babylon.

## COMMENT

It seems that King Nebuchadnezzar was impressed by Daniel's prophecy of the statute in his dream that his kingdom was gold, the most valuable of all the metals. The statue of gold apparently was all Nebuchadnezzar remembered of Daniel's prophecy. So he had a large statute of gold made and commanded all in his kingdom worship it.

The three Judeans – note the story uses their Babylonian names – refused to worship the statue. So the King throws them into a burning fiery furnace. Yet when the King looks inside the furnace he not only sees the three men still alive and only the ropes tying them up burned off, but he also sees a fourth man.

The King brings the three men out and praises the God who saved them. The King then further promotes these three men.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What does this story tell us about the pride of King Nebuchadnezzar?
2. Notice how the story uses the Babylonian names of the three men again and again. How are we to understand this emphasis?
3. What does the fact that the servants of the King were killed putting the three Judeans into the fire tell us about the King's regard for human life?
4. Who was the fourth man in the fiery furnace? Why didn't he come out with the three Hebrews?
5. Notice that Nebuchadnezzar does not order people worship the Hebrew God but only not to slander him. Is this a step in the right direction for the King?

## Pericope Four

### A Letter from Nebuchadnezzar about His Insanity

<sup>4:1</sup> From King Nebuchadnezzar. To the people of every province, nation, and language in the world. I wish you peace and prosperity. <sup>2</sup>I am pleased to write to you about the miraculous signs and amazing things the Most High *illay* God *elahh* did for me.

<sup>3</sup>His miraculous signs are impressive.  
He uses his power to do amazing things.  
His Kingdom is an eternal Kingdom.  
His power lasts from one generation to the next.

### King Nebuchadnezzar Had a Dream

<sup>4</sup>I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living comfortably at home. I was prosperous while living in my palace. <sup>5</sup>I had a dream that terrified me. The visions I had while I was asleep frightened me. <sup>6</sup>So I ordered all the wise advisers in Babylon to be brought to me to tell me the dream's meaning.

<sup>7</sup>The magicians, psychics, astrologers, and fortunetellers came to me. I told them the dream, but they couldn't tell me its meaning. <sup>8</sup>Finally, Daniel came to me. He had been renamed Belteshazzar after my god <Bel>. The spirit of the holy *qadis* gods *elahh* is in him. I told him the dream.

<sup>9</sup>Belteshazzar, head of the magicians, I know the spirit of the holy *qadis* gods is in you. No secret is too hard for you <to uncover>. Tell me the meaning of the visions I had in my dream.

<sup>10</sup>These are the visions I had while I was asleep. I was looking and I saw an oak tree in the middle of the earth. It was very tall. <sup>11</sup>The tree grew and it became strong enough and tall enough to reach the sky. It could be seen everywhere on earth. <sup>12</sup>It had beautiful leaves and plenty of fruit, enough to feed everyone. Wild animals found shade under it. Birds came to live in its branches. It fed every living creature.

<sup>13</sup>I was seeing these visions as I was asleep. I saw a guardian, a holy being, come down from Heaven. <sup>4</sup>He shouted loudly: Cut down the oak tree. Cut off its branches. Strip off its leaves. Scatter its fruit. Make the animals under it run away and make the birds fly from its branches.

### The Oak Tree Is Changed into an Animal

<sup>15</sup>But leave the stump and its roots in the ground. Secure it with an iron and bronze chain in the grass in the field. Let it get wet with the dew from the sky. And let it get its share of the plants on the ground with the animals.

<sup>16</sup>Let its human mind be changed and give it the mind of an animal. Let it remain like this for seven time periods.

<sup>17</sup>The guardians *ir*-watchers <sup>3x</sup> have announced this decision. The holy ones *qadis* have announced this so that every living creature will know that the Most High *illay* has power over human kingdoms. He gives them to whomever he wishes. He can place the lowest of people in charge of them.

<sup>18</sup>This is the dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its meaning because the wise advisers in my kingdom can't tell it to me. However, you can, because the spirit of the holy *qadis* gods *elahh* is in you.

### Daniel Is Stunned

<sup>19</sup>Then Daniel who had been renamed Belteshazzar was momentarily stunned. What he was thinking frightened him. I told him: Belteshazzar, don't let the dream and its meaning frighten you.

Belteshazzar answered: Sir, I wish that the dream were about those who hate you and its meaning were about your enemies. <sup>20</sup>You saw an oak tree grow and become strong enough and tall enough to reach the sky. It could be seen everywhere on earth. <sup>21</sup>It had beautiful leaves and plenty of fruit, enough to feed everyone. Wild animals lived under it, and birds made their homes in its branches.



## King Nebuchadnezzar, You Are that Oak Tree

<sup>22</sup>You are that tree, Your Majesty. You grew and became strong and mighty until you reached the sky. Your power reaches the most distant part of the world.

<sup>23</sup>You saw a guardian *ir*, a holy being, come down from Heaven. He said: Cut down the oak tree. Destroy it. But leave the stump and its roots in the ground. Secure it with an iron and bronze chain in the grass in the field. Let it get wet with the dew from the sky. Let it get its share of the plants on the ground with the wild animals for seven time periods.

## Daniel Tells the King the Meaning of the Dream

<sup>24</sup>This is the meaning, Your Majesty. The Most High *illay* has decided to apply it to you, Your Majesty. <sup>25</sup>You will be forced away from people and live with the wild animals. You will eat grass like cattle. The dew from the sky will make you wet. And seven time periods will pass until you realize that the Most High *illay* has power over human kingdoms and that he gives them to whomever he wishes.

<sup>26</sup>Since I said that the stump and the tree's roots were to be left, your kingdom will be restored to you as soon as you realize that Heaven rules.

<sup>27</sup>That is why, Your Majesty, my best advice is that you stop sinning, and do what is right. Stop committing the same errors and have pity on the poor. Maybe you can prolong your prosperity.

## The Dream Comes True One Year Later

<sup>28</sup>All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>29</sup>Twelve months later he was walking around the royal palace in Babylon. <sup>30</sup>The King thought: Look how great Babylon is. I built the royal palace by my own impressive power and for my glorious honor.

<sup>31</sup>Before the words came out of his mouth, a voice said from Heaven: King Nebuchadnezzar, listen to this: The kingdom has been taken from you.

<sup>32</sup>You will be forced away from people and live with the wild animals. You

will eat grass like cattle. Seven time periods will pass until you realize that the Most High *illay* has power over human kingdoms and that he gives them to whomever he wishes.

<sup>33</sup> Just then the prediction about Nebuchadnezzar came true. He was forced away from people and ate grass like cattle. Dew from the sky made his body wet until his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers and his nails grew as long as birds' claws.

<sup>34</sup> At the end of the seven time periods, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to Heaven and my mind came back to me. I thanked the Most High *illay* and I praised and honored the One who lives forever because his power lasts forever and his kingdom lasts from one generation to the next.

<sup>35</sup> Everyone who lives on earth is nothing compared to him. He does whatever he wishes with the army of Heaven and with those who live on earth. There is no one who can oppose him or ask him: What are you doing?

<sup>36</sup> Just then my mind came back to me. My royal honor and glory were also given back to me. My advisers and nobles wanted to meet with me <again>. I was given back my kingdom and made extraordinarily great.

### **Nebuchadnezzar Praises the King of Heaven**

<sup>37</sup> Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, will praise, honor, and give glory to the King of Heaven. Everything he does is true, his ways are right, and he can humiliate those who act arrogantly.

### **COMMENT**

1. Nebuchadnezzar first refers to *the holy gods* and finally to the *King of Heaven*. Has the King become a monotheist? How does the King refer to the one God?
2. How is King Nebuchadnezzar sinning?
3. Has the King adopted the one God of the Hebrews or not?

4. The phrase *Most High* appears 18x in Daniel. How is it used in reference to God? **Daniel 3:26; 4:2, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34; 5:18,21; 7:25**

5. Has the King sincerely repented of his arrogance?

6. God refers to Nebuchadnezzar in Ezekiel, also a prophet in exile at this time:

For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will bring upon Tyre Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, a King of Kings, from the north, with horses, chariots, war horses, many people, and many troops. **Ezekiel 26:7 KJV.**

Why does God give Nebuchadnezzar such a grand title?

7. Isn't it interesting that Abraham and the patriarchs referred to **YHWH** as *God Most High 'el 'elyon* or the *Most High God*. **Genesis 14:22**. Now that title is used by the Babylonians together with the title, *the God of Heaven*.

## Pericope Five

### The Handwriting on the Wall

#### In 539 BC, the King of Babylon Throws a Banquet

**5:1** King Belshazzar threw a large banquet for 1,000 nobles and drank wine with them. <sup>2</sup>As they were tasting the wine, Belshazzar ordered that the gold and silver utensils which his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem be brought to him. He wanted to drink from them with his nobles, his wives, and his concubines.

Belshazzar is portrayed as the King of Babylon and son of King Nebuchadnezzar, though he was actually the son of King Nabonidus—one of Nebuchadnezzar's successors—and he never became King in his own right, nor did he lead the religious festivals as the King was required to do.

<sup>3</sup>So the servants brought the gold utensils that had been taken from God's *elabh* Temple in Jerusalem. The King, his nobles, wives, and concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup>They drank the wine and praised their gods *elabh* made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, or stone.

<sup>5</sup>Suddenly, the fingers of a person's hand appeared and wrote on the plaster wall opposite the lamp stand of the royal palace. The King watched as the hand wrote.

#### The King Is Terrified

<sup>6</sup>Then the King turned pale and his thoughts frightened him. His hip joints became loose and his knees knocked against each other.

<sup>7</sup>The King screamed for the psychics, astrologers, and fortunetellers to be brought to him. He told these wise advisers of Babylon: Whoever reads this writing and tells me its meaning will be dressed in purple, wear a gold chain on his neck, and become the third-highest ruler in the kingdom.

<sup>8</sup>All the King's wise advisers came, but they couldn't read the writing or tell the king its meaning. <sup>9</sup>King Belshazzar was terrified, and his face turned pale. His nobles didn't know what to do.

### **The Queen Tells the King to Call Daniel**

<sup>10</sup>The discussion between the King and his nobles brought the Queen herself into the banquet hall. The queen said:

Your Majesty, may you live forever. Don't let your thoughts frighten you, and don't turn pale. <sup>11</sup>There's a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods *'elabb*. In the days of your grandfather, he was found to have insight, good judgment, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods *'elabb*.

Your grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar, made him head of the magicians, psychics, astrologers, and fortunetellers. <sup>12</sup>This Daniel who had been renamed Belshazzar was found to have knowledge, judgment, and an extraordinary spirit. He has the ability to interpret dreams, solve riddles, and untangle problems.

Now, call Daniel, and he will tell <you> what it means.

### **Daniel Was Brought to the King to Interpret the Writing on the Wall**

<sup>13</sup>So Daniel was taken to the King. The King asked him: Are you Daniel, one of the captives that my grandfather brought from Judah? <sup>14</sup>I've heard that you have the spirit of the gods *'elabb* and that you have insight, good judgment, and extraordinary wisdom.

<sup>15</sup>The wise advisers and the psychics were brought to me to read this writing and tell me its meaning. But they couldn't tell me its meaning. <sup>16</sup>I have heard that you can interpret such things and untangle problems. If you can read the writing and tell <me> its meaning, you will be dressed in purple, wear a gold chain on your neck, and become the third-highest ruler in the kingdom.

<sup>17</sup>Daniel told the King: Keep your gifts. Give your gifts and awards to someone else. I'll still read the writing for you and tell you its meaning.

### **Daniel Informs the King of God's Discipline of His Grandfather**

<sup>18</sup>“Your Majesty, the Most High *illay* God *'elahh* gave your grandfather Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, might, honor, and glory. <sup>19</sup>People from every province, nation, and language trembled and were terrified by him, because God *'elahh* gave him power.

Nebuchadnezzar killed whomever he wanted to kill and he kept alive whomever he wanted to keep alive. He promoted whomever he wanted to promote, and he demoted whomever he wanted to demote.

<sup>20</sup>But when he became so arrogant and conceited that he became overconfident, he was removed from the royal throne. His honor was taken away from him. <sup>21</sup>He was chased away from people, and his mind was changed into an animal's mind. He lived with wild donkeys, ate grass like cattle, and his body became wet with dew from the sky. This happened until he realized that the Most High *illay* God *'elahh* has power over human kingdoms. God *'elahh* puts whomever he wishes in charge of them.

### **Daniel Accuses Belshazzar of Not Honoring God**

<sup>22</sup>Belshazzar, you are one of Nebuchadnezzar's successors. You didn't remain humble, even though you knew all this. <sup>23</sup>But you made yourself greater than the Lord *mare'*of Heaven.

You had the utensils from his Temple brought to you. You, your nobles, wives, and concubines drank wine from them. You praised your gods *'elahh* made of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, or stone. These gods *'elahh* can't see, hear, or know anything. You didn't honor God *'elahh* who has power over your life and everything you do.

## God Has Sent His Hand to Tell You Your Future

<sup>24</sup>So he sent the hand to write this inscription. <sup>25</sup>This is what has been written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN <sup>26</sup>This is its meaning:

Numbered—God has numbered the days of your kingdom and will bring it to an end.

<sup>27</sup>Weighed—you have been weighed on a scale and found to be too light.

<sup>28</sup>Divided—your kingdom will be divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

<sup>29</sup>Then Belshazzar ordered that Daniel be dressed in purple and wear a gold chain on his neck. He made Daniel the third-highest ruler in the kingdom.

<sup>30</sup>That night King Belshazzar of Babylon was killed. <sup>31</sup>Darius the Mede took over the kingdom. He was 62 years old.

## COMMENT

Babylon was a large, impregnable city measuring  $13 \frac{1}{2}$  miles on each side as a square with a perimeter of 55 miles. A deep wide moat surrounded the walls that were 304 feet high and 76 feet wide. Around the wall were 100 gates of bronze. The Euphrates River flowed through the center of the city.

Belshazzar's name means: *May Bel or Marduk Protect the King*. This arrogant young man deliberately blasphemed God by using the holy cups of the Jerusalem Temple for his banquet. The queen was probably the Queen Mother or daughter of Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel first reminded the King that his grandfather had blasphemed God and then been humiliated by God. This was what was happening to Belshazzar. Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah all used the title *God of Heaven* because this was the title other people in the Persian Empire gave to their chief god. While King Nebuchadnezzar heard a voice from Heaven, Belshazzar saw a hand from Heaven.

The fall of Babylon took place that night. The Persians diverted the water from the Euphrates River so that they could walk under the gate on the riverbed into the city. Darius the Mede now became ruler of Babylon.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did Belshazzar want to use the holy cups of the Jerusalem Temple for his banquet?
2. What did this action of God teach the future rulers of Babylon?
3. Daniel is now 80 years old. What does he think of this action by God?



## Pericope Six

### Daniel Continues to Pray and Is Punished by The King

<sup>6:1</sup> Darius decided it would be good to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom. <sup>2</sup>Over these satraps were three officials. Daniel was one of these officials. The satraps were to report to these three officials so that the King wouldn't be cheated.

<sup>3</sup>This man Daniel distinguished himself among the other officials and satraps because there was an extraordinary spirit in him. The King thought about putting him in charge of the whole kingdom.

#### The King's Officials Are Jealous of Daniel

<sup>4</sup>So the other officials and satraps tried to find something to accuse Daniel of in his duties for the kingdom. But they couldn't find anything wrong because he was trustworthy. No error or fault could be found. <sup>5</sup>These men said: We won't find anything to accuse this man, Daniel, unless we find it in his religious practices.

#### The Officials Convince the King to Make a New Law

<sup>6</sup>So these officials and satraps went to the King as a group. They said to him: May King Darius live forever. <sup>7</sup>All the officials, governors, satraps, advisers, and mayors agree that the King should make a statute and enforce a decree.

The decree should state that for the next 30 days whoever asks for anything from any god *'elahh* or person except you, Your Majesty, will be thrown into a lions' den. <sup>8</sup>Your Majesty, issue this decree, and sign it. According to the law of the Medes and Persians no one could change it or repeal it. <sup>9</sup>So Darius signed the written decree.

## **Despite the New Law, Daniel Continues to Pray to God**

<sup>10</sup>When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went to his house. An upper room in his house had windows that opened in the direction of Jerusalem. Three times each day he got down on his knees and prayed to his God *‘elahh*. He had always praised God *‘elahh* this way.

## **The Officials Accuse Daniel of Violating the King’s Law**

<sup>11</sup>One of those times the men came in as a group and found Daniel praying and pleading to his God *‘elahh*. <sup>2</sup>Then they went and spoke to the King about his decree. <They asked:> Didn’t you sign a decree which stated that for 30 days whoever asks for anything from any god *‘elahh* or person except you, Your Majesty, will be thrown into a lions’ den?

The King answered: That’s true. According to the law of the Medes and Persians the decree can’t be repealed. <sup>13</sup>They replied: Your Majesty, Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, refuses to obey your order or the decree that you signed. He prays three times each day.

## **The King is Reluctant to Punish Daniel**

<sup>14</sup>The King was very displeased when he heard this. He tried every way he could think of to save Daniel. Until sundown he did everything he could to rescue him.

<sup>15</sup>Then Daniel’s accusers gathered in front of the King. They said to him: Remember, Your Majesty, the Medes and Persians have a law that no decree or statute the King makes can be changed.

## **The King Orders Daniel to Be Thrown into the Lion’s Den**

<sup>16</sup>So the King gave the order and Daniel was brought to him and thrown into the lions’ den. The King told Daniel: May your God *‘elahh* whom you always worship save you.

<sup>17</sup>A stone was brought and placed over the opening of the den. The King put his seal on the stone using his ring and the rings of his nobles so that Daniel's situation could not be changed.

<sup>18</sup>Then the King went to his palace and spent the night without food or company. He couldn't get to sleep.

### **At Dawn the King Goes to the Lion's Den and Finds Daniel Alive**

<sup>19</sup>At dawn, as soon as it was light, the King got up and quickly went to the lions' den. <sup>20</sup>As he came near the den where Daniel was, the King called to Daniel with anguish in his voice: Daniel, servant of the living God *'elabh*! Was God *'elabh*, whom you always worship able to save you from the lions?

<sup>21</sup>Daniel said to the King: Your Majesty, may you live forever. <sup>22</sup>My God *'elabh* sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they couldn't hurt me. He did this because he considered me innocent. Your Majesty, I haven't committed any crime.

<sup>23</sup>The King was overjoyed and had Daniel taken out of the den. When Daniel was taken out of the den, people saw that he was completely unharmed because he trusted his God *'elabh*.

### **The King Orders the Officials Who Made the Law Be Thrown into the Lion's Den**

<sup>24</sup>The King ordered those men who had brought charges against Daniel to be brought to him. They, their wives, and their children were thrown into the lions' den. Before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions attacked them and crushed all their bones.

### **King Darius Issues a Proclamation**

<sup>25</sup>Then King Darius wrote to the people of every province, nation, and language all over the world:

I wish you peace and prosperity. <sup>26</sup>I decree that in every part of my kingdom people should tremble with terror in front of Daniel's God *'elabh*, the living God *'elabh* who continues forever. His Kingdom will never be

destroyed. His power lasts to the end <of time>. <sup>27</sup>He saves, rescues, and does miraculous signs and amazing things in Heaven and on earth. He saved Daniel from the lions.

<sup>28</sup>This man, Daniel, prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

## COMMENT

Daniel is about 80 years old in 520 BC when this incident happened. King Solomon taught his people to pray toward Jerusalem even if they were captives:

If they come to their senses, are sorry for what they have done, and plead with you in the land where they are captives saying: We have sinned. We have done wrong. We have been wicked. If they change their attitude toward you in the land where they are captives, if they pray to you toward the land that you gave their ancestors and the city you have chosen, and the Temple I have built for your name, then in Heaven, the place where you live, hear their pray for mercy. Do what is right for them. Forgive your people who have sinned against you. **2 Chronicles 6:37-40**

Praying three times a day was a custom from the days of King David:

But I call on God and he saves me. Morning, noon, and night I complain and groan and he listens to my voice. **Psalm 55:16-17**

Some officials who were jealous of Daniel convinced the King to execute anyone not praying exclusively to him should be thrown in a den of lions. King Darius agreed as the official said this was the feeling of all the officials. But when these same officials accused Daniel and demanded his execution, the King was horrified. But the law was the law.

Yet the King said these encouraging words to Daniel: Your God whom you serve will deliver you. But did the King really think Daniel's God would save him?

Daniel was thrown into the lion's den and the King went to bed. But the King could not sleep or eat. Early in the morning he hurried to the lion's den and called out to Daniel. Daniel reported that God had sent his angel who had shut the lion's mouths. After Daniel was freed, the King ordered the accusers and their families thrown in the lion's den. The lions ate them immediately.

King Darius then personally praised God and ordered his subjects to do the same. This is the end of the first part of the Book of Daniel.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Only Darius uses the expression the *Living God* twice, and only in this chapter. What characteristic of God is expressed by this phrase?
2. How could King Darius issue this decree? Certainly, he knew that Daniel prayed every day. Certainly, Daniel told him this during their conversations. The advisors must have caught the King in an unguarded moment.
3. Is this book about Daniel or about God? What is the purpose for which Daniel wrote this book?
4. Lions are a symbol of Babylon. Winged lions appear on the gates of Babylon. What does God's control of the lions in the den symbolize?

## Pericope Seven

### Daniel Has a Vision of Four Animals

Now the vision is written in Aramaic.

<sup>7:1</sup> In Belshazzar's first year as King of Babylon, Daniel had a dream. He saw a vision while he was asleep. He wrote down the main parts of the dream.

<sup>2</sup>In my visions at night I, Daniel, saw the four winds of Heaven stirring up the Mediterranean Sea. <sup>3</sup>Four large animals, each one different from the others, came out of the sea.

<sup>4</sup>The first animal was like a lion, but it had wings like an eagle. I watched until its wings were plucked off and it was lifted off the ground. It was made to stand on two feet like a human and was given a human mind.

<sup>5</sup>I saw a second animal. It looked like a bear. It was raised on one side and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told: Get up and eat as much meat as you want.

<sup>6</sup>After this, I saw another animal. It looked like a leopard. On its back it had four wings, like the wings of a bird. The animal also had four heads. It was given power to rule.

<sup>7</sup>After this, I saw a fourth animal in my vision during the night. It was terrifying, dreadful, extraordinarily strong, and had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed its victims and trampled whatever was left. It acted differently from all the other animals that I had seen before. It had ten horns

### A Little Horn Appeared on the Fourth Animal

<sup>8</sup>While I was thinking about the horns, another horn, a little horn, came up among them. It uprooted three of the other horns. This horn had eyes like human eyes and a mouth that spoke impressive things.

## **Daniel's Vision of the Ancient of Days**

<sup>9</sup>I watched until thrones were set up  
and the Ancient One, who has lived for endless years, sat down.  
His clothes were as white as snow  
and the hair on his head was like pure wool.  
His throne was fiery flames,  
and its wheels were burning fire.

<sup>10</sup>A river of fire flowed.  
It came from him.  
Thousands and thousands served him.  
Ten thousand times ten thousand were stationed in front of him.  
The court convened,  
and the books were opened.

## **Daniel Watches the Fourth Animal Being Destroyed**

<sup>11</sup>I continued to watch because of the impressive words that the horn was speaking. I watched until the [fourth] animal was killed. Its body was destroyed and put into a raging fire. <sup>12</sup>The power of the rest of the animals was taken away, but they were allowed to live for a period of time.

## **Daniel's Vision of the Son of Man**

<sup>13</sup>In my visions during the night, I saw among the clouds in Heaven someone like the Son of Man. He came to the Ancient One, who has lived for endless years, and was presented to him. <sup>14</sup>He was given power, honor, and a Kingdom. People from every province, nation, and language were to serve him. His power is an eternal power that will not be taken away. His Kingdom will never be destroyed.

Notice that the Son of Man ascends into Heaven. This is after his sacrificial death [atonement] and resurrection when he comes to the Father, is seated at his right hand, and receives power and glory.

## Daniel Asks an Angel to Explain the Vision Him

<sup>15</sup>I, Daniel, was deeply troubled, and my visions frightened me. <sup>16</sup>I went to someone who was standing there and asked him to tell me the truth about all this. So he told me what all this meant.

Notice that Daniel himself participates in this vision.

<sup>17</sup>He said: These four large animals are four kingdoms that will rise to power on the earth. <sup>18</sup>But the holy people of the Most High *'elyon* will take possession of the Kingdom and keep it forever and ever.

## Daniel Questions the Angel about the Fourth Animal

<sup>19</sup>Then I wanted to know the truth about the fourth animal, which was so different from all the others. It was very terrifying and had iron teeth and bronze claws. It devoured and crushed its victims, and trampled whatever was left.

<sup>20</sup>I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that had come up and made three of the horns fall out. That horn had eyes and a mouth that spoke impressive things. It appeared to be bigger than the others.

## The Little Horn Will Defeat the Holy People

<sup>21</sup>I saw that horn making war against the holy people and defeating them. <sup>22</sup>It did this until the Ancient One, who has lived for endless years, came and judged in favor of the holy people of the Most High. The time came when the holy people took possession of the Kingdom.

While victory is assured, there will be a battle until this victory comes.

<sup>23</sup>He said: The fourth animal will be the fourth of these kingdoms on earth. It will be different from all other kingdoms. It will devour, trample, and crush the whole world. <sup>24</sup>The ten horns are ten Kings that will rise to power from that kingdom.



## The Most Powerful King Will Rise to Power – the Anti-Christ

Another King will rise to power after them. He will be different from the Kings who came before him, and he will humble three Kings. <sup>25</sup> He will speak against the Most High *‘ilay* <God>, oppress the holy people of the Most High *‘elyon*, and plan to change the appointed times and laws. The holy people will be handed over to him for a time, times, and half of a time

In the Book of Revelation, this King is the unholy Trinity of Satan – the Dragon, the Beast from the Sea, and the Beast from the Land, also called the False Prophet.

[ It was allowed to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. It was also given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. Everyone living on earth will worship it, everyone whose name was not written in the Book of Life. That book belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered before the creation of the world. **Revelation 13:7-8** ]

## The Most Powerful King Will Be Destroyed and the Holy People Will Rule

<sup>26</sup> But judgment will be handed down, his power will be taken away, and he will be completely and permanently destroyed. <sup>27</sup> The Kingdom, along with the power and greatness of all the kingdoms under Heaven, will be given to the holy people of the Most High *‘elyon*. Their Kingdom is eternal. All other powers will serve and obey them.

<sup>28</sup> Here is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was terrified by my thoughts, and I turned pale. I kept this to myself.

## COMMENT

This vision of Daniel is certainly related to King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Chapter 2. The kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome and the Kingdom God are present in both dreams, but now the Kings of those kingdoms are presented as symbolic animals. Now we see the true character of these four kingdoms.

All four kingdoms are represented by beasts of prey, warlike and aggressive. Obviously, Babylon is the lion. The Medo-Persian Empire swallowed the three kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt. Persia then ruled the world for 208 years.

Alexander the Great overthrew Persia swiftly like a leopard. He conquered the known world by 331 BC surprising everyone with his speed. Alexander was only 20 years old when he started. He was 26 when he conquered Persia, and when he was 32 years old he had conquered the world.

When Alexander died, his kingdom was divided among his four generals. The two we are interested in are Ptolemy, who was given Egypt, and Seleucus, who was given Syria, Israel, Babylon and other territory to the east.

The fourth empire of Rome rose slowly beginning in 241 BC. Gradually, it spread from Italy westward. The Western Roman Empire formally ended in 410 AD when the Visigoths sacked Rome. The Roman Empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilizations and peoples. It killed many captives and sold thousands of others into slavery. There is no agreement on the identification of the ten horns that represent ten kings.

An 11th horn rose among the ten, who is certainly the Anti-Christ, the one Isaiah calls Leviathan. **Isaiah 27:1.** Jesus calls him a false Messiah. **Matthew 24:5.** Paul refers to him as:

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. That day when the Lord returns cannot come unless a revolt *apostasias*—falling away takes place first and the man of sin, a man *yhios*—son of destruction *apoleia*—perdition, is revealed. He opposed every so-called god or anything that is worshiped and places himself above them sitting in God's Temple and claiming to be God. **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**

John the apostle calls him Anti-Christ **1 John 2:18; 4:3**, and in Revelation he is Satan's unholy trinity—the Dragon, the Beast from the Land, and the Beast from the Sea.

In contrast to the Anti-Christ, John is given a vision of the Son of Man, the Son of God, ascending to Heaven after he has fulfilled his mission for God the Father. Here we see a fulfillment of **Psalms 2:**

Why do the nations gather together? Why do their people devise useless plots? Kings take their stands. Rulers make plans together against the Lord and his Messiah by saying: Let's break apart their chains and shake off their ropes.

The one enthroned in Heaven laughs. The Lord makes fun of them. Then he speaks to them in his anger. In his burning anger he terrifies them by saying: I have installed my own King on Zion, My Holy Mountain.

I will announce the Lord's decree. He said to me: You are my Son. Today I have become your Father. Ask me and I will give you the nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your own possession. You will break them with an iron scepter. You will smash them to pieces like pottery.

Now you Kings act wisely. Be warned you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son or he will become angry and you will die on your way because his anger will burst into flames. Blessed is everyone who takes refuge in him. **Psalms 2:1-12**

Daniel questions the vision and an angel explains that the animals represent four kingdoms that will rise on the earth. But the fifth and last kingdom, that of God's holy people, will remain forever.

Daniel then asks about the fourth beast, terrible but mighty. The angel replies that it will crush the whole earth. From that kingdom will arise ten Kings. Then one King following them will arise who will humble three of those Kings. He will speak against God and oppress the holy people for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years. But he will be judged and he will be permanently destroyed. Then the Kingdom of God will rule.

Daniel was terrified by all this and did not reveal it to anyone.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The fourth kingdom is Rome, a horrible beast. John describes its destruction in **Revelation 18:1-24**. What does Rome do to God's people?
2. We are going to see two parallels. There will be a cruel monster who will rise against God's people during the time of the four Greek generals. Then later, at the End Times, there will arise another monster who will oppress God's people for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years.

We will be able to identify the first cruel monster who has appeared in our history as Antiochus IV Epiphanies of the Seleucid Empire. But the second cruel monster appears in the future (perhaps in the far future) and is yet to be identified. Both will oppose God's people and overcome them. Why does God allow this to happen? HINT: Read **Revelation 13:1-18**.

3. John in Revelation describes the monster of the future as comprised of three persons – an Unholy Trinity. These three are closely aligned. What differentiates them?

4. Here Daniel discloses the Messiah who had been predicted by the Hebrew prophets especially Isaiah. What details does Daniel add to our picture of the coming Messiah or Anointed One?
5. There are many prophecies in the Bible that predict that God's people will be put up against the wall. When there seems no hope is left, the Messiah will suddenly appear and save them. Daniel is predicting the same thing. Why does God put his Chosen People to this test and save them at the last minute? Read **Ezekiel 38-39**; **Zechariah 12:1-14**; **Revelation 16:16**; **19:11-21**; **20:7-10**.
6. Both **Daniel 7:24** and John in **Revelation 17:12** speak of ten kings of the Roman Empire. Who are they and what happens to them in each instance?
7. What is Daniel assured of will happen at the end of human history?

## Transition Back to Hebrew

Chapter 1 of the Book of Daniel was in Hebrew. Chapters 2-7 were in Aramaic. Beginning in Chapter 8, we return to the Hebrew language. This is probably because Chapters 9-12 deal primarily with Israel. The Book of Revelation follows a similar tact. The second half of the book, Chapters 12-22 deals primarily with Israel while Chapters 1-11 are primarily dealing with the entire world.

Chapter 7 provides us with a general history of the times of the Gentiles, when the Holy Land was ruled by foreigners.

They shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all the nations. Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until *the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*. Luke 21:24. KJV

When the Judeans returned to Jerusalem after their 70-year captivity, Israel was ruled by the Persians. Then the Greeks ruled them, then the Syrians, then a period of civil war, and finally they were occupied by the Romans. It was not until 1948 that Israel was fully independent again.

## Pericope Eight

### Daniel's Vision about the Ram and the Goat

Here the language of the book returns to Hebrew as it concerns the Jewish people.

**8:1** In Belshazzar's third year as King <sup>551</sup> BC, I, Daniel, saw a vision. This vision came after the one I saw earlier. <sup>2</sup>In my vision I saw myself in the fortress of Susa in the province of Elam. In my vision I saw myself at Ulai Gate.

<sup>3</sup>I looked up and saw a single ram standing beside the gate. The ram had two long horns, one longer than the other, though the longer one had grown up later. <sup>4</sup>I saw the ram charging west, north, and south. No other animal could stand in front of it and no one could escape from its power. It did anything it pleased and continued to grow.

<sup>5</sup>As I was watching closely, I saw a male goat coming from the west. It crossed the whole earth without touching it. This goat had a prominent horn between its eyes. <sup>6</sup>The goat was coming toward the two-horned ram that I had seen standing beside the gate. It furiously ran at the ram.

<sup>7</sup>I saw it come closer to the ram. The goat was extremely angry with the ram, so it attacked the ram. It broke both of the ram's horns. The ram didn't have the strength to stand up against the goat. So the ram was thrown down on the ground and trampled. No one could rescue the ram from the goat's power.

<sup>8</sup>The male goat became very important. But when the goat became powerful, his large horn broke off. In its place grew four horns. They corresponded to the four winds of Heaven.

These are the four generals of Alexander the Great that took over his kingdom after he died.

<sup>9</sup>Out of one of the horns came a small horn. It gained power over the south, the east, and the beautiful land. <sup>10</sup>It continued to gain power until it reached

the army of Heaven. It threw some of the army of Heaven, the stars, down on the ground and trampled them.

<sup>11</sup>Then it attacked the commander of the army so that it took the daily burnt offering from him and wrecked his Holy Place. <sup>12</sup>In its rebelliousness it was given an army to put a stop to the daily burnt offering. It threw truth on the ground. The horn was successful in everything it did.

This is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Syrian King who tormented the Jews.

<sup>13</sup>Then I heard a holy one speaking. Another holy one said to the one who was speaking: How long will the things in this vision — the daily burnt offering, the destructive rebellion, the surrender of the holy place, and the trampling of the army — take place? <sup>14</sup>He told me: For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the Holy Place will be made acceptable to God.

This is celebrated today as Hanukkah when the Temple was reconsecrated after it was desecrated by Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

<sup>15</sup>Now as I, Daniel, watched the vision and tried to understand it, I saw someone who looked like a man standing in front of me. <sup>16</sup>I heard a man in Ulai <Gate> call loudly: Gabriel, explain the vision to this man.

<sup>17</sup>Gabriel came up beside me, and when he came, I was terrified and immediately knelt down. He said to me: Son of man, understand that the vision is about the end times.

<sup>18</sup>As he spoke to me, I fainted face down on the ground but he touched me and made me stand up. <sup>19</sup>He said: I will tell you what will happen in the last days <the time of God's> anger because the end time has been determined.

### **An Explanation of the Ram and the Goat**

<sup>20</sup>The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kingdoms of Media and Persia. <sup>21</sup>The hairy male goat is the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is its first King. <sup>22</sup>The horn broke off, and four horns replaced it. Four kingdoms will come out of that nation but they won't be as strong as the first King was.

## One Very Powerful King Will Arise

<sup>23</sup>In the last days of those kingdoms, when rebellions are finished, a stern-looking King who understands mysterious things will rise to power <sup>24</sup>He will become very strong, but not by his own strength.

He will cause astounding destruction and will be successful in everything he does. He will destroy those who are powerful along with some holy people. <sup>25</sup>He will cleverly use his power to deceive others successfully. He will consider himself to be great and destroy many people when they don't expect it. He will oppose the commander of commanders, but he will be defeated, though not by any human power.

## Daniel Is Told to Seal This Vision

<sup>26</sup>The vision about the <2,300> evenings and mornings that was explained to you is true. Seal the vision, because it is about things that will happen in the distant future.

<sup>27</sup>I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up and worked for the King. The vision horrified me because I couldn't understand it.

## COMMENT

This is a clear vision about the defeat of Persia by Greece. Alexander the Great succeeded his father Philip of Macedon when he was 20 years old in 336 BC. In 334 BC, Alexander invaded the Persian Kingdom and then campaigned for 10 years conquering land all the way to India. He died in 323 BC in Babylon.

At that time, his kingdom was divided among his four generals. The two we are concerned with are Ptolemy, the King of the South who was given Egypt and Seleucus, the King of the North, who was given Syria and lands east. Ptolemy controlled Israel until 198 BC, when Seleucids took it over.

The most infamous Seleucid King was Antiochus Epiphanes IV who ruled from 175 BC until his death in 164 BC.

He is the little horn that defeated Egypt and took possession of the "beautiful land". **Daniel 8:9**. He hated the Jews and attempted to Hellenize them by desecrating the Jerusalem Temple by



offering a pig on the altar to Zeus, the abomination of desolation, stopped the daily burnt offerings, killed thousands of Jews, and forbade using the Torah or circumcising children.

The Jews rebelled against him in the Maccabean Rebellion and rededicated the Temple on December 25, 164 BC, celebrated as Hannukah, and finally defeated him. This story is told in the apocryphal book of **I Maccabees**.

The little horn represents symbolically both Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the later Anti-Christ who will come later.

Daniel was sick and exhausted for days thinking about this horrible experience to come for his people.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did God allow Antiochus IV Epiphanes to torture his Chosen People from 167 to 164 BC?
2. What are the 2,300 mornings and evenings? Many believe this is when Antiochus was torturing the Jews. But he only did this for four years.
3. The Maccabean Rebellion is characterized by some scholars as directed not as much against Antiochus IV Epiphanes as a civil war between Hellenistic Jews and pious Jews who fought against Hellenization. Who were these pious Jews, the Hasidim? What did they later become?
4. The High Priest Onias, with a Jewish name, was succeeded by Jews with Greek names, such as Jason and Menelaus, who were not from the tribe of Levi. Is that why the Sanhedrin, the 70-member ruling council of the Jews was so disliked by pious Jews even though there were many chief priests in that body?
5. Daniel is the only book in the Hebrew Bible to identify angels by name. What books in the New Testament identify angels by name?
6. Prophecy often contains many unanswered questions. Prophets had to live with these unanswered questions. Why does God include unanswered questions in prophecy?
7. Of the four kingdoms, why were only the Persians kind to the Jews?

## Events of the Time of the Maccabees

- **198 BCE:** Armies of the Seleucid King Antiochus III (Antiochus the Great) oust Ptolemy V from Judea and Samaria.
- **175 BCE:** Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) ascends the Seleucid throne.
- **168 BCE:** Under the reign of Antiochus IV, the second Temple is looted, Jews are massacred, and Judaism is outlawed.
- **167 BCE:** Antiochus orders an altar to Zeus erected in the Temple. Mattathias and his five sons John, Simon, Eleazar, Jonathan, and Judah lead a rebellion against Antiochus. Judah becomes known as Judah Maccabee ("Judah the Hammer").
- **166 BCE:** Mattathias dies, and Judah takes his place as leader. The Hasmonean Jewish Kingdom begins. It lasts until 63 BCE.
- **164 BCE:** The Jewish revolt against the Seleucid monarchy is successful in recapturing the Temple, which is liberated and rededicated (Hanukkah).
- **142 BCE:** Re-establishment of the Second Jewish Commonwealth. The Seleucids recognize Jewish autonomy. The Seleucid kings have a formal overlordship, which the Hasmoneans acknowledge. This inaugurates a period of population growth and religious, cultural and social development. During this period, there was the conquest of the areas now covered by Transjordan, Samaria, Galilee, and Idumea (also known as Edom), and the forced conversion of Idumeans to the Jewish religion, including circumcision.<sup>1</sup>
- **139 BCE:** The Roman Senate recognizes Jewish autonomy.
- **134 BCE:** Antiochus VII Sidetes besieges Jerusalem. The Jews under John Hyrcanus become Seleucid vassals but retain religious autonomy.
- **129 BCE:** Antiochus VII dies. The Hasmonean Jewish Kingdom throws off Syrian rule completely.
- **96 BCE:** This date was the beginning of an eight-year long civil war between Sadducee King Alexander Yanai and the Pharisees.
- **85–82 BCE:** Consolidation of the Kingdom in territory east of the Jordan River.

- **63 BCE:** The Hasmonean Jewish Kingdom comes to an end because of a rivalry between the brothers Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II, both of whom appeal to the Roman Republic to intervene and settle the power struggle on their behalf.
- The Roman general Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great) is dispatched to the area. Twelve thousand Jews are massacred in the Roman Siege of Jerusalem. The Priests of the Temple are struck down at the Altar. Rome annexes Judea.

**Per WIKIPEDIA**

## Pericope Nine

### Daniel's Prayer about Jerusalem Is Answered

This is the third vision Daniel received. The vision itself only occupies verses 24-27. The vision sets up a time schedule of coming events –the coming of the Messiah.

**9:1** Xerxes' son Darius, who was a Mede by birth, was made ruler of the Kingdom of Babylon. <sup>2</sup>In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, learned from the Scriptures the number of years that Jerusalem would remain in ruins. The Lord *YHWH* had told the prophet Jeremiah that Jerusalem would remain in ruins for 70 years. **Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10**

The Jews' particular concern with Jerusalem was the Temple. The Babylonians destroyed the Temple in 586 BC, and the Temple was rebuilt and operating in 515 BC.

<sup>3</sup>So I turned to the Lord *'adonay* God *'elohim* and looked to him for help. I prayed, pleaded, and fasted in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>4</sup>I prayed to the Lord *YHWH* my God *'elohim*. I confessed and said:

Lord *'adonay*, you are great and deserve respect as the only God *el*. You keep your Covenant and show mercy *hesed* to those who love you and obey your commandments.

<sup>5</sup>We have sinned, done wrong, acted wickedly, rebelled, and turned away from your commandments and laws. <sup>6</sup>We haven't listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our Kings, leaders, ancestors, and all the common people.

<sup>7</sup>You, Lord *'adonay*, are righteous. But we — the men of Judah, the citizens of Jerusalem, and all the Israelites whom you scattered in countries near and far — are still ashamed because we have been unfaithful to you.

<sup>8</sup>We, our kings, leaders, and ancestors are ashamed because we have sinned against you Lord *'adonay*.

<sup>9</sup>But you, Lord *'adonay* our God *'elohim*, are compassionate and forgiving, although we have rebelled against you. <sup>10</sup>We never listened to you or lived

by the teachings you gave us through your servants the prophets. <sup>11</sup>All Israel has ignored your teachings and refused to listen to you.

So you brought on us the curses you swore in an oath, the curses written in the Teachings of your servant Moses.

We sinned against you. <sup>12</sup>So you did what you said you would do to us and our rulers by bringing a great disaster on us. Nowhere in the world has anything ever happened like what has happened to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>This entire disaster happened to us, exactly as it was written in Moses' Teachings.

Lord *YHWH* our God *'elohim*, we never tried to gain your favor by turning from our wrongs and dedicating ourselves to your truth. <sup>14</sup>So you were prepared to bring this disaster on us. Lord *YHWH* our God *'elohim*, you are righteous in everything you do. But we never listened to you.

<sup>15</sup>Lord *'adonay* our God *'elohim*, you brought your people out of Egypt with your strong hand and made yourself famous even today. We have sinned and done evil things.

<sup>16</sup>Lord *'adonay*, since you are very righteous, turn your anger and fury away from your city, Jerusalem, Your Holy Mountain. Jerusalem and your people are insulted by everyone around us because of our sins and the wicked things our ancestors did.

<sup>17</sup>Our God *'elohim*, listen to my prayer and request. For your own sake, Lord *'adonay*, look favorably on your Holy Place, which is lying in ruins.

<sup>18</sup>Open your ears and listen, my God *'elohim*. Open your eyes and look at our ruins and at the City called by your name. We are not requesting this from you because we are righteous, but because you are very compassionate.

<sup>19</sup>Listen to us, Lord *'adonay*. Forgive us, Lord *'adonay*. Pay attention, and act. Don't delay! Do this for your sake, my God *'elohim*, because your city and your people are called by your name.

<sup>20</sup> I continued to pray, confessing my sins and the sins of my people Israel. I humbly placed my request about my God's *'elohim* Holy Mountain in front of the Lord *YHWH* my God *'elohim*.

### Gabriel Gives Daniel a Third Vision of the Future

<sup>21</sup> While I was praying, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the first vision, came to me about the time of the evening sacrifice. He was exhausted. <sup>22</sup> He informed me:

Daniel, this time I have come to give you insight. <sup>23</sup> As soon as you began to make your request, a reply was sent. I have come to give you the reply because you are highly respected. So study the message and understand the vision.

### Gabriel's Vision of Jerusalem's Future

<sup>24</sup> Seventy sets of seven time periods [490 years] have been assigned for your people and your Holy City. These time periods will serve to bring an end to rebellion, to stop sin, to forgive wrongs, to usher in everlasting righteousness, to put a seal on a prophet's vision, and to anoint the Most Holy One.

<sup>25</sup> Learn, then, and understand that from the time the command is given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the anointed prince comes, seven sets of seven time periods and sixty-two sets of seven time periods will pass.

There were four decrees issued to restore Jerusalem. Cyrus' decree to return to Jerusalem in 539 BC. **2 Chronicles 36:22-23**. Darius I's confirming Cyrus' decree in 512 BC. **Ezra 6:1,6-12**. Artaxerxes' decree in 457 BC. **Ezra 7:11-26**. Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of the city in 444 BC. **Nehemiah 2:1-8**

Jerusalem will be restored and rebuilt with a city square and a moat during the troubles of those times.

<sup>26</sup> But after the sixty-two sets of seven time periods, the Anointed One [Messiah] will be cut off and have nothing.

This is calculated to be 483 years [360 days to a year so subtract 6 days] from 444 BC equals 33 AD when Jesus of Nazareth was crucified in Jerusalem.

The city and the holy place will be destroyed with the prince who is to come. His end will come with a flood until the end of the destructive war that has been determined.

This is the Anti-Christ who will come far in the future. Between the 69th week and the 70th week is a Great Parenthesis in which we are living in now.

<sup>27</sup>He will confirm his Covenant with many for one set of seven time periods. In the middle of the seven time periods, he will stop the sacrifices and food offerings. This will happen along with disgusting things that cause destruction until <those time periods> come to an end. It has been determined that this will happen to those who destroy <the city>.

## COMMENT

Daniel's prayer to God can be divided into three parts. First, Daniel confesses the sin and rebellion of Israel. Then he acknowledges God's just punishment of them by the Babylonian Exile. Then he makes a plea for restoration.

God had been faithful to Israel while the people had been rebellious and unfaithful to their God. So God punished the nation with exile from the Promised Land, as he had promised to do in **Deuteronomy 28:15-68**.

Now, Daniel begs God to deliver the people once again as he did in the Exodus from Egypt. Daniel appeals to God to be compassionate, not because his Chosen People deserve it, but because God loves them so much. He asks God to see, hear, and act.

In response, God sends Gabriel, the same angel who will appear to Mary of Nazareth. **Luke 1:26-38**. He gives Daniel a prophecy that many feel dates the death of Jesus, the Anointed One, in 33 AD.

But after the Messiah is cut off, there is apparently a long break between the 69th week and the 70th week. Some look to the break in chapters between Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 61 – both chapters describe the Messiah – as denoting Jesus' first and second comings.

Then the Holy Place will be destroyed far in the future with a Prince Who Is to Come – the Anti-Christ. He will make a covenant for one set of seven time periods, but in the middle of this

will break his covenant and desecrate the Temple with the Abomination of Desolation. Here we have a repeat of the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 BC.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Commentators compute the 70 years Jeremiah predicted the Exile would last in two ways. From the first deportation in 605 BC to the return to Jerusalem in 535 BC or from the Day the Temple was destroyed in 586 BC to the Day the Temple was finally completed and rebuilt in 515 BC. What is the symbolic difference between these two dates?
2. How many times does Daniel use the name of God in his prayer? Why does he use two different names for God?
3. Daniel refers to *God's Holy Mountain* in **Daniel 9:16, 20; 11:45**. Daniel has great sorrow for the Temple. Is that why he may have computed Jeremiah's 70 years from the time the Temple was destroyed to the time the Temple was rebuilt? This term also appears in Isaiah 6x, Ezekiel 2x, Joel 2x, Obadiah 1x, Zephaniah 1x, Zechariah 1x.
4. The computation for the coming of Jesus appears to be worked out but the calculations for Jewish and Babylonian calendars are perceptible only to experts because of leap years, etc. However, roughly it appears that the death of the Messiah is predicted roughly as 33 AD. Why is the exact date of the Messiah's death considered to be so important?
5. It appears there is a break between the 69th and 70th years of Daniel. I have attempted to study this but have been unable to satisfy myself. Do you have an answer?
6. At some time in the future, there will be a Prince to Come. This appears to be the Anti-Christ. Why does God have another Anti-Christ come?
7. Gabriel divides the one set of seven times periods in half when the Anti-Christ breaks his covenant. He will then cause another Abomination of Desolation until this week comes to an end. What happens next?



## Pericope Ten

### An Angel Comes to Daniel with a Message

**10:1** In Cyrus' third year as King of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel, who had been renamed Belteshazzar. The message was true. It was about a great war. Daniel understood the message because he was given insight during the vision.

**2** During those days I, Daniel, mourned for three whole weeks. **3** I didn't eat any good-tasting food. No meat or wine entered my mouth. I didn't wash myself until the entire three weeks were over.

### Daniel Has a Vision of an Angel

**4** On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, I was by the great Tigris River. **5** When I looked up, I saw a man dressed in linen, and he had a belt made of gold from Uphaz around his waist. **6** His body was like beryl. His face looked like lightning. His eyes were like flaming torches. His arms and legs looked like polished bronze. When he spoke, his voice sounded like the roar of a crowd.

The prophet Jeremiah had predicted that the Babylonian captivity would last 70 years. Daniel had been taken to Babylon in the first deportation in 605 BC. It was now 535 BC, 70 years later. Daniel was 83 years old.

[ This is what the Lord says: When Babylon's 70 years are over, I will come to you. I will keep my promise to you to bring you back to this place.  
**Jeremiah 29:10** ]

God has now sent his angel to Daniel to confirm his promise.

**7** I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision. The men with me didn't see the vision. Yet they started to tremble violently and they quickly hid themselves. **8** So I was left alone to see this grand vision. I had no strength left in me. My face turned deathly pale, and I was helpless. **9** I heard the man speak, and as I listened to his words, I fainted face down on the ground.

<sup>10</sup>Then a hand touched me and made my hands and knees shake. <sup>11</sup>The man said to me: Daniel, you are highly respected. Pay attention to my words. Stand up, because I've been sent to you. When he said this to me, I stood up trembling. <sup>12</sup>He told me:

Don't be afraid, Daniel. God has heard everything that you said ever since the first day you decided to humble yourself in front of your God so that you could learn to understand things. I have come in response to your prayer

<sup>13</sup>The commander of the Persian kingdom opposed me for 21 days. But then Michael, one of the chief commanders, came to help me because I was left alone with the kings of Persia. <sup>14</sup>I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the last days, because the vision is about times still to come.

<sup>15</sup>When he said this to me, I bowed down with my face touching the ground and was silent. <sup>16</sup>Then someone who looked like a human touched my lips. I opened my mouth and began to talk. I said to the person standing in front of me: Sir, because of this vision, pain has overwhelmed me, and I'm helpless. <sup>17</sup>How can I talk to you, sir? I have no strength left and the wind has been knocked out of me.

<sup>18</sup>Again the person who looked like a human touched me and I became stronger. <sup>19</sup>He said: Don't be afraid. You are highly respected. Everything is all right. Be strong. Be strong. As he talked to me, I became stronger. I said: Sir, tell me what you came to say. You have strengthened me.

<sup>20</sup>He asked: Do you know why I have come to you? Now I will return to fight the commander of Persia. When I go, the commander of Greece will come. <sup>21</sup>However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the true writings. No one will support me when I fight these commanders except your commander, Michael.

**II:1** During Darius the Mede's first year as King, I strengthened and defended Michael.

## COMMENT

This chapter is preliminary to the revelation in Chapter 11. Who is the man appearing to Daniel? He at first appears to be the risen Christ for he is described as John the Prophet describes Jesus in Revelation:

I turned toward the voice who was talking to me. When I turned I saw seven gold lamp stands. There was someone like the Son of Man among the lamp stands. He was wearing a robe that reached his feet. He wore a gold belt around his waist. His head and hair were white like wool – like snow. His eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like glowing bronze refined in a furnace. His voice was like the sound of raging waters. In his hand he held seven stars and out of his mouth was a two-edged sword. His face was like the sun when it shines in its brightness. **Revelation 1:12-16**

However, when the man describes his activity, he seems to be an angel, rather than the pre-incarnate Son of God. He is telling Daniel that there are demons affecting the kingdoms in the world and he and other angels are fighting against them. The details of these activities are hard to imagine and the Bible does not give us any details anywhere.

Why has the angel come to Daniel? He wants Daniel to be strengthened so that he can in turn strengthen the Judeans whom Cyrus the Great has allowed to return to Jerusalem. Many of the exiles will choose not to return. They are comfortable in Babylon and have been assimilated into the culture.

But there are those, the righteous remnant, who will choose to return. In 535 BC, Prince Sheshbazzar, Governor Zerubbabel, and High Priest Joshua led the return of 42,360 Judeans and their families, together with 7,337 of their servants, 200 male and female singers, 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels and 6,720 donkeys. **Ezra 2:64-67**. They had apparently done well in Babylon.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. We are given information in this chapter about things talked about no where else in the Bible? What are we to make of this?
2. The person who talked to Daniel is described like Jesus is described in Revelation, but when he talks about his activity, he can only be an angel for how could a demon deter the Son of God?
3. Paul describes this unseen world of demons and angels:

Finally, receive your power from the Lord and from his mighty strength. Put on all the armor that God supplies. In this way, you will take a stand against the Devil's strategies.

This is not a wrestling match against an human opponent. We are wrestling with *pros*-against rulers *arches*-principalities, *pros*-against authorities the powers who govern this *toutou* world of darkness *skotos*, and spiritual forces *exousia*-powers that control evil in the Heavenly world. For this reason, take up all the armor that God supplies.

Then you will be able to take a stand during these evil days. Once you have overcome all obstacles, you will be able to stand your ground. **Ephesians 6:10-13**

Paul also seems to be referring to these dark forces:

He created all things in Heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Whether they are Kings *thronos*-thrones or lords *kyriotes*-dominions <sup>4x</sup>, rulers *arche*-principalities OF powers *exousia*- everything has been created through him and for him. **Colossians 1:16**

How does this help us understand what the angel is telling Daniel?

4. Why does God want Daniel to know about this?
5. What is the main point of the angel's message to Daniel?

## Pericope Eleven

### Daniel Is Given a Prophecy of the Last Days of Judah: Part I

The angel now relates the future of the Chosen People. **Daniel 11:2-35** speak of events preceding the First Coming of the Messiah and **Daniel 11:36-12:4** describes events preceding Messiah's Second Coming.

#### Greece Will Conquer Persia

<sup>11:2</sup> <The person who looked like a human continued:> What I am about to tell you is the truth. Three more Kings will rule Persia. Then there will be a fourth, who will become much richer than all the others. As he becomes strong through his wealth, he will turn everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

<sup>3</sup>Then a warrior-King Alexander the Great will come. He will rule a vast empire and do as he pleases. <sup>4</sup>But as soon as he is established, his kingdom will be broken into pieces and divided in the directions of the four winds of Heaven. The empire will not be given to his descendants. It will no longer be like his empire, since it will be uprooted and given to others.

This warrior King is Alexander the Great. When he died, his kingdom was divided among his four generals. Two of these generals became kings of kingdoms that controlled Israel. The southern King was Egypt governed by the Ptolemies, while the northern King was Syria governed by the Seleucids

After Alexander died, his kingdom was split among his four generals. One general Ptolemy took Egypt and Israel. The Seleucids took Syria and the east. The following prophecy predicts the history of Egypt, Syria, and Israel in the years between 303 BC and 164 BC. The southern and northern Kings are different individuals ruling Egypt and Syria during these years.

#### The Northern and Southern Kings

<sup>5</sup>The southern King will be strong, but one of his officers will become stronger than he is and rule a vast empire <sup>6</sup>After a few years the southern and northern Kings will make an alliance. The southern King's daughter will go to the northern King to make peace. She won't hold on to her power, and

the alliance won't last. She, those who came with her, and the one who fathered and protected her, will be given away.

<sup>7</sup>“At that time a shoot will grow from her roots to replace her father. He will attack the northern army, enter the stronghold of the northern King, fight against them, and be victorious. <sup>8</sup>He will take the metal statues of their gods and their precious utensils of silver and gold back to Egypt. He will rule for more years than the northern King. <sup>9</sup>He will invade the southern kingdom and return to his own country.

<sup>10</sup>“Then his sons will prepare for war. They will assemble a large number of forces so that they can overwhelm <the enemy> and pass through its land. They will return and wage war all the way to the stronghold.

<sup>11</sup>The southern King will be outraged. He will go to fight the northern King, who will raise a large army that will fall into the southern King's hands. <sup>12</sup>When that army is captured, the southern King will become conceited. Although he will dominate tens of thousands of people, he will not always be strong.

<sup>13</sup>“The northern King will return and raise an army larger than the first one. After a few years he will invade with a large army and a lot of equipment. <sup>14</sup>In those times many people will rebel against the southern King, and violent men from your own people will rebel in keeping with this vision, but they will be defeated.

<sup>15</sup>Then the northern King will come, build dirt attack ramps, and capture a fortified city. The southern forces will not be able to withstand him. Even their best troops will not be strong enough. <sup>16</sup>The invader will do as he pleases, and no one will be able to withstand his attack. He will rise to power in the beautiful land and it will be completely under his control.

<sup>17</sup>“Then the northern King will decide to invade with the power of his entire kingdom and some decent men will invade with him. He will give the southern King his daughter as a wife in order to destroy the southern kingdom. But this will not succeed or help him.

<sup>18</sup>Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and capture many of them. But a commander will silence the insults that the northern King makes and even insult him. <sup>19</sup>He will turn back toward the fortresses in his own country, but he will stumble, fall, and disappear.

<sup>20</sup>“Another King will take his place. He will have a cruel official go out in royal splendor. But in a few days the King will be destroyed, although not in anger or war.

### **Antiochus IV Epiphanes Arrives**

The former Kings were described to provide a background for King Antiochus IV Epiphanes 175-164 BC because he foreshadows the Anti-Christ to come later. Both of these individuals will significantly affect the Jews. Antiochus is the little horn of Chapter 8 and foreshadows the little horn of Chapter 7-8, the Anti-Christ.

<sup>21</sup>A contemptible person will take his place. He will not be given royal splendor. He will invade when people are feeling secure, and he will seize the kingdom using false promises. <sup>22</sup>He will overwhelm large forces and defeat them, including the Prince of the Covenant.

The Prince of the Covenant is Onias III, the last legitimate High Priest in Israel. He opposed the Hellenization of the Jews under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and was murdered by his half-brother Jason, who was not from the tribe of Levi, but the tribe of Benjamin. Jason was supported by the Syrian King, who proceeded to Hellenize the Jews by allowing a Hellenistic Jew to build a gymnasium to educate young Jews in Greek ways and language and running Jerusalem like a Roman city or polis.

<sup>23</sup>After an alliance has been made with him, he will act deceitfully and rise to power with only a few people. <sup>24</sup>When people feel secure, he will invade the richest parts of the provinces and do something that none of his predecessors ever did. He will distribute loot and wealth to his followers. He will invent new ways of attacking fortifications. But this will last only for a little while.

<sup>25</sup>“With a large army he will summon his power and courage against the southern King, who will prepare for war with a large, strong army. But the southern King won’t be able to withstand him because of the schemes devised against him.

<sup>26</sup> People who eat the King's rich food will ruin him. His army will be overwhelmed, and many will die in battle <sup>27</sup> The two Kings will both plan to do evil. They will sit at the same table and tell lies. But they will not succeed because the end must wait until the appointed time.

<sup>28</sup> The northern King will return to his country with a lot of wealth. He will be determined to fight against the Holy Covenant. He will take action and return to his own country.

Antiochus in 168 BC returned to Jerusalem where he executed 80,000 Jews and desecrated the Temple. For 3 ½ years, he ravaged the country until Julius Maccabee rose up and started guerilla warfare against him. These events will be continued in the next chapter.

## COMMENT

Most of us skip over the detailed events in the battles between the King of North and the King of the South. They seem to matter very little. But what is important is that during this time, the Jews are pawns between these superpowers. What is focused on are the activities of the Great Satan – Antiochus IV Epiphanies – who killed thousands of Jews and helped to bring Hellenism or secularism to Israel. This Hellenistic influence continued in the first century and helped to explain why the Sanhedrin who cooperated with the Romans crucified Jesus. Religious priorities became less important for the leaders of Israel.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Jesus referred to *the Abomination of Desolation* spoken of by Daniel. **Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14**. How does this prove Daniel wrote all of this book during his captivity in Babylon?
2. When did the second *Abomination of Desolation* occur?
3. Why is this accurate history important to prove the reliability of Biblical predictive prophecy?
4. Can predictive prophecy have more than simply one fulfillment?
5. How does Antiochus IV Epiphanes become a type of Paul's *man of sin* and *son of perdition*? When will this man appear?
6. Describe the events celebrated in the Feast of Hanukkah?
7. What does *the appointed time* mentioned in **Daniel 11:27, 29, 35; 12:7** mean? Why is it an important concept?



## Pericope Twelve

### Daniel Is Given a Prophecy of the Last Days of Judah: Part II

11:29 At the appointed time he the King of the north will again invade the south, but this time will be different from the first. <sup>30</sup> Ships will come from the west *Kittim*—Rome 8x to attack him, and he will be discouraged and turn back.

### Antiochus IV Epiphanes Terrorizes the Jews and Desecrates the Temple in Jerusalem

Angry at the Holy Covenant, he will return, take action, and favor those who abandon the Holy Covenant.

<sup>31</sup> His forces will dishonor the Holy Place—the fortress *miqdas*—sanctuary of *ma'oz*—strength—take away the daily burnt offering, and set up the disgusting thing that causes destruction *siqqus*—abomination *samem*—that makes desolate.

<sup>32</sup> With flattery he will corrupt those who abandon the Covenant. But the people who know their God will be strong and take action.

<sup>33</sup> “People who are wise will help many to understand. But for some time they will be defeated by swords and flames. They will be captured and looted.

<sup>34</sup> As they are being defeated, they will get a little help, but many who are not sincere will join them

### Mention of the End Times Predicts the Coming of the Anti-Christ

<sup>35</sup> Some of the wise people will be defeated in order to refine, purify, and make them white until the end times. But the appointed time is still to come.

<sup>36</sup> The King will do as he pleases. He will highly honor himself above every god *el*. He will say amazing things against the God *el* of gods *el*. He will succeed until God's anger *za'am*—indignation is over, because what has been decided must be done.

<sup>37</sup> He will have no interest in the gods *'elohim* of his ancestors or desire for women. He will have no interest in any god *'eloha*, because he will make

himself greater than anyone else. <sup>38</sup> Instead, he will honor the god *'eloha* of fortresses *ma'oz*. With gold, silver, precious stones, and other expensive things he will honor a god *'eloha* his ancestors never heard of.

<sup>39</sup> With the help of a foreign god, he will deal with strong fortresses. He will give high honors to those who acknowledge him, make them rulers over many people, and distribute land for a price.

<sup>40</sup> In the end times the southern King will attack him. The northern King will rush at him like a storm with chariots, horses, and many ships. He will invade countries, overwhelm them, and pass through their land. <sup>41</sup> He will invade the beautiful land, and tens of thousands will be defeated. But Edom, Moab, and the leaders of the Ammonites will escape from his power.

<sup>42</sup> He will use his power against many countries. Even Egypt will not escape.

<sup>43</sup> He will control gold and silver treasures and all Egypt's treasuries. Libya and Sudan will surrender to him. <sup>44</sup> But news from the east and the north will frighten him. He will leave very angry to destroy and exterminate many.

<sup>45</sup> He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at a Beautiful Holy Mountain. When he comes to his end, there will be no one to help him.

## COMMENT

The history of the battles between the northern and southern kings are continued. But major attention is focused on the exploits of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who terrorized the Jews and killed so many of them. He supported the Hellenized Jews ruling Jerusalem, who modernized Jerusalem into a Roman city, educated their young men in Roman ways and language, and decreed Jews could not participate in synagogues or honor the Sabbath. They would be killed if they circumcised their children or read the Towrah.

Then Antiochus himself desecrated the Jerusalem Temple by offering a pig to Zeus on its altar of sacrifice.

### Dual Fulfillment of the Anti-Christ

In Gabriel's prophecy, an Anti-Christ will again do similar things to the Jews in the future. Paul describes him as *a man of sin* or *son of perdition*. **2 Thessalonians 2:3**

John the prophet in the Revelation of Jesus Christ predicts the Anti-Christ will consist of Satan's unholy Trinity: a Dragon, the Beast from the Land, and the Beast from the Sea. In the same way that God is a Trinity, Satan will have his trinity counterfeiting the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost.

The Beast from the Sea will make a statue of the Beast from the Land and force everyone to worship it. No one will be able to buy or sell unless they have the Mark of the Beast on their right hands or on their foreheads. **Revelation 13:16-17**

In **Daniel 11:41**, it says the Anti-Christ will invade the beautiful land and tens of thousands will be defeated.

In Revelation, Satan will bring a force of Gentiles against Israel. They will gather at Armageddon. **Revelation 16:16**. At this Battle of Armageddon, Jesus will appear riding a white horse and defeat all these enemies with the sword from his mouth. **Revelation 19:11-15**. Then, the Millennial Kingdom comes for 1000 years, while Satan is chained in the Bottomless Pit.

After that, Satan is released, and he gathers Gog and Magog. **Revelation 20:7**. They surround Jerusalem, but fire from Heaven burns them up. **Revelation 20:9**. This seems to be detailed in **Ezekiel 38:1-39:29**. Zechariah also describes a large force of Gentiles coming against Jerusalem. But the Messiah appears to save the Jews. When they see Jesus, whom their ancestors pierced, the Jews will mourn. **Zechariah 12:10**. Then a fountain will be opened up for those in Jerusalem to wash away their sin and stain. **Zechariah 12:13:1**

The end of this chapter says Anti-Christ will come to the Lord's Holy Mountain or Jerusalem. **Daniel 11:45**. There Zechariah says the Messiah will go out and fight against Anti-Christ and his armies. **Zechariah 14:1-3**. The prophet says only Jerusalem will now live securely. **Zechariah 14:11**

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why does God allow these Anti-Christ to persecute God's people?
2. It appears the 70th week of Daniel will be a time of great turmoil. The Anti-Christ – the Beast from the Land – will first be seen as a great Savior and a man of peace. But half-way through the “week” – 3 ½ “days” later, he will break his Covenant. What will he do then?
3. The secularization of God's people is a problem, as we see even today. Although they are persecuted by most of the nations of the world, most Jews will still not turn to God for help. Why are there so many prophecies by different writers in the Hebrew Bible showing Jews with their backs up against the wall apparently to be annihilated while God saves them at the last minute? Read **Zechariah 12:1-13:1**.

4. Paul describes what we see in the majority of Israelites living in Israel today:

The minds of the rest of Israel are closed as Scripture says:

To this day God has given them a spirit of deep sleep. Their eyes don't see and their ears don't hear. **Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10**

Let the table set for them become a trap and a net, a snare and a punishment for them. Let their vision become clouded so that they cannot see. Let them carry back-breaking burdens forever. **Psalm 69:22-23. Romans 11:7-9**

Why does Paul say all Israel will be saved? **Romans 11:26**

## Pericope Thirteen

### Daniel Is Told about the Last Day

12:1 <The person who looked like a human continued:>

At that time Michael, the great commander, will stand up on behalf of the descendants of your people. It will be a time of trouble unlike any that has existed from the time there have been nations until that time.

Apparently, this time refers to the second  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years of Daniel's 70th year – a time of great persecution of the Jews. Jesus said:

There will be a lot of misery at that time, a kind of misery that has not happened from the beginning of the world until now and will certainly never happen again. If God does not reduce the number of those days, no one will be saved. But those days will be reduced because of those whom God has chosen. **Matthew 24:21-22**

But at that time your people, everyone written in The Book, will be rescued.  
<sup>2</sup>Many sleeping in the ground will wake up. Some will wake up to live forever, but others will wake up to be ashamed and disgraced forever.

John describes this as Resurrection Day, followed by the Great White Throne Judgment. **Revelation 20:11-15**. Then we jump to the Eternal State, what Isaiah and John call the New Heaven, the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem. **Isaiah 65:17-18; 66; Revelation 21:1-2**

<sup>3</sup>Those who are wise will shine like the brightness on the horizon. Those who lead many people to righteousness will shine like the stars forever and ever.

<sup>4</sup>But you, Daniel, keep these words secret, and seal the book until the end times. Many will travel everywhere and knowledge will grow.

We understand predictive prophecy only after it has been fulfilled—after the prophesied event has occurred. That is why we should read the Bible backwards.

## COMMENT

The angel says this will be a time of intense persecution for Jews. But the Archangel Michel will stand up on behalf of God's Chosen People. All people will be resurrected and judged. This is the first direct mention of resurrection in the Hebrew Bible, although there are desires of it mentioned.

The first mention of life after death appears in the apocryphal book of **2 Maccabees 7:11, 27-28**. While the Pharisees adopted this concept, the Sadducees did not. **Acts 23:6-7**. Why not?

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Is the Time of Jacob's Trouble referring to the 70th week of Daniel?

Alas. For that day is great. So that none is like it. It is *the Time of Jacob's Trouble*. But he shall be saved out of it. For it will come to pass in that day, says the Lord of Hosts, that I will break his yoke from your neck and burst your bonds. Foreigners will no longer enslave them. But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their King whom I will raise up for them. **Jeremiah 30:7-9 KJV**

2. The angel says the Archangel Michael will stand up for God's people. What will he do?

3. Daniel says *all those whose names are in the Book will be rescued ~~malat~~-delivered*. **Daniel 12:1**. We know that all people, the righteous and the wicked will be resurrected to face the Great White Throne Judgment. What book is Daniel talking about? John talks about the Lamb's Book of Life. **Revelation 21:27**. Will all the Jews now believe in Jesus, their Messiah? Why will *some have Eternal Life and others ashamed and disgraced forever*. **Daniel 12:2**

4. Where are hints of resurrection from the dead mentioned in the Hebrew Bible? HINT: Read **Job 19:25-27**; **1 Samuel 2:6**; **Psalm 30:3**; **49:15**; **71:20**; **Isaiah 26:19**.

## Pericope Fourteen

### Daniel Is Given a Last Prophecy

#### Two Questions

12:5 When I, Daniel, looked up, I saw two men standing there. One man stood on one side of the river *ye'or* and the other one stood on the other side.

This word *ye'or* meaning *river* is of Egyptian origin and usually refers to the Nile River. **Exodus 4:9**

6One of them asked the man dressed in linen clothes who was above the river: How long will it be until these miracles *pele'*-wonders are over?

7I heard the man dressed in linen clothes who was above the river. He raised his right hand and left hand to Heaven and swore an oath by the one who lives forever. He said:

It will be for a time, times, and half of a time. When the power *yad* of the holy people has been completely shattered *napas*-broken in pieces, then all these things will be finished.

[ The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to Heaven. He swore an oath by the one who lives forever and ever, who created Heaven and everything in it, the earth and everything in it, and the sea and everything in it. He said: There will be no more delay. In the days when the seventh angel is ready to blow his trumpet the mystery of God will be completed, as he had made known this Good News to his servants the prophets. **Revelation 10:5-7** ]

8I heard him, but I did not understand. So I asked him: Sir, how will these things end?

9He replied: Go, Daniel. These words are to be kept secret and sealed until the end times time of the end KJV.

<sup>10</sup> Many will be purified, made white, and refined. But wicked people will do wicked things, and none of them will understand. Only wise people will understand.

During this time, many Jews will return to their God and become part of the righteous remnant. But many will remain wicked.

<sup>11</sup> From the time the daily burnt offering is taken away and the disgusting thing *siqqus* -abomination that causes destruction *samem* is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

This is 30 days longer than time, times, and half a time which is 1,260 days.

<sup>12</sup> Blessed are those who wait until they reach 1,335 days.

This is 45 days longer than time, times and half a time.

## Daniel Is Given a Final Command

<sup>13</sup> But [Daniel] go on until the end. *Go your way.* KJV You will rest, and you will rise for your inheritance at the end of time.

## COMMENT

The angel, hovering above the river, before answering Daniel's question, raises not just one hand as in an oath but two hands. This is unparalleled in the Bible. Daniel's question is: When will the end come? The angel says once the power of the Holy People is completely broken. Apparently, it will take 3 ½ years. What happens next?

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. God himself swears:

I raise my hand toward Heaven and solemnly swear: As surely as I live forever: **Deuteronomy 32:40**

Why does the angel raise two hands toward Heaven?

2. Daniel is over 80 years old. Daniel has seen the righteous remnant return to Jerusalem under Governor Zerubbabel, a genuine descendant of King David, King Jehoiachin, the grandson of King Josiah in the line of King David.



The descendants of the prisoner Jeconiah were his son Shealtiel, then Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. Pedaiah's sons were Zerubbabel and Shimei. **1 Chronicles 3:7-19**

The Lord spoke his word to Haggai a second time on the fourth day of the month. He said: Say to Zerubbabel, Governor of Judah. I'm going to shake the Heavens and the earth. I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the powers of nations> I will overthrow chariots and their riders. They will kill one another with swords.

On that day, declares the Lord of Armies, I will take my servant Zerubbabel ben Shealtiel, declares the Lord. I will make you like a signet ring, because I have chosen you, declares the Lord of Armies. **Haggai 2:20-23**

Did the prophet Haggai think Zerubbabel was the Messiah? Read **Matthew 1:12-13**. Why did he think this?

3. Daniel only mentions the Messiah here in his book, although he also talks about the Son of Man.

Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah *Masiah* the Prince *nagid* shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks. The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah *Masiah* be cut off, <but not for himself>. And the peoples of the Prince *nagid* shall come and destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood. And unto the end of the war desolations are determined. **Daniel 9:25-26 KJV**

Why isn't Daniel told more about the Messiah who is to come, but only about *an eternal kingdom of the holy people of the Most High*. *All other powers will serve and obey them?* **Daniel 7:22**

4. What is the significance of the 1290 days and the 1335 days?
5. What is the meaning of the angel's final command to Daniel?

But go your way until the end: For you shall rest and stand in your lot at the end of days. **Daniel 12:13 KJV**

6. What is the portion of the lot or inheritance Daniel will receive at the end of time?

For the Lord's portion is his people. Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.  
**Deuteronomy 32:9**

7. Why does the power of the holy people need to be completely shattered? HINT: Read **Exodus 32:9; Deuteronomy 9:13.**

## EPILOGUE

### What Does the Accuracy of Predictive Prophecy Teach Us?

1. The accuracy and fulfilling of prophecies proves to us that God's revelation in the Bible is true.
2. God warns us about the necessity of being ready to encounter the Last Days.
3. We become sensitive and perhaps in pain for the many lost souls in this world who do not understand the relationship God wants to have with us.
4. The First Coming of Jesus and what he says prepares us for having faith in his Second Coming.
5. Most of all, predictive prophecy teaches us that God is sovereign and fully in control of all human history. Nothing happens without his permission.

## **Alistair Begg's Sermon Series on Daniel (2015)**

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