

THE BOOK OF DANIEL
SIMPLE STUDIES IN SCRIPTURE



LEADER'S STUDY GUIDE
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THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Human Author: Daniel

Divine Author: God the Holy Spirit

Date of Writing: 6th Century BC

Key Thought: The Sovereignty of God over the Kingdoms of the Earth

Key Verse: Daniel 4:17

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

DANIEL 1

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

King Josiah of Judah

c. 640-609 BC

Johanah	Jehoiakim	Jehoahaz
Elder son	Middle son	Younger Son

1:1 **Jehoiakim.** The narrative begins in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim (609-598 BC), king of Judah. Jehoiakim was 25 years old at his accession of power. He was the second son of the good king Josiah. His elder brother Johanah should have been the crowned king but Pharaoh Necho of Egypt raised Jehoiakim to the throne instead. This was done over the choice of the people who had nominated Jehoahaz to be king. Jehoahaz was Jehoiakim's younger brother. Pharaoh Necho thought that he could control Jehoiakim.

The king of Judah was expected to pay tribute to the Egyptian ruler for Josiah's part in siding with Babylon against Egypt. At first, the tribute money was paid. Jehoiakim taxed the people (2 Kings 23:33, 34; Jer. 22:10-12; Ezek. 19:4). But then, Pharaoh Necho suffered his devastating defeat from Babylon at the Battle of Carchemish. As a result of that battle, the ruler of Egypt lost all the territorial holdings between the Euphrates and the Nile. He left Judea and never returned (2 Kings 24:7; Jer. 46:2). Jehoiakim was free to act as he pleased without pressure.

As the king of Judah, Jehoiakim reigned for eleven years. He was a ruthless and ungodly ruler. *"His eyes and heart were only for covetousness, shedding innocent blood, oppression, and violence" (Jer. 22:13-17). "He built his house by unrighteousness and without mercy, using his neighbor's service without wages."*

Jehoiakim had built by forced labor a splendid palace that violated the Law of the Lord (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14, 15 cf. Micah 3:10; Heb. 2:9; James 5:4). However, the personal good life and temporary political freedom from Egyptian servitude came to an end in the third year of his reign. A new political master had stepped onto the stage of world history in the person of Nebuchadnezzar.

1:1 **Nebuchadnezzar**, king of Babylon returned from Carchemish, marched to Jerusalem and subdued the king. It was the original intention of Nebuchadnezzar to take Jehoiakim in bondage to Babylon, but the Chaldean ruler had a change of heart. Remembering his former ally King Josiah, Nebuchadnezzar decided to simply make his son Jehoiakim a vassal. He thought he was being gracious and honoring the memory of a political friend. Later, he would regret that decision.

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

1:2 Behind the natural outworking of human events is the unseen hand of God. From a human perspective Nebuchadnezzar went forth to conquer with a mighty army. From a divine perspective “*the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand.*” The absolute sovereignty of God orchestrating the events of time is a biblical revelation.

Charles H. Spurgeon wrote, “*There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God’s sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that sovereignty has ordained their afflictions that sovereignty overrules them, and that sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought to more earnestly contend to than the doctrine of their Master over all creation—the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands—the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that throne...for it is God upon the Throne whom we trust.*”

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

1:2-3 In place of the king, Nebuchadnezzar took a large portion of the great wealth of the house of God (1:2) plus political hostages in selected children of Israel (Dan. 1:3). By allowing these things to happen, God manifested His justice. Once the people of the Lord had brought the images of other gods into His temple. Now the Lord allowed the holy vessels to be carried into the treasuries of other gods. Once the people of the Lord absorbed the children of other nations. Now, the children of Judah would be held captive in exile (Matthew 7:1-5).

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

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

1:4-5 When Nebuchadnezzar made his decision to deport the children of Palestine, he entrusted the matter to Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs. The young people had to meet six specific qualifications.

- ❖ The young people had to be physically sound.
- ❖ The young people had to be intelligent.
- ❖ The young people had to possess a great capacity to learn.
- ❖ The young people had to be teachable.
- ❖ The young people had to have a gift for learning languages.

To honor those selected for deportation, Nebuchadnezzar appointed them the best food and drink of the kingdom (Dan. 1:5). In all of this the king was politically wise for he was building for the future. In the years to come, the young captives would be assimilated into the Chaldean culture but still able to function as ambassadors to foreign nations or conquered territories.

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

1:6 The Hebrew name Daniel means "*judgment of God.*" He was of the tribe of Judah and a member of the royal family. In time Daniel would be honored for his great wisdom and deep devotion to the Lord. Ezekiel paid honor to him (Ezek. 28:3) and placed him in the esteemed company of Noah and Job (Ezek. 14:14). Josephus called Daniel one of the greatest prophets. Even the angel respected him for Gabriel called him a man greatly beloved. Daniel was destined to lead a long and active life in the courts and councils of some of the greatest rulers ever to have lived in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Darius. It is believed that Daniel finally died in Persia at Susan, where he lived to a very old age. If little is known of the end of Daniel's life, his earlier fate and that of his friends, is more familiar. As captives of Nebuchadnezzar, all of them had a change of names.

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

• Name Daniel	Hebrew Meaning God is my judge
New Name Beltshazzar	Chaldean Meaning The keeper of the hidden treasures of Bel
• Name Hananiah	Hebrew Meaning The grace of the sun
New Name Shadrach	Chaldean Meaning The inspiration of the Lord
• Name Mishael	Hebrew Meaning He that is the strong God
New Name Meshach	Chaldean Meaning Of the goddess Shach (Venus)
• Name Azariah	Hebrew Meaning The Lord is help
New Name Abednego	Chaldean Meaning The servant of shining fire

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

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

1:9 There is a divine proverb that guides certain relationships. *“When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Prov 16:7).*

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

1:10 The way of the world when it cares for others is rooted in self-interest. The prince of the eunuch wanted Daniel to eat properly lest Daniel make him look bad.

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

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse [vegetable] to eat, and water to drink.

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

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved [tested] them ten days.

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

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse [vegetable].

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

1:8-17 **The courage of conviction.** Following his strong stand for a godly purpose (1:8), time passed quickly and quietly for Daniel and his three friends. Their days were filled with concentrated education in all the knowledge of Babylon (1:9-17). Finally, after three years the day came when King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to see what his idea had produced. Would the young men he sponsored be able to serve in the royal courts? In a formal ceremony Ashpenaz brought all the captives before the throne to find out.

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

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

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

1:18-20 One by one King Nebuchadnezzar questioned the young men who stood before him. He was particularly impressed with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. No matter what subject he spoke to them about, they were infinitely more informed and knowledgeable than anyone else in his whole kingdom. While Nebuchadnezzar did not bother to inquire what the ultimate source of their wisdom was, the *Bible* is careful to give the honor and glory to God.

The *Scriptures* state plainly (Dan. 1:17) that "*God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom.*"

Men who do not know God, attribute the acquisition of learning to chance or natural selection. Such thinking brings dishonor to the Lord, and it dishonors man himself, for it is an illogical and unreasonable thought. Nothing cannot make itself greater than it is. The chair cannot become a diamond nor can the bird become an airplane. The infant in the cradle cannot increase in knowledge unless God gives it the means and the opportunity.

Because Christians recognize the Source of all learning and wisdom, believers can appeal to that Source to grant more grace in the distribution of these gifts. James, the brother of Christ according to the flesh, instructs us to do this very thing (James 1:5).

21 And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus [of Persia, 559 BC].

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 1

1. During what time period does the narrative for the book of Daniel begin?

Answer.

The narrative begins in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim (609-598 BC), king of Judah. Jehoiakim was 25 years old at his accession of power.

2. List the meaning of the names of Daniel and his friends in captivity, their new names and what they mean.

Answer.

The following chart tells the meaning of the names of Daniel and his friends, their new names and the meaning of the same.

- **Name** **Hebrew Meaning**
Daniel God is my judge

- **New Name** **Chaldean Meaning**
Belteshazzar The keeper of the hidden treasures of Bel

- **Name** **Hebrew Meaning**
Hananiah The grace of the sun

- **New Name** **Chaldean Meaning**
Shadrach The inspiration of the Lord

- **Name** **Hebrew Meaning**
Mishael He that is the strong God

- **New Name** **Chaldean Meaning**
Meshach Of the goddess Shach (Venus)

- **Name** **Hebrew Meaning**
Azariah The Lord is help

- **New Name** **Chaldean Meaning**
Abednego The servant of shining fire

3. Briefly identify the following:

- ❖ Josiah
- ❖ Johanan

- ❖ Jehoiakim
- ❖ Jehoahaz
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar
- ❖ Ashpenaz
- ❖ Cyrus

Answer.

The following are simply identified.

- ❖ Josiah, king of Judah (640-609)
- ❖ Johanan, Elder son of Josiah
- ❖ Jehoiakim, Middle son of Josiah
- ❖ Jehoahaz, younger son of Josiah
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of Babylonian empire
- ❖ Ashpenaz, leader of the eunuchs
- ❖ Cyrus, ruler of the Persian empire

4. What qualities did the Babylonians look for in the young people they deported?

Answer.

The Babylonians looked for the best and the brightest of the Jewish youth to deport.

- ❖ The young people had to be physically sound.
- ❖ The young people had to be intelligent.
- ❖ The young people had to possess a great capacity to learn.
- ❖ The young people had to be teachable.
- ❖ The young people had to have a gift for learning languages.

5. How much wiser were the Hebrew students than the Babylonian scholars?

Answer.

The Hebrew youth were “*ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.*”

Practical Application and Reflection

1. Do you believe in and embrace the biblical revelation of the absolute sovereignty of God in human affairs? If not, why not?
2. Do you have the courage of your convictions? Has that courage ever been tested? What was the result of the test?
3. Why do you think Daniel refused to eat the food and wine from the king's table? Was his decision rational? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe that God speaks to people in dreams today? Explain. If you do believe God has spoken to you in a dream, please share what was "said" to you.
5. What role if any should astrology have in the Christian life? Should Christians read horoscopes even for fun? Why or why not?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

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

Leaders Supplemental Material

1:1 5 From the vantage point of time, the opening words of the narrative seem almost exciting. The romance of war is in the air. There is the trauma of young people being carried away captive to a foreign land to be reared in a golden palace. There is the opportunity for the captives to be educated by the greatest men of science. There is the comfort of being among a few faithful friends. The story throbs with life, danger, and political greatness.

What must not be forgotten is that a nation was being destroyed bit by bit. Judgment came in part because a corrupt king was sitting on the throne of what was once the theocratic kingdom. So great were his sins that the LORD gave Jehoiakim into the hands of the king Babylon. Rulers and leaders should remember that all power and all positions in life are in the Lord's hands. The Lord gives such honor and the Lord can take them away. As the narrative is reviewed, several spiritual lessons come to mind.

1. It is always sad when the people of God and the possessions of the Lord find their way into the house of false gods. When the Lord allows this to happen, there is usually a greater truth to be learned and that is God demands worship with a right spirit.
2. When adults of the covenant violate their holy commitments, the children suffer as greatly as all others.

3. The world is anxious to transform God's people by force if necessary (Dan. 1:1-2) by change of names if possible (Dan. 1:6-7) and by acts of kindness when practical (Dan. 1:5).

4. As seen so often in the study of the prophets, all judgments begin first in the house of God.

1:2 Concerning the sovereignty of God, guest lecturer at Calvin Seminary, R. B. Kuiper once used the following illustration of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. *"I liken them to two ropes going through two holes in the ceiling and over a pulley above. If I wish to support myself by them, I must cling to them both. If I cling only to one and not the other, I go down. I read the many teachings of the Bible regarding God's election, predestination, his chosen, and so on, I read also the many teachings regarding, 'whosoever will may come' and urging people to exercise their responsibility as human beings. These seeming contradictions cannot be reconciled by the puny human mind. With childlike faith, I cling to both ropes, fully confident that in eternity I will see that both strands of truth are, after all, of one piece."*

Introduction to Daniel 2

In the ancient world dreams were regarded as having significance and as portents of events yet to come. One night, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a significant dream. Because of its contents and vividness, the dream greatly upset him and he wanted to know what it meant. Therefore, in the light of day, he called for his magicians, and astrologers, and sorcerers, who were grouped together and known simply as the Wise Men or the Chaldeans.

The function of these Wise Men was to tap into the supernatural. Such activities were condemned by the Law of Moses (Deut. 18:10) and rightly so for there is only one true God who knows the future with certainty. To the group of Wise Men, King Nebuchadnezzar gave an unusual task. He wanted the men to tell him of his dream and what it meant even though they had no real ability to discern the supernatural.

While the King may not have forgotten the entire dream (Dan. 2:9), he had to find a way to test the Wise Men to know if they could really provide a correct answer as to the meaning of the dream. In his heart the King must have known, as did the Wise Men, that the religion of Babylon was mere superstition and not the truth.

DANIEL 2

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

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

3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know [understand] the dream.

4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live forever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

2:1-4 When the Wise Men first heard that the King had a dream, they were not unduly concerned. Even when the King threatened them with dismemberment and ruin, they were not alarmed. Such threats were common and to be expected. The violence of an eastern despot was brutal. So the Wise Men spoke to Nebuchadnezzar in Syriack [i.e. Aramaic] (Dan. 2:4) with great confidence. If they were able to help the king, they would receive gifts, financial rewards, and great honor. Now, if the King would simply tell them what it was he dreamed they would immediately be able to provide him with an interpretation that would comfort his heart.

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

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

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

2:5-7 For the second time the Wise Men asked the King to share his dream. But the King would not reveal his dream nor would he cancel his threat to kill the Wise Men if they proved not to be so wise. Now the Wise Men were concerned and for good reason. It would soon be apparent for all to see that they had no real ability to tell the King what he dreamed or what his dream meant. In anger Nebuchadnezzar roared at his Wise Men whose hearts were beating rapidly beneath their flowing robes.

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

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

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

11 And *it is* a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

2:8-11 Speaking for the third time the Wise Men pleaded with the King. He was asking too much (2:10-11). What he wanted was beyond human power. Of course it was! And now the truth was out. Whatever the Wise Men could do they did with human power. No wonder the King became furious at them. He was supporting a large group of men who claimed to have access to supernatural power. But when the supernatural power was needed, it was not available. The Wise Men with all their clever tricks were but human after all.

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

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

2:12-13 In his anger and frustration, Nebuchadnezzar sent forth the royal decree that the Wise Men were to be executed immediately. Included in this mandate were Daniel and his three friends because they had been trained under the Wise Men. Unless something happened quickly, Daniel and his friends were going to be executed for the sins of others. When word reached Daniel he acted swiftly.

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

15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, *Why is the decree so hasty [urgent] from the king?* Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

2:14-15 First, he requested an audience with Arioch, the guard of the palace to discover why the King was acting with such harshness (not hastiness). In this behavior, Daniel provides a very important example. It is vital to discover what is on the other person's mind without assuming that one knows and without attributing things that one does not know to be the case.

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

2:16 After he was fully informed, the Bible says that Daniel secured an audience with the King to make a request and to give a promise. The request was for just a little more time.

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

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

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

2:17-19 The promise was that the dream would be revealed and explained. Observe in this three thoughts.

First, Daniel's confidence which was based upon past experiences with the Lord. Daniel knew that he had a special gift from God and so did other people.

Second, consider Daniel's courage, which was extraordinary. "*Men of deep faith,*" says Matthew Henry, "*are bold.*"

Third, notice Daniel's humility. While Daniel is confident, he is not presumptuous. He needs to take this whole situation to the Lord in prayer, which he does. And he invites others to join him in prayer as well. The basis of prayer will be the mercy of God. (*See Doctrine of Mercy*)

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

2:20 When Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar with certainty that he would reveal the dream and its interpretation, he was not being boastful. Daniel knew he had the gift of prophecy. He had faith that God would make known to him the dream and Daniel was right. In a night vision, the secret dream of Nebuchadnezzar's was revealed. Daniel and his three friends had asked for mercy and they would receive it from the Lord.

The mercy of God was given to others besides Daniel for the Wise Men of Babylon would also be spared. The blood bath the king had called for would not be administered. The sad part is that the unbelieving community had no true God to thank for their lives. The Babylonians sorcerers had been spared by the Lord and blessed by Him but they still, knew Him not. What the Chaldeans did not know, Daniel did and so he could render a heartfelt prayer of praise.

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

2:21 In his prayer of praise Daniel recalled the wonderful attributes of God. An attribute is anything true about God.

- ❖ The *Bible* says that God is love (1 John 4:8), therefore, love is an attribute of God.
- ❖ The *Bible* says that God is a spirit (John 4:24) therefore, spirit is an attribute of God.
- ❖ The *Bible* says that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2) therefore, truthfulness or holiness is an attribute of God.
- ❖ The *Bible* says that God is eternal (Psa. 90:2) therefore, eternity is an attribute of God.

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

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

2:21-23 As the *Scriptures* are studied, it becomes obvious that God has many attributes. How many attributes there are is a matter of argument among the theologians. In his small but wonderful book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A. W. Tozer considers nineteen attributes of God and their meaning in the Christian life. In 1682, Stephen Charnock published a work of 1102 pages in which he dealt with only eleven attributes of God. Some religious thinkers have insisted that there are only seven attributes of God but Faber sang of the "*God of a thousand attributes*," and Charles Wesley exclaimed, "*Glad thine attributes confess, Glorious all and numberless*." Whatever the exact number, what is wonderful to realize is that God has revealed Himself to mankind. By faith we believe that God exists and that He can be known. We can know something about God and beyond that we can KNOW God personally. Daniel knew God personally and was able to articulate what he knew about the Lord in a prayer of praise. In the prophet's prayer, we find several attributes and an exhortation to honor God forever and ever.

The Attributes of God According to Daniel in the 6th Century BC

❖ The Wisdom of God	Daniel 2:20
❖ The Power [Might] of God	Daniel 2:20
❖ Manifested in His ability to change times and seasons	Daniel 2:21
❖ Manifested in His ability to remove kings or exalt them	Daniel 2:21
❖ Manifested in His ability to give wisdom	Daniel 2:21
❖ Manifested in His ability to give knowledge	Daniel 2:21
❖ The Omniscience of God	Daniel 2:22
❖ Manifested in His ability to reveal the deep and secret things	Daniel 2:22
❖ Manifested by His self knowledge of the darkness	Daniel 2:22
❖ The Truthfulness [Holiness] of God for light dwelleth with Him	Daniel 2:23

2:23 The prayer of Daniel ends with a personal word of thanksgiving (Dan. 2:23). Daniel had asked for something specific and the Lord had granted his request. When we pray, let us praise God for who He is in His essence. And let us praise Him for specific prayers He has answered. Let all the earth praise the Lord!

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

2:24 After Daniel finished thanking the Lord for His answer to prayer, the prophet went to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard. The first thing that had to be done was to reverse the order to execute the Wise Men of Babylon. By intervening on behalf of the Wise Men of Babylon, Daniel was demonstrating the principle of grace. He who had been shown so much mercy must now try to find it for others. Daniel knew that God shows common kindness to the evil and to the good (Matthew 5:45).

This is contrary to human nature. We want to show kindness only to those who show kindness to us. But God rewards good for evil and tells us to do the same. And then He gives us the opportunity. There is no doubt but Daniel could have easily rationalized why the Wise Men of Babylon should be executed.

- ❖ They had told outrageous lies.
- ❖ They had misrepresented themselves.
- ❖ They had not honored the true Lord God of Israel.
- ❖ They were proud and arrogant.
- ❖ They might continue to mislead people and corrupt the Jewish youth.
- ❖ The competition would be gone.

2:24 Daniel could have thought of many ways to save himself and his friends while allowing the execution of the astrologers, magicians, and soothsayers. But Daniel resisted all such lower impulses. With the death of the opposition, there would be no opportunity for their conversion and it is salvation which should always be the ultimate goal of all Christians. If the Wise Men are to be religiously discredited, there must be a good reason.

If the Wise Men are to be exposed as frauds and sinners in need of a true Saviour, perhaps such exposure will lead to their repentance and godly sorrow.

But an unjust death based upon political and religious intrigue would do nothing to advance the cause of God. The God of all grace and mercy would not then be made known. In similar situations that Christians face today, Daniel becomes a wonderful role model. Specific guiding principles are found.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ❖ Hurt no one physically or emotionally. | Daniel 2:24 |
| ❖ Help everyone when possible. | Daniel 2:24 |
| ❖ Pray for Divine intervention. | Daniel 2:18 |
| ❖ Speak the truth in love even if the truth exposes wrong beliefs. | Daniel 2:27 |
| ❖ Quickly use one's spiritual gift. | Daniel 2:16 |
| ❖ Stand boldly on eternal principles. | Daniel 2:28 |

❖ Give God the glory.

Daniel 2:28

The *Bible* tells us that the same way we treat others, God will treat us.

- *Matthew 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

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

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

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

2:25-27 Once Daniel secured the safety of the Babylonians, he made his services available to the king (2:24b). Anxiously had the king been waiting for someone to help him interpret and understand his dream so sleep would return. Now he knew such a man existed and had been found. In the selection process, Arioch wanted the king to think that he had found Daniel when the truth was, Daniel had found Arioch.

The Captain of the King's Guard sensed a good political and public relations moment when he saw one. This was too good to pass up. If Daniel proved to be able to provide a solution to the king's problem, Arioch knew that Nebuchadnezzar would not forget his loyal captain who found the subject for his ruler.

While Arioch was quick to seize a small amount of glory for himself, Daniel seized the same moment to bring greater honor to the Lord. Daniel was bold to declare the intellectual and spiritual limitations of the Wise Men of Babylon (2:27). In contrast to man's insufficiency is the sufficiency of God. "*There is a God in heaven,*" said Daniel *'that revealeth secret.'*"

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

❖ The God in heaven is high above the gods of the earth reflecting His superiority over them.

❖ The God in heaven is invisible while the Babylonian gods are visible for they are the products of the minds and hands of man.

- ❖ The God in heaven is alive while the gods of Babylon are dead!
 - ❖ The God in heaven is able to reveal things.
 - ❖ He is able to reveal the secrets of men's hearts. Their thoughts, dreams, motives, and ambitions.
 - ❖ He is able to reveal what shall be in the latter days. The "latter days" refers to the Messianic Age. This age was ushered in by the appearance of Christ upon earth as many passages teach.
6. *Hebrews 1:1-2 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

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

2:29 The content of the dream is that which shall occur in the Messianic Age! The reason why God can reveal the future is because He is the Sovereign of the Universe in the absolute sense of the word. The past is known to Him as well as the future. The future is actually history to God for it is HIS story. All that shall come to pass has been planned and decreed by God to come to pass in a specific way.

This is not to say that the future is to be identified with fatalism. In fatalism there is nothing personal. In fatalism, man is the product of irrational forces. The Christian's view of History is that there is wise and loving personal God who is all powerful and is decreeing all things that will happen according to the counsel of His good will and for His own pleasure. History is not the result of constant clashes among the social classes as Communism. Nor is history based upon economic determinism as others teach. History is the outworking of the glorious Plan of Redemption.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| ❖ A people | Abraham |
| ❖ A nation | The Jews |
| ❖ A tribe | The tribe of Judah |
| ❖ A family | In the tribe of David |
| ❖ A woman in the family of the tribe of Judah | Mary |
| ❖ A son | Jesus Christ |

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

2:30 God has been willing to show His great plan with all men but not all men understand. God has not hidden His design from anyone though not everyone cares to read and study what has been revealed. No one has been left out. No one has been neglected. The problem is that when God speaks, things are difficult for some to understand. Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar become clear representatives of two groups of people. Nebuchadnezzar represents all natural men who have been visited by God, spoken to by God, but do not understand a word the Lord has said. Daniel represents all of the elect who are kept safe from destruction, subject to the laws of sin and death, and he is divinely delivered by revelation. To the redeemed God reveals His secrets and understanding of the future. As Daniel embarks on the interpretation of the dream, he pauses one last time to make an important point.

He is but a servant of the Most High. He has no more wisdom than other men apart from Divine revelation. The humility of Daniel is honorable. Daniel knows that God is simply using him for the sake of others. Nebuchadnezzar's dream is revealed to Daniel in order to comfort the Jewish captives. The dream would give hope for the future. The dream would allow many lives to be spared.

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

2:31 The Great Image that King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was not an idol, but a statue in human form of four great empires. Because world powers are one in essence and human by nature, they are united in one statue. This essential unity is important to understand by way of interpretation. The Great Image is said to be bright. The brightness was caused, no doubt, by the reflection of its metals of gold, silver, and brass. The massive size and shining image of the statue would inspire fear and terror. From the head of gold to the feet of clay, there is a steady deterioration. Only the head constitutes a unified whole.

32 This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs [loins] of brass,

33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

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

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

2:32. **This image's head was of fine gold.** The greatest of these four was the first, the Babylonian Empire, represented by the head of gold. By all historical accounts the Babylonian Empire could lay claim to a universal dominion (Dan. 2:38) though there were parts of the earth it did not dominate in Asia, North America, etc. The Babylonian Empire, according to the vision, would be replaced by another kingdom represented by silver.

2:32 **his breast and his arms of silver.** History identifies this second empire as the Empire of the Medes and the Persians who united to overthrow Babylon. This view has been accepted by the church Fathers, Jerome, Luther, Calvin, and in more modern times by the great German scholar, Keil.

2: 32 **his belly and his thighs [loins] of brass.** The third Empire, represented by brass, can be identified as that of Alexander the Great.

2:33 **His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.** Then came Rome, represented by the inferior metal of iron.

2:33 **a stone was cut out without hands.** This prophetic reference is and was about Christ and the kingdom He established.

36 This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

2:36 Once Daniel described the Great Image that King Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream, the next question to address was its meaning. Because no such image had ever been known to man, there was no precedent from which the symbolism could have been borrowed to help in the explanation. The Lord alone would have to explain this Great Image, and He did. From the vantage point of history the interpretation becomes rather easy. The four empires of the prophecy are the Babylon Empire, Mede-Persian Empire, Grecian Empire, and Roman Empire.

37 Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2:44-45 As attention is focused on the image of the Great Uncut Stone which speaks of the kingdom of God, several facts can be noted.

1. The kingdom of God is not of human origin. Man's hands did not form this kingdom. God sets it up.
2. The kingdom of God is eternal in its duration. It shall never be destroyed, nor shall it last only 1,000 years. Since this kingdom is divine, it is therefore eternal.
3. The kingdom of God shall not change hands (2:44). It shall not be left to other people.

It will always be in the hands of the true Israel of God, that is the church.

4. The kingdom of God will break in pieces and destroy the other kingdoms.

**KINGDOMS
OF THE COLOSSUS KINGDOM OF GOD**

❖ Human origin	Divine
❖ Temporary Duration	Eternal
❖ Overcame by each	Cannot be
❖ Succeeding kingdom	conquered

Only Christ can fulfill all the aspects of this prophecy. In complete triumph Jesus destroys the kingdoms of men and sets His own kingdom.

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

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

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

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

2:46-49 In response to Daniel's ability to provide an accurate and rational interpretation of the dream, Nebuchadnezzar honored Daniel in a number of different ways.

- ❖ First, the king showed Daniel personal honor by bowing down to him (Dan. 2:46). In this symbolic act, the king was representing the day that would come when all the kings of the earth will bow before Daniel's God.
- ❖ Second, the king commanded that Daniel be given an oblation. The Hebrew word speaks of some sort of pouring, as in a libation. Sweet odors were also to be poured out around him.
- ❖ Third, Daniel received personal gifts (Dan. 2:48) of houses, servants, clothing, jewels and food.
- ❖ Fourth, he was made the ruler, next to the king, over all of Babylon.
- ❖ Finally, Daniel was made the head of the religious order of Wise Men. As Daniel was honored, so was the God he served, but in a qualified way. The Lord was recognized as the God of truth, the Sovereign among other gods (i.e., idols) and the Lord of the kings of the earth. a revealer of secrets. Men love secrets. In secrecy things can be said and done without much accountability. Secrecy is not part of the Christian experience.
- ❖ The *Bible* tells the Christian to walk in the light and to walk in the truth. For the Christian there is nothing to hide. The *Bible* tells us that one-day God is going to expose every thing that we say and do so that we must give an account. The best preparation for eternity is to live without regret in time and to live openly and honestly before each other.

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 2

The Attributes of God According to Daniel in the 6th Century BC

1. What attributes of God did Daniel notice?

Answer.

Daniel set forth several attributes of God.

- ❖ (2:2) His wisdom
- ❖ (2:21) His power manifested in His ability to change times and seasons, remove kings or exalt them, give wisdom and knowledge.
- ❖ (2:22) His omniscience manifested in His ability to reveal the deep and secret things
- ❖ (2:22) His self knowledge
- ❖ (2:23) His truthfulness

2. List some guiding principles for Christians from Daniel 2:24-28.

Answer.

- ❖ (2:24) Hurt no one physically or emotionally and help everyone when possible.
 - ❖ (2:18) Pray for Divine intervention
 - ❖ (2:27) Speak the truth in love even if the truth exposes wrong beliefs
 - ❖ (2:16) Quickly use one's spiritual gift
 - ❖ (2:28) Stand boldly on eternal principles
 - ❖ (2:28) Give God the glory
3. Why would the anger of Daniel against the wise men of Babylon have been justified?

Answer.

Had Daniel expressed a righteous anger against the wise men of Babylon he would have been justified for they had told outrageous lies against him, misrepresented themselves, and failed to honor the true Lord God of Israel. These men were proud and arrogant and would continue to mislead people and corrupt the Jewish youth. Had Daniel had them terminated his competition would be gone.

4. Describe the image Daniel was able to comment on, and identify each body part with its historical analogy.

Answer.

- ❖ This head of the image *was* of fine gold representing the Babylonian Empire.
- ❖ Its breast and arms of silver can be identified as the Empire of the Medes and the Persians
- ❖ His belly and thighs [loins] of brass spoke of the Greek Empire.
- ❖ His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay foretold the rise of Rome.
- ❖ a stone was cut out without hands is a prophetic reference to Christ and the kingdom He established.

5. State three facts about the kingdom of God.

Answer.

- ❖ The kingdom of God is not of human origin. Man's hands did not form this kingdom. God sets it up.
- ❖ The kingdom of God is eternal in its duration. It shall never be destroyed, nor shall it last only 1,000 years. Since this kingdom is divine, it is therefore eternal.
- ❖ The kingdom of God shall not change hands (2:44). It shall not be left to other people.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you believe God still speaks to individuals in dreams? Why or why not?
2. How do you think you might have reacted with the wise men of Babylon if you were in Daniel's position? Would you have shown them equal grace?
3. Do you think the actions of the wise men of Babylon support the doctrine of the natural depravity of the human heart? Explain.
4. Does the accuracy of Daniel's prophetic vision, with respect to the succeeding empires, enhance your faith in the Bible? Why or why not?

5. Is there a place for secrecy in the life of the believer? If so when and where and under what circumstances?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Daniel 2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: 21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: 22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

Leader's Supplemental Material

2:17-19

Doctrine of Mercy

1. Mercy is that aspect of God's love that causes Him to help the helpless, just as grace is the aspect of His love that moves Him to forgive the guilty.
2. Those who are without hope may be so either because of the breaking God's law or because of circumstances beyond their control.
3. God shows mercy upon those who have broken His law (Dan. 9:9; 1 Tim. 1:13,16), although such mercy is selective, demonstrating that it is not deserved (Rom. 9:14-18).
4. God's mercy on the hopeless extends beyond punishment that is withheld (Eph. 2:4-6). Withheld punishment keeps us from hell, but it does not get us into heaven. God's mercy is greater than this. Mercy takes us to Calvary where our sins are forgiven. According to His mercy He SAVES us.
5. God shows mercy in time by actively helping those who are hurting due to circumstances beyond their control. We see this aspect of mercy especially in the life of our Lord Jesus.
 - ❖ Jesus was a Man of great compassion.
 - ❖ Jesus had compassion for people who needed spiritual guidance.
 - *Matt 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*
 - ❖ Jesus had compassion on those who were sick.
 - *Matt 14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.*
 - ❖ Jesus had compassion on the hungry.

- *Matthew 15:32 Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*
- ❖ Jesus had compassion on those who were blind.
- *Matthew 20:39-40 So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.*
- ❖ Because God is merciful, He expects His children to be merciful (Matthew 5:7; James 1:27).

The Attributes of God
A.W. Tozer, 1897-1963

- ❖ The Holy Trinity
- ❖ God's Omnipresence
- ❖ The Self-existence of God
- ❖ God's Faithfulness
- ❖ The Self-sufficiency Of God
- ❖ The Goodness of God
- ❖ The Eternity of God
- ❖ The Justice of God
- ❖ God's Infinitude
- ❖ The Mercy of God
- ❖ The Immutability of God
- ❖ The Grace of God
- ❖ The Divine Omniscience
- ❖ The Love of God
- ❖ The Wisdom of God
- ❖ The Holiness of God
- ❖ The Omnipotence of God
- ❖ God's Sovereignty
- ❖ The Divine Transcendence

The Attributes of God
Stephen Charnock
b. 1628

❖ Existence of God	Psalms 14:1
❖ God's Being a Spirit	John 4:24
❖ Eternity of God	Psalms 90:2
❖ Immutability of God	Psalms 102:26,27
❖ Omnipresence of God	Jeremiah 23:24
❖ God's Knowledge	Psalm 147:5
❖ Wisdom of God	Romans 16:27
❖ Power of God	Job 26:14
❖ Holiness of God	Exodus 15:11
❖ Goodness of God	Mark 10:18
❖ Dominion of God	Psalm 103:19
❖ Patience of God	Nahum 1:3

2:33 It is at this point that Biblical interpretation can become confusing because of a popular teaching that has become widely accepted since the last part of last century. There is a teaching that the fourth monarch represents not only the historical Roman Empire, but a revived Roman Empire which will come to an end by a sudden catastrophic judgment after which the kingdom of God (i.e., the Millennium) will be set up. Even today, the Revived Roman Empire is in the future.

According to this futuristic view, the destruction of the Gentile world powers by the Great Uncut Stone did not occur at the first advent of Christ but will occur when Jesus comes the second time. There are a number of problems with the concept of a Revived Roman Empire, which modern day would be prophets, see being fulfilled in the European Common Market. The greatest problem is that Christ (symbolized in the Great Uncut Stone) did not smite the image and destroy it; rather, the Great Image, so to speak, smote Him and destroyed Him!

Of course, there is nothing in the vision to suggest that any such thing happened. It may be that those who look to the future to find fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy do not fully appreciate just what Christ did to the Roman Empire and to all the empires of the earth at His First Advent.

Those who still look to the future cannot appreciate the spiritual power and dynamics of the kingdom Christ established represented by the Great Uncut Stone.

A simple reading of Daniel's narrative recognizes that the fourth Empire was to be destroyed and it was. The prophecy says nothing about the Fourth Empire [Rome] being destroyed twice. Nor is there a long interval of time between the destruction of the Great Image and the coming of the Uncut Stone.

There is another argument against the concept of a future Revived Roman Empire. In Daniel's vision, there is an essential unity between the feet and the toes (2:33). The Scriptures do not allow a division of the Roman Empire into two parts nor a further subdivision of ten kingdoms of ten toes. The Great Uncut Stone strikes the feet of the Great Image that reflects four empires, not fourteen.

Where is America in Biblical Prophecy?

To the ever-popular inquiry, "*Where is America in biblical prophecy?*" let me preface my response with this observation. When Daniel saw his Panorama Of Human History, he did not see ALL of human history but only the unfolding of a time period of about 490 years. Daniel saw the rise of four world empires and one spiritual empire. Daniel saw the rise of the Babylonians, the Medes/Persians, the Greeks and the Romans. And then he saw the collapse of these four world empires by the rising of the one Divine Empire represented by the Uncut Stone from the mountain. Concerning the Kingdom of God, Daniel saw four things.

- ❖ It would never be destroyed.
- ❖ It would never be conquered.
- ❖ It would dominate all previous empires. [Notice the word "*these*" in Dan. 2:44. The pronoun reference is to the preceding empires prior to the Divine Kingdom, i.e. Babylon, Medes/Persians, Greece, and Roman]

It is important to stay focused on what Daniel saw because that is all Daniel saw by way of interpretation. Daniel did not see anything beyond the coming of the Messianic kingdom. Daniel did not see any new nations that would arise to fight the kingdom of God.

- ❖ He did not see the rise of Islam.
- ❖ He did not see the rise of Communism.
- ❖ He did not see the rise of Catholicism.
- ❖ He did not see the rise of the Chinese.

What Daniel saw is what is recorded, no more and no less. Therefore, it is wrong for modern day Bible teachers to say that Daniel saw something more than the Scriptures reveal. While it is wrong for new things to be taught, it is done. Men and women shamelessly teach new things. Thousands of books are printed. Charts are made. Dogmatic statements are declared without scriptural basis. Daniel saw a specific time period of history that stretched from his day to the days of the Messiah the Prince and it all happened as he predicted and interpreted. Why then, do we have so much new teaching in our church today? Why are modern day prophetic concepts attributed to Daniel?

There are several reasons.

- ❖ Application has replaced interpretation.
- ❖ Pride has replaced humility.
- ❖ The sensational is very appealing.
- ❖ Satan has infiltrated the church to focus attention upon his power and not the power of Christ.

❖ We are strangers to the Bible.

Interpretation has been replaced by application. And then to make matters worse, the application has become the interpretation. For example, if we were to ask, "*Where is America in biblical prophecy?*" the correct answer would be that there is not a single verse in the entire Bible that speaks of America by way of interpretation. The proof of this is that God knows how to spell. There are hundreds of geographical locations in the bible so that the adding of one more name would be no problem to a sovereign, omniscient God.

If God wanted to put America in the *Bible*, He could have, easily and plainly. It is very humbling to realize that, while we might think our nation great, God does not deem fit to mention it. We are impressed with our strength, our spirituality, and our ancestry, but God is not impressed at all. At least not enough to write about us two thousand to twenty five hundred years ago. This is humbling to realize. The last nation the bible spoke of prophetically was Rome. John called it a Beast in the Revelation and saw its judgment.

Therefore, by way of interpretation, mark it down, America is not in the *Bible*. Neither is China, Russia, Japan, Italy, or England.

However, by way of application, America and all the nations of the earth are in the bible. For example, the Bible teaches that the kingdom of God will dominate the other kingdoms of this world now that it has been established. This is what Daniel saw and it is what John saw in the book of the Revelation. But it takes faith to believe this for the natural eye looks around and wonders.

The natural eye sees the Communist coming to power in 1917 in Russia and wonders where God is. How can such an Evil Empire emerge? But wait! The Sovereign God is not through with Communism and within 70 years the nation is subdued. The eye of faith sees the Lord judging the Communist and the kingdom of God being triumph. Today, America is going the way of all flesh.

On Monday, March 25, 1996, the homosexuals in San Francisco were openly united in marriage by the mayor of that city. This is an abomination upon our land and is certain to bring the swift and just judgment of God upon everyone. And the judgment will come. Blatant sins and multiculturalism will prove to be the curse on our culture.

In the decades to come, America will look more and more like the face of Europe if history teaches us anything. People who are afraid of the United Nations have nothing to fear. People who believe we are moving toward a one-world government have nothing to fear. More nations are being created, not less. The world is becoming more fragmented, not more united. And this too is a form of divine judgment. Evil shall not be allowed to reign forever (Isa. 59:19). Sensationalism teaches one thing. The Scriptures teach another. If we understand the difference between biblical interpretation and practical application of biblical principles then we will be careful not to read into the texts of scripture. We will be careful to read out only what the texts allow us to read. There are technical concepts for these two ideas.

The first is summarized in the word exegesis. Exegesis is a term derived by transliteration from the Greek [exegesis] meaning "*narration*" or "*explanation*." Exegesis is the science of interpretation. It tries to fix the meaning of individual statements and passages. Exegesis is founded upon two fundamentals.

First, it is believed that thoughts can be accurately conveyed in words that have shades of meaning.

Second, exegesis assumes that the Bible is so important that all painstaking effort to discover exactly what God said is important. The search is on for the literal, grammatical, historical understanding of a text.

In contrast to exegesis is another concept which is not scholarly but subjective. The issue is not, "*What has God said?*" Rather, the issue for some people remains this: "*What is God saying to me? Today? In light of the morning news stories?*" Freedom is found to read into the *Bible* whatever the mood of the moment is.

For those who were persecuted during the Reformation period, the Pope was the Anti-Christ. For those who were afraid during the 19th century, Napoleon was the Anti-Christ to come. For those afraid during the 20th century, Germany's Kaiser was the Anti-Christ to come during WW I. Then came WW II and some people thought Mussolini was the Anti-Christ. Others decided it was Adolph Hitler.

During the 1970's, more than one American Protestant prophet said Henry Kissinger was the Anti-Christ. What all of these things have in common is isegesis [reading something into a text] not exegesis [reading truth out of the text]. God's people are guilty of reading into the Scriptures instead of reading out of the *Bible* what God has said. I do not have much hope that this will ever stop.

The *Bible* tells us that God's people will always have itching ears. God's people will always be gullible. God's people will always be lead astray to a certain extent by those who are bold enough to find keys to unlock ancient mysteries. All some of us can do is to be faithful and tell the truth. America by way of interpretation is not in the Bible and it is prideful to think that we merit mentioning. The exciting truth to believe and realize is that the Kingdom of the Messiah has been established according to promise and of that kingdom there will be no end. Let the church be the church and let the people rejoice.

“Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
going on before.

Christ, the royal Master,
leads against the foe;
Forward into battle
see His banners go!

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.

At the sign of triumph
Satan's host doth flee;
On then, Christian soldiers,
On to victory!

Hell's foundations quiver
At the shout of praise;
Brothers lift your voices,
Loud your anthems raise.

Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod.

We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity.

Sabine Baring Gould

The Story Behind the Song

“Whit-Monday [the day after Pentecost] is a great day for school festivals in Yorkshire. One Whit-Monday, thirty years ago, it was arranged that our school should join forces with that of a neighboring village. I wanted the children to sing when marching from one village to another, but couldn't think of anything quite suitable; so I sat up at night, resolved that I would write something myself. “*Onward, Christian Soldiers*” was the result. It was written in great haste, and I am afraid some of the rhymes are faulty. Certainly nothing has surprised me more than its popularity. I don't remember how it got printed first, but I know that very soon it found its way into several collections. I have written a few other hymns since then, but only two or three have become at all well-known.” This hymn was sung at the funeral of American president Dwight Eisenhower at the National Cathedral, Washington, DC, March 1969.

Introduction to Daniel 3

Having faithfully interpreted the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (605-562 BC), and having been honored for his service, Daniel will now face the greatest challenge to his faith by way of temptation. The temptation will be to cling to all the newfound honor and glory he has received by paying the price of worshipping an idol. Since Daniel's three friends were honored with him, they too will face the same temptation.

The reason why Daniel and his companions will be tested is found in the pride of Nebuchadnezzar. Because of someone else's sin, the people of God will be persecuted. While this is not fair, such situations are to be expected as part of the spiritual warfare that rages in the universe. According to the interpretation of the vision by Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold. Gold speaks of riches and riches are one source of wielding power. Because of the wealth of the empire, Nebuchadnezzar did have great power over other lands and people. Daniel had told the monarch that all his power was the result of the grace of the Sovereign God of the universe (Dan. 2:36). Nebuchadnezzar soon forgot that point and began to consider himself unique in all the earth.

DANIEL 3

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

31:1 Having faithfully interpreted the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (605-562 BC), and having been honored for his service, Daniel will now face the greatest challenge to his faith by way of temptation. The temptation will be to cling to all the newfound honor and glory he has received by paying the price of worshipping an idol. Since Daniel's three friends were honored with him, they too will face the same temptation.

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

3:2 Once the great image was established, Nebuchadnezzar sent word that all the government officials in his empire were to gather before the colossus on the plains of Dura. The officials came. There were satraps (kingdom/guardians much like presidential cabinet members), administrators, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, and magistrates.

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

4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

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

3: 3-6 The government officials gathered before the great image of gold believing that a dedication service was about to take place. However, once together, the officials found that the crafty king had a hidden agenda. Nebuchadnezzar wanted more than a ceremonial service. He wanted to be honored by all men in a special way. The penalty of death was threatened if honor was refused. There was no freedom of the will involved in the king's new edict. There was no freedom of conscience. Either he would be honored or there would be a fiery form of death based upon the pretext of treason. Anticipating that there would be contentious souls who would refuse to worship the golden image, Nebuchadnezzar had an execution chamber prepared in the form of a fiery furnace. Furnaces or kilns were used in Babylon for firing bricks. If the furnaces could harden bricks, the king knew they could easily consume human flesh and bones for execution by burning was a well known practice in the ancient world (Jer. 29:22). Those who would not worship, the king set the stage for suffering.

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

3:7 To make the act of idolatry more palatable and the threat of death less menacing, Nebuchadnezzar prepared an orchestra to be present at the ceremonies. The musicians would play their instruments, which included the horn, the flute, the lyre, and the psaltery. While the symphony played, people would fall down and worship the golden image. The great day came. The golden image was polished brightly. A multitude of people of various nations and languages gathered. The king made his royal entrance and was seated on a special platform prepared for him and his entourage.

Finally, the moment arose. The royal orchestra leader raised his hands. The musicians took a deep breath. The signal was given. The sound of music went forth and all the people fell down in an overt act of homage. All the people fell down to worship, that is, except the Jews, to include Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men refused to obey the order of the king, thereby setting the stage for suffering.

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

9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever.

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

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

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

3:8-12 By building an image of gold and demanding that all people in his kingdom worship it or face a certain death by fire, Nebuchadnezzar set the stage for suffering. Those who opposed the policy of the king on religious grounds were destined for persecution. For Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the persecution began when certain Chaldeans asked for a private audience with the king. Once alone with the king, the Chaldeans began to speak things into his ears that were partially true but wholly wrong in conclusion. The Chaldeans spoke of certain Jews who were high officials in the king's court. They had been appointed by royal decree. However, unlike other officials, these Jews were not worshipping the golden image nor the gods of Babylon. All of this was true. What was not true was that the Jews were showing disrespect for the king as charged.

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

3:13 When Nebuchadnezzar first heard what the Jews were doing, the Bible says that he was filled with fury and with rage. While it is possible to be angry and to sin not, it is also possible to have unjustified anger. Nebuchadnezzar's anger was unjustified for it was grounded in a distortion of the Jews and his own foolish pride at having a wicked commandment challenged. Like so many people in a position of power, Nebuchadnezzar thought that authority alone is all that matters. He spoke, others should respond.

What the king forgot was that there is a God who gave him his kingdom and it is to this one true God that he himself is subject to. The God of heaven demands justice and righteousness in the rulers of the earth and not arrogant decrees. Nebuchadnezzar is going to find himself fighting both godly men and the God of the men in his passion. In his anger he does not think, for rage does not reflect, it only threatens.

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

3:14 To his credit, Nebuchadnezzar did give the Jews an opportunity to answer the charges. If he did not reveal the source of the accusations, he at least provided a public forum for the truth to be known and the position of the Jews to be crystallized. What the king discovered is that the Jews had a good reason for their position. When given the chance, people who have been falsely hurt usually can provide a good account of themselves.

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

3:15 Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar was not listening to the good reasoning offered. In his arrogance he threatened the Jews with death while taunting their God (Dan. 3:15). However, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were not intimidated. The righteous have nothing to fear except fear itself.

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

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

3:16-18 Respectfully, the three men answered the king.

First, they professed their confidence in the Lord. *"Our God is able to deliver us"*, they said.

Second, the Jews submitted themselves to His sovereign will. They did not know that the Lord would save them and so they did not presume to tell what they did not know.

Third, the Jews remained loyal to their convictions. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, did not compromise, they did not rationalize, and they did not justify bad behavior.

What these three men did do was prepare themselves to suffer for righteousness sake while maintaining their faith in God.

1. The Chaldeans flattered the proud in order to destroy the innocent, they deified a blood stained and capricious tyrant, that they might doom to death three unoffending strangers and captives, whom they hated.
2. In all of this the Chaldeans are a true picture of the world in every age. It exalts the oppressor and tramples on the innocent.
3. Nebuchadnezzar is a perfect example of the favorite of this world. He is courted, envied, flattered, admired and adorned--outwardly.
4. The Christian is commanded not to fear man but to fear God.
5. The Christian cannot bow down before golden idols and still worship the Living God. We must be equally decided in our relationship with them.
6. It is the course of religion to deteriorate to the point that it becomes an instrument of tyranny. Christianity has been no exception, witnessed by its misuse by the church and kings for centuries 325 - 1500.
7. Duty to God is stronger than gratitude to man.
8. The only way to stand in the hour of ultimate testing is to make a conscious decision to depend upon God. *If sinners entice thee, consent not.*
9. To know the origin of the conflict is to understand it better. Most conflicts start when someone says or does something that will hurt someone else.
10. The first sin was designed to hurt God. We must not be surprised when we as Christians become the target of bad behavior that is unreasonable and unnecessary.
11. We honor the Jewish youths because they made religion personal, they put their trust in God, and they put eternal matters before temporal.

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

3:19 The boldness of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to oppose the policy of the king to worship an idol infuriated him. In addition, their actions caused him to change his attitude towards them. Once the king thought that the three Jewish captives were among the brightest in the land. Now he considered them foolish. Once Nebuchadnezzar thought the Jewish youths to be the most respectful of his subjects. Now he considered them obstinate, unreasonable, and defiant. They were being brought too often into his presence challenging his policies.

First, there was the issue of the food. Now there is this matter of honoring the king. Will the Jews never be reasonable? Must they always cause trouble? If there is a lesson for the church, it is that we must learn to say, "No!" to many temptations.

Without further comment, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered that the fiery furnace should be heated seven times more intense than it normally was. Unreasonable anger is manifested in a desire to overkill. Once the fire was ready, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were cast into the midst of the burning fire. Persecution came to the people of God. When the Lord allows His people to be tested there is always a purpose.

- ❖ Persecution comes to show the reality of religion. A minister was recently visiting in Russia on a missionary tour. He was taken aside by a leading Communist official and asked about the Christian faith of President Clinton. "If he is a Christian, then why does he take so many positions that are anti-Christian?" the Communist leader asked. It is a question that could be asked of many.
- ❖ To test faith.
- ❖ To manifest who is a true believer.
- ❖ To promote the gospel. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church.
- ❖ To prepare the heart for heaven.

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

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

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

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

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

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

3:20-25 By the persecution of God's people several facts are proven. It is proven that the Christian religion cannot be destroyed by it; God is a miracle working God; and the spiritual life is more important than physical life; and truth will triumph over falsehood.

By the persecution of God's people, the world becomes amazed. When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fiery furnace to see what the result of his edict would be, he was amazed at many things. The king was amazed at the number of people he saw. He had expected to see three men screaming in pain, tormented by the flames, consumed in horror. Instead the king saw four men in the fire. The king was amazed at who he saw. He saw a son of the gods (lit.). Bible commentators are divided at this point in their understanding. The Hebrew language speaks of a "*son of the gods*." The Jewish interpreters thought the phrase referred to an angel.

Some Christian theologians thought it referred to the pre-incarnate Christ. However, Jerome thought Nebuchadnezzar was too wicked to have a vision of the Lord. For conservative Christians, there is no problem with believing that Nebuchadnezzar saw a theophany. God has promised His people to be with them (Isa. 43:2).

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

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

3:26-27 Nebuchadnezzar was amazed that no one was being hurt. The Jewish men were loose, free and unharmed. While the king had done his best to make God's people suffer, they ultimately survived. Had Nebuchadnezzar been more spiritual minded, he would have been wise to learn that the furnace of man's wrath has no equal to the furnace of God's righteous indignation, for the Bible speaks of an eternal hell. In his TV special *Starting Over*, Billy Graham said that he has been asked if he believes in hell. "*Well, I believe in heaven,*" he responded. "*And I believe in hell because the Bible teaches it.*"

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

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

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

3:28-30 In the process of purification some things will be the lost. In particular those things which bind us shall be lost. The three Jewish youths lost their physical bonds in the flames of the furnace but only so that they could walk better with the Lord. Spiritually, God's furnace causes us to lose the bonds of sin so that we might walk better with Him. In the end Nebuchadnezzar finally realized that he could not hurt the Jews, so he took five actions. :

- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar stopped the persecution.
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar changed his attitude (again) about the youths.
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar gave them freedom of conscience to worship (Dan. 3:28).
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar provided a token of honor to the Lord (Dan. 3:29).
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar exalted the Jewish youths the second time.

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 3

1. How did Nebuchadnezzar make idolatry more appealing to the people?

Answer.

To make the act of idolatry more palatable and the threat of death less menacing, Nebuchadnezzar prepared an orchestra to be present at the ceremonies.

2. What was the defense of the Hebrew slaves in their act of civil disobedience?

Answer.

First, they professed their confidence in the Lord. "Our God is able to deliver us", they said. Second, the Jews submitted themselves to His sovereign will. They did not know that the Lord would save them and so they did not presume to tell what they did not know. Third, the Jews remained loyal to their convictions. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, did not compromise, they did not rationalize, and they did not justify bad behavior.

3. Why does God allow His people to suffer persecution?

Answer.

- ❖ Persecution comes to show the reality of religion.
- ❖ To test faith.
- ❖ To manifest who is a true believer.
- ❖ To promote the gospel. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church.
- ❖ To prepare the heart for heaven.

4. What is the origin of conflict?

Answer.

To know the origin of the conflict is to understand it better. Most conflicts start when someone says or does something that will hurt someone else.

5. What actions did Nebuchadnezzar take when he realized he could not harm the Jews?

Answer.

- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar stopped the persecution.
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar changed his attitude (again) about the youths.
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar gave them freedom of conscience to worship (Dan. 3:28).
- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar provided a token of honor to the Lord (Dan. 3:29).

- ❖ Nebuchadnezzar exalted the Jewish youths the second time.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Should Christians always obey the laws of man? If not, when is it right to refuse and accept the consequences?
2. Is it ever wrong for a Christian to plot to kill an evil despot? Why?
3. Do you think you would have refused to worship the idol as the Hebrews did? Why or why not?
4. What are modern day forms of idolatry? Why did you list these items?
5. The divine deliverance of the Hebrews amazed the king. Have you ever known a divine deliverance out of a harmful situation?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

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

Leader's Supplemental Material

3:3-7 In considering this section of Scripture, there are several observations to make.

1. It is possible for those who profess to have great respect for the Word of God, and for the ministers of God, to have no true appreciation for either.
2. The heart of man resists being humbled. For a moment, it did appear that King Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by the interpretation of his dream by Daniel. But then he arose from before God to exalt himself. It is hard to keep a bad man down. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said that the great theme of the Bible is to humble us before God.
3. Those who turn from the Lord will spare no expense for their own personal pleasures and self-exaltation. Taking from the royal treasury, Nebuchadnezzar overlaid the colossal image with lavish wealth.
4. When personal safety and self-interest is at stake, it is the nature of people to accept more and more bizarre and silly things. Some of the government officials, like the Jews, may have felt that the king had gone too far with his commandments but they still bowed lest they be burned.

5. The acceptance of sin is understandable to a large extent. Most people will do whatever it takes to continue to live. One survivor of the Nazi Holocaust tells his story of watching an SS officer shoot a Jewish musician who could not play well. The officer thought he had killed the man but had only wounded him. The Jewish man tried to intervene on behalf of the wounded individual only to be told to take the bleeding body to the crematorium and put the man in even though he was still alive and conscious. The Jew obeyed because if he did not, he would have been put alive into the oven. He just did as he was told.
6. The instinct of self-preservation will over rule all reason and all emotions of pity and kindness unless there is mental and spiritual preparation to temper certain actions.
7. Life can change suddenly. One day Daniel and his three friends were safe and secure in the highest echelons of power in the court of the king. The next day they were wanted men, as political enemies stalked their souls.
8. The commandments of men are grievous because of sin. Consider the source of all conflicts, be they personal, national, or international, and you will discover some sinful impulse is at the root. Righteousness is never in conflict with righteousness. Righteousness is always in conflict with sin. The commandments of the Lord are not grievous. Listen, for example, to Jesus as He says, *"A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another."*

3:26-27 God's people might pass through the fires of men, but unrighteous men must one-day pass through the fires of God, prepared for the devil and his angels. The fires of God are more severe and they last forever. Though there is not much physical persecution for the faith in our nation today, there are still spiritual furnaces that God's people must pass through.

1. There is the furnace of slander.
2. There is the furnace of satanic opposition. The devil whispers into our ears things that undermines faith. *"You have been forsaken by God,"* he says. *"Your sins are too many,"* he tells us. *"Your sins are too horrendous for God to forgive,"* he declares. *"Your damnation is certain."*
3. There is the furnace of physical pain. During the last five years of her life, Corrie Ten Boom was unable to speak. For a lady who had been a *"Tramp for the Lord"* for many years, speaking to large audiences, such silence must have been difficult.
4. There is the furnace of bereavement.
5. There is the furnace of loss. The business, which was thought to be a blessing, has only impoverished. Whatever the furnace may be, the purpose of God is to purify His people.

Introduction to Daniel 4:1-18 **Descent into Madness**

I Never Promised You A Rose Garden is the tender, yet terrifying story of a young girl's journey into mental illness and back to normalcy. The American actress Jo-Anne Woodward, won an academy award for her role of Sybil, a woman with multiple personalities. All of this tells us that the mind is a complex organism. It has never been fully understood especially when abnormalities are manifested. These abnormalities are called mental illnesses.

There are some doctors who argue against the whole notion of mental illness. The mind cannot be sick, they say. But something is obviously wrong when people speak and act in an irrational manner. In the ancient world certain forms of unusual behavior were viewed as a type of divine gift sent from the gods. Seizures were considered to be a sign of divine favor. Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar were both afflicted with this problem.

DANIEL

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

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

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

4:1-3 Like other mortal men, the king of Babylon once descended into genuine madness. But he recovered and wrote of his ordeal. In the year 562 BC Nebuchadnezzar told his story in a royal decree. He wanted the people to know about the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward him. People who have been touched by God want others to know. In an official Babylonian State Document, the experience of King Nebuchadnezzar was recorded a year before he died. There were special reasons for telling his story. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to confess the sin of pride (Dan. 4:37). The king wanted to explain the cause of his seven years of insanity. There was the opportunity to give a word of testimony. It may be that Nebuchadnezzar had found peace with God and then he received peace from God. He wanted others to know.

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

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

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

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

4:4-7 As Nebuchadnezzar remembered, his ordeal began when he was in good health and dwelling in his palace. He was at rest, free from all care and worry. He was flourishing as a tree might grow well. One night, the king had a dream which made him afraid. The dream was so real and so vivid that even when Nebuchadnezzar was awake the vision of his head troubled him. Once more the king called for the wise men of the realm. Though they had not been able to help him before, perhaps this time they could, for the king was not hesitant to talk. Dreams were common and trees were often a symbol of royalty. Surely this dream had something to do with himself. Try as they could, once more the wise men of Babylon failed the king (Dan. 4:7). It seemed that hope was gone until the king spotted Daniel.

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

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

4:8-9 Among the wise men who gathered to help the king was the Lord's man in whom the king knew, dwelt the spirit of divinity. Since Daniel had helped the king before, surely he could help again. It was only natural that the king singled Daniel out for special consideration. Once more, eagerly, did Nebuchadnezzar begin to pour out his heart.

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

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

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

4: 10-12 Daniel was told of a large tree which had appeared in the midst of the earth. It occupied a central position as it stood by itself away from any forest. Because of its centrality of location it attracted attention.

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

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

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

4:13-15 As Nebuchadnezzar was considering the tree, there suddenly appeared a Watcher from heaven. The reference is to a holy angel whose job it was to be vigilant. The angel gave a command. To whom the command was given is not stated but the instructions were clear. The great tree was to be cut down. Only a stump was to be allowed to remain. A band of iron and brass was to be placed around the stump to make sure it would not grow again.

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

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

4:16-17 In the dream the image of the vision changed from that of a tree to that of a man, with the heart, or the nature of a beast. For seven years there was to be this new state of existence. The purpose of this unusual beastly nature given in judgment, was to teach a spiritual lesson to the entire world of the absolute sovereignty of God. Let the world know "*the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth upon it the basest of men.*"

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

The Beast of Babylon Daniel 4:19-32

In Daniel 4:19-32 we have the interpretation of the second dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. It is a simple dream to interpret but startling in its announcement. When Daniel first heard of the dream he was so troubled and horrified that he could not speak for one hour. The prophet of God was shocked by the severity of the divine judgment that was going to fall upon Nebuchadnezzar. Some years ago, the English minister, Charles Spurgeon was preaching in the Music Hall in the Royal Surrey Gardens.

The date was October 19, 1856. Twelve thousand people crowded into the building to hear Mr. Spurgeon preach. The service began in the usual way. Suddenly, during the second prayer, there were simultaneous cries from all parts of the building of *'Fire!' 'The Galleries are giving way!' 'The place is falling!'*

Mr. Spurgeon tried to reassure the alarmed multitude that this was a ruse on the part of thieves and pickpockets but it was to no avail. Spurgeon watched in horror as seven people were trampled to death and many others suffered serious bodily injury. In his autobiography, Mr. Spurgeon recounts his reaction of horror at having to witness death in a place he had come to proclaim life.

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

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

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

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

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

24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

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

4:19-25 When Daniel foresaw the hideous human that the king would become, his reaction was that of horror and he hesitated to tell what he knew. Finally, the prophet spoke. The tree, which the king saw, was Nebuchadnezzar himself. It was strong, powerful, and extensive. However, the tree was going to be cut down and destroyed. The destruction would not be complete for there would be a stump of roots. Symbolically, Nebuchadnezzar was to be cut down. The king was too proud of a man. He needed to be humbled. In grace, the king would not be destroyed but he would be humiliated for he would act like a wild animal for seven year. In time, this general mental sickness would be known as Lycanthropy, which is where the sufferer imagines himself to be changed into an animal, and to a certain extent, acts like an animal. Nebuchadnezzar was destined to act like an ox, and therefore suffer from boanthropy.

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

4:26 The purpose for the loss of mental reasoning is that the king might learn *that "the God of heaven rules"* (Dan. 4:26).

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

4:27 If Nebuchadnezzar were interested, there was a way to delay judgment. He could break off his sins by being righteous. He could stop iniquity by showing mercy. In order for Nebuchadnezzar to be righteous, he could give everyone what was right, and make amends for the wrongs that had been done to his subjects, and between his subjects. The king had been cruel by believing that might makes right. The king had been unjust to the Jews. He must break this off by showing acts of mercy. Mercy could be shown by either setting the captives free or at least making their bondage easier to endure. Matthew Henry says, *"It is necessary, in repentance, that we not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well, not only do no wrong, to any, but do good to all."*

28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

4:28 Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar would do none of these things. If Daniel was shocked at the threat of a certain coming judgment, the king was not. It is the nature of the human heart to grow so hard that it fears neither God nor man. Unbelief dulls the sensitivity of the soul. Until a person faces the actual instruments of discipline, and is certain that the actual moment has arrived to implement justice, there is no fear. The heart deceives itself and is allowed to continue in its arrogance by the patience of a gracious God. For twelve months life continued as it was before the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. For twelve long months the mighty ruler continued to rule his vast empire with all the confidence of a conceited monarch.

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

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

31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

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

4:29-33 It was at the end of this period, when Nebuchadnezzar was walking in his palace, that life dramatically changed. Impressed with the magnificent structure all around him, Nebuchadnezzar was more impressed with himself for we find him talking to himself saying, "*Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?*" (Dan. 4:30). On one level, what Nebuchadnezzar said to himself was true. He was responsible for the construction of the splendor of Babylon. History confirms that Nebuchadnezzar was a builder, not a warrior.

- ❖ He renovated the two temples of Marduk in Babylon.
- ❖ He renovated the temple of Nebo in Borsippa.
- ❖ He constructed fifteen other temples in Babylon.
- ❖ He added two great walls of the city with a rampart.
- ❖ He rebuilt the palace of Nabopolassar.
- ❖ He had the beautiful hanging gardens installed.

Nebuchadnezzar looked around at the palace of Babylon and could not help but being satisfied. However, there was not a thought of humility in the king for he failed to recognize all the artists, laborers, architects, and designers, who allowed his dream to come true. Nebuchadnezzar never lifted one finger in actual work, and yet he boasted of what he had built. By his word, the king exposed the arrogance of his soul. By his speech, Nebuchadnezzar also revealed his motivational drive. He did all that he did "*for the honor of his own majesty!*" There was no intention of giving his Creator any glory.

Finally, the God of heaven had enough. He who knows our thoughts and listens to our conversation would not be denied or mocked any longer. While the word of conceit was still in the king's mouth, a voice was heard from heaven saying, "*O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee*" (Dan. 4:31).

In the same hour judgment fell. Reason was taken from the king. Nebuchadnezzar had been so proud of his mental achievements. Now his mind was gone. The highest thought he had was how to eat grass like an ox. Day after day, Nebuchadnezzar roamed as a crazy man until finally, God, in His infinite grace, restored his reason.

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

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

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

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

4:34-37 When he came to his senses, Nebuchadnezzar was a changed man. The change is reflected in the fact that when he was restored to his kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar recognized the true King of heaven. While not everyone agrees, *Bible* scholars such as Professor Edward Young and Matthew Henry believed that Nebuchadnezzar was a converted man. Doctor Young argues for certain considerations that would lead to the conclusion that the king did, after all, experience in his heart the regenerating grace of God.

- ❖ There is discernible a progress in his knowledge of God (cf. Dan. 2:47 with 3:23 and finally with 4:34, 35).
- ❖ The king acknowledges the utter sovereignty of God with respect to his own experience (Dan. 4:37b).
- ❖ The king utters true statements concerning the omnipotence of the true God (Dan. 4:34,35).
- ❖ The king would worship this God, whom he identifies as King of heaven (Dan. 4:37a).

Matthew Henry believes that Nebuchadnezzar, *"looked up as a devout man, as a penitent, as a humble petitioner, for mercy, being perhaps never till now made sensible for his own [spiritual] misery."* *"It would be nice, and charitable, to hope that free grace came to Nebuchadnezzar so that one day we shall meet with him among the elect in heaven."*

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 4

1. What important spiritual truth is taught in Daniel 4:16-17?

Answer.

Let the world know "*the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth upon it the basest of men.*"

2. How could Nebuchadnezzar have prevented judgment?

Answer.

If Nebuchadnezzar was interested, there was a way to delay judgment. He could break off his sins by being righteous. He could stop iniquity by showing mercy. In order for Nebuchadnezzar to be righteous, he should give everyone what is right, and make amends for the wrongs that had been done to his subjects and between his subjects. The king had been cruel by believing that might makes right. The king had been unjust to the Jews. He must break this off by showing acts of mercy. Mercy could be shown by either setting the captives free, or at least making their bondage easier to endure.

3. What judgment fell upon Nebuchadnezzar and for how long?

Answer.

Reason was taken from the king. Nebuchadnezzar had been so proud of his mental achievements. Now his mind was gone. The highest thought he had for seven years was how to eat grass like an ox.

4. What evidence can be presented to argue Nebuchadnezzar was converted.

Answer.

- ❖ There is a discernible progress in his knowledge of God (cf. Dan. 2:47 with 3:23 and finally with 4:34, 35).
- ❖ The king acknowledges the utter sovereignty of God with respect to his own experience (Dan. 4:37b).
- ❖ The king utters true statements concerning the omnipotence of the true God (Dan. 4:34,35).
- ❖ The king would worship this God, whom he identifies as King of heaven (Dan. 4:37a).

5. How does Matthew Henry evaluate the heart of Nebuchadnezzar in the end?

Answer.

"It would be nice, and charitable, to hope that free grace came to Nebuchadnezzar so that one day we shall meet with him among the elect in heaven."

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Daniel 4:32 says, *"the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."* Is it not safe to say that Satan lied to Jesus when he promised Him the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would only worship him? Why or why not?
2. Has your heart ever been lifted up with pride to the point the Lord had to severely humble you?
3. In the divine economy the principle seems to be established of grace preceding judgment. Nebuchadnezzar had a chance to repent but did not. Do you have any insights into the great attraction to evil and why people do not take advantage of the grace of God and repent?
4. Do you personally believe Nebuchadnezzar was converted? Why or why not?
5. Some men are born great. Some do something noble and become great. Some have greatness thrust upon them. What is the most memorable deed you have done? Was it for the glory of God? Was it done for self-interests? Was anyone blessed by your deed?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

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

Leader's Supplemental Material

4:19 History is filled with examples of how God sets up rulers and suddenly removes them. November 22, 1963, three shots are fired from a lone sniper in the sixth floor of a building in Dallas, Texas. Suddenly, the world is different. America is different. The mythical political world of "Camelot" is dead and a new Great Society is created. The kingdom is taken from a young man and given to an older man. The concept of Divine sovereignty should be a source of great comfort to Christians because it answers the ultimate question of who is in charge. If men were in charge of all things then there would be cause for alarm. If angels were in charge of the world there would be cause for alarm. If no one was in charge and life was simply chaos, that would certainly be reason for ultimate despair. The good news is that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. Setting aside all else, there is great comfort from this doctrine in a daily way. In daily life, when things become challenging, it is very comforting to know that the Lord rules in the affairs of men.

Our personal safety, our individual security, our present existence, and our future life are in His hands. We no longer need to fear what men may do to us or say about us. God is in control. He will rule in righteousness and in justice. It is a wonderful truth, rooted in experience, enjoyed in time, to be embraced with all the heart. *"The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."*

Practical Observations from Daniel 4

1. Though Daniel was a Jewish captive to a capricious king, he still honored the king (Dan. 4:19b). When Daniel knew what judgment was going to befall Nebuchadnezzar he did not rejoice, though the discipline was well deserved.
2. Daniel told the truth. Standing for the truth had caused his friends to go through great tribulation (Dan. 4:24). Daniel could have reinterpreted the dream. He could have given a message of comfort, but he chose to tell the truth. It is not easy for anyone to speak the truth, especially in trying circumstances.
3. There is a wonderful principle in God's moral universe, that grace will precede judgment. King Nebuchadnezzar will be warned before he is judged.
4. In the judgments of God, there is always a holy purpose. Some discipline is punitive. Other discipline is for purifying the heart: God wants Nebuchadnezzar to *know "that the heavens do rule"* (Dan. 4:26).
5. Despite the certainty of a coming judgment, God is merciful. If men and nations repent they shall yet be spared, as Nineveh was spared (Jonah 3:10) and as the death of Hezekiah was delayed (2 Kings 20:1-5).
6. When gospel repentance changes the heart, there is the desire to display righteousness and mercy. In Scriptures, these two virtues are often united (cf. Isa. 11:4; Psa. 72:4; Isa. 41:2).
7. While salvation is not by good works they always accompany grace.
8. We will either hear the voice of God in grace, or we will hear the voice of God in judgment as He says, *"Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."*

Introduction to Daniel 5

Belshazzar, Grandson of a Converted Sovereign

It is very difficult to understand many passages in the *Old Testament* without being familiar with ancient history. The fifth chapter of Daniel offers an excellent illustration of this fact for we are suddenly introduced to a man named Belshazzar. Belshazzar was a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, one of the greatest kings of antiquity. Nebuchadnezzar died in the year 561 BC. He was succeeded in death by his son Evil-Merodach who was sympathetic to the plight of the Jews.

It was Evil-Merodach who liberated Jehoiachin, king of Judah, from prison and fed him from his own table (2 Kin. 25:27-30; Jer. 52:31-34). After a reign of only two years Evil-Merodach was put to death by a conspiracy headed by Neriglissar, his brother-in-law. Neriglissar ascended the throne and reigned for about four years before he was killed in battle in the year 556 BC. His son and successor was Laborosoarchod, who was an imbecile. He was king for less than a year when he was beaten to death and his throne seized by an usurper named Nabonidus (or Nabonaid), another son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar because he married the widow of Neriglissar. Nabonidus was destined to reign from 555 BC to the fall of Babylon in 538 BC.

The problem with this secular chronology of history is that it seems to conflict with the biblical chronology which states that it was Belshazzar who was ruling when Babylon fell. However, there is no real conflict when it is understood that Belshazzar was the legitimate grandson of Nebuchadnezzar (note Jer. 27:7) but the adopted son of Nabonidus (the usurper) and a co-ruler with him. At the time of the events of Daniel chapter five, Belshazzar, as co-ruler, had been left in charge of the city of Babylon while his "*father*" Nabonidus was away on a military expedition. The foolishness of Belshazzar would bring about the destruction of the mightiest empire of the day. In one night, Babylon would be conquered. In one night Almighty God would pass ultimate judgment upon a drunken king. In one night Belshazzar would be weighed in the balance and be found wanting (Daniel 5:27).

DANIEL 5

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

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

5:1-2 With a feeling of great security, Belshazzar decided to have a party. It would be a feast and it would be given in a spirit of contempt and defiance. Before a thousand of his lords, Belshazzar wanted to boast that he was not afraid of the circumstances that surrounded him. An army was knocking at his gates but he pretended not to be afraid. The Great Impostor tried to fool his royal audience with foolish acts of bravado conceived in the consumption of wine. When his reasoning was dulled with drunkenness, Belshazzar began to reminisce, as drunkards like to do. He remembered the glory days of old when his grandfather went forth and conquered other nations. Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Judah and plundered the treasure of Jerusalem's holy temple. *"Would any one like to see the wealth grandfather got? It is here in the temple. Servants, go get some of the holy vessels. We will pour wine into them and drink our fill."*

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

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

5:3-4 The king's order was obeyed. The holy treasures were brought and the drunken brothel continued. Toasts were made to the dreams of grandfather. *"We will drink," said the king, "to the gods of gold, silver, bras, iron, wood and stone. Here is to you and your visions grandfather!"*

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

5:5 The crowd laughed. Belshazzar laughed. That is the king laughed until the moment his eyes looked up by the candlesticks and he saw a movement. Could it be? It looks like the fingers of a man's hands. The golden goblet of wine dropped from the kings hands. He pushed the laughing prostitutes away from him to stare more closely at what he was seeing. There it is. It is the hand of a man and it is writing upon the wall.

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

5:6 Suddenly the king was shaken and scared. He was terrified to the point that his whole body would not function. His knees literally shook so that they knocked together. After a few moments, the king found enough strength to scream out, *"Bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers."*

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

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

5:7-8 Once the wretched lot was gathered, the king promised them the wealth of the empire and a high place of authority if anyone of them could tell what that hand on the wall was doing. The Wise Men of the kingdom wanted to help. They wanted to get the rewards but not a one of them knew what to make of the handwriting on the wall and they told the king that.

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

5:9 This announcement caused Belshazzar to become alarmed all over again as hope died within his heart. Color left his face. The large assembly of lords did not know what to make of this scene. Some of them thought that their king was about to go mad just like his grandfather and so they stared at him with amazement. The time provided an opportunity for a few to reconsider what this moment might really mean.

5:9 Familiar lessons of life were remembered.

- ❖ The higher social position a person has in life, the greater are the responsibilities to be a good influence upon others. To whom much is given, much shall be required.
- ❖ Belshazzar was a fool which, in biblical terms, means that he acted independently of God.
- ❖ The hand of God reaches out in love to die for sinners but it also reaches out to pronounce judgment on them too.
- ❖ People look to leadership in times of spiritual crisis to know what to do. If leadership fails, the people will fail.
- ❖ There are defining moments when either righteousness will be manifested or the works of the flesh will prevail so that reason is distorted, fear is displayed, and the memory of God is dishonored.
- ❖ When spiritual sensitivity is lost, people will naturally turn to human solutions. They do not work of course, for human solutions have never yet solved a spiritual problem. Belshazzar did not need clever men. He needed to repent. He needed to cry out to God for mercy.
- ❖ The fear and trembling of Belshazzar was but a prelude to the eternal judgment of hell.

- ❖ In the day of ultimate judgment, sinners will look in amazement at one another. There will be no laughing. There will be no talking. There will only be astonishment at what is about to happen and what they are witnessing.
- ❖ The finger of God wrote the Law on tablets of stone. When they were broken or ignored, the finger of God wrote it a second time. When He was through the Lord said, "*Do this and live.*" Because Belshazzar had no respect for the Law of God, the hand of the Lord wrote a postscript: "*Thou shalt not live!*" Belshazzar, the grandson of a converted king, would not be converted himself. Before the night was over, he would perish.

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

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

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

5:10-12 The tragic end of a great empire continues with the entrance of the Queen into the banquet house. The identity of the Queen is uncertain. Some believe that she was the widow of Nebuchadnezzar, named Nitocris whom Herodotus mentions as a woman of extraordinary wisdom. Whatever her true identity, she was not present at the feast until she heard of the terror of the King. Her presence brought a calming influence to the situation for she was full of penetrating insight. Assessing the scene, the Queen was able to offer hope. There was a man in the kingdom that could do what all the court's wise men could not. He could interpret the dream (Dan. 5:11-12). His name was Belteshazzar or Daniel. Upon the counsel of the Queen, Daniel was immediately sent for (Dan. 5:13) and when called, he came. Daniel came as an old man, almost ninety years of age now, having walked with God for many years. He was a man who proved he could be trusted and relied upon and so Belshazzar explained what had happened (Dan. 5:15).

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

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

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

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

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

5: 13-17 If Daniel could interpret the handwriting, there would be great personal rewards. But Daniel did not need the rewards of the king nor did he want them. While riches and honor are nice, they are deceiving and meaningless in the hour of ultimate judgment and in the day of ultimate accountability. What is needed in life is an honest setting forth of what God will do, and that Daniel could give to the king he stood before (Dan. 5:17-24).

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

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

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

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

5: 18-21 In his response the old prophet provides a historical framework for what he will eventually say. Daniel speaks of what God once gave Beltshazzar's, grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord gave him (Dan. 5:18-19) a kingdom, majesty, glory, and honor. Wars ceased, prosperity reigned, and palaces were built. But instead of being grateful and recognizing the source of his greatness, Nebuchadnezzar became proud (Dan. 5:20) which led the Lord to take from the king all that he valued. The Lord took his throne, his glory, his sanity, and his home (Dan. 5:21) until Nebuchadnezzar KNEW that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever He will.

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

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

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

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

5:22-25 At this moment Daniel may have paused before beginning his personal application. He has only told Belshazzar what they both already knew about Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 5:22). Now, the great sin for Belshazzar was that he did not learn nor turn from the sins of his grandfather, but engaged in the same cesspool of pride. The sins of the parents were being visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. Belshazzar was committing the same sins as Nebuchadnezzar. With holy boldness Daniel would point this out in a plain and highly personal way (Dan. 5:22).

- ❖ You Belshazzar have lifted up yourself against the Lord.
- ❖ You Belshazzar have brought forth sacred objects to be used for sensual pleasure.
- ❖ You Belshazzar have praised dead idols.
- ❖ You Belshazzar have not glorified the Lord God.

Therefore, God had three words for Belshazzar:

- ❖ MENE = numbered
- ❖ TEKEL = weighed
- ❖ PERES = divided

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

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

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

5:26-29 Belshazzar has been numbered, in that the days of his reign and the days of his kingdom are coming to an end. He has been weighed in the moral balance of God's universe and found wanting. His kingdom will be divided. It is possible that Belshazzar did not really believe the words of the old prophet, reflected in the fact that he insisted that the honors be given to Daniel anyway (5:29). Daniel was made the third ruler of the land, which meant that behind Nabonidus and Belshazzar, Daniel's voice would be the most authoritative. It was just a few hours after this royal pronouncement that the king was suddenly killed. The biblical narrative tells us that in the same night the ruler of the Chaldeans was slain. Secular history tells us what happened.

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

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

5:30-31 While the drunken party members, led by Belshazzar, were celebrating and seeing strange things, Cyrus had discovered a way to move his army into the city. Cyrus could not scale the walls, nor tunnel through them, but he could drain the river Euphrates that flowed through the city, and march his soldiers into the city on a dry riverbed. To this end, some say, he constructed a large artificial lake, miles above the city, into which he drained the river. Others say, and it seems the most likely, that he constructed a new channel for the river, far away and invisible from the tops of the towers on top of the walls, and into this new channel he diverted the water of the river above the city, so that the water that flowed through the city flowed away and left the river bed through the city dry.

Having made all arrangement to carry out his plan, Cyrus waited for a suitable occasion. Hearing of the feast that Belshazzar's soldiers would be off their guard, Cyrus divided his army into three Divisions.

One Division was to divert the water of the river Euphrates, at the proper time, into the new channel. The second Division was stationed where the river entered the city on the north. And the third Division was stationed where the river left the city on the south.

The second and third Divisions were instructed to enter the channel of the river as soon as the water was low enough, and march toward each other until they met in the center of the city where the Palace was located.

The plan worked to perfection...The soldiers of Cyrus immediately took possession of the city, stormed the city, stormed the Palace and slew the king.

That night's revelry cost Belshazzar his life, and the Fall of Babylon. As proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures it is worthy to note that the Fall of Babylon was foretold, the manner of its capture described, and the name of its captor given 175 years before the event took place. The Prophecy is found in Isaiah 44:28-45:1-4 (*The Book of Daniel*, Clarence Larkin).

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 5

1. Who was Belshazzar?

Answer.

Belshazzar was a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, one of the greatest Babylonian kings of antiquity. He ruled the Empire until it was taken from him in a night.

2. What divine message did Daniel give to Belshazzar?

Answer.

- ❖ You Belshazzar have lifted up yourself against the Lord.
- ❖ You Belshazzar have brought forth sacred objects to be used for sensual pleasure.
- ❖ You Belshazzar have praised dead idols.
- ❖ You Belshazzar have not glorified the Lord God.

3. Identify the meaning of the handwriting on the wall.

Answer. God had three words for Belshazzar.

- ❖ MENE = numbered
- ❖ TEKEL = weighed
- ❖ PERES = divided

4. Was the prophecy of Daniel fulfilled?

Answer.

The prediction of Daniel came to pass. Hearing of the feast that Belshazzar's soldiers would be off their guard, Cyrus divided his army into three Divisions. One Division was to divert the water of the river Euphrates, at the proper time, into the new channel. The second Division was stationed where the river entered the city on the north. And the third Division was stationed where the river left the city on the south. The second and third Divisions were instructed to enter the channel of the river as soon as the water was low enough, and march toward each other until they met in the center of the city where the Palace was located. The plan worked to perfection...The soldiers of Cyrus immediately took possession of the city, stormed the city, stormed the Palace and slew the king.

5. How old was Darius the Mede when he conquered the Babylonian empire?

Answer.

Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old (62 years old).

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Have you ever been terrified to the point that your knees shook or you felt like you were going to faint with fear? What caused that extreme fear?
2. If your life were required of you tonight and you were weighed in the balances, would you be confirmed in righteousness or banished from the presence of God?
3. Comment on the relationship between faith and works.
4. Have riches and honor ever deceived you? In what way?
5. Despite giving a severe word of warning and denunciation of Belshazzar, Daniel was promoted as the king promised. Do you know of unbelievers who are honorable and keep their promises? Why are the unrighteous honorable in some areas?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

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

Leader's Supplemental Material

Selected People of History

- ❖ **Nebuchadnezzar** (neb-u-kad-nez'-zar; O god Nabu, protect my son), was the king of the Babylonian Empire (604-561 B.C). Under his reign, Babylon became a great cultural, commercial, religious, and political center.
- ❖ **Evil-Merodach** (e"-vil-mes'-o-dak; man of Marduk), was the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. As king (562 BC) Evil-Merodach released Jehoiachin, king of Judah, who had been in prison for 37 years (2 Kings 25:27; Jer. 52:31). Evil-Merodach was so wicked that the priestly party encouraged his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, to kill him and take the throne. This was done, 560 BC
- ❖ **Neriglissar**, ascended the throne and reigned for about four years before he was killed in battle in the year 556 BC
- ❖ **Laborosoarchod**, was his son and successor. He was king for less than a year when he was beaten to death and his throne taken by Nabonidus.
- ❖ **Nabonidus**, was destined to reign from 555 BC to the fall of Babylon in 538 BC

Introduction to Daniel 6

Following the collapse of the Babylonian Empire, the Medes and the Persians ruled the world of the Middle East under a man name Darius. He is known to history as Darius Hystaspis the Great, (521-486 BC). Several facts can be noted about him.

- ❖ Darius spent the first three years of his reign establishing his authority throughout his great empire.
- ❖ Once in firm control, Darius divided the empire into 29 satrapies, or provinces, each ruled by Persian or Median nobles. He made Shushan, or Susa, his new capital and formed a uniform code of laws comparable to the Code of Hammurabi.
- ❖ He expanded trade, built roads, created a postal system, had a standard system of coinage, weights, and measures, and started astonishing building projects at Persepolis, Ecbatana, and Babylon.
- ❖ As king, Darius continued the political policy of Cyrus the Great of allowing the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem. In 520 BC, during Darius' second year as king, the Jews began again to work on the unfinished Temple in Jerusalem.
- ❖ Darius encouraged the project of the Jews rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem by ordering the work to continue, He sent financial gifts to help restore worship in the Temple (Ezra 6:1-12). The Temple was completed in 515 BC, in the sixth year of Darius' reign.
- ❖ The final years of the reign of Darius were characterized by confrontation with the emerging Greek Empire in the western part of his territory. He led two unsuccessful major military campaigns against the Greeks.

As a capable organizer and administrator, Darius re-organized the kingdom so that a counsel of 120 princes were placed as administrators over his vast empire. They in turn were responsible to a triumvirate of three presidents of whom Daniel was recognized as the Prime Minister. In this manner there was responsibility and accountability given to the new rulers of the land. The reason that Daniel came to be given a place of preference is stated in that he had an excellent spirit. This spirit had been recognized by Nebuchadnezzar, by the wife of Nebuchadnezzar, by Belshazzar, and finally by Darius. The new ruler realized that Daniel was a man who could be trusted and who was respected throughout the land. Daniel was a man who was respected because he was not greedy, he was not covetous, and he told the truth even when the truth was not pleasant. Such a person was needed in a key place of leadership during the transition period.

DANIEL 6

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

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

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

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

6:1-4 As might be expected, the other rulers of the land became jealous of the wise old prophet who had power with God and power with man. In secret sessions they took counsel together how they might discredit Daniel. The more they looked for something to criticize, the less they found. Daniel was a genuine man of integrity. He was faithful and he was without fault. This does not mean that Daniel was sinless. Only Jesus Christ is sinless. But over the years Daniel had grown to be more and more like the Lord. When he was tempted, he was found faithful. Still, his enemies would not let him alone. The very goodness of Daniel led other's to hate him, for it is within the human heart to try to prove that no one is better than self. It is within the nature of the fallen heart to hate it when others are right, especially on moral and ethical matters. The hunt is on to find something in the character of the child of God that will bring disgrace. In politics this attempt to discredit someone has been called "*Blood Sport*". In history, it is called "*Revisionism*." In biblical scholarship it is called "*demythologizing*." In the church it is called "*sharing*." In heaven it is called "*sin*."

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

6:5 After looking at Daniel's personal life and finding no fault, after examining his public life in the service of several kings and finding no fault, the rulers of the Medes and the Persians came to the correct conclusion that their only hope was to find fault with his life of piety or religion. Since they could find no fault with what Daniel did, they would find fault with what he would not do.

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

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

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

9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

The Exceeding Sinfulness of Sin Daniel 6:6-9

There are many passages in the *Bible* that set forth the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and this is one. Consider the characteristics of wickedness.

- ❖ **Sin is built upon falsehood.** The princes presented themselves as representing all of the leadership of the land but that was not true. Daniel had not been consulted, neither had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, nor the Queen Mother, for none of these people would have been part of this plot.
- ❖ **It is the nature of sin to want to appear to be more powerful than it is.** Sin uses power to achieve its objective. This practice is not uncommon. "*People are saying this,*" we hear. "*Parents are saying that.*" "*The children are threatening a certain type of action.*" "*Everyone is talking,*" it is said. The bad is whispered, but in such a way as to appear more powerful and more threatening than it really is. Why do people do this? Part of the answer is a simple desire to have power. Individuals want to control a situation. They want to effect change in a certain way. Sometimes, it does not matter what the truth is, as long as a certain objective is achieved. If the appearance of force can be used as a lever, so much the better. Because of this practice of sin, it is all the more important to tell the truth. If only one person has said something then we must not say, "*People are talking,*" etc. If only three people have said something, then it must be reported that three people said something, and not leave a general impression that more are talking. It is wrong to leave false impressions. It is also important to name names. Jesus has taught us to walk in the light and not in darkness.
- ❖ **Sin disguises itself as wisdom and reasonableness.** The first words from the mouth of Satan were, "*Yea, hath God said?*" And here, the words of the nobility sound sweet and reasonable.
- ❖ **Sin operates in secret.** The royal princes met in secret, for it was only in secret that they could talk openly about the evil that was in their hearts.

❖ **Sin finds unholy boldness in concert with others.** Wickedness grows strong in the presence of wickedness just as the righteous grows bolder in the presence of holiness. That is why the Bible commands the saints to exhort one another to good works. If you will remember your early adventures into sinful conduct, you will remember that there was someone nearby to encourage you to do wrong.

❖ **Sin always appeals to the vanity of man** (*save thou O king*). It is a well known principle that one way to control difficult people is not to challenge their bad behavior but to flatter and reward them. Sometimes, such people are given places of leadership. They are given public rewards and preferential treatment. They are told how nice and wonderful they are.

What does it matter that their hearts are far from God? What does it matter that no one has ever heard them pray? What does it matter that they have a track record of trying to discredit the people of God and destroy his church? The willingness to reward and flatter the unrighteous in the church is one of the curses of Christendom. The church needs more prophets, but prophets are not popular. Prophets are killed. Prophets get thrown into prisons like John the Baptist. Prophets get crucified like Jesus. Prophets get themselves thrown into the den of lions like Daniel.

❖ **Sin has its own agenda.** As righteousness has an objective which is to be conformed into the image of God, sin has its own agenda which is to BE God! There is a difference between wanting to emulate someone and being in the place of someone. Satan has never given up his goal to be like the Most High. Satan's servants are like their father. They have secret agendas. Only time reveals what the true agendas are.

❖ **In order for sin to be most effective, it must silence the voice of conscience.** In the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians, Daniel was the court voice of conscience.

❖ Consider what people in the highest places of power can do when they do not have a conscience.

- They can request information that will discredit their political enemies.
- They can have people followed, investigated, and intimidated.
- They can have people audited.
- They can have stories planted in the popular mind by whispering things that are untrue to the news media.
- They can form concentration camps.
- They can have people arrested.
- They can find legal ways to justify killing!

❖ **Sin has no sensitivity.** Sin does not care if hungry lions tear a human life limb from limb. The sound of shrieking, the smell of blood, the sight of pain, emboldens the sin saturated soul. Sin does not know the concept of mercy or compassion.

❖ **Sin has a sense of urgency.** There is always a pressing matter with sin, for the devil knows that his time is short.

- ❖ **Sin is what causes young people to experiment** with adult behavior that they are not capable of handling.
- ❖ **Sin urges the heart on.**
- ❖ **Sin is what motivates the heart to get rich quick or to cut ethical corners or to promote oneself at the expense of another.** The royal assembly that met to find a way to discredit Daniel could not wait for the king to make the decree they desired so that the process could begin. "*Do it now! O king,*" they pleaded.
- ❖ **Sin tries to think through a situation so that all the options are covered.** In the situation of our passage, the objective was not simply to establish a royal statute, but to have it signed according the laws of the Medes and the Persians so that it could not be altered. Sin tries to be very clever.
- ❖ **Sin is often persuasive** in convincing people, because it does appear on the surface to be logical, flattering, and is done swiftly. The Lord told Judas, "*What thou hast to do, do quickly.*" And he did leave the Upper Room quickly, to his eternal shame.
- ❖ **The human intellect is no match for sin.** It never has been and never will be. The problem is that men have not figured this out yet and so there are endless wars. There is a war on drugs in our country. There is a war on poverty and a war on aides. And man is losing all the moral wars on all fronts because the solutions of man don't work.

As there is strength in sin, so the Christian finds a Champion in Christ. Consider the following.

- ❖ Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil. While the Devil is a strong man, Jesus is stronger still and He has entered into the Devil's house to take back control and abolish sin.
- ❖ Jesus Christ is not afraid of what sin can do. The Lord laughs at the counsel of the wicked. He does allow the sly proposals of sinners to be made, but only so that He can show forth His great glory and power and sovereignty over sin.
- ❖ Jesus Christ knows what sin will do before sin acts. While sin thinks it is creative, the Lord knows the imaginations of the wicked before anything is conceived. That is why the Lord is always ahead of sin. For example, the Lord God knew that man would succumb to the temptation of the Wicked One, and so, before the foundation of the world was laid, Jesus Christ was crucified.
- ❖ Jesus brings calmness to chaos. He can calm the storms of the Sea of Galilee and He can calm the storms of life. Daniel had storms in his life that were building up. He probably knew that trouble was coming because the storm clouds gather first. An ill omen is felt long before sin flashes into the open. Daniel knew that people were out to hurt him and yet, he lived in the calmness of the Lord.

- ❖ The Law of God, like the law of the Medes and the Persians, altereth not. The Law of God says that the Lord will not be mocked. Whatsoever man sows that shall he reap. It is foolish to think that an unrepentant life, that a life lived without God and full of cursing and carousing will be rewarded with heaven. The wages of sin is death. The seeds of sin sown reap eternal damnation, apart from crying out to the Lord and pleading for mercy according to the blood of Christ.
- ❖ The Savior is more wonderful than sin. Sin brings pleasure, but only for a little while. When the King signed the decree that the royal bloodhounds wanted, they held a victory celebration. But it was not to last. They thought they had found a way to hurt Daniel but the Lord was with His servant. The old prophet possessed a lasting joy that passeth understanding.

With the Psalmist Daniel could sing, *The joy of the Lord, is my strength*. The exceeding sinfulness of sin finds a worthy challenger in the exceeding greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us that we might fear no one but God.

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

6: 10 The fate of Daniel was fixed when King Darius signed the Law that no one could pray to any god or ask a petition of any man for thirty days except the king upon penalty of death. Daniel had to decide if he was to obey his God or man. Daniel was forced to choose between his conscience and conveyance.

While most Christians face similar temptations, very few will face the same fate that awaited Daniel if he chose to obey the Lord. I suspect that the Evil One might have come to whisper thoughts of compromise into the Prophet's heart. "*Daniel, the Law is foolish. But foolish Laws have to be obeyed.*" Of course, that is not true. When a Law is not only foolish but also immoral, then there is a holy responsibility not to obey. During the days of Nazi Germany, many Lutheran pastors opposed the immoral Laws of the Third Reich. Among the Lutheran pastors was the great theologian Dietrich Bonnhoffer. He was arrested and put into jail to await execution for his crimes against the State.

One day Bonnhoffer was visited by a friend who greeted him with the breathless question, "*Dietrich, what are you doing in here?*" The Lutheran pastor, responded, "*My friend, what are you doing out there?*"

Following the Civil War here in the United States, the South found a way to keep the blacks in their place, so called, with Jim Crow laws. For over a hundred years there was racial division based in large part upon unjust laws. While many felt uncomfortable with laws of segregation, they enforced them. But others did not, and engaged in Civil Disobedience. As a result, foolish and wicked laws were overturned and society was challenged for the better.

When he knew that Daniel was willing to engage in Civil Disobedience, Satan might have whispered another suggestion to God's Man. *"Daniel, the decree is only for thirty days. That is not too long a time. Why not just be silent and wait this situation out? Don't cause trouble, Daniel, for yourself or for others."*

There would have been a certain amount of logic to this suggestion. *"Why stir up trouble?"* But that is just the point, isn't it? Who are the real troublemakers in the presence of sin? Who is it that causes tense situations? Is it the righteous? No! All pressure situations, all hostile confrontations come because of the sin that people do. Investigate any given situation and you will discover a challenge to authority, an ugly spirit of discontent, a desire for power and control, a longing to be in charge, a distorted point of view. In short, you will find sin.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and self-control against which there are no Laws. But the fruit of sin is always bitterness, destruction, hurt feelings, wounded pride and the insatiable need to destroy someone else.

Who has caused this tense situation? Was it Daniel and his Jewish friends? Of course not! This whole situation was conceived and executed by individuals whose hearts were full of jealousy and hatred. Daniel is not the troublemaker because he withstands evil and will not keep silent. He is in fact not only righteous but also courageous. I am sure that Daniel realized something else. He understood that once holy habits are set-aside even for a short period, they are easily lost. Anyone who has stopped reading the *Bible* for a few days, or stopped attending a service once attended faithfully, knows how hard it is to be consistent again.

It is understandable. When holy habits are first set aside, Satan comes to give a sense of liberation to the heart. It seems that a religious burden has been lifted, and it has. But upon reflection, it will be seen that the burden was not a heavy burden for Jesus said, *"My burdens are light."* The burden of faithfulness is exchanged for freedom, but freedom can become a heavy burden when guided by sin. Just ask the Sweet Singer of Israel.

We read that one day David set aside his kingly duties and moved geographically out of the will of the Lord. He had the freedom to walk on the palace rooftop and he did. There, he saw someone who stirred his emotions. Sin ensnared his soul and Psalm 51 is the burden of a broken heart caused by sin's concept of freedom. Daniel might easily have rationalized his way to accept a temporary suspension of his holy habits but he was more afraid of sin than he was of the schemes of sinners.

When word reached Daniel that the writing had been signed, the Bible says that he went into his house. He went into the window of his residence where he could be seen publicly, and then he prayed. Kneeling before the Lord, Daniel prayed and gave thanks before His God. While the actions of Daniel were deliberate, they were not hypocritical. Daniel prayed this way often and people knew it. He just continued to do what he had always done.

In the end, that is what we should all do. Let us do what we have always done. Let us just be found faithful. God puts a high premium on faithfulness. Psalm 3:23 says, *"The Lord preserveth the faithful."*

Cal Ripcon made a name for himself in the world of baseball by faithfully showing up for work year after year. Every Christian can make a name in heaven by simply being faithful to Christ.

In John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the main character is named Christian. He is traveling to the Celestial City. Along the way, the Lord gives him a traveling companion named Faithful. One of the names of Jesus Christ is that He is Faithful.

The Lord promised that He would never leave nor forsake us. As Daniel was faithful to the Lord despite the threat of pain and death, so the nobility of the land were faithful to their fallen nature. The Devil too has his faithful servants. Jesus said of the Pharisees, "*You are of your father the Devil and the lust of your father you will do.*"

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

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

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

6:11-13 The enemies of Daniel assembled. They had discovered that Daniel was still praying and still making supplications before the Lord. It was confirmed. They had predicted Daniel's behavior correctly and now they would use his righteousness to hurt him much like children do when they make fun of another child who is good and will not lie or cheat. As a group the Nobility returned to the king for there is unholy boldness in a concerted effort. In presenting themselves before the king, the Nobility reminded Darius of the Law he had signed which could not be altered. The king remembered the law well for not only was it recent, it appealed to his pride.

The Nobility were now poised to seize the moment they had been planning for. All of their venom and hatred for Daniel poured forth as they presented Daniel in the most unfavorable way they could before the king. With just a few words, Daniel was accused, like the Lord, unjustly. It was said of Daniel that he had no respect for the King and that he had no respect for the king's law. While these were serious accusations the greater question would be, "*Are they true?*" Certainly the charges were within the sphere of being believed. The charges could have easily been believed for several reasons.

- ❖ The Nobility of the land were trusted men. High office carries its own weight of authority.
- ❖ There was truth mixed with error, which is always a dangerous combination. It was true that Daniel was a Jew. It was also true that he had been a captive for many years. But it was not true that he had no respect for the king whom he served.
- ❖ It sounded plausible that Daniel might not be loyal.
- ❖ The seriousness of the charges was such that it seemed they had to be true or else why would they be made? The reality is that men have always known that if a big enough lie is told often enough, and forcefully enough, it will be believed, no matter what.

Putting all these considerations together, it is understandable how a king could become angry at one of his subjects, especially if that subject was not knowing and not present to defend himself.

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

6:14 To his eternal credit, Darius did not believe the evil reports that he was hearing about Daniel. He did not allow others to form his view about Daniel. In fact, as the situation crystallized, Darius became angry with himself for allowing himself to be used by these court jesters. Darius realized that it was the Noblemen who had no real respect for their king or the king's Law. The Noblemen were using both for their own political and private agendas. And nothing that Darius could do would move them from their course of action. Until the going down of the sun Darius tried. But it was no use. The Noblemen insisted that the Law of the Medes and the Persians be honored.

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

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

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

6:15-17 Finally, the king commanded that Daniel be brought and cast into the den of lions. However, Darius had learned enough about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to offer Daniel a personal word of encouragement and hope. *Daniel*, said the king, *thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.* This was really a remarkable statement for it manifests great faith. Darius did not qualify his remarks. He did not say that the Lord God of Daniel might deliver him. The statement was emphatic. *"Thy God...will deliver thee."*

How did Darius know this? Was it not because faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God? Had not Darius heard the many wonderful things about the Lord God of Israel? Had he not heard what Jehovah had done at creation, at the Red Sea, and at Mt. Sinai? Had Darius the Mede not learned about the lives of men such as Abraham, Moses, David, and Solomon? Had Darius not witnessed and profited from the great wisdom that the Lord had given to Daniel? Would such a Living, Powerful God allow His most faithful servant to be destroyed by petty men? In his heart Darius had come to a decision.

The God who could give dreams. The God who could make men go mad. The God who could restore reason. The God who could make the hand of a man write on a wall. The God who could cause a kingdom to fall in a night could easily deliver His own.

Though Darius had tried to change the situation, he could not. But he could have faith that Someone else could do what no mortal could do. Darius could believe that God would deliver. There are times in life when we as Christians find ourselves unable to change a given situation. We find that we cannot change people. We cannot change the circumstances. We find ourselves helpless but not hopeless. What shall we do? In such trying times we can look up and say with Darius, God...will deliver me. In that hour of life we shall know something about being with Daniel in the lion's den.

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

6:18 Having given the royal command that Daniel be cast into a den of lions, the king returned to his palace. But he was a troubled man. A great injustice had been done. An innocent man had been set up to be hurt by false accusers.

Seven Characteristics of False Accusers

1. False accusers are shameless. They will take the righteousness of another person and use it to their advantage.
2. False accusers are bold. Like their father the devil, they are as roaring lions seeking whom they may devour.
3. False accusers are persuasive. The natural gifts of logic, oratory, and simplicity of thought are used to advance unholy causes.

4. False accusers love conspiracy. There is the thrill of living on the edge of propriety just beyond the law. Where the Law of God is not respected, individuals become a law unto themselves.
5. False accusers are often successful. Reputations are ruined, possessions are acquired, power is gained, the contest of the will is won. But the God in heaven has not finished. He too will have something to say about every situation.
6. False accusers will not escape a just judgment in time or in eternity.
7. False accusers will cause others who are innocent to share their same sinful fate. Proverbs 11:8 says, "*The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.*"

It was only after they had tricked him and used him that Darius was able to realize the treachery of the false accusers. They had led him to engage in unjust behavior. While his heart was filled with tenderness toward Daniel, and demanded that the old prophet be saved, the Law demanded to be enforced. We cannot help thinking of another Law and another Love that came into conflict at the Cross of Calvary.

At Calvary the love of God was manifested, while the Law was satisfied. Jesus Christ bore our sins in His own body so that we might never know the ultimate wrath of God's great anger against sin. As Daniel spent the time in the lion's den, he once again foretold the sufferings, sorrows, and triumphs, of the coming Savior. Consider how the life of Daniel foreshadowed the life of Christ.

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

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

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever.

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

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

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

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

6:19-25 When King Darius discovered that Daniel was alive, his heart could not help but rejoice. Wisely did the king set about to punish those who were truly unjust, while giving honor and glory to the name of God. A royal decree was issued that set forth the majesty of the Lord and man's responsibility.

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

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

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

6:26-28

Eight Truths About God

- ❖ God is personal for He is called "*the God of Daniel.*"
- ❖ God is the Living God.
- ❖ God is steadfast forever.
- ❖ God's kingdom cannot be destroyed.
- ❖ God's dominion shall be unto the end of time.
- ❖ God delivers and rescues.
- ❖ God works signs and wonders in heaven and in earth.
- ❖ God is able to control the beasts of nature.

Two Responsibilities of Men Daniel 6:26

Men have two great responsibilities, to tremble before God and to fear him. When the greatness of God is realized and when the heart of man learns to tremble and fear Him, then the natural order of creation is restored and righteousness is manifested. We can commit ourselves to the great and terrible God who is able to deliver us not only from sin, but also from sin itself through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 6

1. List five characteristics of sin.

Answer.

- ❖ Sin is built upon falsehood.
- ❖ It is the nature of sin to want to appear to be more powerful than it is.
- ❖ Sin disguises itself as wisdom and reasonableness.
- ❖ Sin operates in secret.
- ❖ Sin finds unholy boldness in concert with others.
- ❖ Sin always appeals to the vanity of man. *Etc.*

2. Give four responses of the Savior to sin.

Answer.

- ❖ Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil.
- ❖ Jesus Christ is not afraid of what sin can do.
- ❖ Jesus Christ knows what sin will do before sin acts.
- ❖ Jesus brings calmness to chaos.

3. What are the seven characteristics of false accusers?

Answer.

Seven Characteristics of False Accusers

- ❖ False accusers are shameless. They will take the righteousness of another person and use it to their advantage.
- ❖ False accusers are bold. Like their father the devil, they are as roaring lions seeking whom they may devour.
- ❖ False accusers are persuasive. The natural gifts of logic, oratory, and simplicity of thought are used to advance unholy causes.

- ❖ False accusers love conspiracy. There is the thrill of living on the edge of propriety just beyond the law. Where the Law of God is not respected, individuals become a law unto themselves.
 - ❖ False accusers are often successful. Reputations are ruined, possessions are acquired, power is gained, the contest of the will is won. But the God in heaven has not finished. He too will have something to say about every situation.
 - ❖ False accusers will not escape a just judgment in time or in eternity.
 - ❖ False accusers will cause others who are innocent to share their same sinful fate. Proverbs 11:8 says, "*The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.*"
4. Provide eight truths about God.

Answer.

- ❖ God is personal for He is called "*the God of Daniel.*"
- ❖ God is the Living God.
- ❖ God is steadfast forever.
- ❖ God's kingdom cannot be destroyed.
- ❖ God's dominion shall be unto the end of time.
- ❖ God delivers and rescues.
- ❖ God works signs and wonders in heaven and in earth.
- ❖ God is able to control the beasts of nature.

5. What two responsibilities do men have toward God (Dan. 6:26)?

Answer.

Men have two great responsibilities, to tremble before God and to fear him

Personal Application and Reflection

4. What has been your relationship to sin? Would you confess to any addictions? Did the Lord ever give you the victory over your besetting sin? If not, would you seek out someone to be accountable to?
5. Write some simple but personal slogans to help you overcome areas of weakness or temptation. For example: *Jesus, Not Java Chat Room; Grace, Not Gambling; or Purity not Passion.* Display these small slogan signs where you can see them often.

6. If you have ever been accused of something falsely share that experience. Has it changed the way you speak about others?
7. List five precious personal truths about God that are dear to your heart.
8. Do you tremble before God? Do you fear Him? What evidence is there that you fear God?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Daniel 6:19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live-forever. 22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

Leader's Supplemental Material

6:1-5 From this portion of the biblical narrative we are reminded of several spiritual truths.

1. Sometimes great honors will come to God's servants. The Lord allowed Daniel to be appointed Prime Minister of State in charge of the royal treasury and the great seal of commerce. This is not normally the case. Usually, Christians are not recognized in time, but the people of God do need heroes of the faith. We read in the book of Hebrews about Faith's Hall of Fame, and are stimulated to good works.
2. Daniel was a great man. His greatness was derived, not from his position of secular honor, but from his life of private prayer and fellowship with the Lord.
3. Despite his personal, spiritual greatness, Daniel had great enemies who were jealous of him. He was from the old order and therefore suspicious. Some thought he could not be trusted. Others believe he could not be faithful to Darius. Most just did not like his obvious goodness grounded in faith.
4. The hostility towards Daniel was not rooted in reason, but in emotion. Reason was used to channel the feelings of hatred and hostility, but emotion was driving the mental forces to find fault.
5. The primary emotion was that of jealousy which is grounded in insecurity. The jealous person has low self-esteem and is filled with many fears. Solomon observed that "for every right work a man is envied for of his neighbor (Eccl. 4:4).

6. One effect of envy is that it must make everything bad. It does this in part by creating a negative atmosphere. A spirit is set loose that is felt if not verbalized. This spirit overshadows all else. Every word is weighed for hidden meaning. Every action is suspect. Unholy motives are attributed. Secret meetings are held. Conversations are whispered only to be covered up at the first sign of exposure.
7. Once the spirit of envy is released, nothing less than the departure or death of the object is sought. Disgrace is not enough. There must be the elimination of the person. Proverbs 27:4 says, *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who can stand before envy?*
8. Because the eyes of others are upon us to watch for our destruction, we need to walk with Christ. Despite his enemies, Daniel walked with the Lord. He was at the king's service as far as the altar, but there he left him and returned to God. Only with God is there safety from the danger of envious men.

Daniel, a Type of Christ

- ❖ Daniel was sent into a far country (1:3-4).
- ❖ Daniel was tempted by the world (promotions, gold, and honor); the flesh (food, 1:8); and the devil (worship for thirty days, 6:4-11).
- ❖ Daniel had a singleness of mind (1:8).
- ❖ Daniel was undefiled (1:8).
- ❖ Daniel grew in favor with God and man (1:9).
- ❖ Daniel was able to reveal the innermost thoughts of men (2:19-45).
- ❖ Daniel was a prophet when he made predictions of things to come; he was invested with royal authority (2:48); and he functioned as a priest when he prayed on behalf of others.
- ❖ Daniel was accused falsely (6:13).
- ❖ He was treated as one of the vilest of malefactors (6:17).
 - He was plotted against (6:4-9).
 - He was ministered to by angels (6:22).
 - He prayed before the hour of his persecution (6:11).
 - He submitted to unjust punishment (6:16-17).
 - He was buried in a tomb where a great stone was rolled over the entrance and the royal seal was placed to keep him in.
 - Daniel did not have a bone of his body broken (6:22 cf. 6:24).
 - He was brought forth from the place of death alive.
 - He was forever free from the curse and the penalty and the pain of the Law.
 - He was triumphant over his enemies and saw them destroyed (6:24).

Introduction to Daniel 7
A Panorama of History from Babylon to Rome
Daniel 7:1-8

Chronologically, chapter seven should be placed before chapters 5-6 for the events take place in the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, or about BC 541. However, the Holy Spirit wanted to keep the prophetically division separate from the historical division. Daniel is about 85 years of age when he had this vision. Sixty-two years had passed since Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of the golden image. What Daniel once interpreted for the king, he shall now envision in a new way.

An angel will explain his vision from heaven (Dan. 7:16). In the repetition of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar's to Daniel, the difference between a divine understanding of history and a human understanding is made plain. When men look at life they see gold, silver, and brass. They see wealth, power, glory, and conquests. When God looks at the nations of the Earth, He see the true beastly nature of humanity.

Men are like rapacious beasts reflected in the lion, which devours, the bear, which crushes, the leopard, which springs to kill, and the hideous beast. It is instructive that the nations of the earth today still choose to project themselves through beastly symbols such as the British lion, the Russian bear, the American eagle, the Chinese dragon, the Persian ram, and the Macedonian goat.

DANIEL 7

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

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

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

7:1-3 As Daniel's dream began, he saw the four winds of heaven converging upon the Great Sea which may refer to the Mediterranean Sea, or better, to just a great body of water. The four winds speak of the powers of the air which reflects upon Satan and his great ability to influence and shape the nations of the Earth as per Ephesians 6:12. According to Daniel, from the sea came four beasts. They correspond to the four parts of the golden image seen by Nebuchadnezzar.

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

7:4 **The First Beast** that Daniel saw emerge from the seething foam of the sea was like a lion except that it had wings like those of an eagle. Daniel was familiar with the colossal figures of lions with the wings of an eagle and the face of a man that adorned the palaces of Nineveh and Babylon. This First Beast would naturally remind Daniel of the symbolism of the Babylonian Empire and its first king Nebuchadnezzar, the Head of Gold of the Great Image on the plain. In the Lion with Eagle Wings we discover a combination of the King of the Beasts and the King of the Birds which suited the portrayal of the Absolute Monarchy enjoyed by Nebuchadnezzar over the other nations of his day. As Daniel gazed upon the First Beast he observed that its wings were plucked so that it was no longer fierce though still powerful. Historically, Nebuchadnezzar became satisfied with his conquests and turned his attention from war to building palaces and pursuing peace. His heart was changed from that of a beast to that of a man. This may allude to the period when Nebuchadnezzar's sanity was returned to him and he gave up his beastly state that had tormented him for seven years.

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

7:5 **The Second Beast** was like a bear. Like the lion, the bear is a very strong animal and is noted for its voracity though it has none of the speed and agility and majesty of the lion. The bear is awkward in its movements depending upon brute force and sheer strength. These were the characteristics of the ancient Medo-Persian Empire. Its military victories were gained by overwhelming the enemy with vast masses of troops. Xerxes defeated the smaller army of Greece by opposing it with 2,500,000 men. The movement of enormous bodies of men devoured much flesh. The side of the bear which raised up to attack was Persia which was the stronger and more aggressive of the Dual Empire. It is reflected in the right shoulder and arm of the Great Golden Image. The three ribs that the bear had in his mouth speaks of the three kingdoms of Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt, that formed a Triple Alliance to oppose the Medo-Persian Empire only to be destroyed by it.

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

7:6 **The Third Beast** was like a leopard except that it had four heads and four wings. The leopard is one of the most agile and graceful of the animal kingdom. Because it has a slight frame, it can move swiftly. The leopard is a very fierce animal and serves as an excellent picture of the rapid conquests of the Greeks under Alexander the Great. Unlike the Medes and the Persians, Alexander did not depend upon mass mobilization of troops but upon small, well-trained and well-equipped armies. In less than ten years he overthrew the awkward forces of Persia and brought under his control the civilized world. The four wings of the leopard speak of the rapid movements of Alexander while the four heads represent the four kingdoms into which his empire was finally divided: Thrace, Macedonia, Syria, and Egypt. The beastly leopard corresponds to the thigh parts of the Great Golden Image.

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

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

7: 7-8 **The Fourth Beast** was like no other creature that Daniel had ever witnessed on the earth. It was hideous to look upon for it had teeth of iron, nails of brass, and strong feet that could stomp. It also had ten horns with an eleventh one growing out of the ten. The Fourth Beast corresponds to the legs of iron of the Great Golden Image and speaks of the Roman Empire, which was hideous to behold once it began its decline. As Daniel was about to ask for an explanation of the little horn that he saw arise from the ten horns on the Fourth Beast, he suddenly saw another scene within his vision. Before his eyes were brought a judgment scene.

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

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

7:9-10 When the prophet Daniel saw the ten horns on the Fourth Beast, he knew immediately that they stood for thrones or rulers. Historically, the Roman Empire, when it was in its glory, comprehended ten kingdoms.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. Italy | 6. Sarmatia |
| 2. France | 7. Pannonia |
| 3. Spain | 8. Asia |
| 4. Germany | 9. Greece |
| 5. Britain | 10. Egypt |

The symbol of the horn as a political image was well known in the ancient world. In Daniel's vision, the horns were cast down by the Ancient of Days who sat in majesty. Nine things are said about this scene. The Ancient of Days wore a garment of white.

- ❖ His hair was white like pure wool.
- ❖ His throne was like the fiery flames.
- ❖ His wheels as burning fire.
- ❖ A fiery stream came from before His throne.
- ❖ Thousands ministered unto Him.

- ❖ Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
- ❖ The Court was settled.
- ❖ The Books were opened.

Scenes of judgment are familiar in the *Scriptures*. The *Revelation* of Jesus Christ speaks about a Great White Throne Judgment.

- *Revelation 20:11-15* 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Paul taught that we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

- *2 Corinthians 5:10* For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.
- *1 Corinthians 3:11* For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Daniel speaks about judgment upon the Gentile Nations. To speak about the judgment of nations is ultimately to speak about individuals because individuals make up the nations. A modern day illustration helps to explain what is meant. After World War II, the Allied Powers put the nation of Germany on trial for crimes against humanity. How did the allied powers do that? First, they arrested the leaders of the Nazi war machine such as Rudolph Hess, Albert Speer, and Herman Goering. Second, the Allied Powers brought these war leaders before an international tribunal. The court passed judgment upon the men. Some were hanged. Some were imprisoned for life. Some were put in prison for only a few years. When it was over, the world could say that the nation of Germany had been judged. In like manner, Daniel sees the nations of his day being judged. In Daniel's vision the ten horns of the Fourth Beast are cast down. Later, in John's Vision of the Fourth Beast, he is cast into the Lake of Fire.

- *Revelation 19:20 "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."* Both of the prophets, Daniel and John, predicted the same thing. The nations in general and Rome in particular would be destroyed by the Ancient of Days.

Who is the Ancient of Days? Various suggestions have been offered to include David, the Elders of Israel, glorified men, and angels. The best understanding is to realize that what Daniel saw was an old man, or a man of gray hairs, in whose majestic form God the Father made Himself visible. For those who lived in the ancient world, respect was shown for others who were mature in years. Age inspired veneration and gave the impression of majesty. Everything about the Ancient of Days was wonderful and meant to produce the deepest respect.

- ❖ There was His garment, which was white, the symbol of majestic dignity and purity. There was His hair, which was also white. Naturally, when people age their hair turns white. God the Father, as the Ancient of Days, has as one of His essential attributes eternity. He is without beginning and He is without end.
- ❖ The throne that the Ancient of Days sat upon was made of fire. Fire often accompanies the presence of God.
- *Exodus 19:18 And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*
- *Exodus 20:18 And all the people saw the thundering, and the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.*
- *Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.*
- *Deuteronomy 9:3 Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.*
- *Psalms 18:8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.*
- ❖ Fire with power to destroy, also is designed to display splendor and majesty. The river of fire that surrounded the throne is another dimension to what John saw in his vision.
- *Revelation 4:5 And out of the throne proceeded lightning and thundering and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*

- ❖ The fire around the throne was meant to consume all that opposed God.
- ❖ Thousand upon thousand and ten thousand upon ten thousand individuals surrounded the throne. This vast number was there to wait and worship and serve the Lord God Almighty.
- ❖ There was to be a judgment. The court was set. The books were opened, for the actions of men are recorded in the books of heaven.
- *Isaiah 65:6 Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,*
- *Jeremiah 17:1 The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;*
- *Malachi 3:16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*

Here the deeds of the Fourth Beast in particular and the Gentile nations in general, are recorded for judgment.

Divine Judgment, Divine Justice

In the moral universe that He has established, God has ordained penalties upon unrighteous behavior. Many scriptures warn about judgment and many examples are provided to remind us that the God of the Universe is a righteous judge who will not clear the guilty.

- ❖ Divine judgment falls upon individuals such as Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).
- ❖ Divine judgment comes upon families illustrated in the lives of Korah, Nathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16:1-35).
- ❖ Divine judgment falls upon communities such as Capernaum and Nazareth (Matthew 13:58; Mark 6:5).
- ❖ Divine judgment falls upon cities (Deut. 20:10-20) reflected in the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19).
- ❖ Divine judgment falls upon nations such as the Babylonian Empire, the Medes and the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans and most of all upon Israel.
- ❖ Divine judgment will one day engulf the whole world (2 Peter 3:12).
- ❖ The judgment that God inflicts upon mankind is varied.

- ❖ There is economic loss (Deut. 28:16-21).
 - ❖ There are outbreaks of epidemics (Deut.28: 2, 27, 35).
 - ❖ There is loss of spiritual power (Deut. 28:22).
 - ❖ There is military defeat (Deut 24-26; 49-52).
 - ❖ There is a judgment upon the mind so that reason is removed (Deut. 28:28; Daniel 6).
 - ❖ There is the disintegration of the family (Deut. 28:30,32).
 - ❖ There is enslavement (Deut. 28:36-37).
 - ❖ There is the practice of cannibalism and infanticide (Deut. 28:53-57).
1. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God who is angry with the wicked every day.
 2. The harshness of God's judgment is balanced by the greatness of His grace and the fact that God does not do to His creation what He has not suffered Himself (Deut. 28:1-14).
 3. One-day, the pain and shame and suffering will cease. There will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein will dwell righteousness (2 Pet. 3:12).

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

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

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

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

7:11-14 In the vision of the kingdom of the Messiah, the Messiah is called the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13). Jesus plainly referred to this vision when He says in John 5:27 of Himself that the Father has given Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man. In the vision of the kingdom, the Messiah is said to come with the clouds of heaven.

Some believe that the reference here is to the Lord's incarnation when He came into the world veiled much like the glory of God which took possession of the Temple in a cloud. Others believe that the reference is to the ascension of Christ when He returned to the Father as the clouds received Him (Acts 1:9). Leaving Earth, the Lord went to the Ancient of Days. He ascended to His Father and our Father and to His God and our God (John 20:17). In His return to heaven, the Lord was welcomed.

The angels adored Him (Heb. 1:6) and the saints worshipped Him. Ten thousand times ten thousands souls waited to minister to Him as He rules the affairs of the universe through His kingdom. Concerning this glorious kingdom, Daniel sees that it is unlike the kingdoms of this world for it is universal and it is everlasting.

No other kingdom can make this claim. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Christ is embodied in the Church which means in part that, "*The Church shall continue militant to the end of time, and triumphant to the endless ages of eternity.*" --Matthew Henry

Alexander the Great

Alexander was the son of Philip, King of Macedon, and the beautiful Olympias, an Epirote princess. He was born 356 BC Upon the death by assassination of his father Philip in 336 BC, Alexander took his army and began a rapid world conquest as predicted by Daniel the prophet (Dan. 8:5-8).

1. Alexander led his armies across the Hellespont into Asia Minor in 334 BC and defeated the Persian forces at the river Granicus.
2. Moving rapidly (Dan. 8:5) he again met and defeated the Persians at Issus.
3. Turning south, Alexander moved down the coast of Syria, advancing on Egypt which surrendered to him rather than fight.
4. Turning again to the east, Alexander met the armies of Darius the Mede for the last time and defeated them in The Battle of Arbela, East of the Tigris River.
5. He then occupied Babylon, then Susa, and Persepolis, the capitals of Persia.
6. Alexander spent the next few years consolidating his empire, and Hellenizing Asia through the establishment of Greek cities in the Eastern Empire.
7. He marched his armies' eastward as far as India where they won a great battle at the Hydaspes River.

8. After this, the army revolted and Alexander was forced to return to Persepolis.
9. While making plans for more conquests died in Babylon in 323 BC. His empire was then divided up among four of his generals.

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

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

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

18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.

7:15-18 In Daniel 7, the prophet has seen many angels in his life. During a vision, Daniel does not hesitate to address one of them to explain to him what was the meaning of the images he has seen. *"So he told me, and made me know [understand] the interpretation of the things"* (Dan. 7:16). Responding to Daniel, the angel revealed two simple spiritual truths.

1. The four beasts, which Daniel saw in his vision, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth (Dan. 7:7) possessing beastly natures.
2. Despite the ferocious nature of the kings and their kingdoms, the saints of the Most High shall enjoy their own kingdom of which there shall be no end (Dan. 7:18). When all is said and done, these two guiding points do summarize what the saints in every generation need to remember.
3. The kingdoms of this world will hurt the saints and the kingdom of heaven.
4. The kingdoms of this world will pass away while the kingdom of heaven will last forever.

In light of this, the objective for spiritual minded people is to possess the kingdom of God. How is this possible? How does one possess the kingdom that will last forever and ever?

First, it must be realized that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. It is not made of flesh and blood, bricks and mortars, but is within the heart.

Second, the kingdom of God is a present reality. It does exist right now.

Third, entrance into God's kingdom is based upon gospel repentance.

Fourth, the citizens of this kingdom are obligated to honor its Sovereign, king Jesus and to obey His laws as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount and in the general epistles. If the church does not give much thought to possessing the kingdom of God, it should.

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

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

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

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

7: 19-22 While Daniel considered the concept of the saints taking the kingdom, his mind went back to the Fourth Beast of his vision, the Beast that was so hideous, it defied description. Daniel remembered how different it was (Dan. 7:19); how dreadful it was (Dan. 7:17); how war was made with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came (Dan. 7:20).

It is true that the kingdom of God seems to be at the mercy of the kingdom of this world. Because of this, the kingdom of this world persecutes the saints. Historically, and currently, the church is in a struggle with the kingdom of this world.

Historically, when the saints have lived out the ethics of their beliefs, the Evil One has manifested himself by speaking great words against the Most High and wearing out the saints (Dan. 7:25). But the good news is that in the end, the saints shall emerge victorious (Dan. 9:26-27). Evangelist William Finnegan likes to say that he has read the last chapter of the *Bible* and discovered that the church wins.

Despite the certainty of the victory, Daniel confesses that his thoughts still troubled him, but he kept the matter in his heart (Dan. 7:28). It is not hard to appreciate the concern that Daniel faced, for one of the great mysteries of life is the problem of evil in and of itself. Why must there be a world of fallen humanity? Why must there be a world full of sin? Why must humans hurt each other? Why must there be a devil?

Why must there be an angelic conflict? Why must there be a Calvary?

Why must the pathway to heaven be through the valley of the shadow of death?

Over the years theologians have wrestled with the problem of evil. How sin entered the moral universe has not been revealed. That it is here is obvious. The problem of evil may trouble us as it did Daniel, and we may have to keep this whole matter in our hearts. But we are not left hopeless. Spiritual victory belongs to the saints.

The Most High God will triumph. And all that love Him shall serve Him and obey Him in an everlasting kingdom. With that in mind, we face the future of a better tomorrow and a glorious forever.

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

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

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

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

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

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

7:23-25 **The Enemy**

1. Several suggestions have been offered as to the identity of Daniel's fourth kingdom (Dan. 7:23-25).

- ❖ Some have argued that the Fourth Kingdom refers to that of the Seleucides (Syrians). The Little Horn is Antiochus.
- ❖ Others contend that the Fourth Kingdom is that of the Romans. The Little Horn is Julius Caesar and the succeeding emperors.
- ❖ The Reformation Leaders said that the Fourth Kingdom was the papal kingdom and the Little Horn was the Pope.

- ❖ Others make the Little Horn to be the Turkish Empire.
 - ❖ The modern interpretation is that the Fourth Beast is a Revived Empire that is still in the future.
 - ❖ The Eleventh Horn is the Anti-Christ.
2. It is easy to see how every generation has taken this prophecy to interpret its own situation or imaginations. By way of application, this is not wrong for the principle is constant. The world is at war with the saints. The world will hurt the saints. But the saints will triumph.
 3. The future triumph of the church is rooted in historical successes. For example, after the Syrian persecution under Antiochus, the Jewish church emerged triumphant. It weathered the storm of the Syrians.

Time passed and the Lord Jesus was born. His kingdom was firmly established so that today the gospel is to be found in every tribe and on every continent. For judgment Christ came into this world, to rule by His Spirit, and to make all his saints kings and priests to their God.

4. Because of what has happened, our hearts should anticipate the Second Coming of Christ when the saints shall judge the world and sit down with Jesus on his throne in triumph over the downfall of the devil's kingdom. When the Communist powers in Europe fell, there was great rejoicing in the world. Such triumph of good over evil will be manifested in a greater way when Satan's entire stronghold is destroyed. All of Christ's enemies shall be made His footstool: Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Communism, and Secular Humanism.
5. The Church should always keep in mind that the saints will judge the world. Faith and obedience will condemn all unbelief and disobedience (Matthew 19:28).

Though the church is weak, frail, and divided, it shall one day be strong, vigorous, and united. Light, holiness, and love, will replace darkness, defilement, and lust. The saints shall possess the kingdom forever and ever. "*Because I live, you shall live also.*" (John 14:19).

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 7

1. What were the four beasts?

Answer.

Lion	Babylon
Bear	Medes – Persia
Leopard	Greece
Hideous Beast	Rome

2. Describe the ancient of days.

Answer.

- ❖ The Ancient of Days wore a garment of white.
- ❖ His hair was white like pure wool.
- ❖ His throne was like the fiery flames.
- ❖ His wheels as burning fire.
- ❖ A fiery stream came from before His throne.
- ❖ Thousands ministered unto Him.
- ❖ Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.

3. List seven places divine judgments falls.

Answer.

- ❖ Divine judgment falls upon individuals such as Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).
- ❖ Divine judgment comes upon families illustrated in the lives of Korah, Nathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16:1-35).
- ❖ Divine judgment falls upon communities such as Capernaum and Nazareth (Matthew 13:58; Mark 6:5).
- ❖ Divine judgment falls upon cities (Deut. 20:10-20) reflected in the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19).
- ❖ Divine judgment falls upon nations such as the Babylonian Empire, the Medes and the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans, and most of all upon Israel.
- ❖ Divine judgment will one day engulf the whole world (2 Peter 3:12).

4. List at least four forms of divine judgments God inflicts upon mankind.

Answer.

- ❖ There is economic loss (Deut. 28:16-21).
- ❖ There are outbreaks of epidemics (Deut.28: 2, 27, 35).
- ❖ There is loss of spiritual power (Deut. 28:22).
- ❖ There is military defeat (Deut 24-26; 49-52).
- ❖ There is a judgment upon the mind so that reason is removed (Deut. 28:28; Daniel 6).
- ❖ There is the disintegration of the family (Deut. 28:30,32).
- ❖ There is enslavement (Deut. 28:36-37).
- ❖ There is the practice of cannibalism and infanticide (Deut. 28:53-57).

5. What should the church always keep in mind?

Answer. The Church should always keep in mind that the saints will judge the world.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Why do you think people like to name sport teams, and cars, and service organizations after animals?
2. Christ is associated with being a “*Lamb*” and “*Lion*” while the Holy Spirit is associated with a “*Dove*”. Christians are called “*sheep*”. What are some of the characteristics associated with these creatures?
3. Have you been the object of God’s divine judgment? What form did it take?
4. What is your vision of God?
5. Do you believe the Church is destined for apostasy or greatness? Why?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Daniel 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Leader's Supplemental Material

7:7-8 There is another interpretation of the Fourth Beast. Many Jewish commentators believe the Fourth Beast is better identified with the Kingdom of Syria which was ruled by the family of the Seleucides who were very cruel and oppressive of the Jews. The Syrians were more vicious than the other empires in that they made the Jews renounce their religion. Their armies and commanders were the great iron teeth with which they devoured and broke in pieces the people of God. The ten horns are supposed to be the ten kings that reigned successively in Syria. The little horn is Antiochus Epiphanes, the last of the ten kings, who by force, undermined three of the kings and took control of the government. He was a man of great ingenuity reflected in the eyes of the eleventh horn like the eyes of a man. Antiochus was also very bold having a "*mouth speaking great things*." Because he was an evil genius, Antiochus was able to inflict much pain on the Jews. In BC 166 Antiochus inflicted religious horror upon the Jews as he desecrated the Temple altar by offering a swine upon it. Whether the Fourth Beast is Syria or Rome or a pre-view of Rome does not matter as much as the message that God wanted His people to hear so they could be comforted. Three things are presented that would bring comfort to a hurting people.

- ❖ First, there is a judgment to come and God is the Judge (Dan. 7:9). The judgment scene of Daniel 7:10 is intended to convey God's wise and righteous government of the world by His providence (Psa. 103:19). There is a God that judges the injustices that occurs in the affairs of men (Psa. 58:11).
- ❖ Second, the proud and cruel enemies of the Church of God will definitely be dealt with in due time (7:11-12). Typically, this truth is reflected in the fact that the Syrian Empire was eventually destroyed. Antiochus himself died of a miserable disease in BC 165. His family was rooted out. The Parthians and Armenians destroyed the kingdom. The enemies of the church do not go unchallenged.
- ❖ Third, the kingdom of the Messiah shall be setup and established in the world despite all of the opposition of the powers of darkness.

Introduction to Daniel 8
A Witness and a Guide
Daniel 8:1-14

The contents of this chapter addresses only the prophetic events that were to be fulfilled in the Media-Persia and Greek empires following the decline of Babylon. The writing returns to the Hebrew text from the Chaldean of chapters 2-7 so that the Jews might know what the future was to hold. Two truths are set before the Israelites: the future would bring great political and personal trouble for the Jews, but the days of great tribulation were numbered. These two truths were part of the vision which Daniel saw. The Vision of the Ram and He Goat (Dan. 8:1-14). The Little Horn was given victory against the people of God. According to the Angelic interpretation the Ram signifies the Media-Persian Empire

DANIEL 8

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

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

8:1-2 This vision which Daniel had took place in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar (c. 553 BC) which proved to be his last year. Chronologically, this vision takes place before chapter 5. It reminded Daniel of a former vision which appeared in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar (c. 555 BC). The scene of this vision was at Shushan, the palace, one of the royal cities of Persia. Daniel was not in Shushan in person for he was still in Babylon. "*The soul may be at liberty when the body is in captivity*" (Matthew Henry).

3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

8:3 Daniel saw a ram with two large horns. One horn was higher than the other was. The two horns foretold the empires of the Medes and the Persians. The kingdom of Persia rose last but higher under the leadership of Cyrus the Great. Daniel saw the ram pushing all round. It pushed: westward, towards Babylon, Syria, Greece and Asia; northward, towards the Lydians, Armenians, and Scythians; southward, towards Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt. In time, the ram, normally an animal preyed upon, became so formidable that the other beasts could not stand before him nor escape his sphere of influence if attacked by him.

4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

8:4 This Ram-King thought himself to be great because he did whatsoever he wanted to. However, true greatness is to do good to others.

5 And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.

8:5 Finally, the Ram-King was overcome by a He Goat-King, which was Alexander the Great, the son of Philip of Macedonia. Alexander, as predicted came from the west, from Greece. He came "*on the face of the earth*" which means that he conquered his known world and then he sat down to weep because there were no more worlds to be conquered. Perhaps it was he whom Jesus had in mind when the Lord said, "*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul*"

8: 5 **touched not the ground.** The He Goat-King "*touched not the ground.*" He seemed to have the ability to fly. It was speed, which characterized the movement of Alexander and his army. With a small force of only 30,000 men and 5,000 horses, Alexander crushed the larger armies of his enemies and their empires fell to him.

8:5 As Daniel continued to look at the He Goat-King, he noticed that a prominent horn grew between the eyes, like a unicorn. The horn speaks of great power. With great power and fury the He Goat King moved against the Ram-King, which again is a foretelling of how Alexander would move against the Media-Persian Empire which he did at age 26. Darius Codomanus, the emperor of Persia was killed. He was cast down. The He Goat King stamped upon him.

6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

8:9 This threefold biblical expression may reflect the three famous victories of Alexander over Darius at Granicus, the Battle of Issus, and the Battle of Arbela where 60,000 men were killed. In six short years Alexander made himself master so that he could be considered a notable horn.

8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

8:8 However, in the height of his great power, the He Goat King was broken, as Daniel foresaw. Historically, that is exactly what happened. At age 33, Alexander died suddenly. He did not die honorably on the field of battle as would befit a soldier. Alexander died of a fever in a drunken stupor. He left no child but only a memory of worldly pomp and illicit power and unhappiness. His kingdom was divided into four parts ruled by "noble" personages or four notable generals: one took Syria in the East; another took Egypt in the South. Asia in the north was ruled by a third general while Greece in the west went to the fourth.

9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

8:9 As the He-goat speaks of the Grecian Empire so the Little Horn represents a Greek king that will set himself against the Jews such as Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 8:15-27).

10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.

12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered.

In Daniel's vision, from the midst of the four noble personages arose a Little Horn which history knows as Antiochus Epiphanes or Antiochus the Illustrious. At first, Antiochus was a Little Horn in that he was unknown. Once, he had been a hostage and a prisoner of Rome. Making his escape from captivity, Antiochus rose to leadership position in the army. He made a successful campaign against Egypt in the South and then Persia and Armenia in the East as Daniel had foretold (Dan. 8:9). What is of particular importance is not his military victories against warring nations but his hostility against the Jews (Dan. 8:9). He attacked the "*pleasant land*" [Palestine] to hurt "*the host of heaven.*"

Some, like Eleazar and his seven brethren, Antiochus tortured and killed because they would not eat pig (2 Macc 6:7). Others, such as the High Priest Onias, were stripped of their dignity. Antiochus magnified himself like Pharaoh of old who asked in contempt, "*Who is the Lord?*" "But remember, those who persecute the people of God persecute God Himself" (M. Henry). In addition to the torturing of the innocent and the humiliation of the holy ones of Israel, Antiochus took away the daily sacrifices. The morning and the evening lambs which God had appointed to be offered every day upon His altar were restrained. These sacrifices spoke of constant fellowship with the Lord through the shedding of blood. There was the daily delight of the Jews.

Now the sacrifices were made to cease. Antiochus also cast down the place of his sanctuary. He did not burn and demolish the Temple but he did profane it by setting up the image of Jupiter Olympius in it and offering pig's blood upon the altar. In his evil ways Antiochus did prosper...for 2,300 days [6 years 3 months 18 days]. Concerning this reign of spiritual terror and political perversion several things must be remembered.

- ❖ Antiochus could not have done the evil which he did if God had not permitted him to do it. The saints must not forget that the enemies of the Church are but a rod in God's hands.
- ❖ God would not have permitted harm to come to His people if they had not provoked Him to anger as per Isaiah 42:24.

13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

8:13-14 There is a principle here that transcends time. When a ministry is destroyed, it is usually because there is sin in the sanctuary that has not been dealt with by the spiritual leadership, or the spiritual leadership has been rejected. Once individuals find justification for rejecting spiritual leadership apart from Scriptural grounds they become an authority to themselves and since they have no authority higher than themselves, the fruit of their labors is certain to rot. Following their Babylonian Captivity, God knew the Jews would reject spiritual authority. They would display a contempt for holy things as per Malachi 1:7, 8. Therefore, God is justified to forewarn His church that He will deprive individuals of the privileges of His house because they despise and reject spiritual authority and godly counsel. People who reject the privilege of assembling and who refuse to listen to the proclamation of God's Word will find themselves unable to do the same.

God has a way of using our own sinful emotions and unjustified anger to judge us so that we no longer want to come to God's house. Those who show contempt to His ministers and His word and glory will know the heavy hand of divine discipline. And yet, though God becomes angry with His people and judges them, He will not leave them forever according to Daniel 8:13-14. The time will come when the sanctuary will be cleansed.

According to Josephus, the Jewish community believes that this prophecy found fulfillment when Menelaus the High Priest in the 142nd year, the 6-month and on the 6th day of the Kingdom of the Seleucide was deposed. Worship was not restored until the 148th year, the 9th month and the 25th day of the Seleucide dynasty when the Temple was cleansed.

The cleansing of the sanctuary in any generation is always a happy occasion for God's people. When the saints are reformed they will be revived. Matthew Henry reminds us that,

"Though the righteous God may, for the correction of His people, suffer His sanctuary to be profaned for a while, yet the jealous God will, for His own glory, see to the cleansing of it in due time. Christ died to cleanse His church, and He will so cleanse it as at length to present it blameless to Himself."

15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.

16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.

17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright.

19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.

21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

8:15-27 One of the foundational principles of biblical interpretation is to let the Bible interpret itself and when it does, believe what is written. Much harm has come to the Church of Jesus Christ because men who know better consistently violate this simple rule. In Daniel 8:15-27 the Lord sends His Archangel Gabriel to interpret the vision that has been given to Daniel. The interpretation is plain.

1. The ram which Daniel saw having two horns are the kings of the Media-Persia Empire (Dan. 8:20).
2. The rough goat is the king of Greece and Alexander in particular represented by the horn that is between the goat's eyes (Dan. 8:21).
3. Following the death of Alexander, his one empire became four (Dan. 8:22).
4. The lesser kingdoms would not stand, for in the latter time of their existence, a ruthless ruler would arise. Since he is opposed to the Lord and to His anointed, he is worthy of being called Anti-Christ. Historically, the Anti-Christ, known to history as Antiochus-Epiphanes IV (175-163 B.C), which Daniel saw was to come had distinct characteristics.

**Ten Attributes of an Ancient
Anti-Christ
Daniel 8**

1. If Antiochus-Epiphanes IV (175-163 B.C) was the anti-Christ of prophecy, then he was to be a king of fierce countenance (Dan. 8:23), and he was. Antiochus was insolent, furious, and fearless of God or man.
2. He was a king who could understand dark sentences (Dan. 8:23), which means he was versed in the hidden things of dishonesty. He was a master of deceit.
3. Antiochus was to have unusual power, but from a source beyond his natural abilities (Dan. 8:24).
4. He was ruthless in conquest so he prospered and practiced evil (Dan. 8:24).
5. Antiochus was to destroy the mighty and the holy people [the saints] (Dan. 8:24).
6. He was a king who could bring about victory through "craft" which means he was "wise to do evil" through political intrigue (Dan. 8:25).

7. Pride was to fill his heart (Dan. 8:25).
8. Through his political platform of peace and prosperity, Antiochus was to destroy many (Dan. 8:25).
9. He was to be opposed to the Prince of peace (Dan. 8:25).
10. In the end, the king was to be destroyed (Dan. 8:25). Antiochus did die a violent death. The description of his illness reads much like a description of the ebola virus.

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 8

1. Describe the general content of Daniel 8.

Answer.

The contents of this chapter address only the prophetic events that were to be fulfilled in the Media-Persia and Greek empires following the decline of Babylon.

2. Who was the greatest leader of the Persian empire?

Answer.

History calls the greatest leader of the Persian Empire Cyrus the Great.

3. Who is the “*Little Horn*” of Daniel’s vision?

Answer.

In Daniel's vision, from the midst of the four noble personages arose a Little Horn which history knows as Antiochus Epiphanes.

4. When is a ministry destroyed?

Answer.

When a ministry is destroyed, it is usually because there is sin in the sanctuary that has not been dealt with by the spiritual leadership, or the spiritual leadership has been rejected.

5. What did Matthew Henry say about the cleansing of the church?

Answer.

Matthew Henry reminds us that, *“Though the righteous God may, for the correction of His people, suffer His sanctuary to be profaned for a while, yet the jealous God will, for His own glory, see to the cleansing of it in due time.*

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Have you ever fainted under spiritual stress as Daniel (Dan. 8:27)? Why?
2. Saints speak often one to another about spiritual matters (Dan. 8:13). Do you enjoy holy conversations about the Lord? Why or why not?
3. Do you think the glory and honor given to Alexander is justified? Why are men of extreme passions and violence given the title “*great*” by the world?

4. Why are so many Christians fascinated with the concept of a coming anti-Christ whom they believe is going to rule the world for seven years? Is there any biblical evidence for this?
5. Since 1989 and the collapse of the “*Evil Empire*”, the Soviet Union, many new democratic nations have emerged. Why then do so many Christians believe in a coming one-world government?

Hiding God’s Word in My Heart

Daniel 8:23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. 25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

Leader's Supplemental Material

8:1 Shushan was located on the banks of the river Ulai that surrounded the city. Shushan was in the province [district] called Elam, a part of Persia, which lay next to Babylon.

The Biblical Prophecies of Daniel A Historical Chronology

As a youth Daniel had been taken to Babylon by 604 BC He remained there until his death many years later as an older. The world was constantly changing during these years just as Daniel foresaw. Though Babylon had conquered Jerusalem in 586 BC, this great empire suddenly fell in 539 BC to the Persians.

The Persian Empire

1. The Persian Empire conquered Babylon 539 BC under the leadership of Cyrus The Great. He died nine years later in 530 BC
2. Cambyses, who ruled the Persian Empire from 530-522 BC, conquered Egypt 525 BC Three years later he died.
3. Then came Darius I (The Great) who ruled the Persian Empire from 522-486 BC. After he was defeated by the Greeks at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC, he returned home.
4. Upon his death four years later, Ahasuerus rose to power and ruled the Persian Empire from 486-465 BC. He too campaigned against Greece, but was defeated at the Battle of Salamis in 480 BC. Fifteen years after that Battle he died and the empire went to Artaxerxes I.
5. Artaxerxes I ruled the Persians from 465-424 BC.
6. Then came Xerxes II who ruled from 424-423 BC
7. He was followed by Darius I who ruled from 424-404 BC
8. Next, arose Artaxerxes II 404-358 BC who was followed by Artaxerxes III 358-338 BC who was succeeded by Arses 338-336 BC and finally, Darius III, 336-331 BC

The Greek Empire

1. Prior to the formal establishment and growth of the Greek Empire, Greece enjoyed many years of isolated grandeur.
2. They defeated the Persians at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC and then again at the Battle Of Salamis in 480 BC
3. After this, Greece enjoyed The Golden Age of Athens under the influence of such men as
 - Pericles 460-429 BC
 - Herodotus 485-425 BC
 - Socrates 469-400 BC
 - Plato 430-350 BC
 - Aristotle 384-322 BC
4. Philip of Macedonian (359-336 BC) had visions of grandeur which were fulfilled in his son Alexander the Great. During the years 336-323 BC, Alexander conquered the Persian Empire and reached India in 327 BC. He died suddenly in Babylon in 323 BC.
5. After Alexander died, the Greek Empire was divided into four spheres of influence because of the four generals who took the empire for themselves. Gradually, by 275 BC, three leading kingdoms had emerged, which existed to the Roman Period.
 - **Macedonia.** A line of kings ruled until the area was made a Roman province in 146 BC.
 - **Egypt.** In Egypt a lineage was established called the Ptolemy Dynasty.
 - ❖ Ptolemy I 323 - 285 BC
 - ❖ Ptolemy II 285 - 246 B.C
 - ❖ Ptolemy III 246 - 221 B.C
 - ❖ Ptolemy IV 221 - 203 B.C
 - ❖ Ptolemy V 203 - 180 B.C

This royal dynasty continued until Egypt was made a province of the Roman Empire in 30 BC.

- **Syria.** The Seleucid Dynasty was established based upon the name of the first ruler.

Seleucid Rulers

❖ Seleucus I Nicator (Satrap)	311–305 BC, King 305 BC–281 BC
❖ Antiochus I Soter (Co-ruler from 291; ruled)	281–261 BC
❖ Antiochus II Theos	261 – 246 BC
❖ Seleucus II Callinicus	246–225 BC
❖ Seleucus III Ceraunus (or Soter)	225 – 223 BC
❖ Antiochus III the Great	223 – 187 BC
❖ Seleucus IV Philopator	187 – 175 BC
❖ Antiochus IV Epiphanes	175 – 164 BC
❖ Antiochus V Eupator	164 – 162 BC
❖ Demetrius I Soter	161 – 150 BC
❖ Alexander I Balas	150 – 145 BC
❖ Demetrius II Nicator (first reign)	145 – 138 BC
❖ Antiochus VI Dionysus (or Epiphanes)	145 – 140 BC?
❖ Diodotus Tryphon	c. 140 – 138 BC
❖ Antiochus VII Sidetes (or Euergetes)	138 – 129 BC
❖ Demetrius II Nicator (second reign)	129 – 126 BC
❖ Alexander II Zabinas	129 – 123 BC
❖ Cleopatra Thea	126 – 123 BC
❖ Seleucus V Philometor	126 - 125 BC
❖ Antiochus VIII Grypus	125 – 96 BC
❖ Antiochus IX Cyzicenus	114 – 96 BC
❖ Seleucus VI Epiphanes Nicator	96–95 BC
❖ Antiochus X Eusebes Philopator	95–92 BC or 83 BC
❖ Demetrius III Eucaerus (or Philopator)	95–87 BC
❖ Antiochus XI Epiphanes Philadelphus	95–92 BC
❖ Philip I Philadelphus	95–84/83 BC
❖ Antiochus XII Dionysus	87–84 BC
❖ (Tigranes I of Armenia)	83–69 BC
❖ Seleucus VII Kybiosaktes or Philometor	83–69 BC
❖ Antiochus XIII Asiaticus	69–64 BC
❖ Philip II Philoromaeus	65–63 BC



Doctrine of Anti-Christ

1. The term anti-Christ refers to any false prophet and evil being who sets himself up against Christ and the people of God.
2. The term is used only in the writings of John in the New Testament. It refers to one who stands in opposition to all that Jesus Christ represents.
 - *1 John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*
 - *1 John 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.*
 - *1 John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*
 - *2 John 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-Christ.*
3. John wrote that several antichrists existed already in his day, false teachers who denied the deity and the incarnation of Christ.
4. The Antichrist's primary work is deception, which also characterizes Satan in his attempts to undermine the work of God in the world.
5. Satan's deception began in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) and will continue until the end of time. Therefore, there will be many Anti-Christ's until the end of time.
6. Those who worship the Antichrist will experience certain doom through the wrath of God (Rev. 14:9-11).
7. The Antichrist will always make war against Christ and His army, but he is captured and is "*cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone*" (Rev. 19:20).
8. Although the apostle Paul does not use the term Anti-Christ, he surely had an Antichrist in mind when he wrote of the great apostasy, or falling away, that would occur before the return of Christ:
 - *2 Thess 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.*

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

9. The future Antichrist is also called the lawless one who, empowered and inspired by Satan, will lead the final rebellion against God, but will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord. Paul urges believers to stand firm in the faith and not be deceived by the Antichrist who will display "*all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders*" (2 Thess. 2:9).
10. Believers are warned not to be misled by the deceit of the last Anti-Christ or any prior to him.
 - *Matt 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*
 - *Matt 24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*
 - *Matt 24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.*
 - *Mark 13:6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*
 - *Mark 13:21 21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: 22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.*
 - *Luke 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.*

Practical Lesson from Daniel 8

1. Daniel sought to understand the Word of God. As it was difficult for him, so shall it be difficult to us to understand all that the Bible teaches and yet there is a divine promise: "*Seek and ye shall find.*"
2. Daniel sought by prayer to understand the Word of God and he was not disappointed (cf. Dan. 2:18).

3. Daniel had a glimpse of the coming glorious Christ, for he says, "*there stood before me as the appearance of a man*" (Dan. 8:15). Who else could this be but Christ, for who would have the authority to command the angel Gabriel?
4. Daniel was exhausted by spiritual revelations (Dan. 8:18). Heart work can be very exhausting. The angel gently touched him and the prophet revived (cf. Rev. 1:17).
5. Daniel was told that there is an appointed end to periods of pain and suffering. God knows the beginning and end of these seasons of sorrow (Dan. 8:19).
6. When the Lord so wills, he can change the heart of any world conqueror to protect and not persecute his people. One example is that of Alexander. The conquest of Alexander was told over two hundred years prior to his existence. The mighty monarch acted according to promise. When Alexander drew near to Jerusalem, Jaddas the high priest met him. Upon seeing the high priest, Alexander fell at his feet and prostrated himself before that God whose name was written on the golden plate of the priestly miter. Alexander said that there had appeared to him in Macedonia, a man just like Jaddas, who assured him of success in his conquest. Alexander believed he was the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, and so he protected and spared the Jews.
7. In obedience to the will of God, Daniel kept the secrets of the vision to himself (Dan. 8:27).

Introduction to Daniel 9 The Prophet's Prayer

Daniel 9:1-19

The proper study of this chapter should begin with two questions.

First, *"Why was Israel allowed by God to be placed into Babylonian exile?"*

Second, *"Why did the Exile last only seventy years?"* The human response to these inquires is that the world was filled with powerful, egotistical rulers, who wanted to expand their various empires. Humanity has always been plagued with the Nimrod's, Nero's, Hitler's, and Sadam Hussein's of this world. Every generation has them, and the ancient world of the sixth century was no exception.

The Divine answer concerning Israel's history is discovered in 2 Chronicles 36:21. According to the Word of God, Israel was sent into exile because the nation had neglected a portion of her covenant agreement, which was to let the land rest every seventh year (Lev. 25:4,5). For 490 years God allowed His Law to be violated. Then, the Lord *"collected"* the time owed Him of seventy years. Now the debt was paid in full in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus (c. 539 BC). Darius the Mede, as he is better known, may be identified with Gobryas (Gubaru), the governor of Babylon under Cyrus. He succeeded Belshazzar (Dan. 5:30, 31). Daniel discovered this truth through a personal study of another prophet named Jeremiah (25:11; 29:10). Once he understood that the time of Divine judgment was over and that it was time for the Jews to return home, Daniel began to pray.

DANIEL 9

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

Principles of Prayer

1. Prayer is to be made to God who is to be feared and trusted (Dan 9: 4).
2. Prayer involves confession of specific sins (Dan. 9:4,5-6,10-11). Some of the sins that Daniel confessed included: rebellion and neglect of the prophets who had been maligned, mocked and murdered (2 Chron. 36:16) Confession must be the language of our own conviction. The exceeding sinfulness of sin must be realized.
3. Prayer includes praise (Dan. 9:4).
4. Prayer is based upon a covenant relationship (Dan. 9:4).
5. Prayer acknowledges the justice of God (Dan. 9:7-8).
6. Prayer appeals to the Divine attributes (Dan. 9:9) of mercy and forgiveness.
7. Prayer reminds God of the desperation of a given situation (Dan. 9:12).
8. Prayer remembers Scripture (Dan. 9:12).
9. Prayer perceives the hardness of the heart (Dan. 9:13).
10. In prayer it is remembered that there is a consequence to sin (Dan. 9:14).
11. In the act of prayer hope is found for Divine Deliverance (Dan. 9:15).
12. Prayer pleads for grace (9:16) and reminds God of His honor before others (Dan. 9:16b).
13. Prayer longs for peace so that face-to-face fellowship can be restored (Dan. 9:17).
14. True prayer is characterized by passion (Dan. 9:18-19).

20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

9:20-23 Sometimes when we pray, the Lord answers but in an unexpected way. Daniel has been asking the Lord for knowledge as to when the seventy weeks of the Babylonian Captivity was to end (9:20). That they would end, the prophet was certain, because he had been reading the prophet Jeremiah. Instead of giving that little tidbit of information, the angel Gabriel was sent to show the Lord's servant a grandeur view of the future that he had asked for (9:21-23). Gabriel showed Daniel that there are seventy weeks determined relative to a redemption from another sort of captivity, which shall begin with the going forth of the edict to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. The captivity shall terminate with the death of Messiah the Prince, and the total abolition of the Jewish sacrifices (9:24). The details of this general prophecy are provided in verses 24-27.

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks [7 weeks x 7 years = 49 years], and three score and two weeks [62 weeks x 7 years = 434 years]: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

9:25 the Going forth of the Commandment.

1. When did the command go forth to restore and to build Jerusalem? If that date can be identified, then 490 years later Messiah the Prince would come.
2. History records Four Decrees concerning Israel following the Babylonian Exile.

- ❖ **The First Decree** was given by Cyrus the Great in BC 536 according to Ezra 1:1-4. This proclamation is confirmed in 2 Chronicles 36:22-23. It is instructive that 176 years before he took the throne, the Lord had already spoken of him by name through the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 44:28). It may be significant that Cyrus says nothing in the decree about *"restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem."* Only the *"House of the Lord"* or the Temple is mentioned.
 - ❖ **The Second Decree** was given by Darius the Mede in BC 519. It is recorded in Ezra 6:1-12. In Ezra 5:1-17 we discover that those who were trying to rebuild the Temple were being opposed on the basis that they had no authority to work. An appeal was made to Darius to make a search in the king's treasure house in Babylon, which was done. The search revealed the Decree of Cyrus. Therefore, Darius' Decree is simply a re-affirmation of the Decree of Cyrus with penalties attached. Again, in the Second Decree, nothing is said about restoring and rebuilding the City, thus confirming the limitation of Cyrus' decree to the Temple.
 - ❖ **The Third Decree** was that of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, in BC 458. This was simply a letter giving Ezra permission to go up to Jerusalem and take with him some of the Priests and Levites, with authority to collect gold and silver to purchase bullocks, rams, and lambs, for offerings in the Temple. If necessary, the King's Treasurers could also be asked to give to the extent of "an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much" (Ezra 7:11-22). There is nothing in this Decree that had anything to do with restoring or rebuilding Jerusalem.
 - ❖ **Artaxerxes Longimanus issued the Fourth Decree** in BC 445, in the twentieth year of his reign as recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-8. The Decree was given to Nehemiah, the king's cupbearer, who was a very high official of the Persian Court. Permission was granted to return to Jerusalem and to BUILD it. This was a political, not a religious mandate. While the walls were repaired in 52 days, it took Nehemiah 12 years to rebuild and restore the city, and re-establish the Law. During this period there was opposition to the work from such men as Sanballat and Tobiah. It would seem that this Fourth Decree fits better than the other of Daniel's prophecy for we read that, *"The streets shall be build again, and the wall, even in troublous times."* Then, from that period on, we are told that there would be 62 weeks or 434 years until the Messiah was manifested to Israel. This took place at the Lord's baptism by John. At thirty years of age Jesus presented Himself for public ministry and was honored by the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 4:16-19).
3. Not every Bible teacher agrees that the Fourth Decree issued by Artaxerxes Longimanus in BC 445 should be the place to mark the *"going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem."*

Matthew Henry prefers to date the going forth of the decree to the time of Cyrus. In all honesty, every attempt to be precise in working with ancient dates will be met with frustration. What is certain is that God kept His word. Four hundred and ninety years prior to the manifestation of the Messiah, prophecy was given that He was coming. And in the fullness of time Christ was born.

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The Greatest Prophecy Ever Fulfilled: Daniel 9:24-27

In order to appreciate prophecy, it must be kept in mind that the prophets did not express their own personal views. The bible states plainly that the prophets told what God the Holy Spirit instructed them to tell. *"For the prophecy came not in old time by will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"* (2 Peter 1:21).

All the prophecies concerning Christ were fulfilled (Luke 24:44), including those given by Daniel. In Daniel's vision of seventy weeks, the weeks stand for years, to total four hundred and ninety (490) years. The first sixty-nine (69) weeks measure a period of four hundred and eighty three (483) years, followed by the seventieth (70th) week of year or seven (7) years, for a total of four hundred and ninety (490) years.

Since the first sixty-nine (69) weeks were literally fulfilled by the return of the Jews from Babylon to Israel to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, there is no compelling reason to believe that the final week is not also fulfilled, and that it naturally followed the 69th week in chronological order.

There is no time gap indicated in the Scriptural narrative. There is a theory that a time gap exists. (A theory, according to Webster's dictionary, is an unproven assumption, or a hypothesis accepted for the sake of argument). It has been suggested that a *"Prophetic Time Clock"* stopped at the end of the sixty-ninth (69th) week of years or after 483 years. The purpose of this time stoppage, according to the theory, is so that national Israel can, in the future, experience the seventieth (70th) week in the form of a great tribulation.

It is argued that one day Israel (and the whole world) shall suffer for seven (7) years while being deceived by the Anti-Christ who will lead the world into the greatest battle of human history called Armageddon. Of course none of these events are mentioned in the text.

The basic question of concern is this: *"Did the 70th week follow the 69th week?"* If the seventieth (70th) week did follow the sixty-ninth (69th) week, then the "Postponement Theory", and the *"Prophetic Clock"* concept, and all the rest, can be exchanged for the simplicity of the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. It is significant to note that Christendom did not know these theories until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In contrast to these recently developed spectacular theories, is God's specific ancient wording to Daniel which was that *"seventy weeks are determined."* This divine decree, in context, does not allow the separation of one week from the initial sixty-nine (69) weeks by a long period of time.

A comparison of this passage can be made with other time passages in scripture. For example, when the prophecy of Christ was made that He was to be buried and rise again on the third day, there was no other day that the Lord could have risen and still fulfilled prophecy. When Joseph prophesied of seven fat years followed by seven years of famine, there was no indeterminate time between fulfillments. When Jeremiah prophesied of seventy years captivity in Babylon, it all happened on schedule, with one year following the next for seventy years. The seventieth year did not find fulfillment hundreds of years later. God keeps His appointments on schedule. A break or long postponement in prophecy does not make a fulfillment possible.

Deuteronomy 18:22 says, *When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not [no postponement permitted] nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him.* Jesus Himself said that the scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35).

A careful examination of Daniel 9:24-27 reveals that the prophet wrote about the consummation of Jewry, not its exaltation and eventual restoration.

To be specific, Daniel was told of many things that would happen to the Jews and to the Holy City following the Babylonian Captivity. It was decreed that Jerusalem was to be restored (9:25) *"for the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times."* The account of this work of rebuilding Jerusalem is given in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Following the seventy years of Babylonian Captivity, God was determined to restore Israel back to her land for at least four hundred and ninety more years as reflected in the prophecy (9:24). The weeks of years principle can be found in other passages such as Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6.

In that four hundred and ninety years period several things would happen in the history of national Israel. Some would be good, some would be bad.

First, it was determined that Israel *"would finish the transgression."* The transgression of Israel had for a long time been the focus of the messages from God's prophets. It was for their transgressions that the Jews had gone into captivity in 721 BC under the Assyrians and then in 586 BC under the Babylonians. It was for their transgressions that the land of Palestine had been made desolation for seventy years. Daniel himself had confessed this by saying: *"Yea, all have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore, the curse is poured upon us."*

As sad as this was the angel Gabriel revealed to Daniel the distressing news that as badly as Israel had behaved in the past, she would yet sin again to an even greater extent. Yes, Israel would be restored to her land following the seventy years in Babylon. Yes, the Holy Temple would be rebuilt. Yes, the wall of the holy city Jerusalem would be made secure once more, but only so that the full measure of Israel's transgression might be made complete, for it was to be the fate of the nation that the Messiah would come, only to be killed by a mindless Jewish mob.

Turning to the *New Testament*, we read that the Messiah did come to Israel. Jesus knew what Daniel had said, and the other prophets. After bringing a railing accusation against the Jewish leaders the Lord said, *Fill ye up the measure of your fathers... that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth* (Matthew 23:32-35).

With these words Jesus declared that the hour had come in His day for Israel to *"finish the transgression"* of rejecting all the words of warning, all of the prophets, all the means of grace, even to that which was offered by the Messiah. There would be a terrible price to pay by Israel for the transgression. Jesus predicted an awful doom upon the beloved city and its people. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon THIS generation (Matthew 23:36).

Again, the Lord said, *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate*. When the transgression of the Jewish nation was finished as predicted by Daniel, then was brought to pass the words spoken by Peter on the day of Pentecost concerning Christ. *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain* (Acts 2:33).

Paul confirms that the crucifixion of Christ was the crowning sin of Israel (1 Thessalonians 2:15-16) adding that the wrath of God would come upon Israel to the uttermost. The wrath of God did come. The year was AD 70. Jerusalem was destroyed. The Holy Temple was laid waste. The blood sacrifices were made to cease and the Jewish people were scattered to the nations of the earth.

Israel had broken her covenant vow. Israel had tried to kill her Husband. Israel had committed spiritual fornication. Finally, the transgression completed, the Lord gave the true kingdom covenant blessing to a nation bringing forth the fruits of Christ (Matthew 21:43) which 1 Peter 2:9 declares to be the true Israel of God, the CHURCH of the living God. *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*.

Second, returning to Daniel 9:24 the prophecy says again, *“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city...to make an end of sins.”* The things that happened in Israel during the four hundred and ninety (490) year period brought an end to sins. How was this possible? The answer is the Cross. The wrath of man manifested against Christ (Psa. 76:10) at the Cross became the means that God used to put away the sins of the elect and to make an end of sins. On the Cross, the Lord Jesus offered the one sacrifice for sins forever (Heb. 10:2). The Lord did not die in vain. He died in order to purge His people from all their sins (Heb. 1:3).

The third expression in Daniel 9:24 is also instructive. The prophet was told that, *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city ...to make reconciliation for iniquity*.

Reconciliation signifies the bringing back together those who were rebels and enemies. Man has been a rebel against God by nature and by choice since the fall of Adam. In his heart man has been disloyal and non-submissive to God. In His justice and righteousness God has had to punish this revolt against Divine authority. Yet the character of God also enjoys displaying grace and mercy. The only way for grace and mercy to be freely expressed without compromising justice and righteousness, is for the sin issue to be dealt with. Sin must be punished before there is a basis for reconciliation.

Selecting the nation Israel to work through, God the Father decreed a plan of salvation to be expressed in time, with the end result being the making of reconciliation for iniquity. It happened at the Cross (Col. 1:12-22). As a result of the death of Christ, those who have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, are reconciled.

The fourth truth Daniel was told by the angel Gabriel is that, *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, “to bring in everlasting righteousness”*. Jeremiah had prophesied of this bringing in of righteousness. *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in earth...and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

Within the four hundred and ninety (490) year time frame it was determined by God that through the nation Israel and in the Holy City of Jerusalem something would happen to bring in everlasting righteousness.

Something did happen within the specified time. The Messiah came to Israel and established the kingdom of God in His righteousness through Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:33 cf. Rom. 14:17). History records that a work of righteousness was done in Israel on a Cross outside the Holy City. Christ was made unto us righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30). *For God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).*

The fifth fact the angel told Daniel was that, *Seventy “years are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city in order to...seal up the vision and prophecy.”* In order to fully appreciate the meaning of these words it must be kept in mind that the whole vision that Daniel was allowed to see, set forth the goodness and the severity of God. The severity of God is manifested in that He allowed Israel to continue their rebellion against Himself by abusing the prophets and by killing the Messiah. The severity of God is manifested in that He was determined to seal up the vision and the prophecy (Isa. 6:10) for where there is no vision the people will perish. God can be very severe (cf. Isa. 6:9-10; 29:9-10).

The conclusion of the matter is that the spiritual blindness of national Israel was complete when the Messiah arrived within the designated time-frame. Though the Jewish leaders read the scriptures daily, they heard not the ancient voices, and so they fulfilled them in condemning Him (Acts 13:26 cf. Luke 23:34). Twice in the New Testament our Lord applied the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9-10 to the Jews of Israel (Matthew 13:11-13). By appealing to the prophet Isaiah, the Lord taught that He Himself was sealing up the visions and the prophecies so that the Jews of His day would have no more light from God because their transgression against God was fulfilled. The racial Jew was to know the severity of God. Only the regenerate Jew, only those who had the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, only the elect of God, would see, and hear and understand (Matthew 13:16; cf. John 12:37-41 and Acts 28:24-27 with Romans 11:22).

There is a sixth truth the angel shared with the prophet. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city *“to anoint the Most High”*. The Most High is the Lord Jesus Christ. Of Himself the Lord said, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19).*

For three and one half (3 1/2) years the Lord Jesus did all of this before He was "cut off for His people" (Dan. 9:26). All of the four gospels describe in detail, *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him (Acts 10:38).*

The ultimate anointing of the Most Holy person of Christ came with His resurrection as Hebrews 1:9 explains. He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Paul declares that, God hath highly exalted Christ, *and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).*

In Daniel 9:25ff the certainty of all the prophetic utterances being fulfilled is reinforced by further details being given concerning the time frame. Daniel is instructed to know certain things. The prophet of God is to know that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Within the four hundred and eighty three (483) years [7 weeks of 7 years = 49 years + 62 weeks of 7 years = 434 years or 49 + 434 = 483 years] from the issuing of the royal decree to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem, the Messiah did appear. When He came there were souls who recognized Him (John 1:41) because He was expected (Luke 2:25-35).

The heart of Daniel must have shuddered at the next statement of the holy angel, for it was revealed that, *"after threescore and two weeks [i.e. after the 483 years] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself.*

The time period is plain. Within the first seven weeks or forty-nine (49) years Jerusalem was to rebuild following the Babylonian Captivity. Then, after four hundred and thirty four (434) more years the Messiah was to appear. Next would come the final one week of seven (7) years.

Two questions are raised.

- ❖ Did the final, seventieth (70th), week follow the sixty ninth week?
- ❖ At what point in the Messiah's ministry did the prophecy occur which would mark the BEGINNING of the final week?

The key to understanding the answer is in the name "*Messiah.*" After four hundred and eighty three (483) years Messiah was to appear. After four hundred and eighty three (483) years Messiah did appear to Israel at the river Jordan in the person of Jesus Christ. Peter bore witness to this fact when he said that, God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.

The baptism of Jesus marked precisely when the seventieth (70th) week began. In this seven (7) year period of one prophetic week the six predicted features of Daniel 9:24 came to fulfillment as well as the features of Daniel 9:27. "*He [the Messiah] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.*"

The pronoun reference "*He*" in 9:27 can only refer to the Messiah of 9:26 and no one else. The Messiah was to confirm the covenant with many for one week.

The word for confirm means "*to ratify.*" Since it is not possible to confirm or ratify something unless it is in existence, the covenant that the Messiah ratified must have been in existence. Theologians refer to this existing covenant as the Covenant of Works, which was first made with Adam.

The provision of the Covenant was that obedience brought life and disobedience brought judgment and death.

The First Adam failed to keep the provision of obedience thereby breaking the Covenant of Works. The Last Adam [the Messiah] did not fail to be obedient but fulfilled all the provisions of the Covenant of Works. He was perfect. The Messiah kept all of the Law of Moses, and then He did more. The Messiah instituted a New Covenant of Grace, based upon His substitutionary death at Calvary.

The New Covenant is an everlasting covenant. It was instituted during the last week of Daniel's prophetic vision, but is destined to endure for eternity. This New Covenant of Grace is explained in detail in Hebrews 8 and 9. In Hebrews 8:8-13 and 10:15-17 the Holy Author of scripture declares that the New Covenant (cf. Matthew 26:28) is the fulfillment of the promise of Jeremiah 31:31-34.

The New Covenant of Grace, confirmed by the Messiah, is said to be made with "*many*" according to Daniel 9:27. Not all people shall be saved but many will be. The New Testament agrees. Matthew 1:21 declares that the Messiah was to save His people from their sins. In Matthew 26:28 Jesus said, *This is my blood of the New Covenant shed for many for the remissions of sins* (cf. Isa. 53:11; Luke 1:16; 2:34; Matthew 20:28; Rom. 5:19).

While "*confirming the covenant*" in fulfillment of Daniel 9:27, the Messiah was able to cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. With these words the prophecy was made that the Messiah would make an end to all the Old Testament sacrifices, if not in literal practice, at least as to their necessity. Hebrews 8-10 sets forth in great detail, and with great emphasis the abolishing of the demands of the Law of Moses with all the sacrifices and ritual. For the Christian community the sacrifices of bulls and goats have ceased. Hebrews 10:9 is the fulfillment of Daniel 9:27. The reality of the death of Christ dispels the shadows forever.

The final important phrase of Daniel 9:27 is that which says the work of the Messiah would be such that the way would be paved, “*for the overspreading of abominations; he shall make it desolate, even until consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate*”. The *Revised Standard Version* makes this passage a little easier to understand: “*and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolate.*”

The desolate was Israel who had killed the prophets of God. Israel had also rejected the Messiah. Israel had refused to repent. Israel had crucified the Lord of Glory. God therefore decreed that Israel would be made desolate in fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy and it was.

In all of its essential parts, the prophecy given to Daniel was fulfilled. There is only one other factor to consider and that is the reference by the Lord to “*the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the Holy Place*” (*Matthew 24:15*). As the Lord was fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, He appealed to the prophet's previous prediction concerning Antiochus Epiphanes (IV) who was the ruler of Syria from 175-164 BC.

Antiochus was the “*little horn*” of Daniel 8:9. In a vain attempt to influence the Jews with Greek culture, Antiochus performed an abomination of desolation when he offered a pig on the altar of the temple in Jerusalem to Zeus, thereby desecrating the holy altar.

With that historical allusion in mind, Jesus, in Matthew 24:15 tells the Jews that the same type of thing will happen again in their generation. The Lord had in mind the destruction of the Temple by the Romans.

The destruction of the Holy Temple would have happened soon after the death of Christ except for one fact.

While He was on the Cross Jesus prayed for the people and God delayed the execution of His judgment until AD 70 (Luke 19; 21; Matthew 23).

In AD 70, Israel was made even more desolate, for there did come one upon the wings of abominations in the person of the Roman general Titus. In AD 70 Rome was weary of the Jewish revolts. For three and one half (3 1/2) years Rome laid siege to Jerusalem, and finally conquered the city completely. The Holy Temple was destroyed, and the prophecy of Christ in Matthew 24:15, using a previous typology provided by Daniel in the form of Antiochus, was finally fulfilled.

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 9

1. Why did God judge Israel for seventy years?

Answer.

The Divine answer concerning Israel's history is discovered in 2 Chronicles 36:21. According to the Word of God, Israel was sent into exile because the nation had neglected a portion of her covenant agreement, which was to let the land rest every seventh year (Lev. 25:4,5). For 490 years God allowed His Law to be violated. Then, the Lord "*collected*" the time owed Him of seventy years.

2. List seven of the fifteen principles of prayer.

Answer.

- ❖ Prayer is to be made to God who is to be feared and trusted (Dan 9: 4).
- ❖ Prayer involves confession of specific sins (Dan. 9:4,5-6,10-11). Some of the sins that Daniel confessed included: rebellion and neglect of the prophets who had been maligned, mocked and murdered (2 Chron. 36:16) Confession must be the language of our own conviction. The exceeding sinfulness of sin must be realized.
- ❖ Prayer includes praise (Dan. 9:4).
- ❖ Prayer is based upon a covenant relationship (Dan. 9:4).
- ❖ Prayer acknowledges the justice of God (Dan. 9:7-8).
- ❖ Prayer appeals to the Divine attributes (Dan. 9:9) of mercy and forgiveness.
- ❖ Prayer reminds God of the desperation of a given situation (Dan. 9:12).
- ❖ Prayer remembers *Scripture* (Dan. 9:12).
- ❖ Prayer perceives the hardness of the heart (Dan. 9:13).
- ❖ In prayer it is remembered that there is a consequence to sin (Dan. 9:14).
- ❖ In the act of prayer hope is found for Divine Deliverance (Dan. 9:15).
- ❖ Prayer pleads for grace (9:16) and reminds God of His honor before others (Dan. 9:16b).
- ❖ Prayer longs for peace so that face-to-face fellowship can be restored (Dan. 9:17).
- ❖ True prayer is characterized by passion (Dan. 9:18-19).

3. Total and then divide the 70 weeks of years of Daniel 9.

Answer. The 70 weeks of years totaled 490 years. This large number was subdivided into 483 years and then one week of 7 years in the middle of which the Messiah would be cut off.

4. Can the dating of the “going forth of the commandment” be given with absolute confidence and utter certainty? Does it matter?

Answer. *Bible* scholars debate the origin of the commandment to return to Jerusalem. In the absence of secular certainty, what is confirmed is that God kept His word. Four hundred and ninety years prior to the manifestation of the Messiah, prophecy was given that He was coming. And in the fullness of time Christ was born. He confirmed the covenant and was cut off for His people thereby making the sacrifices to cease.

5. What was the abomination of desolation?

Answer.

The abomination of desolation was the sacrifice of a pig on the altar in the Holy Temple.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you believe that *Scripture* can be broken? If not then the prophecy of Daniel has been fulfilled. Comment.
2. Do you believe in the “*Prophetic Clock*” concept whereby 483 years of prophecy given by Daniel has been fulfilled but a final 7 year period is to be given to national Israel to fulfill this ancient prophecy? Why or why not?
3. For centuries the “*prince that was to come*” was interpreted by the Church to refer to the Messiah. Then, beginning around 1830 the “*the prince that was to come*” was assigned to speak of the anti-Christ. Was the church wrong all those years? How did a Messianic prophecy become associated with the Arch Enemy? Comment.
4. Do you believe there are signs that still need to be fulfilled prior to the second coming of Christ? If so, what are those signs?
5. Having read the section, “The Greatest Prophecy Ever Given” are you more convinced or less convinced the prophecy of Daniel 9 is fulfilled in the Messiah and the early church. Explain.

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Daniel 9:3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: 4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; 5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

Introduction to Daniel 10

A Vision of the Majestic Messiah

Daniel 10:1-9

In the third year of the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia (559-530 BC) Daniel had a "*certain thing*" revealed unto him. That "*certain thing*" concerned the events that happen to the nation of Israel in the "*latter days*." Three points are made about the revelation.

- ❖ It was true for two reasons. First, God cannot lie. Second, the Lord does not have to lie, for the future is certain and established, according to a Divine decree.
- ❖ It was futuristic. No one would be able to accuse Daniel of an astute follower of contemporary events, and then pretending to speak for the Lord.
- ❖ It was understandable. What was revealed to the true prophet did not startle the imagination nor stretch logic.

DANIEL 10

1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel;

10:2- 4 Prior to the vision being given to him, Daniel had been in a state of mourning for three full weeks. The prophet was on a holy search for a message from the Lord, which indicates that Daniel was a sensitive man to the sins of his nation and his own heart. Daniel was a spiritual man who loved the Lord. He was a sincere man who considered his prophetic office to be something not to be held lightly. Daniel's sincerity manifested itself in that he ate no food that was enjoyable, he did not eat meat, nor did he drink wine, nor did he bath fully for three weeks (21 days). Finally, on the 24th day of the first month [Nisan, i.e., March/April] as he was by the river Hiddekel, Daniel found the Lord. He had a vision of the Majestic Messiah.

5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

10:5-6 Daniel saw a Man (Dan. 10:5). Though Jesus Christ is God, He is true humanity.

- ❖ The Man was clothed in linen (Dan. 10:5). This could bring up the interesting speculation of what shall be worn in heaven. The Bible tells us that there is a body suited for heaven just as we have a body suited for earth.
- ❖ The loins of the Majestic Man in the vision was girded with fine gold of Uphaz (Dan. 10:5). Uphaz refers to a geographical location in S Arabia which was known for gold (Jer. 10:9).
- ❖ His body was like beryl (10:6). Beryl (ber'-il), refers to a precious stone, probably golden or yellow in color (Ex. 28:20).
- ❖ The face of the Majestic One had the appearance of lightening. It was bright and shining.
- ❖ His eyes were red like lamps of fire.
- ❖ His arms and feet shone were like polished brass.
- ❖ His voice was bold and loud.

7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

10 And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

10: 7-10 This vision of the Majestic Messiah was shown to Daniel alone, which speaks of electing grace. It has always been a curious thing to men that some see spiritual realities while others do not. Elisha saw angels, which others did not. Saul saw the resurrected Lord, though others did not (Acts 9:7; 22:9). The heart wonders, "Why?" The only answer has to be found in sovereign grace. Only one thing is certain. Apart from Divine revelation and illumination, no one would ever see spiritual realities.

Those with Daniel did not see what he saw. The prophet of God witnessed something special. His associates only knew that a spiritual experience was taking place. It was enough to make them afraid and flee (Dan. 10:7). Far better would it have been for the men to have stayed, despite their fear, and asked God to be gracious. In the end Daniel was left alone to see the vision.

This spiritual experience depleted him of natural strength, which was good. It is only when our natural resources are exhausted that we can be still and know the power of God's might. Despite his physical state of exhaustion, Daniel could still hear the voice of God.

The voice of God has been heard by many people since the beginning of time. Adam and Eve heard the voice of God as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God spoke to Moses, and all the Old Testament prophets. During the days of His humiliation, Jesus spoke to multitudes, so that it can be said that many heard His voice. A.W. Tozer says that God still speaks to the man who cares.

The voice of God caused Daniel to fall asleep on His face toward the ground in sweet security. There, Daniel stayed until a supernatural hand touched him. It was the hand of an angel. His strength revived by degree, until Daniel was able to get upon his knees and the palms of his hands. So it is that we learn how God's grace comes to us. It comes by degrees, until we are strong in the Lord. In this humble position, time passed. Suddenly, Daniel heard another voice speak.

11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

10:11 The voice called his name. God knows His own by name. The voice told him he was loved. We may have trouble saying we love one another, but God has no trouble telling us we are loved. The voice declared that Daniel would understand Divine revelation. Sometimes it is possible to make prophecy, dark mysteries, complicated and overwhelming. People love to create complicated charts and diagrams. But God communicates in order to impart information to be understood. First, however, Daniel must stand upright, for man is made in God's image, which speaks of dignity. Always obedient to gospel duties, Daniel stood, but his natural heart still trembled (Dan. 10:11). With great sensitivity, the angel told Daniel revealing facts. First, he was not to worry (Dan. 10:12) and second, his prayers were to be answered.

12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

10:13 The prayers of Daniel would have been answered sooner, except the Prince of the kingdom of Persia had opposed the angel for three weeks. It was only when Michael, a chief prince of the Elect Angels, came to help his heavenly companion that Daniel could then be reached. A number of fascinating insights are provided by this simple passage.

- ❖ Fallen angels, or demons, are assigned to the kingdoms of this earth. There was a Fallen Angel that affected the kingdom of Persia, and another that affected the kingdom of Greece (Dan. 10:20). It is logical to believe that there is at least one Fallen Angel assigned to America.
- ❖ Though Fallen Angels are assigned to nations, so are Elect Angels. The appointed angel over Israel is declared to be Michael (Dan. 10:21).
- ❖ The Fallen Angels are in active conflict with the Elect Angels of light. Caught up in the angelic conflict are the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. The life of Job illustrates this conflict, as does the words of Jesus to Peter (Luke 22:31), and the teaching of the apostle Paul (Eph. 6:12).
- ❖ Ultimately, the Fallen Angels must give way to the Elect Angels, but there is a contention of some sort. Whether this spiritual warfare is verbal or physical, or both, is not certain. What is certain is that the hostility is real.

14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

10:14 **latter days.** The term "*latter days*" speaks of a period of time that is in the future from the moment it is spoken. Sometimes the term is associated with the Messiah. When Daniel heard he was to know about the "*latter days*", he once more fell down in silence (Dan. 10:15). After a while he was given strength to converse, which he began to do in verse 17-19. This brief conversation of Daniel was characterized by one main thing: astonishment, that he could speak to angels. What kept Daniel going was a fourfold measure of reassurance.

- ❖ Daniel was told again that he was loved.
- ❖ He was told that he should not fear.
- ❖ The prophet was instructed to enjoy a measure of peace.
- ❖ He was told that he should be strong.

When the angel finally arrived Daniel, was told of things to come.

15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

16 And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

17 For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? For as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

18 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? And now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 10

1. What three general points can be made about the revelation of Daniel 10?

Answer.

- ❖ **It was true** for two reasons. First, God cannot lie. Second, the Lord does not have to lie, for the future is certain, and established, according to a Divine decree.
 - ❖ **It was futuristic.** No one would be able to accuse Daniel of being an astute follower of contemporary events, and then pretending to speak for the Lord.
 - ❖ **It was understandable.** What was revealed to the true prophet did not startle the imagination, nor stretch logic.
2. For how long did Daniel seek an answer to his prayer, and what were the signs of his sincerity?

Answer.

Daniel had been in a state of mourning for three full weeks. He did not eat meat nor did he drink wine, nor did he bath fully for three weeks (21 days). Finally, on the 24th day of the first month [Nisan, i.e., March/April], as he was by the river Hiddekel, Daniel found the Lord. He had a vision of the Majestic Messiah.

3. State four facts about fallen angels.

Answer.

- ❖ Fallen angels, or demons, are assigned to the kingdoms of this earth.
- ❖ Though Fallen Angels are assigned to nations, so are Elect Angels. The appointed angel over Israel is declared to be Michael (Dan. 10:21).
- ❖ The Fallen Angels are in active conflict with the Elect Angels of light. Caught up in the angelic conflict are the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. The life of Job illustrates this conflict, as does the words of Jesus to Peter (Luke 22:31), and the teaching of the apostle Paul (Eph. 6:12).
- ❖ Ultimately, the Fallen Angels must give way to the Elect Angels, but there is a contention of some sort.

4. How was the heart of Daniel comforted by gracious words spoken to him?

Answer.

- ❖ Daniel was told he was loved.
- ❖ He was told that he should not fear.
- ❖ The prophet was instructed to enjoy a measure of peace.
- ❖ He was told that he should be strong.

5. Define the term “latter days”.

Answer.

The term "*latter days*" speaks of a period of time that is in the future from the moment it is spoken. Sometimes the term is associated with the Messiah. The New Testament reveals that since the time of Christ the Messiah, the church has been living in the "*latter days*" (2 Tim. 5:1; James 5:3; 2 Peter 3:3).

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you believe that fasting and prayer should be part of the normal Christian life? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever been comforted by the *Scriptures* in time of stress? Do you have confidence that you are beloved by God?
3. Have you ever known angelic oppression? Explain how you knew you might be in the presence of a fallen angel?
4. Have you ever had such a sight of God that you fell in fear before His presence? If not, would you seek such a vision?
5. How does a Christian learn to have a trembling heart before God and yet not fear men?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Daniel 10:18 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, 19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Leader's Supplemental Material

10:5-6

The Majestic Messiah

1. The vision that Daniel saw (Dan. 10:5-6) of a "*certain man*" can be none other than the Majestic Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Rev. 1:13-15).
2. The One whom Daniel saw was dressed as a priest. Jesus is the High Priest of our profession.
3. He was clothed in linen, as the High Priest was so clothed on the special Day of Atonement.
4. His loins were girded with a golden girdle of the finest gold, which was proper. Everything about Christ is the best of its kind (Matthew Henry).
5. The girding of the loins denotes that the Lord is ready to diligently perform the work that the Father has given Him to do. It is the great work of redemption.
6. The shape of the One whom Daniel saw was like beryl, which reminds the church the Lord is altogether lovely.
7. His countenance struck reverence in Daniel and terror in his companions, for His face appeared like lightening which dazzles the eyes. However, lightening can also threaten and terrify.
8. The purpose of this manifestation of the Majestic Messiah is so that we might think highly of Him. Jesus is worthy of all pre-eminence.
9. The vision is also given that the church might understand His interest in her salvation.

10:13 The purpose of the angelic messenger was to inform Daniel what shall befall the Jews in the "*latter days*." The term "*latter days*" is significant, as it is used in eleven passages in the Bible.

- *Num 24:14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.*
- *Deut 4:30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;*
- *Deut 31:29 For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.*

- *Jer 23:20 The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.*
- *Jer 30:24 The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.*
- *Jer 48:47 Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far is the judgment of Moab.*
- *Jer 49:39 But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.*
- *Ezek 38:16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.*
- *Daniel 2:28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;*
- *Daniel 10:14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.*
- *Hosea 3:5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.*

Introduction to Daniel 11
Kingdoms in Conflict
Daniel 11:1-20

As he promised, the angel Gabriel shares with Daniel what will befall the Jewish people "*in the latter days.*" Focus of attention is given to the kings of Persia, and Greece in general, and one king in particular, known as Antiochus Epiphanes.

The establishment of the monarchy of Greece would be built upon the ruins of the Persian monarchy (11:1-4). In addition to giving details about the Persians and the Greeks, Gabriel will also predict what will happen in the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria (11:5-20).

It is from Syria that Antiochus Epiphanes would arise to do great harm to the nation of Israel, and to their religious ceremonies (11:21- 29).

Antiochus had nothing but contempt for all religions (11:30-39) though he would use religion on occasion to advance his cause.

In the end, Antiochus himself was to be destroyed (11:40-45). One of the precious things about true biblical prophecy is that at times it gets very specific, and detailed, for we are told that this prophecy came to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus (533 B.C).

The angel Gabriel revealed the coming reign of four Persian kings who may be identified:

- ❖ **Cyrus** (si'-rus; the sun), was the king of Persia (559-530 BC). Within 20 years after becoming king of Persia, Cyrus had conquered the Medes, Lydians, and Babylonians (549, 547, and 539 BC, respectively). His conquest of Babylon came during the night that followed a great feast.
- ❖ **Artaxasta** (Artaxerxes and Cambyses), 529-522 BC (Pseudo-Smerdis reigned from 522-521 BC)
- ❖ **Ahasuerus** (Darius Hystaspes) 521 to 485 BC.
- ❖ **Xerxes** 485-465 BC Xerxes was richer than other kings, and far greater in power, for he presided over an army of 800,000 men. Making war against Greece, in 480 BC he invaded Greece, but was not able to conquer it. He met with shameful defeat. Going out in terror to hurt Greece, Xerxes returned with their scorn ringing in his ears.

DANIEL 11

A Historical Translation of Daniel 11:1-45

1 Also I [Gabriel] in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I stood up to confirm and to strengthen [Darius by giving him success in his wars, and after he had conquered Babylon, by confirming him in his resolution to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem].

2 And now will I [Gabriel] shew [to Daniel] the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia [named Cyrus, Artaxasta, and Ahasuerus]; and the fourth [king named Xerxes] shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength [and] through his riches [Xerxes] shall stir up all [the Persians so that they want to make war] against the realm of [Greece].

3 And a mighty king [whom the world will come to call Alexander the Great] shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will [for being worshipped as a god, he will begin to act the part of the same in his own conceit].

11:3 Gabriel foretells of the conquest of Alexander the Great (336-323 BC), and the division of his kingdom. Alexander was the mighty king that was to stand up against the kings of Persia. He ruled with great dominion over many kingdoms with a despotic power, as he did according to his will. The Medes and the Persians ruled according to a fix law. But not Alexander. After his conquest of Asia he was worshipped as a god, and as a god, Alexander did all things according to his will (Dan. 11:3). Upon his death, Alexander's kingdom was broken, and divided into four parts by his generals, as Gabriel predicted (Dan. 11:4). One part went to Cassander, who took Macedonia, and the western part of the kingdom. A second part went to Lysimachus, who took Thrace, and the northern part of the kingdom. The third part was ruled by Seleucus, who took Syria, and the eastern portion. The fourth part went to Ptolemy, who took Egypt, and the southern part of the kingdom. None of the divisions of the empire went to Alexander's posterity (Dan. 11:4b).

4 And when [Alexander] shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven [among his generals]; and not to his [family] nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those [of his own household].

11: 4 However, none of the four generals who took the empire, ever achieved the greatness Alexander enjoyed. Had Alexander's sons been allowed to reign in his place, the history of the ancient world would have been different. But predicted that his kingdom would be "plucked up, even for others besides those" of his own family (Dan. 11:4). Instead of glory, violence came to Alexander's family. His brother Arideus, was made king in Macedon, but he did not reign for long because his mother, Olympias, killed him.

She then murdered her own grandchildren, by poisoning Alexander's two sons, Hercules and Alexander. In death, Alexander the Great would have agreed with the writer of Ecclesiastes, "*All is vanity and vexation of spirit.*"

5 And the [Egyptian] king of the south [called Ptolemaeus Lagus] shall be strong, and one [shall arise] of [Alexander's] princes [from Syria by the name of Seleucus Nicanor]; and he shall be strong above [Ptolemaeus Lagus], and have dominion; [Seleucus'] dominion shall be a great dominion.

11: 5 As Gabriel continued his narrative he foretold that from the ruins of Alexander's empire would arise two strong kingdoms (Dan. 11:5). There would be the kingdom of Egypt, led by Ptolemaeus Lagus, a former general in the army of Alexander. He is called "*the king of the south*" (Dan. 11:8). Also to arise would be the kingdom of Syria, which was established by Seleucus Nicanor (The Conqueror). Seleucus became stronger than Ptolemaeus, and the other former generals of Alexander's army (Dan. 11:5). At one time Ptolemaeus had not less than 72 subordinate kingdoms under him. Once friends, and then antagonists, Seleucus and Ptolemaeus had something in common, and that was a strong hostility against the small kingdom of Judah (Dan. 11:6). They both invade the land to spoil and exploit it. Ptolemaeus invaded Jerusalem by deceit. While on a state visit of friendship, he moved against the nation, much to everyone's surprise, for it was on a Sabbath that he attacked.

6 And in the end of years [Ptolemaeus and Seleucus] shall join themselves together; for the [Egyptian] king's daughter of the south shall come to [Antiochus Theos], the [Syrian] king of the north, to make an agreement: but [Bernice] shall not [agree to] retain the power of the [political] arm [suggest by her father]; neither shall [Ptolemaeus] stand, nor his arm: but [Bernice] shall be given up [by Ptolemaeus through divorce], and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times [shall not survive the political repercussions].

11: 6 In the years to follow, the kingdom of Egypt, and the kingdom of Syria, tried to form an alliance through a political marriage (Dan. 11:6). Ptolemy abdicated the throne of Egypt in favor of his son, Ptolemaeus Philadelphus, whose half brother Antiochus Theos had married a daughter of Antiochus Soter, who had succeeded Seleucus Nicator as king of Syria. The woman's name was Bernice.

The political marriage failed to produce the unity of nations that was desired (Dan. 11:6). In the end Antiochus divorced Bernice, and took his former wife Laodice again. Laodice was obviously unhappy with this matrimonial "*shuttle diplomacy.*" Having been once rejected, and her children declared illegitimate, Laodice intended to get revenge for she went on a murderous rampage. She poisoned her former husband, King Antiochus, and then hired assassins to kill his former wife Bernice, and her son. There was a method to this madness. Laodice wanted her own child to be crowned king, and he was. His name was Seleucus Calinicus. Such drastic intrigue demands retaliation, and it came in the person of the Egyptian, Ptolemaeus Euergetes.

7 But out of a branch of [the] roots [of the now former Egyptian Queen, Bernice] shall one stand up in [the] estate [of Ptolemaeus Philadelphus his son and successor, Ptolemaeus Euergetes], which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the [Syrian] king of the north [the one is known as Seleucus Callinicus], and shall deal against [the Syrians], and shall prevail:

8 And [Ptolemaeus Euergetes] shall also carry captives into Egypt [the] gods [of the Syrians], with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and [Ptolemaeus Euergetes] shall continue [to reign in Egypt] more years than the [Syrian] king of the north.

9 So the king of the south [called Ptolemaeus Philadelphus] shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land [which is Egypt].

11:7-9 Ptolemaeus Euergetes was the son, and successor of Ptolemaeus Philadelphus. Gathering together a large army, Euergetes moved against Seleucus Callinicus, the new king of Syria. He wanted to avenge his sister's [Bernice] death, which he did, by putting Laodice to death, and by capturing Seleucia, the fortress of the king of the north. He would have taken the entire kingdom had he not been forced to return to Egypt to put down an insurrection. He did not return home empty handed, but carried the riches and resources of Syria back down into Egypt (Dan. 11:8). The spoils of war included many princes, 40,000 talents of silver, and 2500 precious vessels and images of gold. Because of the wealth he brought back, the Egyptian priest bestowed an honorary degree upon Ptolemy, and they surnamed him Euergetes, meaning "*benefactor*" (11:9).

10 But [the] sons [of Seleucus Callinicus, Seleucus and Antiochus] shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and [the] one [named Antiochus] shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through [the land from Syria on down into Egypt]: then shall [Antiochus] return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress [back in Syria].

11:10 Ptolemaeus Euergetes reigned for forty-six years, which was longer than his Syrian counter-part in the north. When Seleucus Callinicus, king of Syria finally died, he left two heirs, Seleucus and Antiochus who are called in Daniel 11:10 "*his sons.*" It was their declared intent to recover what their father had lost (Dan. 11:10) by assembling "*a multitude of great forces.*" Unfortunately, the elder brother Seleucus, was a rather weak warrior and leader. Unable to control his army, he was poisoned by his friends after a reign of only two years. His brother Antiochus succeeded him. He was more ruthless, and so enjoys in history the title of Antiochus the Great. He reigned for thirty-seven years. It is to Antiochus the Great that Gabriel refers in 11:10 as the one who would "come," [into Egypt] "*overflow,*" "*pass through,*" and then return to Syria.

11 And the [new Egyptian] king of the south [Ptolemaeus Philopater] shall be moved with anger, and shall come forth and fight with [Antiochus], even with the king of the north: and [Ptolemaeus Philopater] shall set forth a great multitude [of men and animals consisting of 70,000 foot soldiers, 5,000 horses, and 73 elephants]; but the multitude shall be given into [the] hand [of Ptolemaeus Pilopater at a place called Raphia].

11: 11 At first, it did not appear that Antiochus the Great would have much military success despite the angelic announcement. When the Egyptian ruler Ptolemaeus Philopater, heard that this Syrian king was on the march, Ptolemaeus was outraged (Dan. 11:11). Gathering together 70,000-foot soldiers, 5,000 horses and 73 elephants, the king of Egypt prepared to do battle. On the field of conflict he faced the Syrian army of Antiochus which consisted of 62,000-foot soldiers, 6,000 horses, and 102 elephants. The battle was fought at a place called Raphia, not too far from Gaza, according to one named Polybius who lived with Scipio. The year was 217 BC. When the dust settled and the blood stopped flowing, Ptolemaeus Philopater had gained the victory over Antiochus.

12 And when [Ptolemaeus Philopater] hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it.

11:12 In the victory, he grew insolent, for "*his heart was lifted up*" (Dan. 11:12). In this inflated condition, while in Judah, Philopater went into the Temple of God at Jerusalem. He dared to enter into the most Holy Place, and by so doing incurred the wrath of the Lord. It was decreed that though he cast down many myriads, yet he would not be strengthened by his military victories.

13 For the [Syrian] king of the north [called Antiochus] shall return [with allies such as Philip of Macedon], and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

14 And in those times there shall many stand up against the [Egyptian] king of the south [named Ptolemaeus Philopater]: also the robbers of thy people [led by the Syrian king Antiochus] shall exalt themselves to establish the vision [as now given to you Daniel by me Gabriel]; but they shall fall.

11:13-14 In the providence of Almighty God, Antiochus was allowed to regroup during a thirteen-year period of peace. Prophecy must be fulfilled. Antiochus refortified his army and returned to Egypt to fight afresh against Ptolemaeus Philopater's infant son, Ptolemaeus Epiphanies who was not technically the ruler of the land. Really in command of the Egyptian army was a capable general named Scopas. In this second expedition the Syrian king, Antiochus did not come alone.

He had some powerful allies to support his efforts for "*many shall stand up against the king of the south*" (11:14). Among the allies of Antiochus the Great was Philip of Macedon. In the bitter battles to follow, Antiochus totally routed the Egyptian armies thereby fulfilling the word of the Lord.

15 So the [Syrian] king of the north [called Antiochus] shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the [Egyptians in the] south shall not withstand [the sweeping conquests of Antiochus who will move from Syria through Samaria, past Judah and on down into Egypt], neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

11:15 Caught in the crossfire of all this ancient warfare were the Jews, who decided that they needed to side with one army or the other. Considering their options, the Jews decided to unite with the Syrian, Antiochus the Great. Yielding themselves to his rule, the Hebrew soldiers entered into The Syrian military service to lay siege to the garrisons of Ptolemaeus Epiphanes.

16 But [Antiochus, king of Syria, will destroy anyone] that cometh against him [and] shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land [of Israel], which by his hand shall be consumed.

17 [Antiochus, king of Syria] shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give [the young king of Egypt] the daughter of women [named Cleopatra], corrupting her: but she shall not stand on [her father's] side, neither be for him.

11:16-17 Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, the other Israelites discovered that the Syrians, having become entrenched in the daily life of the nation through political and military expediency, would be hard to get rid of. Divine help was needed and divine help came, for the prediction had been made that the presence of "*the robbers*" (Dan. 11:13) would serve only to confirm the vision, or the prophecy that had been given to Daniel (Dan. 11:14). The promise was made that "*they shall fall*" (Dan. 11:14).

The Syrians presence would not last forever though it would grow in strength for a while. One reason for this is revealed in the fact that, embolden by military victory, the northern Syrians, still ruled by Antiochus, launched another attack on the Egyptians. This time Antiochus and his army prevailed (11:15-16). Further and further, the Syrian military might push into the southern frontiers (Dan. 11:17). Somewhere in all of this upheaval, about 193 BC, the Syrian king gave his daughter Cleopatra to the child king of Egypt, who was only seven. Cleopatra herself was very young, and because she was so young, she was still under the care of her mother, and nurse as she was called "*the daughter of women*" (Dan. 11:17).

No doubt, Antiochus was hoping for some positive political repercussions, and the cessation of hostilities, but it did not happen. In a surprising display of independence, Cleopatra did not support her father's policies of conquest thereby fulfilling Scripture (Dan. 11:17).

18 After this shall [the Syrian, Antiochus] turn his face unto the isles [of Italy and Greece], and shall take many [of the small island kingdoms]: but a prince [or ruler of the Roman senate] for his own behalf, shall cause the reproach offered by [Antiochus] to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause [pain and suffering] to turn upon [the Syrian, Antiochus].

11:18 Finally, growing frustrated with this phase of his foreign policy, the Syrian king Antiochus decided to fight an emerging people in Greece and Italy known as the Romans (11:18). By war and by treaty, Antiochus was able to take the isles of these people such as Rhodes, Samos, and Delos. Like all subjugated nations, the Romans did not appreciate the foreign oppression. Gabriel told Daniel that someone, a prince (Dan. 11:18) [either a Senator or a General perhaps], would fight violence with violence. This prophecy was fulfilled when two Roman generals, both named Scipios, were sent with an army to fight Antiochus.

A man named Hannibal had counseled Antiochus to invade Italy and destroy it, but Hannibal's advice was not taken. As a result, Antiochus found himself on the battlefield at Magnesia in 190 BC facing Scipio Asiaticus (11:18). With 70,000 men against the Romans 30,000, Antiochus should have won. But he suffered a terrible defeat as prophesied (Dan. 11:18).

After so many years of inflicting pain and suffering on others, Antiochus found himself in trouble. At the mercy of the Roman army, he could either be executed or kept alive. The Romans finally agreed to let Antiochus live provided he pay them tribute money. Antiochus lost Europe, he lost Asia on the European side of Taurus, he lost all but ten ships out of a fleet of three hundred, and he had to make an initial payment of 15,000 talents to Rome.

19 Then [Antiochus] shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land [of Syria]: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

11:19 Though he agreed to these terms, Antiochus did not know how to raise money to pay his tribute. His empire was bankrupt, and the land of Syria and Palestine was devastated. In desperation, Antiochus decided to plunder a temple of Bel, in the city of Elymais, to find money to pay tribute to the Romans. This, however, proved to be too much for the people. Enraged by the desecration of a holy place, the people of Syria finally rose up against Antiochus and killed him. He "*fell*" and "*was found no more*" (Dan. 11:19).

20 Then shall stand up in [the] estate [of Antiochus] a raiser of taxes [in the person of Seleucus Philopater who was the son of Antiochus. He shall revel] in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle [but by poison administered by the hand of a servant who had been with him for twelve years].

11:20 Into the power vacuum of political leadership moved Antiochus' eldest son, Seleucus Philopater, who was to reign for twelve years. In the end, Seleucus proved to be just as foolish as his father. Instead of lowering the tax burden, Philopater raised it (11:20). He also proceeded to try and rob the temple at Jerusalem. There was a public outrage and within a few days this foolish man was destroyed, but not in anger, nor in battle (Dan. 11:20). Heliodorus, a faithful servant of twelve years, poisoned him.

In all of this political and military turmoil, there are important spiritual lessons to be observed. Matthew Henry offers five thoughts.

- ❖ God, in His providence, sets up one ruler and kingdom and pulls another down as He pleases.
- ❖ Life is full of strife and conflict that come from the passions of men. Politics and power make a theater for the expression of sin and misery as individuals are exploited.
- ❖ All the changes and revolutions have been foreseen by God. Nothing is new to Him. All things are foreseen because they are foreordained.
- ❖ No word of God shall ever fail to happen. What God has designed shall come to pass. Even the sins of men are made to serve the purpose of, and contribute to, the bringing of His counsels to the birth in their season.
- ❖ In order to correctly understand the Bible in some parts, other sources have to be consulted. God is to be honored for the general knowledge He allows people to study and preserve for great service, is often rendered to divine truths. The spade of the archeologist confirms scripture, as does the extra biblical historical narratives. Josephus was not a Christian, and yet his eye witness accounts of the fall of Jerusalem helps to confirm the prophecy of Christ.

21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person [named Antiochus], to whom [the leaders of Syria] shall not give the honor of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably [pretending to reign for his brother's son, Demetrius, who was a hostage in Rome], and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

22 And with the arms of a flood shall [his political opposition such as Heliodorus] be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also [Demetrius himself] the prince of the covenant [and rightful heir to the Syrian throne, shall be killed].

23 And after the league made with [Antiochus by the government of Syria and local rulers such as Eumenes and Attalus] shall [Antiochus] work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

24 [Antiochus] shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province [of Syria]; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them [the wealth of the empire and the products of war in the form of] prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time [thereby bringing the local military leadership and weapons under his personal control].

25 And [Antiochus] shall stir up his power and his courage against the [Egyptian] king of the south [named Ptolemaeus Philometer] with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but [the Egyptian ruler] shall not stand: for [his own political and military advisers] shall forecast devices against him [because they had been bribed in secret by Antiochus].

26 Yea, they that feed of the portion of [the Egyptian's king's] meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.

27 And both these kings' hearts [even the hearts of Antiochus and Ptolemaeus Philometer] shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at [the] one [conference] table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.

28 Then shall [Antiochus] return into his [own] land [of Syria] with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant [which is the peace treaty]; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

29 At the time appointed shall [Antiochus] return [into Egypt], and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

30 For the ships of Chittim [sent by the Roman senate] shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return [once more to Syria], and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; [Antiochus] shall even return [to Syria], and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

31 And arms [supplied by Jewish traitors] shall stand on [the] part [of Antiochus], and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate [by offering a pig on the holy altar].

32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God [such as Judas Maccabeus] shall be strong, and do exploits [even to the point of being tortured for the faith].

33 And [the righteous] that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

34 Now when [the faithful righteous] shall fall, they shall be help with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

35 And some of them [the righteous] of understanding shall fall, to try them [test them for the purpose of approval], and to purge, and to make them white [for in this way only can saints be sanctified], even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed [for God has ordained that all suffering will come to an end].

36 And the king [called Antiochus] shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god [including the Lord God, Jehovah], and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that [which] is determined shall be done.

37 Neither shall [Antiochus have respect for] the god of his fathers, nor [shall this debased individual have any natural respect for the desire of women], nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

38 But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not [but whom he shall call Jupiter Olympius] shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

39 Thus shall [Antiochus] do in the strongest holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

40 And at the time of the end shall the [Egyptian] king of the south [known as Ptolemaeus Philometer] push at [Antiochus]: and the king of the north shall come against [the Egyptian] like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and [Antiochus] shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

41 [Antiochus] shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

42 [Antiochus] shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

44 But tidings out of the east [concerning the Parthians] and out of the north [regarding the Persians] shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

45 And [Antiochus] shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain [near a place called Emmaus]; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

Antiochus Epiphanes
The Satan from Syria
Daniel 11:21-45

All the verses in Daniel 11:21-45 deal with the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes who is the Little Horn spoken of in Daniel 8:9. Antiochus was the sworn enemy to the Jewish religion and a bitter persecutor of the Israelites. He was a racist and an anti-Semite before the words were ever conceived. To prepare His people for persecution the Lord predicted the rise of the Anti-Christ known as Antiochus Epiphanes. Concerning this Satan from Syria four major facts are set forth.

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|-------------------------|--------------|
| ❖ His Character | 11:21 |
| ❖ His Crown | 11:21-24 |
| ❖ His Wars With Egypt | 11:24-28; 40 |
| ❖ His Cruelty To Israel | 11:31-45 |

Concerning the character of Antiochus, it is predicted that he would be rude, boisterous, crass, and sordid. History records that Antiochus was all this and more. He would leave his royal court to go out into the night and mix with infamous company in disguise. Some took him to be silly, while others took him to be mad. Once imprisoned in Rome, Antiochus had escaped to return to Syria. Rising rapidly through the ranks of the army, he was soon in a position to try and take over the throne. Antiochus would come to power by political intrigue as he managed to win the leaders of Syria to his side.

These guardians of the throne were not willing at first to give the reigns of political power of the kingdom to Antiochus (11:21) for they knew that Demetrius, Antiochus' nephew, was the rightful heir apparent. Wisely, Antiochus did not try to use force to come to power. Rather, he came in peaceably (11:21), pretending he wanted to reign for Demetrius only until his nephew could be free from Roman imprisonment. Few people knew that it was Antiochus himself who had arranged for Demetrius to become a prisoner of Rome. With the help of ruling princes such as Eumenes and Attalus, and the use of flattering and persuasive speech, Antiochus obtained the kingdom of Syria. Once in power, he moved to crush all opponents such as Heliodorus (11:22). Anyone who opposed Antiochus was ruthlessly overthrown and broken down. In the end, this included his nephew Demetrius, the rightful prince of the covenant.

Having consolidated his power, Antiochus entered into a series of diplomatic alliances that were meaningless, because he never intended to keep his word. Beginning with a small support base of loyal followers, Antiochus became stronger (11:23). As his political strength grew, Antiochus Epiphanes perpetuated the myth that he had the best interest of others in his heart. He entered peaceably into the most prosperous parts of Syria where he proceeded to scatter among the people the spoils of war. At the same time he was able to disarm the cities. In the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes, generosity became a cover for taking political control. Only later would people realize that he who came in like a fox, stayed to reign like a lion.

Prior to the outbreak of his bloodlust, one of the places that Antiochus plied his diplomatic charms was in Egypt. He promised to be a friend and guardian of the young king Ptolemaeus Philometer, but in the end Antiochus proved faithless. Stirring up his power and his courage against the Egyptian monarch (Dan. 11:25), Antiochus overthrew the larger force.

His success was due in part to the fact that Ptolemaeus Philometer's own counselors betrayed him, having been bribed by the Syrians (Dan. 11:26) prior to the military conflict. After a series of battles, a peace treaty was to be signed according to prophecy (Dan. 11:27) as the two kings met in a royal summit. But neither were sincere. They lied to one another. In each heart lay the desire to hurt and rule the other so that neither would prosper. The peace treaty was not to last. In the end, at the appointed time according to Divine providence, there would be more war.

Returning to the Syrians with great riches, Antiochus re-armed his military forces and then, after just two years of peace, he invaded Egypt in the eighth year of his reign. War, with all of its horrors came easy to Antiochus Epiphanes because his heart was against the covenant he had made. Despite being the aggressor on the field of battle, the renewed attempt to conquer Egypt did not succeed. It was doomed to failure according to prophecy (Dan. 11:28), thereby forcing Antiochus to return to Syria. Part of the reason for the military failure was that the ships of Chittim [or Rome] came against Antiochus (Dan. 11:30). Ptolemaeus Philometer, king of Egypt, had made an alliance with the Romans because he wisely did not trust Antiochus. Therefore, when the second war broke out, the Roman senate sent an embassy to Antiochus to command him to go back to Syria. Antiochus was told to leave in a very dramatic fashion.

Popilius, one of the ambassadors, drew a circle with his staff around Antiochus and told him to give Rome an answer of what he would do before he came out of the circle. Fearful of Roman power, Antiochus retreated with his army from Egypt. It grieved him to do this. Actually, it enraged him. In his shame and anger, Antiochus decided to destroy as many Jews as possible and thus we discover that the concept of a Final Solution did not originate with Adolph Hitler.

Following his forced return from Egypt, Antiochus Epiphanes moved with a vengeance against Israel. His heart was against the holy covenant (Dan. 11:30) which characterized the Jews and their relationship to God. The Law of Moses was predicated upon the concept of a formal covenant contract. While most of the Israelites loved the covenant, there were some who were strangers to its provisions (11:28). Antiochus discovered who these people were and used them for his own purposes. There have always been traitors in every society.

Among the faithless was Jason, the brother of Onias the high priest. By the appointment of Antiochus, Jason set up a school at Jerusalem, for the training of the youth in the fashion of the heathen (2 Macc. 4:23ff).

Matthew Henry observes, *"It is not strange if those who do not line up to their religion, but in their conversations do wickedly against the covenant, are easily corrupted by flatteries to quit their religion. Those that make shipwreck of a good conscience will soon make shipwreck of their faith."*

Uniting his own military forces with the deserters from Judaism, Antiochus move foreword with his decision to profane the temple (1 Macc. 1:21). Proudly did he enter into the holy place, boldly did he take away the golden altar and the candlestick which immediately led to great outrage and mourning in Israel (2 Macc. 5:15). Antiochus then went into the most holy of holies in the temple being guided by a traitor named Menelaus. There he committed a great abomination as he sacrificed a pig on the altar (1 Macc. 1:54). Then, in a final act of desecration, Antiochus renamed Solomon's temple the Temple Of Jupiter Olymplus (2 Macc. 6:2).

As he showed disrespect to the temple, so Antiochus Epiphemes continued to show further disrespect to the Israelites through persecution, only to discover that there is always a people that do know their God and who remain steadfast to the end. One example was found in Eleazar, a respected scribe of the Law. When a piece of swine's flesh was forced into his mouth, he spit it out though he knew he would be tortured to death (2 Macc. 6:19). In another instance, a mother and her seven sons were murdered for not renouncing their faith (2 Macc. 7). *"The right knowledge of God is, and will be, the strength of the soul, and, in the strength of that, gracious souls do exploits"* (Matthew Henry).

Concerning the faithful, four truths are declared.

First, they shall instruct many in truth and righteousness (Dan. 11:33).

Second, the righteous will fall by the cruelty of Antiochus (11:33). By sword, by fire, by forced exiles, and by murder they shall suffer many days (1 Macc. 1:60, 61). If we ask why God allows these things to happen, the answer in part is that there are some spiritual lessons that can only be learned through suffering (Dan. 11:35 cf. 1 Pet. 1:7).

Third, it is promised that the religion of the faithful shall not perish (11:34). Heroes, such as Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, as well as others, will always arise to pull down idolatrous altars, try to circumcise the uncircumcised, and recover the Law from the hands of the Gentiles. These efforts will not be in vain (1 Macc. 2:45). Though there will be little help in such noble efforts, there will be some (11:34).

Fourth, all troubles have an appointed end (11:35).

Nearing the end of his life, Antiochus Epiphemes grew even more proud, more insolent, and more profane. Being puffed up with his conquests, he dared to mock the Lord God as he mocked all religions (11:36-37) except the one that he established (11:38). This mocking of God was allowed (11:39) as were the attempts of Antiochus to put an end to the Sabbaths (1 Macc. 1:45).

Finally, the Lord had enough. He had already decree that the end of the actions of Antiochus Epiphemes would come with a final invasion of Egypt (11:40). Furious that the Egyptians would seek to move against him, Antiochus went out like a whirlwind with initial success (11:42-43).

The Libyans and the Ethiopians united with him in his renewed efforts but it was all too little too late. Attacked by the king of Parthia, harassed by the Egyptians, Antiochus Epiphanes ultimately died the death of the wicked. In the end, no one came to help him (11:45). He died in 164 BC having ruled since 175 BC.

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 11

1. What is the focus of attention in Daniel 11?

Answer.

Focus of attention is given to the kings of Persia and Greece in general and one king in particular, known as Antiochus Epiphanes.

2. Identify the four Persian kings of whom the angel Gabriel spoke.

Answer.

- ❖ **Cyrus** (si'-rus; the sun), was the king of Persia (559-530 BC). Within 20 years after becoming king of Persia, Cyrus had conquered the Medes, Lydians, and Babylonians (549, 547, and 539 BC, respectively). His conquest of Babylon was during the night that followed a great feast.
- ❖ **Artaxasta** (Artaxerxes and Cambyses), 529-522 BC (Pseudo-Smerdis reigned from 522-521 BC)
- ❖ **Ahasuerus** (Darius Hystaspes) 521 to 485 BC.
- ❖ **Xerxes** 485-465 BC Xerxes was richer than other kings and far greater in power. for he presided over an army of 800,000 men. Making war against Greece, in 480 BC he invaded Greece, but was not able to conquer it. He met with shameful defeat. Going out in terror to hurt Greece, Xerxes returned with their scorn ringing in his ears.

3. What five spiritual lessons does Matthew Henry offer on Daniel 11.

Answer.

Matthew Henry offers five thoughts.

- ❖ God, in His providence, sets up one ruler and kingdom and pulls another down as He pleases.
- ❖ Life is full of strife and conflict that come from the passions of men. Politics and power make a theater for the expression of sin and misery as individuals are exploited.
- ❖ God has foreseen all the changes and revolutions. Nothing is new to Him. All things are foreseen because they are foreordained.
- ❖ No word of God shall ever fail to happen. What God has designed shall come to pass. Even the sins of men are made to serve the purpose of and contribute to the bringing of His counsels to the birth in their season.

4. Who is referred to in Daniel 11:21-45?

Answer.

Antiochus was the sworn enemy to the Jewish religion and a bitter persecutor of the Israelites. He was a racist and an anti-Semite before the words were ever conceived. To prepare His people for persecution, the Lord predicted the rise of the Anti-Christ, known as Antiochus Epiphanes.

5. According to Daniel 11:36 what are the characteristics of this man of sin?

Answer. This man of sin would be

- ❖ Willful
- ❖ Full of pride
- ❖ Self-promoting
- ❖ Blasphemous
- ❖ Rich and powerful

Personal Application and Reflection

1. The history of the world is filled with violence and bloodshed. Is history cyclical or is it moving towards a predetermined end?
2. Taxes are mentioned in Daniel 11:20. If a people are taxed excessively do they have a right to revolt?
3. The concept of king's lying to one another is found in Daniel 11:27. Do politicians reflect the people or should they to be held to a higher level of accountability and honor?
4. A veiled reference to homosexuality may be found in Daniel 11:37. Why has the homosexual movement grown in such power and acceptance in the modern world in America and Europe?
5. Do you believe your heart has the characteristics of being dictatorial, prideful, self-promoting, willful, and covetous? If not, why not? If so, how has grace subdued these passions?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Daniel 11:32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

DANIEL 12

1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

12:1-2 Once again the angel reminds Daniel that great persecution will come to the people of God. The time period in view has primarily to do with the events that were to take place in the second century BC during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C). However, by way of application this passage refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 (Matthew 24:21) and the judgment that will accompany the Great Day of the Lord at the Second Advent.

In the wake of the blood and carnage of persecution by Antiochus will come death (Dan. 12:2). But there will be life after death, for those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, *"some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."*

In these words there is a primary and secondary understanding of this verse that teaches a spiritual resurrection while implying a physical resurrection. The hope of a resurrection replaces the trauma of death.

Not everyone will sleep in the dust of the earth, for some have been marked to live. Their names are found written in *"The Book."* There is a *"Book of the Living"* (Isa. 4:3) and there is a *Book of the Dead*. Our names are written in both and will not be transferred, the one to the other, until God's work is completed in our lives.

During all of the turmoil that was to come in the second century BC, the angel predicted that there would be wise ones or teachers of righteousness who would receive a glorious reward because they would be careful to turn many to righteousness.

In days of human darkness it is easy to lose faith. I have read of a conversation between two Jews in a Nazi concentration camp. The first Jewish man asked in essence, *"Do you think that God will forgive the Germans for what they have done to us?"* His friend replied, *"Do you think we will forgive God for allowing all of this to happen?"*

To have faith in the hour of death and unspeakable brutality is to test the limits of righteousness. And yet, after the ordeal, those who have turned others to righteousness do shine, reflected in the life of people such as Corrie and Betsy Ten Boon, who suffered in the Holocaust of World War II. Ultimately, there is glory reserved for all the saints who will win souls to the Savior and encourage others to love the Lord as well. Every mother, every father, every Sunday School teacher, every deacon, ever pastor, every Christian, can teach someone about the things of the Lord and influence them in righteousness.

3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

12:3-4 This final announcement to Daniel of resurrection and honor would provide a basis for hope in the people of God during the days to come. Until the days predicted arrived, prophecy was to be sealed up. The sealing came because the souls of men were to become less interested in spiritual things. But then more days would pass and the time would come when many would want to know afresh what God had to say. There would be an intense desire to discern the mind of God. People would think and talk and meditate on the Scriptures once more. By searching for spiritual truth, knowledge would be increased (Hos. 6:3). Matthew Henry notes that, *"those that would have their knowledge increased must take pains [to study and they], must not sit still in slothfulness and bare wishes, but run to and fro, and must make use of all the means of knowledge and improve all opportunities [to learn]."*

5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

12: 5-8 Having finished listening to the final message from the angel, Daniel's spiritual eyes were directed to another vision. He saw a river and on each bank there were two angelic personages. In addition to the angels, there was also One who was standing in the midst of the river upon the waters. This last Person was the pre-incarnate Christ, the Lord of Glory (Dan. 10:5). One of the angels on the banks of the Tigris [Hiddekel, cf. 10:4; note Gen. 2:14] spoke and called across the water, *"How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?"*

That simple question still rings in the ears of men. Every generation has asked the Lord, *"How long shall it be to the end of time? When will this age be over?"*

Unfortunately, instead of waiting for the Divine answer, other voices have spoken and the world has been foolish enough to listen. What does it matter that these other voices cannot swear by the Eternal? What does it matter that what they say is not true? "*We have an answer!*" cries a multitude. Yes, the world now thinks it knows all about the future.

We have charts and diagrams and a system that people will die for. But the problem is that the world has heard by and large the voice of many men. It has yet to hear clearly the voice of God. The result of all the new prophetic utterances is that the sure word of prophecy has been reduced to human speculations, religious opinions, and breathless watching for so called signs of the times which are gone with the wind.

Current events are now being used by self-proclaimed prophecy experts to excite the imaginations of men that the end is near. Why can this happen? Because prophecy sells. What does it matter that unscrupulous men and women make merchandise out of the people of the Lord? The cynic might say that the Christian flock needs to be fleeced financially because it is so gullible and easily misled. Spiritual wolves certainly have no problem with devouring this silly flock. Money, greed, power, and ego, combine forces to make men speak about things they really are ignorant of. It is only when God speaks that our hearts can rest in the truth. It is only when God speaks that trust can be placed in the things that are said.

9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

12:9 -11 When the angels asked, "*How long till the end of time?*" the Lord answered and HE provided a time frame. "*It shall be for a time, times, and an half,*" He said. But what does that mean? Other Scripture may provide an answer.

In the book of the Revelation, we find this expression "*time, times, and an half*" being limited to 42 months or 3 and 1/2 years or 1260 days. Perhaps it means the same in Daniel 12:7. It is possible that the historical fulfillment of this passage begins to find fulfillment in Antiochus who did surprise Jerusalem and held it hostage for 3 years and 6 months (1260 days; 42 months x 30 days per month = 1260 days) according to Josephus. The problem, in context, is that 1290 days (or 3 years and 7 months) is spoken of according to verse 11 and then 1335 days (or 3 years 7 months and 15 days). What is to be made of the extra days?

The simple reality is that the historical fulfillment of some of the events of these last few verse are difficult to document in precise order. This does not mean that prophecy has not been accurately fulfilled. It does mean that our knowledge of the ancient world is incomplete.

"There are many particular times fixed in scripture-prophecies, which it does not appear by any history, sacred or profane, that the event answered, and yet no doubt it did punctually" (as Isa. 16:14). (M. Henry). The wisest thing to do is to find confirmation for what can be confirmed and then trust that the Bible is accurate on the other details. The major events were certainly accurately foretold.

We know that Antiochus caused the sacrifices to cease (Dan. 12:11). We know that he desecrated the Holy Temple by offering pigs blood upon the altar and then set up an image of Jupiter (Dan. 12:11). We also know that Antiochus died soon (perhaps 30 days?) after this happened which may be the fulfillment of Daniel 12:12.

If we do not know about the last few days of this prophecy and how they are to be best understood, we can be confident that the church once knew for it was predicted *that "the wise shall understand"* (Dan. 12:10c). During the days of Antiochus, the Lord did reveal to His people the prophecies that were first given to Daniel, and then sealed following the prophet's death until the hour of need.

In the days of the tribulation inflicted by Antiochus Epiphanes, many saints were purified and made white for they were tried under pressure. Those who were found faithful now shine as the stars in the heaven. They serve as an inspiration for us to be found faithful until the end of time.

12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

13 But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Final Observations

1. The angels are not omniscient. They know about the future only as the future is revealed to them (1 Pet. 1:12). This is true of both the Fallen Angels as well as the Elect Angels. Those who look to the occult for guidance are wrong to think that the demons have advanced knowledge. God has reserved the future for Himself (Acts 1:7).
2. Water signifies people. The image of the Lord standing upon the waters speaks of His dominion over all. *"He sits upon the flood,"* (Psa. 29:10) says the psalmist. *"He treads upon the waters of the sea,"* declares Job (Job 9:8). During the days of His flesh, Jesus did walk upon the waters according to the gospels (Matthew 14:25).
3. The evil that men do is still under the sovereign control of Christ (Dan. 12:7). Why the Lord allows great sin is a mystery, but it shall not be allowed free expression forever.

4. As there was a time fixed for the termination of the Lord's troubles, so there is a time fixed for the termination of the troubles of the church. This time must be waited for with faith and patience. When it comes, the saints will be rewarded. *"Blessed is he"* who, having waited long, comes to it at last, for he will then have reason to say, *"Lo, this is our God, and we have waited for Him."*

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Daniel 12

1. What are the time periods associated with the events of Daniel 12?

Answer.

The time period in view has primarily to do with the events that were to take place in the second century BC during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C). However, by way of application this passage refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 (Matthew 24:21) and the judgment that will accompany the Great Day of the Lord at the Second Advent.

2. In what passage is the doctrine of the resurrection taught?

Answer.

Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3. How can a Christian be wise and shine?

Answer.

Daniel 12:3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

4. What does the Bible say about the speed of life and knowledge?

Answer.

Speed shall increase along with knowledge. For "*many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*" (Dan. 12:4).

5. What is your overall view of the Book of Daniel? Do you understand it better as a result of this study? Why or why not?

Personal Application and Reflection

1. What gives a person the right to teach a particular passage of Scripture has a dual fulfillment?
2. Do you believe modern nations are found in Biblical prophecy? If so, which one and how are the modern nations identified?
3. Do you know of any modern day prophetic teacher who has proven to be correct one hundred percent of the time? Please identify that individual.
4. Though men are more knowledgeable today than ever before, are they wiser? Why or why not?

5. How much longer do you think the Lord will tarry before He return to judge the world in righteousness? Why do you say this?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Daniel 12:2-3 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of Visions

1. A vision refers to a divine revelation that reveals the will of God. Visions generally occurred while the prophet of God was awake or was in a semi state of consciousness.
2. At least twenty-two people in the Bible are said to have received a vision. Sixteen visions were given to the Old Testament saints while seven were given to New Testament believers.

Visions from God

- Abraham Genesis 15:1
- Jacob Genesis 46:2
- Balaam Numbers 24:4
- Samuel 1 Samuel 3:15
- Nathan 2 Samuel 7:17;
1 Chronicles
17:15
- Isaiah 2 Chronicles
32:32; Isaiah 1:1;
21:2; 22:1,5
- The Messiah Psalm 89:19
- Ezekiel Ezekiel 1:1; 7:13;
8:3-4; 11: 24
13:16; 40:2; 43:3
- Daniel Daniel 2:19; 7:2;
8:1-2
- Eliphaz Job 4:13 cf. 7:14
- Obadiah Obadiah 1:1
- Nahum Nahum 1:1
- Habakkuk Habakkuk 2:2
- Zechariah Zechariah 13:4 cf.
2 Chronicles 26:5
- Iddo 2 Chronicles 9:29
- Hosea Hosea 12:10
- Peter Matthew 17:1,10;
Acts 10:17; 11:5
- James Matthew 17:1,10
- John Matthew 17:1,10;
Revelation 9:17
- Ananias Acts 9:10
- Paul Acts 9:12;
16:9, 10; 26:19;
2 Corinthians 2:11
- Cornelius Acts 10:3

3. God promised to speak to His prophets in visions (Num. 12:6).
4. Long periods of time went by when there was not a vision from God (1 Sam. 3:1; Lam. 2:9).
5. Where there is no vision the people perish (Prov. 29:18).
6. It was possible for men to err in their visions (Isa. 28:7 cf. Jer. 14:14).
7. God's people were called upon to seek visions from the prophets (Ezek. 7:26).
8. Angels were sometimes used to help explain a vision (Dan. 8:16-17; 9:21-27).
9. Visions can produce great emotional distress (Dan. 8:27; 10:16).
10. It is possible for one person only to have a vision even in the presence of others (Dan. 10:1, 7, 8).
11. The absence of visions was considered to be a form of divine judgment (Mic. 3:6).
12. The prophet Joel predicted that visions were to be found during the *New Testament* era (Joel 2:28 cf. Acts 2:17).
13. The appearance of the angels to the women on the morning of Christ's resurrection was considered by them to have been a vision (Luke 24:23 cf. Acts 12:9) so that it is sometimes hard to separate a vision from "*reality*".
14. Visions can come during the act of prayer (Acts 10:17; 11:5).

Doctrine of Dreams

1. The purpose of dreams was to reveal God's will (Gen. 28:12; 31:24; 37:5-10; 1 Kings 3:5; Matthew 1:20; Matthew 2:13, 19, 20).
2. Even in the present era of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with a fuller revelation (2 Cor. 5:7) to guide the believer, the promise of dreams is given (Acts 2:17).
3. It is possible for dreams to be corrupted so that the will of a false god is conveyed. One ancient practice was to induce religious dreams by incubation or sleeping in some shrine where the patron god was believed to communicate secrets to the sleeper. Herodotus mentions this practice among the Egyptian sect known as the Hasamonians (Herod IV. p. 172, ed. A.D. Godley). The Lord warned against false dreamers (Jer. 23:25, 27; 29:8; Zech. 10:2) and pointed out that normal desires such as hunger and thirst can produce dreams (Isa. 29:8).
4. God promised to speak to the prophets in dreams (Num. 12:6), but even they had to be tested (Deut. 13:1-5).

5. The absence of dreams was considered to be a form of divine discipline (1 Sam. 28:6,15).
6. As there is a danger in the absence of dreams there is also a danger in the multitude of dreams (Eccles. 5:7) for it is possible that foolish whims will be insisted upon as requirement of worshippers.
7. Thirteen people in the Bible are credited with specific dreams. Eleven people are noted in the Old Testament while two are listed in the New Testament.

A Dreamer of Dreams

- Abimelech Genesis 20:3,6
- Jacob Genesis 28:12; 31:10,11
- Laban Genesis 31:24
- Joseph Genesis 37:5-10
- Pharaoh's Butler Genesis 40:5
- Pharaoh's Baker Genesis 40:5
- Pharaoh Genesis 41:7-8, 15-22
- A Man from Midian Judges 7:13
- Solomon 1 Kings 3:5,15
- Nebuchadnezzar Daniel 2:3; 4:5-9
- Daniel Daniel 7:1;
- Joseph Matthew 1:20; 2:12-22
- Pilate's Wife Matthew 27:19

Seven Accomplishments of a Dream or Vision from God

1. Dreams can provide Divine answers to our questions though the answers may comfort or alarm.
 - Gideon was comforted by the revelation he discovered through a dream (Judges 7:9-11).
 - Saul was alarmed when discovered what would happen in battle through a vision (1 Samuel 28:15).
2. God can use dreams to warn about unseen dangers.
 - The wise men were told to return to their country another way than the one in which they came (Matthew 2:12).
 - Joseph was warned to take Mary and Jesus into Egypt (Matthew 2:13).
3. Dreams can give instructions of the will of God as Joseph discovered (Matthew 1:20-21).
4. Dreams can provide guidance that will stop sinful actions.
 - King Abimelech did not harm Sarah because of a dream he had (Gen. 20:3-9).
 - Laban did not harm Jacob because of a dream (Gen. 31:24).
 - Pilate was warned not to hurt Jesus (Matthew 27:19) but he did anyway under duress.
5. God can use dreams to induce humility as He did with Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:5, 9, 34, 37).
6. Dreams can preserve our souls from the pit of depression and despair as Ezekiel's vision gave hope to the children of Israel (Ezek. 1:1 cf. Psa. 126:1-3; 127:2).

*"There is no pit so deep that God's
love is not deeper still."*

Corrie Ten Boom

How to Identify False Dreams and Visions

1. False dreams and visions do exist (2 Pet. 2:1-3; Deut. 13:1-3).
2. False dreamers and false prophets who share their visions are greedy. They want power, fame, wealth, attention, loyalty, and service and God HATES them (Jer. 23:16, 25-27; 28:8-9).
3. False dreams and visions have two things in common (Matthew 7:15-16).
 - Deception. The specific sign of deception is that what they see or dream leads others away from Christ. The classic examples of this are the visions of Joseph Smith (Gal. 1:6-9).
 - Discord. Because light cannot have fellowship with darkness, and Satan cannot have fellowship with Christ, there will be conflict.
4. Those that are exposed as false are to be dealt with severely (Deut. 13:1-3).

Six Ways to Recognize False Dreams and Visions

1. False dreams and visions are seductive as they promise glory or produce terror (Jer. 23:16).
2. False dreams and visions encourage immorality (Lev. 19:31).
3. False dreams and visions are contradictory (Jer. 23:17).
4. False dreams and visions are discouraging (Zech. 10:2).
5. False dreams and visions are unproductive (Jer. 23:22).
6. False dreams and visions are destructive (Jer. 23:32).

Six Important Questions

1. Do the dreams and visions lead me to Jesus Christ and fill me with love for His church?
2. Do these dreams and visions promote righteousness and purity in my life?
3. Do these dreams and visions align themselves with the clear and emphatic teachings of Scripture?
4. Do these dreams and visions strengthen my faith and fill me with the sense of a noble destiny and an honorable purpose in life?
5. Do these dreams and visions turn me from sin and selfishness to seek the Lord and serve Him in faithfulness and love?
6. Do these dreams and visions build up the body of Christ and equip believers to do the work of the ministry?

Twelve Expectations in a Dream or Vision

1. A promise of God (Gen. 15:1).
2. A pronouncement of judgment (1 Sam. 3:15).
3. A preview of the future (2 Sam. 7:17).
4. A proclamation of grace (Psa. 89:19).
5. A prophetic word of warning (Isa. 1:1-3).
6. The knowledge of someone else's heart (Dan. 2:19).
7. A glimpse of glory (Matthew 17:9).
8. A word of guidance (Acts 9:10).
9. A word of exhortation (Acts 10:19).
10. A spiritual appeal (Acts 16:9).
11. The way of salvation explained (Acts 26:19).
12. Some of the mysteries of heaven unfolded (Rev. 9:17).

Three Points of Caution

- Not everyone is promised a vision.
- All visions are to be subject to the Word of God.
- We must be open to receiving visions and dreams.

Non-Biblical Reasons for Dreams

1. Diet. There is a definite relationship between the mental and physical health. Deficiency can cause hallucinations and unpleasant dreams.
2. Activity. Physical exertion does not always mean more restful sleeping. It is possible to take work to bed.
3. Memory. Good memories and bad can be relived through dreams.
4. Secret sins and private fantasies can emerge from the subconscious during sleep.
5. Satan has a way of disturbing our sleep with dreams of terror and fear.

Categories of Dreams

- ❖ **Personal dreams** are those in which a word from God is received to comfort or instruct.
- ❖ **Prophetic dreams** are those through which the Lord works to speak a word to others.
- ❖ **Literal dreams** are those in which the Lord reveals something is real and will actually happen.
- ❖ **Symbolic dreams** are like a parable. They have a specific message but need interpretation.
- ❖ **Revealing dreams** provide an insight into a situation.

Dreams and Visions of the Apostle Paul

1. When Stephen was being stoned, Saul heard the saint tell what he saw in his dying moments and that was the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:54-8:1).
2. On the road to Damascus, Paul had his own vision of Christ (Acts 9:1-9).
3. In some way the Holy Spirit communicated to the prophets and teachers at Antioch that Barnabas and Saul were to be set apart for service (Acts 13:1-3).
4. While at Antioch, Paul was stoned and left for dead. During the ordeal he had a vision of heaven (Acts 14:19- 20 cf. 2 Cor. 11:25).

5. While he was at Troas, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia appealing for help (Acts 16:9).
6. When he stayed at the house of a man named Justus in the city of Corinth, Paul had a vision that many souls would be saved (Acts 18:7-11).
7. While in the city of Jerusalem praying in the holy temple, Paul fell into a trance and received a message from God (Acts 22:18).
8. After being arrested in Damascus, Paul saw the Lord in a night vision (Acts 23:11).
9. During an ocean voyage that became life threatening, an angel appeared to Paul in a dream stating that no one would be hurt (Acts 27:12-26).
10. Writing to the church of Corinth, Paul stated plainly that he had many visions and revelations of the Lord (2 Cor. 12:1-10).
11. By revelation Paul was instructed to go and preach to the Galatians (Gal. 2:2).
12. Paul told the Galatians and the Ephesians that he received his understanding of the gospel by means of revelation (Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:1-6).
13. When Paul appeared before Nero, he may have seen a vision of Jesus standing in the palace hall with him (2 Tim. 4:16-17).
14. As Paul had dreams and visions, so did others such as Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-6; 12:16-11).

Practical Suggestions in order to Obtain a Dream from God

1. Set the heart upon God (Psa. 25:14; Jer. 15:19).
2. Repent of wrong attitudes towards the gifts of God.
3. Saturate the heart with scripture (2 Tim. 2:15).
4. Have a close relationship with the church and pastor in order to be accountable and balanced (1 Cor. 2:16; 13:9).
5. Ask the Lord by faith to speak to the heart in order that HE might be glorified (Luke 11:9-13).
6. Be alert and sensitive to the dreams that do come (Song of Solomon 5:2).
7. Record important dreams (Dan. 7:1).

8. Seek wisdom (Prov. 8:4-6), which will produce many rewards.
- By wisdom there is the understanding of proverbs, parables, and riddles (Prov. 1:5-6).
 - By wisdom a personal relationship with God will be enjoyed (Prov. 2:5).
 - By wisdom discretion will be exercised and deliverance from evil will come (Prov. 2:11).
 - By wisdom life is filled with happiness and peace (Prov. 3:16-17).
 - By wisdom there is public safety and private security (Prov. 3:23-24).
 - By wisdom comes counsel, strength, authority, and justice (Prov. 8:14-15).
 - By wisdom riches, honor, and righteousness is gained (Prov. 8:18-21).
 - By wisdom the favor of God is received (Prov. 8:34-36).