

Daniel

Introduction

Overview

Author:

Daniel

Purpose:

- To prepare the king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar to receive the bad news of chapter 4 by building confidence in the reliability and truthfulness of Daniel's prophecies and the omnipotence of his God in the preceding chapters.
- Reassure the Israelites (captives and first returnees to the Land) that God is in control of history and that His prophet Daniel was telling the truth when he spoke of a prolonged period of oppression before the final phase of God's kingdom.
- To prepare the generations of the distant future for the persecution that will await them in the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
- To prepare believers in the even more distant future for the coming of the Messiah in the time of the fourth kingdom.

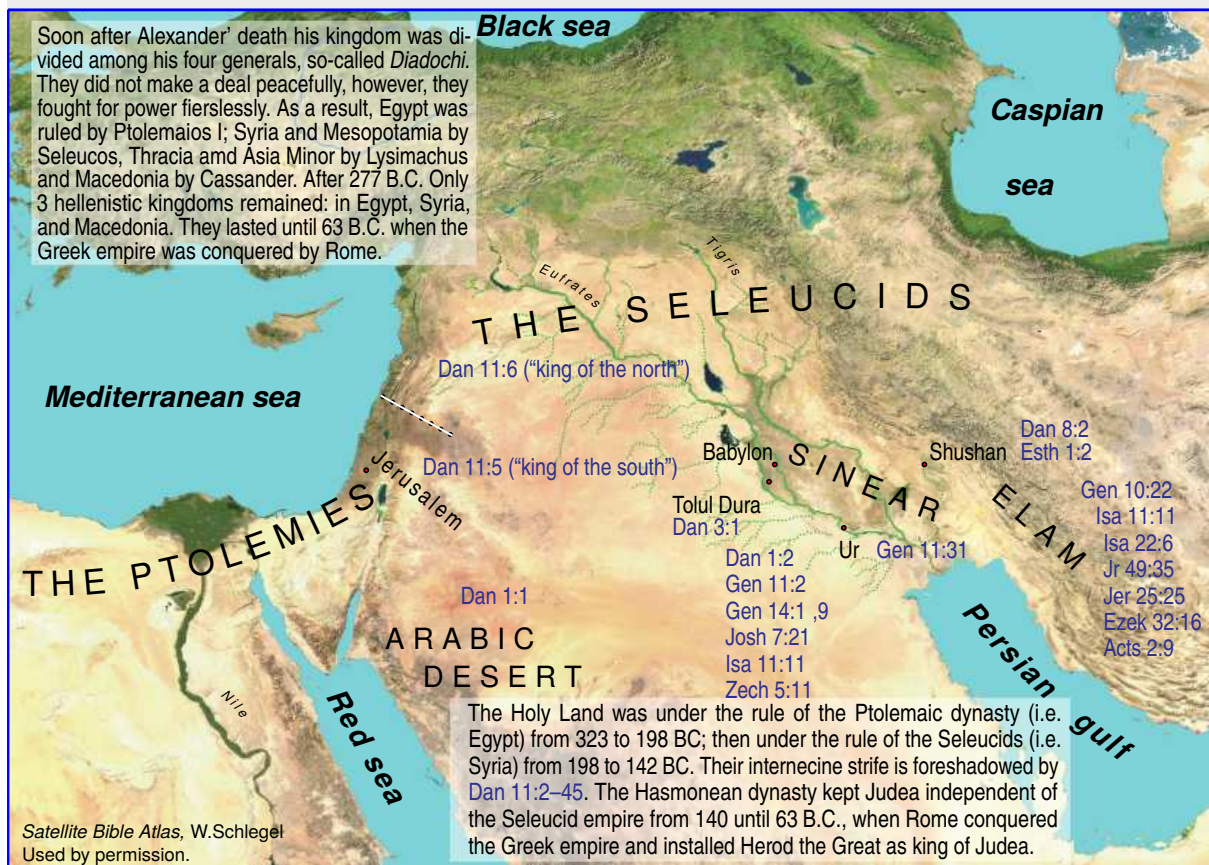
Date:

Shortly after 539 B.C.

Key truths:

- Daniel and his friends were faithful to God even in exile.
- Daniel can be trusted to tell the truth because he never compromised his faith, even under pressure from his slavers.
- God is the absolute ruler of all history.

The empires of Daniel's distant visions



- Israel's slavery is prolonged until a total of four kingdoms (of which Babylon is the first) succeed in dominion over her because God's people have not turned away from their sins.
- Although there is much suffering in Israel's future, God's Anointed, Christ, will one day come to bring salvation.

Author

The authorship of Daniel is a subject of protracted debate among interpreters. Many scholars date the book's composition between 170 and 165 B.C., during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, long after the lifetime of the prophet Daniel (the so-called Maccabean dating, cf. the article "Who was Darius the Mede?"). This date, however, is contradicted by the book itself, which indicates that Daniel is its principal author (9:2; 10:2) and that it was written shortly after the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 B.C. Furthermore, Christ himself explicitly links the book to the prophet Daniel (Matt 24:15).

Time and place of origin

The dispute over the dating of the book of Daniel involves three basic issues:

1. the nature of the prophecy,
2. the alleged historical errors in Daniel, and
3. the linguistic features of the Hebrew and Aramaic in the book.

Generally speaking, Israel's prophets were primarily concerned with religious and social circumstances affecting themselves and their peers. When the prophets predicted the future, it usually concerned near future events. For this reason, some interpreters are of the opinion that Daniel's vision concerning „king of the north“ and „king of the south“ (11:2–12:3) is too detailed to have been written by Daniel, who lived some 200–300 years before the events depicted in the prophecy.

However, this position denies the supernatural nature of the prophecy, as is the case with the occasional practices of other prophets (e.g., 1Kgs 13:2; Isa 44:28). Although the passage Dan 11:2–12:3 is unusual, it is certainly not impossible that Daniel knew such details; after all, it was to him that God revealed secrets as to no one else (cf. e.g. 2:19–23).

Some advocates of late dating argue historical inaccuracies attributed to the book by Daniel. They question Belshazzar's relationship to Nebuchadnezzar (see note 5:2), as well as the identity of Darius the Mede (see note on 6:1).

In addition, they identify the four kingdoms foretold by Daniel (chs. 2; 7) as Babylon, Medea, Persia, and Greece (including the Seleucids and Ptolemies). However, this identification is problematic because there is no historical evidence for an independent Mede kingdom in the interval between the kingdoms of Babylon and Persia. The Persian king Cyrus (550–530 BC) conquered Medea in 549 BC and Babylon in 539 BC (see notes 5:1 and 5:31).

Advocates of the early dating of the book understand the four kingdoms sequence to predict Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. This view is supported by the allusion to the „Medes and Persians“ in 5:28, which shows that the author considered both nations to be parts of one kingdom.

Supporters of the late date argue that several terms borrowed from Greek to refer to musical instruments occur in the text (see note 3:5), as do late Hebrew and Aramaic terms (see note 2:4). None of these arguments, however, is convincing. There is abundant evidence of contact between the Greeks and the peoples of the Near East before the time of Alexander the Great. These are quite sufficient to explain the existence of a minimal number of words taken from Greek before Alexander's conquest.

The original names of musical instruments commonly accompany their bearers without a corresponding equivalent in the local language; compare today's Czech untranslated terminology associated with musical instruments: „gibson“, „jumbo“, „stratocaster“, „telecaster“, „Les Paul“, „stage piano“, „hohner“, „humbucker“, „single-coil“, etc. On the contrary: Proponents of Maccabean dating have trouble explaining the complete absence of terms adopted from Greek, *outside* musical terminology. If the book had been written under Greek rule, commercial, military, political, administrative, etc. terminology would have been rife with Greek terms. But there is nothing of the sort in the book.

The Aramaic and Hebrew of the book of Daniel can be dated anywhere between the late sixth and early second centuries B.C. In other words, the linguistic evidence does not give much weight to either aspect: neither late nor early dating.

The argument for a second-century B.C. date is at odds with the biblical claim regarding the date and authorship of the book of Daniel, and the late dating does not demonstrate the late dating convincingly enough. A date shortly after 539 B.C. (see 1:21) best fits the nature of the prophecy, the historical dates, and the language of the text.

Purpose and Distinctiveness

Daniel contains two different types of material. In the first six chapters there are six historical narratives; in the second half (chapters 7–12) there are four visions, almost exclusively predictive. Among the six narratives of the first half, chapter 2 stands out because it also contains a prediction.

An examination of the content of the historical narratives shows that they are independent wholes, pieced together with a purpose. The narrative offers neither a history of Israel under Babylonian or Persian rule nor a biographical account of Daniel and his friends. It has two main emphases.

On the one hand, the stories show how God's absolute sovereignty extends into the affairs of all nations (2:47; 3:17–18; 4:28–37; 5:18–31 6:25–28). Jerusalem was in ruins, God's people in captivity, and wicked rulers seemed to triumph, but God remains sovereign. According to his unwavering will, he enters among the kingdoms of this world to establish a universal kingdom of which there will never be an end.

Although all nations have believed that deities are territorial, that they have power only over the territory where their people dwell (and because they want to rule the whole world, their people must conquer other territories for themselves and establish their religion there), the experience of the Israelites in captivity shows that their Lord is not limited in any way, not even territorially; He is Lord over the whole earth, including the deities of other nations. And that he does not abandon his people wherever they go. Sometime around that time, the idea began to emerge that since the sacred is not a place on earth where God dwells apart from other places, then time will be sacred. And the holidays on the calendar began to take on importance.

The visions of chapters 7–12 contain predictions of future times during which the truth of the narrative will become more important to God's people. Although the Israelites suffered under the rule of both the Babylonians and the Persians, they did not suffer any widespread and systematic attack on their faith. This did not occur until Antiochus IV Epiphanes, ruler over the Seleucid empire between 175–164 B.C., sought to eradicate the religion of the Jews and force them to conform to Greek religious practices. Many Jews obeyed him, but others resisted and suffered adversity. One of the main reasons for writing the book of Daniel is to prepare God's people for the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and to encourage perseverance in those who would live through the coming times of persecution.

The book also looks beyond the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes to the coming of Christ who will one day destroy all human empires and establish His eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace. All of these events are in view in the prophecies of Daniel. The book has served as a powerful encouragement to God's people suffering oppression and continues to be an inspiration to persecuted believers today.

Christ in Daniel

Daniel's focus on the restoration of Israel after the exile turns the attention to Jesus quite directly. Like some other prophets, Daniel predicted a glorious future for God's people, the fulfillment of which the New Testament is linked to the first and second coming of Christ, as well as to the whole history of the Church.

While much controversy surrounds the details of the fulfillment of Daniel's visions, the basic structure of Daniel's visions leaves no one in doubt that Christ is the fulfillment of the prophet's hopes. This is most clearly seen in the way Jesus refers to Himself as the „Son of Man“ (e.g., [Matt 9:6](#); [10:23](#); [12:8](#)). Daniel used the term in the sense of God's exalted Davidic king, representing God on earth. Jesus, the Messiah, is the ultimate Davidic King; only he fulfills the predictions of the Son of Man in Daniel's visions (see [notes on 7:13](#) and [7:14](#); see the theological article [Kingdom of God Mt 4](#)).

One never does evil so fully and gaily, as when one does it through a false principle of conscience.
Blaise Pascal

In addition, Daniel learned in chapter 9 that Jeremiah's prediction of 70 years of exile would be extended to „seventy weeks“ years (9:24), or about 490 years. This prediction reaches its initial fulfillment at Christ's first coming. The delay corresponds to the series of four foreign empires that will oppress God's people (2:1–49) and to the rock that became „a great mountain that filled the whole earth“ (2:35), which Daniel refers to as „a kingdom that will not be destroyed“ (2:44). This is the kingdom of Christ, which was inaugurated by His first coming, continues and grows to this day, and will reach its consummation at Christ's glorious return (see the theological articles [The Kingdom of God Mt 4](#) and [The Plan of the Ages Heb 7](#).)

Daniel foresaw other, even more concrete events that have come to the fore again in the New Testament. For example, Jesus refers to Daniel's prediction of „exact abomination“ (see [note on 9:27](#); [11:31](#); [12:11](#)), which originally pointed to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Greece (see Introduction: Intent and Peculiarities) as a foreshadowing of the destruction of the temple by the Roman general Titus in 70 CE (see [notes on Mt 24:15](#) and [Mk 13:14](#)).

Most Christians associate this typology with Antichrist, whose spirit is already at work in the world (see [notes on 1Jn 2:18](#)) and will appear in fullness, apparently as a specific person, near Christ's return (see [notes on 2Te 2:3](#)).

Outline

I. Narration (1:1–6:28)

- A. The loyalty of Daniel and his friends (1:1–21)
- B. (2:1–49)
- C. Deliverance from the fiery furnace (3:1–30)
- D. Nebuchadnezzar's second dream (4:1–37)
- E. The Judgment of Balsazar (5:1–31)
- F. Deliverance from the lion's den (6:1–28)

The stories of Daniel and his friends illustrate both their loyalty to God and his supremacy over all nations.

II. Vision (7:1–12:13)

- A. Vision of the Four beasts (7:1–28)
- B. The vision of the ram and the goat (8:1–27).
- C. Vision of the seventy weeks (9:1–27)
- D. Vision of the future of God's people (10:1–12:13)
 - 1. The angel's message to Daniel (10:1–11:1)
 - 2. From Daniel to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (11:21–12:3)
 - 3. Final message to Daniel (12:4–13)

Daniel's visions of the future of God's people, looking back to the long after the end of the exile. God revealed to Daniel that the four great kingdoms would dominate and persecute Israel. At the time of the fourth of these, God will set up His kingdom, of which there will be no end.

Jehoiakim's captivity

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came unto Jerusalem and besieged it. ²And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand with part of the

1:1–21 *Vindication of Daniel and His Friends.* The prophet set the context of his book by narrating his (and his companions') personal history of captivity, training, faithfulness and service to King Nebuchadnezzar. **1:1–6:28** *The Narratives.* This first section of the book highlights both God's absolute control over the kingdoms of this world and the sincere devotion that Daniel and his friends offered to God. Daniel wanted his readers to learn that although God's people are sometimes persecuted, kings and kingdoms rise and fall according to God's purpose. Daniel also taught that God would greatly bless those who paid attention to him as God's faithful spokesman. This material divides into six sepa-

rate narratives: the vindication of Daniel and his friends (1:1–21), Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:1–49), deliverance from the furnace (3:1–30), Nebuchadnezzar's second dream (4:1–37), judgment on Belshazzar (5:1–31) and Daniel's deliverance from the den of lions (6:1–28).

1:1 **In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim.** In 605 B.C., the same year Nebuchadnezzar defeated an Assyrian-Egyptian coalition at Carchemish and initiated Babylon's rise to international power. Subsequent to victory at Carchemish Nebuchadnezzar advanced against Jehoiakim (2Ki 24:1–2; 2Ch 36:5–7) and took Daniel and a number of

You can't get second things by putting them first. You get second things only by putting first things first.

C. S. Lewis

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.

Ashpenaz takes Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah

³And the king spoke unto Ashpenaz the prince of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the sons of Israel of the royal lineage of the princes, ⁴young men in whom *there was* no blemish whatsoever but *who were* good looking and taught in all wisdom and wise in knowledge and of good understanding, and that *had* strength in them to stand in the king's palace, that they might be taught the letters and speech of the Chaldeans. ⁵And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's food and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. ⁶Now among these of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: ⁷unto 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.

They refusing the king's portion do prosper with pulse and water

⁸And Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's food, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. ⁹(And God brought Daniel into grace and mercy with the prince of the eunuchs.) ¹⁰And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for when he shall see your faces more downcast than the *other* young men who *are* like unto you, then ye shall condemn my head before the king. ¹¹Then Daniel said to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹²Prove, now, with thy servants ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenances of the young men that eat of the portion of the king's food; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. ¹⁴So he consented to them in this matter and proved them ten days. ¹⁵And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than the young men who ate the portion of the king's food. ¹⁶Thus Melzar took the portion of their food and the wine that they should drink and gave them vegetables.

other Judahites captive. This was the first of three invasions of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar. The second was in 597 B.C. (2Ki 24:10–14) and the third in 587 B.C. (2Ki 25:1–24). The apparent discrepancy between Dan 1:1 and Jer 25:1 and 46:2 (where Jeremiah placed Nebuchadnezzar's attack against Jehoiakim during Jehoiakim's fourth rather than third year) may be explained by the difference between the Babylonian and Jewish systems of chronology. Under the Babylonian system, which Daniel apparently used, the first year of a king's reign was viewed as an "accession year," and the reign itself was counted as beginning on the first of the month of Nisan in the following year. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar led the Babylonians to victory at Carchemish in 605 B.C. as crown prince and commander of the army. Shortly after this victory he assumed the Babylonian throne upon the death of his father, Nabopolassar (626-605 B.C.). Nebuchadnezzar's reign (605-562 B.C.) forms the historical background for much in the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

1:2 And the Lord gave. Israel's defeat by the Babylonians is not to be explained simply by analysis of the military and political conditions of the time. God was sovereignly at work in the affairs of the nations. He used the Babylonians to judge his own people' breaking their covenant obligations (2Ki 17:15,18–20; 21:12–15 24:3–4).

Which he carried. Refers to the plunder of vessels from the temple, not to the deportation of captives.

The treasure house of his god. Marduk was the chief god of the Babylonian pantheon (cf. Jer 50:2).

1:4 The letters and speech of the Chaldeans. Babylonian literature was written in cuneiform and primarily on clay tablets. Thousands of these tablets have been discovered. Study of this literature would have

introduced Daniel and his friends to the polytheistic worldview of the Babylonians, which prominently featured magic, sorcery and astrology. **1:5 Daily provision of the king's food.** Jehoiachin later received the same provision under the rule of the Babylonian king Evil-Merodach (2Ki 25:27–30).

1:6 Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Characteristic Hebrew names. Two of them contain the Hebrew component *el*, meaning "God," and two the component *yah*, a shortened form of "Yahweh" ("the LORD"). Daniel means "My judge is God," Hananiah "Yahweh is gracious," Mishael "Who is what God is?" and Azariah "Yahweh has helped."

1:7 Belteshazzar ... Shadrach ... Meshach ... Abednego. The meanings of these names are disputed. Suggestions for Belteshazzar: "Bel [another name for Marduk, the chief Babylonian god] protect his life" or "Lady, protect the king." Shadrach: "I am very fearful (of God)" or "The command of Aku [the Sumerian moon god]." Meshach: "I am of little account" or "Who is what Aku is?" Abednego: "Servant of the shining one."

1:8 He would not defile himself. The reason for Daniel's conclusion that the king's food would defile him and his friends is not given. Perhaps eating it involved violation of the dietary laws of the Mosaic legislation (Lev 11:1–47), which prohibited eating pork or meat from which blood had not been drained (Lev 17:10–14). It may also have involved partaking of food that had been offered to Babylonian idols.

1:15 Their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh. God blessed Daniel and his friends for their obedience to the Lord and their refusal to compromise their faith in a heathen environment (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4).

Their proficiency in wisdom

¹⁷ And unto these four young men, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in all letters and science; furthermore Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ¹⁸ Now at the end of the days after which the king had said he should bring them in, the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ And the king communed with them, and none among them all was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; and *therefore* they stood before the king. ²⁰ And in all matters of wisdom *and* intelligence, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm. ²¹ And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus.:

Nebuchadnezzar, forgetting his dream, requires it of the Chaldeans, by promises and threatenings

2 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, with which his spirit was troubled, and his sleep fled from him. ² Then the king commanded to call magicians,

1:17 God gave them knowledge and intelligence in all letters and science. God's blessing was not limited to physical well-being but included outstanding success in intellectual development during their three years of Babylonian education. visions and dreams of all kinds. With a view to what follows in the book (chs. 2; 4-5) Daniel was distinguished from his companions by his ability to interpret dreams and visions, much as Joseph had been set apart by the same in the court of Pharaoh (Ge 40:8; 41:16).

1:18 At the end of the days after which the king had said. After the three years mentioned in [verse 5](#).

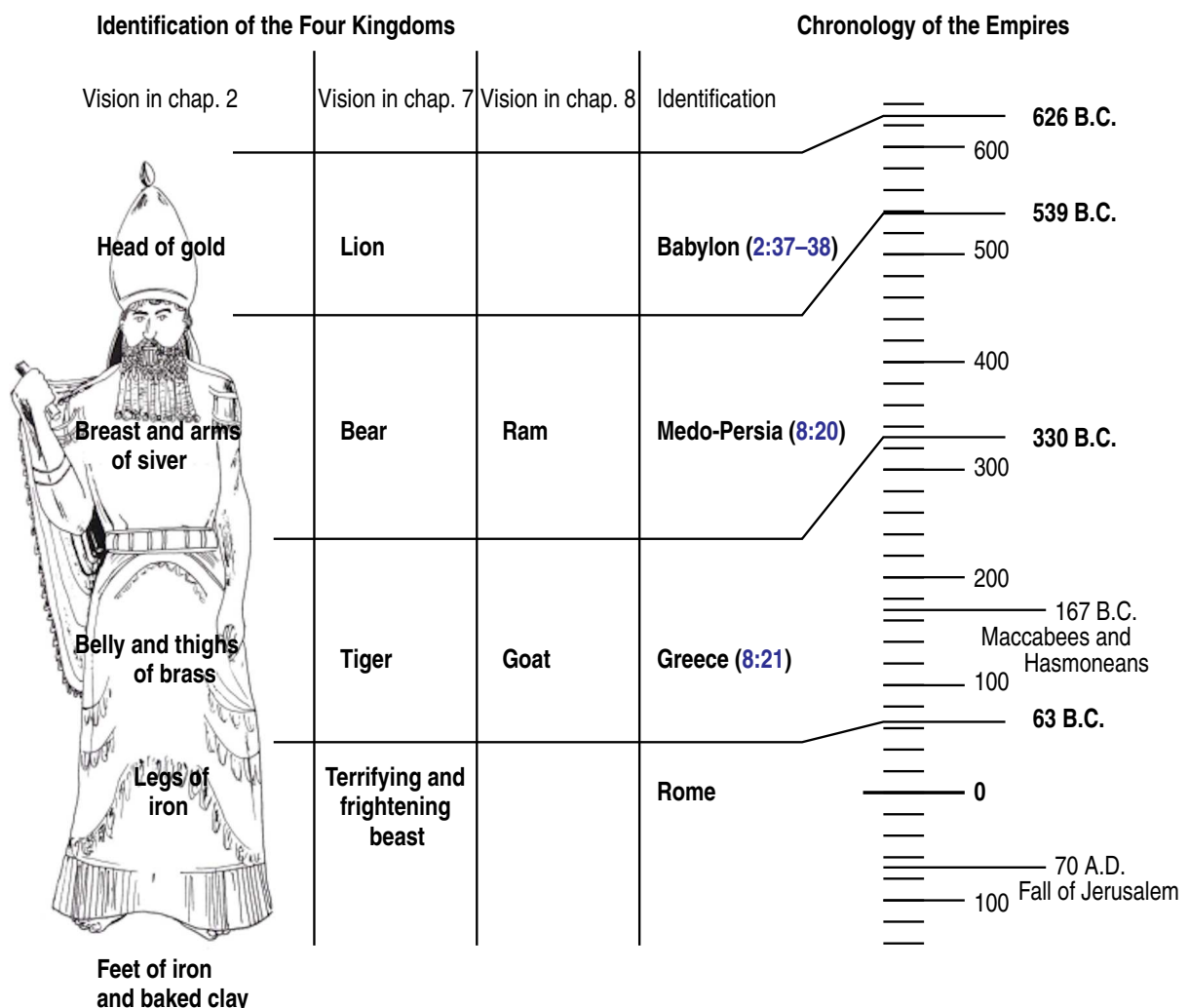
1:20 Magicians and astrologers. The term here translated "magician" is also used in [Ge 41:8](#) and [24](#) and [Ex 7:11](#). The term translated

"enchanters" occurs only here and in [2:2](#) and is sometimes rendered "conjurer" or "soothsayer." Daniel and his friends demonstrated superior insight on the matters about which they were questioned.

1:21 Unto the first year of king Cyrus. Babylon fell to Cyrus in 539 B.C., 66 years after Daniel had been taken captive to Babylon. Daniel lived through the entire period of the Babylonian captivity. Cyrus issued a decree in the first year of his reign that permitted the Israelites to return from captivity and to take with them the vessels from the temple that had been seized by Nebuchadnezzar ([Ezr 1:7-11](#)). The statement does not signify that Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus's reign ([10:1](#)).

2:1-49 Nebuchadnezzar's First Dream. While in the service of Neb-

Daniel's Visions of the Four Kingdoms



astrologers, enchanters, and Chaldeans, that they might show the king his dreams. So they came and presented themselves before the king. ³ And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. ⁴ Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever; tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation. ⁵ The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from my memory; if ye will not make known unto me the dream with its interpretation, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. ⁶ But if ye show the dream and its interpretation, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore show me the dream, and its interpretation. ⁷ They answered the second time and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it. ⁸ The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain time because ye see the thing is gone from my memory. ⁹ But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, *there is but* one decree for you for ye certainly prepare lying and corrupt words to speak before me, until the time is changed; therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me its interpretation.

They acknowledging their inability are judged to die

¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter; furthermore *there is* no king, prince, nor lord *that* asked such a thing of any magician or astrologer or Chaldean. ¹¹ Finally, the thing that the king requires is singular, and there is no one that can show it before the king except the angels of God, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 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, and the wise men were taken to be slain, and they sought Daniel and his fellows to kill them.

Daniel obtaining some respite finds the dream

¹⁴ Then Daniel spoke with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, who was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁵ He spoke and said to Arioch the king's captain, What is the reason for which this decree has gone forth from the king with such haste? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. ¹⁶ And Daniel went in, and asked the king that he give him time and that he would show the king the interpretation. ¹⁷ Then Daniel went to his house and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸ to petition mercies of the God of heaven concerning this mystery and that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

He blesses God

¹⁹ Then the mystery was revealed unto Daniel in a night vision for which Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ²⁰ And Daniel spoke and said, Blessed be the name of God from age to age for wisdom and might are his; ²¹ and it is he that changes the times and the opportunities; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives

uchadnezzar Daniel interpreted the king's dream, revealing that Daniel was greatly blessed by God and that God was moving history toward the establishment of his kingdom.

2:1 In the second year. There is no contradiction between this statement and the completion of the three-year period of training for Daniel and his friends mentioned in 1:5 and 18–20 if one understands that the first year of training was considered Nebuchadnezzar's "accession year," while the second and third years would correspond with the "first" and "second" years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. It was during Nebuchadnezzar's second year, according to the Babylonian system of accession-year dating, that the dream occurred (see [note on 1:1](#)).

His spirit was troubled, and his sleep fled from him. It was widely believed in the ancient Near East that the gods spoke to human beings in dreams. Nebuchadnezzar's agitation is understandable because the dream had implications for the future of his kingdom. When a dream could not be remembered, it was believed to be a sign that the deity was angry with the person involved.

2:2 Magicians, astrologers. See [note on 1:20](#).

Enchanters. Practitioners of divination through means such as witchcraft. Their activities were prohibited by God ([Ex 22:18](#); [Dt 18:10](#); [Isa 47:9, 12](#); [Jer 27:9](#)).

Chaldeans. This term translates the Hebrew term for Chaldeans; it is probably used here as a designation for a class of soothsayers concerned with astrology rather than as a designation for an ethnic group. See [1:4](#); [3:8](#); [5:30](#); [9:1](#) and NIV text notes.

2:4 Syriack. From here until the end of chapter 7 the text is written in Aramaic rather than in Hebrew ([Ezr 4:8–6:18](#) was also written in Aramaic). It is not clear why the two languages were used, but Aramaic may have been used for the sections containing prophecies that would have been of more interest to non-Jews.

2:5 If ye will not make known unto me the dream with its interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar formulated a plan for testing his advisors. If they could not relate the dream back to him he would have no confidence in their interpretation (see [v. 9](#)).

2:11 There is no one that can show it before the king except the angels of God. The wise men were forced to confess that they were unable to do what the king asked. They claimed that only the gods have such power and that they do not reveal such things to men. See [Exod 8:18–19](#).

2:18 To petition mercies of the God of heaven concerning this mystery. Daniel also realized that human wisdom was insufficient to meet the king's demand (see [note on 2:11](#)). Daniel addressed God as the ruler of the stars to which the heathen astrologers looked for guidance.

2:19 Mystery. Here the word denotes an enigma that can be interpreted only by God's revelation. The term was later used by Daniel as a reference to God's hidden purpose at work in history ([4:9](#)).

2:21 He removes kings and sets up kings. Daniel alluded to the content of the dream. See [BC 36](#).

wisdom unto the wise and knowledge unto those that know understanding: ²² He reveals that which is deep and hidden; he knows what *is* in darkness, and the light dwells with him. ²³ Unto thee, O God of my fathers, do I confess and give thee praise that thou hast given me wisdom and might and now hast shown me what we asked of thee, for thou hast shown us the king's matter.

He staying the decree is brought to the king

²⁴ After this Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon; he went and said thus unto him, Do not destroy the wise *men* of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation. ²⁵ Then Arioch brought Daniel in 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 me understand the dream which I have seen and its interpretation? ²⁷ Daniel answered in the presence of the king and said, The mystery which the king demands cannot be shown unto the king by wise *men*, astrologers, magicians, nor fortune-tellers. ²⁸ But there is *a* God in the heavens who reveals the mysteries, and he has made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall happen at the end of days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, is this: ²⁹ Thou, O king, in thy bed, thy thoughts rose up to know what should come to pass in the future; and he that reveals the mysteries showed thee what shall come to pass. ³⁰ And unto me this mystery has been revealed, not for *any* wisdom that is in me more than in all those living but that I notify the interpretation to the king and that thou might understand the thoughts of thy heart.

The dream

³¹ Thou, O king, didst see and behold a great image. This image, which was very large and whose glory was very sublime, stood before thee, and its form *was* terrible. ³² The head of this image *was* of fine gold, its breasts and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet part of iron and part of baked clay. ³⁴ Thou didst see until a stone was cut out, not with hands, which smote the image upon its feet *that were* of iron and baked clay and broke them to pieces. ³⁵ Then was the iron, the baked clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them again; and the stone that smote the image was made into a great mountain that filled the whole earth.

The interpretation

³⁶ This *is* the dream, and we will tell its interpretation before the king. ³⁷ Thou, O king, *art* king of kings, for the God of heaven has given thee the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the majesty. ³⁸ And everything that is inhabited by children of men, beasts of the field, and fowls of the heaven, *he* has given into thine hand, and has made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold. ³⁹ And after thee shall arise

2:22 He reveals that which is deep and hidden. See note on 2:11.

2:23 Unto thee, O God of my fathers, do I confess and give thee praise. Daniel was deeply grateful for God's mercy in responding to his prayer. The divine revelation he received was in stark contrast to the silence of the false deities of the heathen soothsayers. Only God knows all things and is sovereign over all creation. God chose to exalt Daniel by imparting to him special knowledge.

2:24 I will show unto the king the interpretation. Daniel spoke here only of the interpretation of the dream. The text assumes that he already knew the content.

2:28 There is a God in the heavens who reveals the mysteries. As Joseph had done in Egypt (Ge 10:8; 41:16), Daniel attributed his knowledge of the dream and its interpretation to divine revelation. God showed himself superior in his ability to reveal secrets and mysteries in days to come. Literally, "in the after part of the days." This expression can mean "in the end times" or "in the last days," which is the time of restoration after the exile (see Dt 4:30). The phrase may also simply refer to the general future (Ge 49:1; Dt 4:30; 31:29). The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) interprets it there as "in the last days," although it is difficult to determine Daniel's intended usage. The Greek expression is used five times in the New Testament, two with reference to the age begun at Pentecost (Ac 2:17; Heb 1:2) and three with regard to the end of the age preceding the second advent of Christ (2Ti 3:1;

Jas 5:3; 2Pe 3:3).

2:32–33 Head ... gold, ... breast and arms ... silver, ... belly and thighs... brass, legs ... iron, ... feet part of iron and part of baked clay. Moving from the head to the feet of the image, there is a decrease in both the value and weight of the materials but a general increase in its strength. The image was clearly too heavy with fragile feet.

2:34 Stone ...not with hands. Unlike the kingdoms represented by the statue, this rock would be formed by God himself. In the Old Testament a rock is often associated with kingship; here it is linked to the kingdom itself (see 1Co 10:4 and its note). It is likely that Daniel had in mind the Messiah, the great son of David, who would establish God's kingdom over all of the earth—including the Gentile nations (v. 35)—after the restoration from exile. See theological article "The Kingdom of God" at Matthew 4. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay. Some interpreters view the mixture of iron and clay in the feet of the image as representing a second phase of the fourth kingdom—as distinguished from the legs, which were made of solid iron (cf. vv. 41–43).

2:38–40 Thou art this head of gold ... another kingdom ... third kingdom ... fourth kingdom. The four kingdoms represent the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman Empires. The climax of the dream occurs in the time of the fourth kingdom (see "Introduction" and chart "Visions in Daniel," at Daniel 2).

another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the land. ⁴⁰ And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; and as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all *things*, and as iron that breaks all these things, it shall break in pieces and bruise. ⁴¹ And whereas thou didst see the feet and toes, part of baked potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divisive; but there shall be in it *some* of the strength of the iron, such as thou didst see the iron mixed with baked clay. ⁴² And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron and part of baked clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly fragile. ⁴³ Concerning that which thou didst see, the iron mixed with baked clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven shall raise up a kingdom which eternally shall never become corrupted, and this kingdom shall not be left to another people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. ⁴⁵ In the manner which thou didst see that out of the mountain was cut one stone, not with hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God has shown the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is true, and its interpretation sure.

Daniel's advancement

⁴⁶ Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and humbled himself before Daniel and commanded that they should sacrifice presents and sweet odours unto him. ⁴⁷ The king answered unto Daniel and said, Certainly the God *that is* your God *is* God of gods and the Lord of the kings and the revealer of the mysteries, seeing thou could reveal this mystery. ⁴⁸ Then the king magnified Daniel and gave him many and great gifts and made him governor over the whole province of Babylon and prince of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon. ⁴⁹ And Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel *was* at the gate of the king.:

Nebuchadnezzar dedicates a golden image in Dura

3 Nebuchadnezzar the king made a statue of gold, whose height *was* sixty cubits *and* its breadth six cubits; he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. ² Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the great *ones*, the assistants and captains, the judges, the treasurers, those of the council, presidents, and all the governors of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the statue which Nebuchadnezzar the king had raised up. ³ Then the great *ones*, the assistants and captains, the judges, the

2:43 They shall not cleave one to another. The fourth kingdom would constitute a composite of peoples who would not adhere together well. Efforts to combine the diverse elements of the kingdom would not succeed.

2:44 In the days of those kings. Some interpreters surmise that "those kings" refers to the succeeding kings of the fourth kingdom. It seems best, however, to understand them as referring to the succession of the rulers of the four kingdoms previously mentioned in this chapter. The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. Like other prophets Daniel spoke of the kingdom of God that would be established after the exile as permanent (e.g., *Isa 9:7; Joel 2:26–27; Am 9:15*). The New Testament explains that the kingdom began with the first coming of Jesus and will reach its consummation at Christ's glorious return. See theological article "The Kingdom of God" at [Matthew 4](#).

2:46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face. In a remarkable reversal of roles Daniel was exalted to a position of great honor by virtue of the Lord's intervention on his behalf. Nebuchadnezzar's reaction anticipated the coming kingdom of God.

2:47 The God that is your God is a God of gods. Nebuchadnezzar's statement does not signify that he recognized Israel's God as the only true God, but he did perceive him to be superior to the deities of the Babylonian pantheon.

And the Lord of the kings. Nebuchadnezzar declared that Israel's God was supreme also over human rulers and their kingdoms. This is a unifying theme of Daniel [1:1–6:28](#).

2:48 Governor over the whole province of Babylon. The Babylonian Empire was divided into provinces. Daniel was appointed the ruler (cf. [3:2](#)) of the province in which the capital city was located. For accounts of similar ascents to political power by Jews in foreign lands, see [Ge 41:37–44](#) (Joseph) and [Est 8:1–2](#) (Mordecai). Daniel's friends were similarly exalted as his assistants ([v. 49](#)). The divine approval

of Daniel is another dominant theme in this portion of the book. Although prominent in Babylon, he never compromised his faith: he was a reliable prophet of God.

3:1–30 Deliverance From the Furnace. Daniel recounted God's miraculous deliverance of his friends from the fiery furnace to instruct his readers that God's people must admire Daniel's companions and be faithful to God alone. He also illustrated that God would eventually frustrate even the mightiest kings who tempt his people to abandon their God to worship another.

3:1 A statue. Opinions differ as to whether this extraordinary image was of Nebuchadnezzar himself or of a Babylonian deity or whether it was merely an obelisk. From what is known of Babylonian religious tradition, it seems likely that the image was either of Bel or of Nabu, Nebuchadnezzar's patron deity. Prostration before the image of this deity would also indicate submission to Nebuchadnezzar, the deity's representative (cf. [2:46](#)).

Of gold. Probably gold overlay, the fabrication of the image being much like that described in [Isa 40:19, 41:7](#) and [Jer 10:3–9](#).

Height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. The proportions are the reason some have concluded that the image was an obelisk rather than a human form (the proportions of the human body are six to one). However, the image may have stood on a pedestal or had a stylized shape.

The plain of Dura. Its location is uncertain. It is usually associated with Tolul Dura, located about six miles south of Babylon.

3:2 The great ones, the assistants and captains, the judges, the treasurers, those of the council, presidents. The precise responsibilities of these seven different types of officials are not known. Five of the seven terms seem to be of Persian origin, perhaps indicating that Daniel did not complete the writing of this account until after the beginning of Persian rule in 539 B.C.

treasurers, those of the council, presidents, and all the governors of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar the king had raised up; and they stood before the statue that Nebuchadnezzar the king had raised up. ⁴Then a herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, ⁵that when ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and of every musical instrument, ye *are to* fall down and worship the statue of gold that Nebuchadnezzar the king has raised up: ⁶and whoever does not fall down and worship shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. ⁷Therefore, when all the peoples heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and every musical instrument, all the peoples, nations, and languages, fell down *and* worshipped the statue of gold that Nebuchadnezzar the king had raised up.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are accused for not worshipping the image

⁸Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. ⁹They spoke and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. ¹⁰Thou, O king, hast made a law that every man upon hearing the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and every musical instrument, shall fall down and worship the statue of gold; ¹¹and whoever does not fall down and worship *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. ¹²There 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 do not worship thy gods, nor *do they* worship the statue of gold which thou hast raised up.

They being threatened, make a good confession

¹³Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said unto them, *Is it true*, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that ye do not honour my gods, nor worship the statue of gold which I have set up? ¹⁵Now, are ye ready when ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and of every musical instrument to fall down and worship the statue which I made? For if ye do not worship, 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? ¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to king Nebuchadnezzar, *We are* not careful to answer thee in this matter. ¹⁷Behold, 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. ¹⁸But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not worship thy god, nor honour the statue which thou hast raised up.

They are cast into the furnace,

¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; *therefore* he spoke, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was customary to be heated. ²⁰And 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. ²¹Then these men were bound in their coats, their undergarments, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. ²²Therefore 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. ²³And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

3:4–6 See WLC 130.

3:5 **Cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer.** Three of the six terms used for different types of musical instruments account for the only Greek loanwords (“zither,” “harp” and “pipes”) in Daniel. This is not surprising, since the exchange of musicians and their instruments at royal courts has a long history. The presence of these Greek terms does not therefore constitute compelling evidence that this account was written after the conquests of Alexander the Great.

3:6 **Burning fiery furnace.** Furnaces, or kilns, were widely used in Babylon for the firing of bricks (Ge 11:3). It was not unusual to use such furnaces for execution by burning (Jer 29:22; see Herodotus. 1.86; 4.69; see also 2 Maccabees 7).

3:8 **Chaldeans.** See NIV text note and note on 2:2. The term “Chaldeans” as used here is best understood as indicating nationality rather than function. The informants looked down on the Jews simply because they were Jews (v. 12; Est 3:5. The privileged position of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (2:49) heightened the Chaldeans’

hostility toward them (v. 12).

3:12 **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.** See note on 1:7. Daniel was either not present or exempted from demonstrating his loyalty because of his high position (2:48).

3:15 **Who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?** From Nebuchadnezzar’s polytheistic, heathen perspective there was no god capable of such deliverance. Unwittingly Nebuchadnezzar challenged the power of the God of Israel.

3:17–18 **Our God whom we serve is able ... we will not worship thy god.** The men did not assert that God always protects his people from physical harm (Isa 43:1–2). Although he may opt to do so, and certainly is able, the central idea is that God’s people should remain obedient to their Lord no matter what the circumstances because he is far more trustworthy than any human ruler and more powerful than any force on Earth. Thus the first six chapters of Daniel exalt the prophet and his friends as men who were unflinchingly faithful to God throughout their ordeals. See WLC 109.

Courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means at the point of highest reality.

C.S.Lewis

from which God delivers them.

²⁴Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste *and* spoke and said unto his counsellors, Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. ²⁵He answered and said, Behold, 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. ²⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace *and* spoke and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth and come *here*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. ²⁷And the great ones, the governors and the captains and the king's counsellors gathered together to see these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

Nebuchadnezzar seeing the miracle blesses God, and advances them

²⁸Then Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said, Blessed *be* the God of these, of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has 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 ²⁹Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, or language which speak blasphemy 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.

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

Nebuchadnezzar confesses God's kingdom,

4 King Nebuchadnezzar, to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. ²The signs and wonders that the high God has wrought with me are such that I must publish them. ³How great *are* his signs! and how mighty *are* his wonders! His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion *is* from generation to generation.

makes relation of his dreams, which the magicians could not interpret.

⁴I Nebuchadnezzar was quiet in my house and flourishing in my palace; ⁵I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the imaginations and visions of my head troubled me in my bed. ⁶Therefore I made a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me that they might show me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the fortune-tellers came in and I told the dream before them; but they never showed me its interpretation.

Daniel hears the dream

⁸But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar, who when I name him it seems to me that I name my god, and in whom *is* the spirit of the holy God; and before him I told the dream, *saying*,

3:25 Son of God. In the ancient world the expression "son of the gods" could refer to various types of heavenly beings. Here it meant "angel" (v. 28). No explanation is given for why Nebuchadnezzar recognized the fourth person in the furnace as a heavenly being (see [note on v. 28](#)). Perhaps the miraculous presence of the fourth person was in itself sufficient reason for this conclusion.

3:26 The most high God. A title for God's universal authority. As in verse 29 ("no other god can save in this way") and in 2:47, this confession on the lips of a pagan was not an acknowledgment that Daniel's Lord alone was God but rather that Daniel's God was supreme above other deities (4:2, 17, 34). On the lips of an Israelite the same confession implied monotheism (4:24-32; 5:18, 21; 7:18-27).

3:27 See WCF 5.3.

3:28 Angel. The angel may be identified with "the angel of the LORD," who may have represented an appearance of Christ prior to his incarnation (cf. 6:22; see notes on [Ge 16:7](#) and [Ex 3:2](#)). God promised his presence when Israel walked through fire ([Isa 43:1-3](#)).

3:29 No other god. See [note on verse 26](#). See also WCF 20.4.

3:30 The king promoted. As this narrative makes clear, their promi-

nence resulted from their faithfulness to God, not from compromise with the Babylonians.

4:1-37 Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream. The prophet narrated the story of the king's second dream and its interpretation. Once again Daniel was exalted and Nebuchadnezzar humbled before God.

4:1 King Nebuchadnezzar. This is the book's final incident associated with Nebuchadnezzar. It too is placed late in the king's 43-year reign, at a time when his building projects were completed and his power was at its height (cf. vv. 4, 30). At that time Nebuchadnezzar ruled over the most powerful kingdom on Earth, but he was no match for the God of Israel.

4:2 The high God. See [notes on 2:47](#) and [3:26](#) and [28](#).

4:3 How great. Nebuchadnezzar's confession in this verse and in [verses 34-35](#) communicates one of the central themes of the book of Daniel; namely, the absolute sovereignty of the God of Israel over the kingdoms of the earth and their rulers.

4:6-7 See [notes on 1:20](#) and [2:2](#).

4:8 Belteshazzar. See [note on 1:7](#).

⁹ Belteshazzar, prince of the wise *men*, now that I have understood that the spirit of the holy God is in thee, and that no mystery is hidden from thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen and its interpretation. ¹⁰ Thus *were* the visions of my head in my bed: It seemed that I saw a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and made itself strong, and its height reached unto heaven, and its sight to the end of all the earth: ¹² His leaves *were* fair, and his fruit abundant, and in him *was* food for all; underneath him the beasts of the field lay down in his shadow, and in his branches dwelt the fowls of the heaven, and all flesh was fed of him. ¹³ I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, one who was a watchman and holy descended 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 him and the fowls from his branches: ¹⁵ nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and of brass shall he be bound in the green grass of the field; and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth: ¹⁶ let his heart be changed from a man's heart, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. ¹⁷ By sentence of the watchmen is the matter *resolved*, and the case by the word of the holy ones to the intent that the living may know that the most High takes rule over the kingdom of men and gives it to whoever he will and sets up over it the man who is the lowest. ¹⁸ I, king Nebuchadnezzar, saw this dream. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, shall declare its interpretation, forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom could never show me its interpretation; but thou *art* able, for the spirit of the holy God in thee.

He interprets it

¹⁹ Then Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, was silent for almost one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. Then the king spoke and said, Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, *let* the dream *be* to thine enemies, and its interpretation to those that wish thee evil. ²⁰ The tree that thou didst see, which grew and made himself strong, whose height reached unto the heaven and the sight thereof to all the earth; ²¹ whose leaves *were* fair and his fruit abundant and in him *was* food for all, under whom the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the fowls of the heaven dwelt: ²² it *is* thou, O king, that grew and made thyself strong; for thy greatness has grown and has reached unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. ²³ And regarding that which the king saw, one who was a watchman and holy who came down from heaven and said, Hew the tree down and destroy it; yet leave the stump of its roots in the earth, and with a band of iron and of brass *let it remain bound* in the green 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 until 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 among men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall feed thee with grass of the field as the oxen, and with the dew of heaven shalt thou be bathed, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou shalt understand that the most High takes rule over the kingdom of men and that he shall give it to whoever he will. ²⁶ And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots in the earth; thy kingdom shall remain sure unto thee, that

4:9 Although he spoke in pagan terms Nebuchadnezzar stated an important truth. The presence of God's Spirit in an individual has remarkable effects. Here his ability to give extraordinary insight into God's mystery, such as was later given to Paul and the church (1Co 2:6-16), is in view.

4:9 Spirit of the holy God. See 2:47 and note on 2:19.

4:10 I saw a tree. See Eze 31 for an extensive ' description of a nation (Assyria), using the imagery of a tree. Similar imagery is found in Ps 1:3; 37:35; 52:8; 92:12; Jer 11:16-17 and 17:8 (see also Mt 13:32).

4:11 Unto heaven. The term "sky" may also be translated "heaven," a key term in this chapter. The tree represented Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom reaching from Earth to heaven (vv. 11, 20, 22) and protecting birds, which defy the separation of the two spheres (vv. 12, 21). In truth the king was not only subject to the judgment of heaven for his pride (vv. 13, 23, 31) but also dependent on the God of heaven for his existence (vv. 15, 22, 25, 33) and sanity (v. 34).

4:13 Watchman. Although Nebuchadnezzar continued speaking in terms of his pagan religion, he acknowledged that he saw a holy, heavenly being in his vision. This common ancient Near Eastern belief fits well with the Biblical truth that God involves himself in Earth's affairs through revelations by angels.

4:15 Let him. From Hebrew pronoun "he" it becomes clear that the dream concerned a human being and not just a tree. See note on

verse 22.

4:16 Let a beast's heart be given unto him. Nebuchadnezzar may have suffered from a recognized mental illness called lycanthropy which comes from the Greek words *lukos* ("wolf") and *anthropos* ("man") in which a person is deluded into behaving like a wolf or some other animal (v. 33; see also note on 4:33).

Seven times. Seven periods of an unspecified duration (cf. vv. 23, 25). Most interpreters conclude that "time" represents a period of one year. Verse 33 suggests that the period was longer than a day, week or month.

4:22 It is thou, O king. With this statement—much like that of Nathan to David (2Sa 12:7)—a direct application was made to Nebuchadnezzar.

4:25 They shall drive thee from among men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. In words more specific than those in verse 15 Daniel indicated the form of mental illness that God would bring upon the mighty Nebuchadnezzar. Similar symptoms occasionally afflicted King George III of England (1738-1820) and Otto of Bavaria (1848-1916). See note on 4:16.

Until thou shalt understand that the most High takes rule over the kingdom of men. The purpose of Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation was to compel him to recognize God's sovereignty. See WCF 2.2.

4:26 Thy kingdom shall remain sure unto thee. Nebuchadnezzar

*Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely**Lord Acton*

thou shalt understand that the rule *is* in the heavens.²⁷ Therefore, O king, approve my counsel and redeem thy sins with righteousness and thine iniquities with mercies unto the poor: behold the medicine for thy sin.

The dream fulfilled

²⁸All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.²⁹ At the end of twelve months as he was walking upon the palace of the kingdom of Babylon,³⁰ the king spoke and said, Is this not the great Babylon that I have built for *the* house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the glory of my greatness?³¹ The word was yet in the king's mouth when there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee;³² and they drive thee from among men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field; and they shall feed thee as the oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee until thou know that the most High takes rule in the kingdom of men and gives it to whoever he will.³³ The same hour the word was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from among men and ate grass as the oxen, and his body was bathed with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like eagles' *feathers* and his nails like birds' *claws*.³⁴ But at the end of the time I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up my eyes unto heaven, and my understanding was returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and glorified him that lives for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* through all ages:³⁵ and all the inhabitants of the earth *are* counted as nothing; and in the army of heaven and in the inhabitants of the earth, he does according to his will; nor is there anyone who can interfere with his hand and say unto him, What doest thou?³⁶ In the same time my reason was returned unto me, and I *turned* to the majesty of my kingdom; my dignity and greatness returned unto me; and my governors and my great *ones* sought me; and I was restored in my kingdom, and more *excellent* greatness was added unto me.³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and build up and glorify the King of heaven because all his works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and he is able to humble those that walk with arrogance.:

Belshazzar's impious feasts

5 Belshazzar the king made a great banquet to a thousand of his lords, and against the thousand he drank wine.² Belshazzar, under the influence of the wine, commanded that they bring the vessels of gold and of silver which Nebuchadnezzar his father had brought from the Temple of Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink with them.³ Then they brought the vessels of gold that they had brought from the Temple of the House of God which *was* in Jerusalem; and the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank with them.

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

was assured that, in spite of the severity and length of his illness, he would regain the throne subsequent to his acknowledgment of God's sovereignty. Heaven rules. For the first time in Scripture "heaven" is used as a substitute name for God (cf. v. 37). Compare [Matt 5:3](#) with [Lk 6:20](#).

4:30 See WLC 105.

4:33 Ate grass as the oxen. Because Nebuchadnezzar exhibited traits characteristic of oxen, the form of his mental illness is sometimes termed boanthropy. See [note on 4:16](#).

4:34–69,37–34 Although Nebuchadnezzar confessed God's sovereignty in no uncertain terms, he never explicitly affirmed the God of Israel as the only supreme Creator of the universe. See WCF 2.2: 5.1.

4:37 King of heaven. This unique term brings together the theme of the chapter: the rule of God from heaven (see [4:26](#) and its [note](#)).

5:1–31 Judgment on Belshazzar. Daniel turned next to an account of God's judgment against Belshazzar. In this narrative the king is condemned for his impudent disregard for the holiness of Israel's God and of his temple.

5:1 Belshazzar the king. Belshazzar means "Bel, protect the king." It is not to be confused with Belteshazzar, the Babylonian name given to Daniel (see [note on 1:7](#)). From Babylonian sources we know that Nabonidus, Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, was the last king of Babylon. Belshazzar, the eldest son of Nabonidus, was made co-regent with his father and placed in charge of affairs in Babylon while Nabonidus spent

extensive periods of time at Tema in Arabia. The events of this chapter took place in 539 B.C., the year of Babylon's fall to the Persians and of the edict releasing Israelites from captivity. 42 years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 563 B.C.

Great banquet. The banquet scene juxtaposes the splendor of the event and the divine judgment that would soon be meted out (cf. [Ge 40:20–22](#); [Mk 6:21–28](#)).

5:2 Belshazzar, under the influence of the wine. Under the influence of alcohol Belshazzar committed a sacrilegious act. Even from a heathen standpoint the holy things of other religions were to be held in reverence.

Vessels of gold and of silver ... from the Temple in Jerusalem. See [note on 1:2](#).

His father. Nebuchadnezzar is called the father of Belshazzar here and in [verses 11, 13 and 18](#), and in [verse 22](#) Belshazzar is called the "son" of Nebuchadnezzar. Although we know that Belshazzar was the immediate son of Nabonidus, not Nebuchadnezzar, the terms father and son were often used in the ancient world in the broader sense of "ancestor" or "predecessor" and "descendant" or "successor." respectively. It is likely that Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar through his mother, Nitocris.

5:4 Praised the gods. The temple vessels were defiled not only by being put to profane use but also by being used to honor the false deities of Babylon.

A hand-writing unknown to the magicians, troubles the king

⁵In that same hour some fingers of a man's hand came forth and wrote in front of the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the palm of the hand that wrote. ⁶Then the king became pale, and his thoughts troubled him, and the girdings of his loins were unloosed, and his knees smote one against another. ⁷The king cried in a loud voice that they bring in the magicians, the Chaldeans, and the fortune-tellers. The king spoke and said to the wise *men* of Babylon, Whoever shall read this writing and show me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and *have* a chain of gold about his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. ⁸Then all the king's wise *men* came in, but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king its interpretation. ⁹Then king Belshazzar was greatly troubled, and his colour was changed, and his princes were upset.

At the commendation of the queen Daniel is brought

¹⁰Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and of his princes, came into the banquet room. The queen spoke and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy *countenance* be pale. ¹¹There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom *lives* the spirit of the holy God; and in the days of thy father light and intelligence and wisdom, like the knowledge of God, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, made prince over all the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* fortune-tellers; *thus did* thy father, the king, ¹²because Daniel, whom the king named Beltechazzar, was found to have a more excellent spirit and greater knowledge and understanding interpreting dreams, unraveling questions, and dissolving doubts. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show *thee* the interpretation. ¹³Then Daniel was brought in before the king. *And* the king spoke and said unto Daniel, *Art* thou that Daniel, who *art* of the sons of the captivity of Judah, whom my father brought out of Judea? ¹⁴I have heard of thee, that the spirit of the holy God is in thee and *that* light and understanding and greater wisdom was found in thee. ¹⁵And now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me that they should read this writing and make known unto me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the thing: ¹⁶And I have heard of thee, that thou canst declare that which is in doubt and unravel difficulties: now if thou canst read this writing and show me its interpretation, thou shalt be clothed with purple and *have* a chain of gold about thy neck and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

He, reproving the king of pride and idolatry,

¹⁷Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be for thyself and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king and show him the interpretation. ¹⁸O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom and the greatness and the glory and the magnificence: ¹⁹and by the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, 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 humbled. ²⁰But when his heart made itself arrogant, and his spirit hardened itself in pride, he was deposed from the throne of his kingdom, and they took his glory from him: ²¹and he was driven from among the sons of men; and his heart was put with the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild asses: they made him eat grass like an ox, and his body was bathed with the dew of heaven until he understood that the most

5:7 The magicians, the Chaldeans, and the fortune-tellers. See notes on 1:20 and 2:2 (cf. 2:27; 4:7).

Whoever shall read this writing and show me its interpretation. Once again the king demanded a double requirement: to declare the portent and then to interpret it (cf. 2:3).

The third ruler in the kingdom. Next in power under Nabonidus and his co-regent Belshazzar (see note on 5:1).

5:8 They could not read the writing, nor make known to the king its interpretation. See 2:2–13 and 4:7; see also Ge 41:8.

5:10 The queen. It is unlikely that she was a consort of Belshazzar since these women were already present at the banquet (vv. 2-3). She may have been the widow of Nebuchadnezzar, but it is more likely that she was Nitocris, the wife of Nabonidus, daughter of Nebuchadnezzar and mother of Belshazzar.

5:11 The spirit of the holy God. See 4:8. It is not surprising that the queen mother was more familiar with the events of Daniel's time than was Belshazzar. It is likely that Daniel was in his 80s by 539 B.C. He had been a young man when taken to Babylon 66 years earlier in 605 B.C. (see note on 1:1).

5:12 Beltechazzar. See note on 1:7.

Was found to have. This divine enablement can be described theologically as the presence of God's Spirit in an individual or as a person possessing a remarkable spirit.

5:16 The third ruler in the kingdom. See note on verse 7.

5:17 Let thy gifts be for thyself. Some think that Daniel rejected Belshazzar's offer of reward not only because he did not seek such honors but also because of his consciousness that it was only by God's mercy that he had been able to respond to the king's request; he did not want to use his God-given role as a means of personal profit (Ge 14:23). Yet he had accepted such rewards before (2:48) and did so again later (v. 29). Perhaps he was avoiding any pressure to modify the ominous message (Nu 22:18; Mic 3:5, 11).

5:18 The most high God. See 2:37 and 4:36.

Nebuchadnezzar thy father. See note on verse 2.

5:20–21 See 4:31–33.

5:21 The most high God takes rule. This statement summarizes the book's theology (see "Introduction: Purpose and Distinctives").

high God takes rule of the kingdom of men and *that* he appoints over it whoever 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 princes, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; furthermore, thou hast praised gods of silver and of gold, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone, which do not see, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand *is* thy soul and whose *are* all thy ways, thou hast never honoured.²⁴ Then from his presence was sent the palm of the hand that sculpted this writing.

reads and interprets the writing.

²⁵ And the writing that he sculpted is, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.²⁶ This *is* the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God has audited thy kingdom and finished it.²⁷ TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.²⁸ PERES; Thy kingdom has been broken and is given to the Medes and Persians.

5:22 Thou his son. See [note on verse 2](#).

Though thou knewest all this. Because the king was without excuse—even more so than his father—the time of mercy had passed (see [1Ti 1:13](#)). See WLC 151.

5:23 See WLC 105.

5:24 Then. The writing on the wall was God's answer to the arrogant challenge presented by Belshazzar's pride and defiance of the God who had demonstrated his existence and sovereignty in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

5:25 MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. Literally, "numbered, numbered, weighed, divided" or "mina [a unit of weight], mina, shekel, half shekel."

5:26 MENE. The original script for this word could be understood as either a verb or a noun. Daniel read it as a verb meaning "numbered" or "counted" and interpreted it as signifying that the days and years of

Belshazzar's reign had been determined by God and were about to end.

5:27 TEKEL. This word could also be understood as either a verb or a noun. Daniel read it as a verb meaning "weighed" and interpreted it as signifying that Belshazzar failed to measure up to God's standards of righteousness.

5:28 PERES. Daniel construed this word as a verb meaning "divided" and interpreted it to signify that Belshazzar's kingdom would be taken from him and given to the Medes and Persians. If, as is likely, those present at the banquet understood the three terms as nouns that simply indicated various monetary weights (mene, a weight equivalent to 60 Babylonian shekels; tekem, the shekel; peres, a half shekel), then it is not surprising that they failed to comprehend the significance of the inscription. Medes and Persians. See "Introduction: Purpose and Distinctives." See also BC 36.

Who was Darius the Mede?

He is first mentioned in [5:31](#). Some (mainly critical, i.e., liberal) theologians, advocating a late (so-called „Maccabean“) dating of the book of Daniel (according to them around 165 B.C.), claim that (1) Darius Medes never existed because he is not mentioned in other ancient documents; (2) the name Darius was used by an unknown Maccabean author, poorly acquainted with Persian history, and confused it with the legendary Darius I (255–484) of Persia (not the Medes); (3) the author erroneously assumed that Babylon was conquered by Medea, not Persia, and that under the leadership of this legendary „Darius“ the Medes ruled the world empire for several years before it fell into the hands of the Persians.

As a result, advocates of the Maccabean (late) date can claim that the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream ([Dan 2](#)) are (1) Babylonian; (2) Median; (3) Persian; and (4) Greek, which gives them the advantage of limiting the horizon of Daniel's prophecies to no further than 165 B.C. (If the book was written at this time, all of the alleged „prophecies“ could be explained in retrospect by looking back at the historical events *after they occurred*. The problem with the traditional identification of the fourth kingdom as Rome for liberals

is that such a view presupposes actual true predictive prophecy, which rationalist higher criticism fundamentally does not allow.)

Even in literature and art, no man who bothers about originality will ever be original: whereas if you simply try to tell the truth (without caring twopence how often it has been told before) you will, nine times out of ten, become original without ever having noticed it.

C. S. Lewis

The tenability of the Maccabean date hypothesis therefore depends on the above explanation of „Darius the Mede“ (since according to this explanation the Median kingdom pre-dates the Persian kingdom). Therefore, this figure is very important; its identification has serious theological implications.

However, the Persian Darius I, son of Hystapes, cannot be identified with Darius the Mede for several reasons:

²⁹Then Belshazzar commanded, and they clothed Daniel with purple 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.

The monarchy is translated to the Medes

³⁰That same night Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans was slain. ³¹And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being sixty-two years old.:

Daniel is made chief of the presidents

6 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty governors who should be in all the kingdom; ²and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel *was* first, that the governors might give accounts unto them, and the king should not be bothered. ³Then this Daniel was preferred above these governors and presidents because an over abundance of *the Spirit was* in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole kingdom.

5:29 Belshazzar commanded. Like Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar honored Daniel (2:48), but unlike Nebuchadnezzar he did not honor Daniel's God (2:46–47). The honor that Daniel and his companions had repeatedly received because of their faithfulness to God had established Daniel's credibility as a prophet. He was not a compromiser; he was faithful to God. Therefore his later prophecies ("chs. 7-12" 7:1) could be fully trusted.

5:30 Belshazzar ...was slain. Ancient Near Eastern texts and the Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon record that Babylon was taken in a surprise attack by the Persians while the Babylonians were engaged in reveling and dancing.

5:31 Darius the Median. It has long been alleged that this and other references to "Darius the Mede" in the book of Daniel (6:1, 6, 9, 25, 28; 9:1; 11:1) are historical errors. See note on 6:1.

6:1–28 Deliverance From the Den of Lions. The prophet recounted his

treatment under Darius the Mede, who succeeded Belshazzar. During his reign Daniel was thrown into a lions' den, and only through faith did he emerge unscathed.

6:1 Darius. See note on 5:31. While it is true that Darius the Mede is not referred to in extant historical sources outside the Scripture and that there was no interval between Belshazzar/Nabonidus (see note on 5:1N) and the accession of Cyrus of Persia, this does not necessarily mean that the book of Daniel is in error. Most likely "Darius the Mede" was a throne name for Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire (see note on v. 28N). It is also possible, but not as likely, that it was a designation for Gubaru, a general who defected from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus, led the Persian conquest of Babylon and was made governor by Cyrus over the territories the Persians had taken from the Babylonians.

6:3 Over abundance of the Spirit. See 1:17; 4:8 and 5:12.

1. Darius I was a Persian by birth, a cousin of king Cyrus; he was by no means a Mede.
2. Darius I was a young man of about twenty when he murdered the impostor Gaumata (who claimed to be Cyrus's son Smerdis) in 522 BC. He could not have been 62 (5:31).
3. Darius I was not king of Babylon before Cyrus as liberal theories claim. He did not become an independent ruler until seven years after the death of Cyrus (cf. [Ezd 4:5](#)).
4. Such confusion about the nationality and chronology of Darius and Cyrus was absolutely unthinkable in the Hellenistic world of the second century BC. Students must have read Xenophon, Herodotus and other Greek historians of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. From Xenophon and Herodotus we have information about Cyrus and Darius. Any Greek writer who placed Darius before Cyrus would have ended his writing career in public ridicule; he would never be taken seriously again.

Thus, Darius Persian ([Ezra 4:5](#)) and Darius-Median ([Dan 5:31](#)) have nothing to do with each other; the confusion is only on the part of the late date theorists, not on the part of the author of Daniel.

However, it is true that archaeology has not yet discovered any mention of *Darius the Medes* from the time he lived, outside the Bible. (Until the nineteenth century, the same was true of Balsazar, the viceroy representing his father Nabonidus. Critical theologians, advocating Maccabean dating, have argued that Balsazar was another fictional character in Daniel until Babylonian tablets from his time were discovered confirming that Balsazar served as a junior king in the last years of his father Nabonidus' reign. Cf. [note on 5:1](#)).

Nevertheless, we can identify Darius the Mede. There are several indications in the book of Daniel that Darius was not a sovereign king, but was temporarily placed on the throne by some higher authority. In verse [9:1](#), we read that „was made king“. The passive root *hofal* is used here for the verb form „homlak“ (הִמְלַךְ) instead of the common „malak“ (מָלַךְ „became king“) used in the context of gaining the throne by conquest or inheritance (e.g., [1Sam 13:1](#)). Similarly, in verse [5:31](#) we read that Darius „possessed the kingdom“ („qabbel“ קָבַל), as if it had been conferred on him by a higher authority.

The very name Darius (Old Persian *Da-ri-ya-(h)u-(ú-)ish*/ 𐎠𐎼𐎷𐎡𐎴 𐎧𐎺𐎠𐎫𐎡𐎴, Heb. דָּרְיוּשׁ)

They, conspiring against him, obtain an idolatrous decree

⁴Then the presidents and governors looked for occasions against Daniel on behalf of the kingdom, but they could find no occasion or fault because he was faithful, and no vice nor fault was found in him. ⁵Then these men said, We shall never find any occasion against this Daniel except we find *it* against him in the law of his God. ⁶Then these governors and presidents assembled together before the king and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. ⁷All the presidents of the kingdom, magistrates, governors, great *ones*, and captains have agreed in common accord to promote a royal decree and to confirm it that whoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, except of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸Now, O king, confirm the decree and sign the writing that it not be moved, according to the law of Media and of Persia, which does not change. ⁹Therefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

Daniel, accused of the breach thereof, is cast into the lion's den

¹⁰Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he entered into his house; and with the windows open toward Jerusalem in his dining chamber, he knelt three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he was used to doing before.

6:5 The law of his God. Daniel's adversaries affirmed not only his moral integrity but also the visible nature of his piety and commitment to the God of Israel. Thus the book's major theme of Daniel's holiness and reliability is affirmed once again.

6:7 All ... have agreed in common accord. The false implication was that Daniel had concurred with the proposal. These officials were hypocritical in their seeming devotion to Darius. Their scheme was an attempt to manipulate him into securing their own designs.

Whoever shall ask a petition of any God ... except of thee. The proposal would have seemed to Darius to be more political than religious and would have served to consolidate his authority over newly conquered territories.

6:8 The law of Media and of Persia. See [Est 1:19](#) and [8:8](#). The irre-

vocable nature of Persian law is also attested in extra-Biblical writings. The effect of the decree was to create a conflict for Daniel between allegiance to the Lord and obedience to human government.

6:10 Open toward Jerusalem. See [1Ki 8:44](#) and [48](#), as well as [Ps 5:7](#) and [138:2](#).

Knelt. Standing may have been a regular posture in prayer ([1Ch 23:30](#); [Ne 9](#)). While kneeling in prostration marked a lowering of oneself, appropriate in circumstances of particular solemnity ([1Ki 8:54](#); [Ezr 9:5](#); see also [Ps 95:6](#); [Lk 22:41](#); [Ac 7:60](#); [9:40](#)).

Three times a day. See [Ps 55:17–18](#).

As he was used to doing before. Evidently Daniel's prayer habits were public knowledge, a mark of his genuine piety.

is probably related to *dara*, which appears in Avestan (a dead northeastern ancient Iranian language) as an expression for a king. Like the appellation *augustus* among the Romans, the surname *dārayawush* („royal“) may have been a special honorary title that could also serve as a proper name, like the English surname „King“.

So it seems that soon after the defeat of Babylon by the Medo-Persian armies, Cyrus' personal presence was forced by another front of his expanding empire. It seemed expedient to him, therefore, to entrust the kingdom to Gubar-Darius with the title of King of Babylon, to rule for about a year before Cyrus personally returned for his coronation ceremony in the temple of Marduk. After this year's reign as viceroy, Darius remained as governor of Babylon, but the crown was handed over to his superior ruler Cyrus (who later passed it on to his eldest son Cambyses, cf. [note on 11:2](#), at his coronation as king of Babylon).

This scenario is supported by the text of the book in that Daniel nowhere mentions any later year of Darius' reign than „first“ ([9:1](#)), indicating its very short duration. Even if this were to mean that the one-year reign belonged to the Medes (we know it did not; it belonged to Persian Cyrus), a

one-year empire could hardly have defended its legitimate position as the number two kingdom in a series of empires of considerably greater durability: the Babylonian lasted 73 years, the Persian 208 years, the Greek would have had 167 years of existence by 165 BC.

In addition, a pun on Daniel's interpretation of the inscription on the wall in [5:28](#), which combines two meanings of the same root P–R–S (פָּרַס): *p^erisat*/פָּרִיסָה („divided“) and *pārās* וּפָרַס לְמַדֵּי („given to the Medes and Persians“), while assuring that the author of the book wrote in the belief that kingdom number one (Babylonian) would pass under to the rule of the Persians already allied with the Medes and thus becomes kingdom number two. The book of Daniel leaves no room for critical speculation about the earlier Median kingdom, which the author of the book may have had in mind.

The fourth kingdom, then, is Rome, the only one that has been able to subdue Greece ([2:40](#)), and during whose existence the eternal kingdom of which there will be no end ([2:44](#)) – the church – has come into being by divine intervention. (Cf. chart [Daniel's Visions of the Four Kingdoms](#) on p. [6](#)).

Enemy-occupied territory—that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.
C.S. Lewis

¹¹Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹²Then they went and spoke before the king concerning the royal decree; Hast thou not confirmed a decree that whoever 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 Media and Persia, which does not change. ¹³Then they answered and said before the king, That Daniel, which *is* of the sons of the captivity of the Jews, has not regarded thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast confirmed, but makes his petition three times a day. ¹⁴When the king, heard the matter, it weighed very heavy upon him, and *he* set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured until the going down of the sun to deliver him. ¹⁵Then those men assembled near the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that this is the law of Media and of Persia: No decree nor statute which the king has confirmed may be moved. ¹⁶Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast *him* into the den of lions. *Now* the king, speaking unto Daniel, said, Thy God whom thou servest continually, *may* he deliver thee. ¹⁷And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet *ring* and with the signet *ring* of his princes that the agreement concerning Daniel might not be changed.

Daniel is saved;

¹⁸Then the king went to his palace and lay down without eating; neither were instruments of music brought before him, and his sleep fled from him. ¹⁹Therefore, the king arose very early in the morning at dawn and went in haste unto the den of lions. ²⁰And when he came to the den, he cried loudly with a sad voice unto Daniel; *and* the king, in speaking to Daniel said, Daniel, servant of the living God, has thy God, whom thou servest continually, been able to deliver thee from the lions? ²¹Then Daniel said unto the king, O king, live for ever. ²²My God has sent his angel, who shut the lions' mouths, that they do me no evil because before him righteousness was found in me; and even before thee, O king, I have done no corruption. ²³Then the king was exceeding glad because of him and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury was found upon him because he believed in his God.

his adversaries devoured;

²⁴And the king commanded, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, *them*, their children, and their wives; and even before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions had the mastery of them, and broke all their bones in pieces.

and God magnified by a decree

²⁵Then king Darius wrote unto all the peoples, nations, and tongues, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you. ²⁶On my behalf a statute is put into effect, That in all the dominion of my kingdom everyone tremble at the presence of the God of Daniel for he *is* the Living God and endures for all ages, and his kingdom *is such* that it shall never come apart, and his dominion *shall be even* unto the end. ²⁷that saves

6:13 Of the sons of the captivity of the Jews. This ethnic identification of Daniel is perhaps indicative of prejudice toward the Jews on the part of the other officials (cf. 3:8). That Daniel's ethnic identity was widely known reveals that he had not compromised his heritage in favor of success in captivity—an important lesson to the readers.

6:14 He set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. Darius immediately perceived that he had been victimized by the intrigue of his own officials in order to trap Daniel. His appreciation for Daniel remained unshaken.

6:16 Thy God ... may he deliver thee. Against his own will Darius was forced to comply with the decree. Nevertheless, he hoped that Daniel's God would intervene on behalf of his faithful servant.

6:17 Sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet ring of his princes. Signet rings and cylinder seals were commonly used by the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians. The ring or cylinder was rolled across impressionable clay to leave the personal mark of the owner of the seal. Breaking open whatever was sealed in this way

would be a violation of the law.

6:22 My God has sent his angel. Likely the angel of the Lord (see note on 3:28).

6:23 Commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. Darius could do this without violating the initial decree, since its demands had already been fulfilled.

6:26–27 See 2:47; 3:17–18 and 28–29; 4:2–3 and 28–37 and 5:18–29. As in the previous narratives the Lord revealed himself to be greater than human rulers or kingdoms, for his sovereignty extends over nature and history. But this decree went far beyond those earlier confessions in acknowledging God as a living, enduring and saving deity, whose kingdom is eternal and secure.

6:26 Statute. Darius's decree does not imply that he actually converted from pagan polytheism to faith in Daniel's God alone any more than did Cyrus's proclamation that God had instructed him to send the Jews home (Ezr 1:3–4; Isa 44:28; 45:4).

and frees, and makes signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.²⁸ So this Daniel was prospered during the reign of Darius and during the reign of Cyrus, *the Persian*:

Daniel's vision of the four beasts,

7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream *and* penned the sum of the matters.² Daniel spoke and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven fought the great sea.³ And four great beasts came up from the sea, different one from another.⁴ The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings; I beheld until the its wings were plucked off, and it was removed from the earth, and it stood up on its feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.⁵ And behold the second beast, like unto a bear, which went off to one side, and *it had* three ribs between its teeth; and thus was said unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.⁶ After this I beheld, and behold another, like a tiger, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; this beast also had four heads; and power was given to it.⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold the fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and trod down that which was left with its feet; and it was very different from all the beasts that had been before her; and it had ten horns.⁸ As I was considering the horns, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom three of the first horns were plucked up *by the roots*; and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking grand things.

6:28 Daniel was prospered. The major theme of God's blessing toward Daniel appears again. Daniel remained faithful, refusing to compromise. For this reason he rose in prominence under both Babylonian and Persian kings. This fact exalted Daniel as a faithful Israelite whose prophecies could be trusted. the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus. The wording may be understood in two ways: (1) Daniel prospered under the rule of Gubaru (see [note on v. 1](#)) as well as under Cyrus; or (2) Daniel prospered under the reign of Darius, even in the reign of Cyrus. In the latter case, Darius the Mede and Cyrus are understood to be two names for the same ruler (see [note on v. 1](#)).

7:1–28 Vision of the Four Beasts. Daniel reported his dream of four beasts. The dream traces the history of foreign kingdoms oppressing Israel until their earthly dominion was given to the "one like a son of man" and to the saints.

7:1–12:13 The Visions. In these chapters Daniel turned from historical narrative to reports of visions. These visions depend on the two main themes set forth in the first six chapters of the book: Israel's God was in control of all nations, and Daniel could be trusted as God's uncompromising prophet. These chapters prepared an exiled Israel for the long delay of the restoration and the trials to come under the control of foreign powers. They also encouraged the people of God not to give up hope that God's kingdom would come at the end of these trials. Daniel touched on four main topics: the four beasts (7:1–28), the ram and the goat (8:1–27), the "seventy weeks" (9:1–27) and the future of God's people (10:1–12:13).

7:1 The first year of Belshazzar. See [note on 5:1](#). It is not known whether Belshazzar's coregency with Nabonidus began at the same time as the accession of Nabonidus (556 B.C.) or a few years later. In any case, the events of this chapter (and [ch. 8](#)) are lobe placed chronologically between those of chapters 4 and 5.

7:2 Great sea. Whether or not this is a reference to the Mediterranean Sea is immaterial. What is clear is that the sea is symbolical the chaotic restlessness that characterized the sinful nations oppressing Israel. See the interpretation given in [verse 17](#) and in [Isa 17:12–13](#) and [57:20](#).

7:3 Four great beasts. These four beasts represent four kingdoms ([vv. 17, 23](#)). It is clear that there is a close correspondence between the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image in chapter 2 and those symbolized by the beasts in this chapter. For identification of the four kingdoms, see chart, "Visions in Daniel," at Da 2.

7:4 A lion ... eagle's wings. The lion with eagle's wings is an ap-

propriate symbol for the Babylonian Empire (cf. [Jer 50:44](#); [Eze 17:3](#)). Winged lions were common Babylonian art forms often placed at the entrances of important public buildings.

Wings were plucked off ... a man's heart was given to it. Perhaps this is a reference to Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation and later restoration following a seven-year period of insanity ([4:1–37](#)).

7:5 The second beast, like unto a bear. The Medo-Persian kingdom is symbolized by a bear with a voracious appetite. The raised side may represent the superior status of Persia, and the three ribs likely point to Persia's conquests over Lydia (546 B.C.), Babylon (539 B.C.) and Egypt (525 B.C.). See [note on 8:3](#).

7:6 Another, like a tiger. The Greek Empire is symbolized by a leopard, which is known for its speed. Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.) conquered the Persian Empire with great rapidity. He encountered the Persians in three major battles: (1) At the Granicus River (334 B.C.) he gained entry into Asia Minor. (2) At Issus (333 B.C.) he was enabled to occupy Syria, Canaan and Egypt. (3) At Arbela (331 B.C.) he destroyed the last Persian army and pushed onward toward India. See also [8:5–8](#). Shortly after his premature death at age thirty-three the empire he had established divided into four parts: Macedonia under Cassander, Thrace and Asia Minor under Lysimachus, Syria under Seleucus and Egypt under Ptolemy.

7:7 The fourth beast ... dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong. History has revealed that this unidentified beast represents Rome, the kingdom that ultimately assimilated the various parts of the divided Greek kingdom.

It had ten horns. The ten horns symbolize ten kings or kingdoms arising from the Roman kingdom ([v. 24](#)). It is not clear whether these horns are successive or contemporaneous. Some suggest that they represent a second phase of the fourth kingdom, "a revived Roman Empire" of the last days, but there is no evidence of such a distinction.

7:8 Another little horn, before whom three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. The ten horns are prior in time to the "little horn" which uproots three of them. Here is another phase of the fourth kingdom. Many interpreters have suggested that the little horn symbolizes the rise of the antichrist ([2Th 2:3–4, 8](#)). If so, this is the first Scriptural reference to the antichrist.

Eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking grand things. The imagery suggests that this horn represents an individual rather than a kingdom.

and of God's kingdom

⁹I beheld until thrones were placed, and an Elder of great age did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne *a* flame of fire, his wheels burning fire. ¹⁰A river of fire issued and came forth from before him; thousands of thousands served him, and ten thousands of ten thousands stood before him; the Judge sat down, and the books were opened. ¹¹I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke; I beheld *even* until the beast was slain and its body was undone and given over to be burned in the fire. ¹²They had also taken from the other beasts their rule because their lives had been prolonged until a certain time. ¹³I saw in the vision of the night, and, behold, in the clouds of heaven like a Son of man that came and drew near unto the Elder of great age, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴And he gave him dominion and glory and kingdom; and all the peoples, nations, and tongues served him: his dominion *is* an eternal dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom such that it shall never be corrupted.

The interpretation thereof

¹⁵My spirit was troubled, I Daniel, in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head astonished me. ¹⁶I came near unto one of those that stood by and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made me know the interpretation of the things. ¹⁷These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings, *which* shall arise in the earth. ¹⁸And they shall take the kingdom of the Holy *One who is* most High and possess the kingdom until the age and until the age of the ages. ¹⁹Then I had the desire to know the truth regarding the fourth beast, which was so different from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and its nails of brass; *which* devoured and broke in pieces and trod down that which was left with its feet; ²⁰also regarding the ten horns that *were* in its head, and *of* the other which came up, and before whom three fell; and that same horn had eyes and *a* mouth that spoke very grand things, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. ²¹I saw that this horn made war against the saints and overcame them; ²²until such time as the Elder of great age came, and the judgment was given unto the saints of the most High; and the time came, and the saints possessed the Kingdom. ²³Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth king in earth, which

7:9 An Elder of great age did sit. The title "Ancient of Days" occurs in the Bible only in this chapter (v. 13, 22). A similar expression appears in Ugaritic texts to designate the great God El. It is clearly used as a designation for God, who is sitting to judge, and it implies that God is eternal or that he has ruled from ancient times.

Garment ...hair . Although God appeared in magnificent glory to Daniel, he still revealed himself in a recognizably human form so that Daniel could grasp what he saw.

His throne ... his wheels. The depiction of God's throne resembles that of Ezekiel's vision (Eze 1:15–28). As in other parts of the ancient world the divine throne is depicted as having wheels, like a mobile chariot throne used most notably in battle. Similar motifs lie behind the pillar of fire that led Israel during the Exodus (Ex 13:21–22).

7:10 The books were opened. See 12:1 (see also Ex 32:32; Ps 149:9; Isa 4:3; 65:6; Mal 3:16; Lk 10:20; Rev 5:1–5; 6:12–16; 20:12). See BC 37.

7:11–12 A contrast is drawn between the complete destruction of the fourth kingdom and the measure of continuance granted the preceding kingdoms as their people and customs were absorbed into the succeeding kingdoms.

7:13 In the clouds of heaven. Elsewhere in the Old Testament only God is said to appear on clouds (Ps 104:3; Isa 19:1). The One like a man originates in heaven and comes by divine initiative. He is the same as the rock cut out of the mountain, but not by human hands (2:45; see note on 7:14).

Like a Son of man. The term "son of man" may mean simply "a man." The Hebrew equivalent is used for Daniel in 8:17 and is used many times of Daniel's contemporary Ezekiel (e.g., Eze 2:1, 3, 6). In contrast to the beasts who misruled the earth, this "one" will preside over creation as God had intended before the fall; he will have dominion over the beasts (Ge 1:26–28; Ps 8). Daniel may have been the earliest witness to this special use of "son of man." Later Jewish apocalyptic literature written between the Old and New Testaments draws upon this passage and speaks of the "son of man" as a supernatural human being who brings the power of heaven to Earth. Daniel saw someone

like a man; i.e., someone who was to be compared with a man yet was somehow qualitatively different (v. 14). The expression "son of man" is used 69 times in the Synoptic Gospels and 12 times in John's Gospel to refer to Christ. It is in fact the most common title Jesus used of himself.

7:14 He gave him dominion. God gives him vice-regency over all the nations. He fulfills the symbolic rule of the rock cut out of a mountain (2:44–45).

All the peoples ... served him ... his kingdom such that it shall never be corrupted. The "son of man" whom Daniel envisioned was none other than the great son of David, the Messiah. Isaiah also spoke of his kingdom as never ending (Isa 9:7). Jesus clearly confirmed this Messianic connection by an allusion to this passage. For this he was accused by the religious leaders of his day of blasphemy (Mt 26:64–65; Mk 14:62–64). In serving him, people serve God.

7:15 Spirit was troubled ... astonished. Daniel was horrified by what he saw and asked an angel to elucidate the vision.

7:18 They. See verses 21–22, 25 and 27. Not angels but true believers who will share responsibility in the administration of the kingdom (1Co 6:1–11; 2Ti 2:12; Rev 22:5).

They shall take the kingdom. There is close identification between the "son of man" as King (v. 13–14) and the "saints of the Most High" as those who participate in his kingdom (see "possessed the kingdom" at v. 22; see also v. 27).

Until the age. See 6:26, 7:14 and their notes.

7:21 This horn made war against the saints and overcame them. Daniel recounted additional information about the hostility of the little horn (v. 8) toward the people of God (cf. Rev 13:7).

7:22 Until such time as the Elder of great age came. Although the little horn (v. 8) would prevail for a time against God's people, in the end he would fall under the judgment of God (cf. Zec 14:1–4; Rev 13:7–17; 19:20).

Possessed the Kingdom. God's intervention in history will lead to what the New Testament calls "the kingdom of God" (see theological article "The Kingdom of God" at Mt 4).

shall be greater than all the other kingdoms and shall devour the whole earth and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.²⁴ And the ten horns *signify* that of this kingdom ten kings shall arise; and another shall rise after them; and he shall be greater than the first *kings*, and he shall bring down three kings.²⁵ And he shall speak *great* words against the most High and shall break down the saints of the most High and think to move the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until *a* time and times and the half *or dividing* of a time.²⁶ And the Judge shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to destroy and to cast out unto the end;²⁷ and that the kingdom and the dominion, and the majesty of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, be given to the holy people of the most High, His Kingdom *shall be* an eternal Kingdom, and all the dominions shall serve him and hear *him*.²⁸ Up unto here was the end of the word. I, Daniel, was very troubled in my thoughts, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the word in my heart.:

Daniel's vision of the ram and he goat

8 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, Daniel, after that *vision* which had appeared unto me before.² And I saw in *the* vision; (and it came to pass, when I saw it, that I *was* at Shushan, which is *the* head of the kingdom in the province of Persia); so that I saw in that vision, being by the river of Ulai,³ and I lifted up my eyes and saw, and, behold, a ram was standing before the river, which had two horns; and even though they were high, the one *was* higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.⁴ I saw that the ram smote with the horns to the west, to the north, and to the south and that no beast could stand before him, nor could anyone escape from his hand; but he did according to his will and made himself great.⁵ And as I was considering, behold, a he goat came from the west upon the face of the whole earth and did not touch the earth: and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes.⁶ And he came to the ram that had the two horns, which *I* had seen standing before the river and ran against him in the fury of his power.⁷ And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he rose up against him and smote him, and broke his two horns: because the ram did not have the strength to stand before him; therefore he cast him down to the ground and trod him under; and there was no one to deliver the ram out of his hand.⁸ And the he goat made himself very great, and when he was at his greatest strength, that great horn was broken; and in its

7:24 Three kings. A few of the ten, but an indefinite number.

7:25 He shall speak great words against the most High. More details are given of the activities of the little horn (v. 8) as a ruler who opposes God.

Break down the saints. He will persecute God's people.

Until a time and times and the half or dividing of a time. The word "time" is the same word used in 4:16 and 4:23 and, as there (see [note on 4:16](#)), may be understood as representing a period of one year (cf. [Rev 12:14](#)). It is best understood as symbolic of a period of time that will be shortened when God suddenly intervenes.

7:26 The Judge. The court of heaven (see v. 10).

7:27 Be given to the holy people. After God's people face the trials of oppressive kingdoms they will rule over all forever. See [note on 7:18](#).

7:28 Very troubled in my thoughts, and my countenance changed in me. Thoughts of Israel falling under repeated and prolonged oppression from foreign powers still troubled Daniel, even though the ultimate outcome would be divine intervention resulting in victory for God's people. See also v. 15 and its [note](#).

Kept the word in my heart. Daniel mentioned this to inform his readers that he did not delight in the prospect of such a future for God's people. Despite his authority in the Gentile courts of Babylon and Persia, no one could rightly accuse him of betraying his loyalty to God's people. He spoke of these future events with regret.

8:1-27 Vision of the Ram and the Goat. The prophet recorded a vision concerning the treatment of God's people under the Medo-Persians and Greeks.

8:1-12:13 Daniel resumed use of the Hebrew language in the book's last five chapters. He had written 2:4-7:28 in Aramaic (see [note on 2:4](#)).

8:1 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar. That is, two years after Daniel's dream in chapter 7 (see [note on 7:1](#)).

8:2 I saw it, that I was. Daniel experienced a visionary journey like that of Ezekiel ([Eze 3:10-15](#)).

Shushan, which is the head of the kingdom in the province of Persia. In Daniel's time Shushan was the capital of Elam, about 230 miles east of Babylon. It is unclear whether Elam was then independent or aligned with either Babylon or Media. Later, however, as one of three royal cities, Shushan became the diplomatic and administrative capital

of the Persian Empire (cf. [Est 1:2](#); [Ne 1:1](#)).

River of Ulai. This canal near Shushan connected two rivers that flowed into the Persian Gulf.

8:3 A ram was standing before the river, which had two horns. Verse 20 identifies the ram and its horns as a symbol for the kings of the Medo-Persian Empire. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. Medo-Persian history clarifies the symbolism here. The Medes became strong and independent of Assyria after 631 B.C. The Persians began as an insignificant segment of the Median kingdom but eventually rose to control it when Cyrus (reigned 559-530 B.C.) of Anshan (in Elam) brought Media under his control (550 B.C.). Cyrus added to his list of titles "King of the Medes." Thus both horns were long but the one representing Persia longer because it was superior in might, and later in growing because it came to power after the other.

8:4 Smote with the horns to the west, to the north, and to the south. Cyrus initially took Asia Minor; afterward, both northern and southern Mesopotamia. Subsequent rulers extended Medo-Persian control far to the East.

Made himself great. The Persian Empire became larger and more powerful than any previous empire in ancient Near Eastern history.

8:5 Upon the face of the whole earth and did not touch the earth. This depicts the amazing rapidity of Alexander's conquests (see [note on 7:6](#)). In only three years he was able to defeat the powerful Persian Empire.

The goat had a notable horn between his eyes. Verse 21 identifies the goat as Greece and the large horn between his eyes as its first king. The symbolism is a clear depiction of the rise of the Greek Empire under the leadership of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.).

8:8 The he goat made himself very great. Alexander's empire quickly exceeded the Persian Empire in size. By 327 B.C. Alexander had moved eastward into what is today Afghanistan and then on to the Indus Valley.

When he was at his greatest strength, that great horn was broken. When his own troops refused to advance farther eastward Alexander returned to Babylon, where he died at the age of thirty-two, most probably of typhoid fever.

place came up another four marvellous ones toward the four winds of heaven.⁹ And out of the first of them came forth a little horn, which grew much toward the south and toward the east and toward the desirable land.¹⁰ And it magnified itself unto the host of heaven, and it cast down *part* of the host and of the stars to the ground and trod them under.¹¹ Even *against* the prince of the host did he magnify himself, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast to *the* earth.¹² And the host was given over by reason of the prevarication upon the daily *sacrifice*; and he cast the truth to the ground; and he did *whatever he would* and prospered.

The two thousand three hundred days of the suspension of the daily sacrifice

¹³Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto the one which spoke, How long *shall* the vision of the daily *sacrifice last* and the prevarication of desolation that places *both* the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?¹⁴ And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred *days of* evening and morning; then shall the sanctuary be justified.

Gabriel comforts Daniel, and interprets the vision

¹⁵And it came to pass, as I, Daniel, was considering the vision and seeking to understand it, behold, there stood before me the likeness of a man.¹⁶ And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of the* Ulai, which called and said, Gabriel, teach this *man* the vision.¹⁷ So he came near where I stood, and with his coming, I was afraid and fell upon my face; and he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time appointed *by God* the vision shall be fulfilled.¹⁸ Now as he was speaking with me, I fell into a *deep* sleep on the ground upon my face; and he touched me and changed my state.¹⁹ And he said, Behold, I will show thee that *which* is to come in the last end of the wrath; for at the time appointed *this* shall be fulfilled.²⁰ The ram which thou didst see having *two* horns *are* the kings of Media and Persia.²¹ And the he goat *is* the king of Grecia, and the great horn that he *had* between his eyes *is* the first king.²² Now that being broken, whereas four stood up in

In its place came up another four marvellous ones. Verse 22 indicates that these horns symbolize four kingdoms that emerged from Alexander's empire but were inferior in strength to its original domain. Historical records indicate that after a time of internal struggle four of Alexander's generals were able to secure portions of the former Greek Empire as their own kingdoms. See note on 7:6.

8:9 A little horn. Verse 23 indicates that this horn symbolizes a wicked ruler who would arise in one of the four Greek kingdoms after an extended interval of time ("in the latter part of their reign"). The descriptions of the actions of this ruler (vv. 9–14, 23–25) identify him as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the ruler of the Seleucid kingdom from 175 to 164 B.C. This horn is not to be identified with the "little horn" of 7:8, which would arise during the Roman rather than the Greek period.

Toward the desirable land. Daniel showed his love for the promised land by this expression.

8:10 The host of heaven. Or the stars (cf. Jer 33:22), symbolizing the people of God (cf. 12:3; Ge 12:3; 15:5; Ex 12:41) and/or a heavenly army (Isa 14:13; also see 2 Maccabees 9:10). Antiochus's coins picture a star above his head. Epiphanes means "God manifest." The attack against the people of God amounted to an attack against heaven itself.

Cast down part of the host and of the stars to the ground and trod them under. This is a symbolic depiction of the severe persecution of God's people under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who attempted to abolish Israel's traditional worship and way of life (see "Introduction: Purpose and Distinctives": cf. 11:21–35; 1 Maccabees 1:10–64).

8:11 Against the prince of the host did he magnify himself. The "Prince" is to be understood as God, the Lord of hosts. See verse 25, where the designation is "Prince of princes." Antiochus IV took the name Epiphanes ("God manifest") and viewed himself as the incarnate manifestation of Zeus (the chief god of the Greek pantheon).

The daily sacrifice was taken away. See verses 12–13 and 11:31. Antiochus IV ordered the cessation of all ceremonial observances related to the worship of the Lord at the Jerusalem temple and in the cities of Judah. The place of his sanctuary was brought low. Antiochus IV not only entered the Most Holy Place and plundered the silver and gold vessels, but he also erected an altar to Zeus on top of the altar of the Lord in the temple court and offered swine upon it (see note on 11:31).

8:12 The host was given over by reason of the prevarication upon the daily sacrifice. God's people were subjected to the power of the horn that started small (v. 9), Antiochus IV. This entailed the cessation of regular temple observances.

Prospered. The vision depicts the apparent success of the wicked acts of Antiochus IV (the horn that started small). That success included the destruction of copies of the Hebrew Scripture (cf. 1 Maccabees 1:56–57).

8:14 Unto two thousand and three hundred days of evening and morning. The phrase "evenings and mornings" occurs in the Old Testament only here and in verse 26. Some understand it as a reference to the evening and morning sacrifices (cf. Ex 29:38–42). On that basis it would represent 1,150 days. Others view it as simply an expression for 2,300 days. Since the beginning of the persecutions of Antiochus IV could be linked with any one of a number of incidents beginning early as 171 B.C., it is difficult to determine which understanding of the phrase is to be preferred. The number 23 may be symbolic of a fixed period, as in apocalyptic literature outside the Bible.

Then shall the sanctuary be justified. The temple was cleansed and rededicated under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus on December 25, 165 B.C. (see note on 11:34; cf. Zec 9:13–17).

8:16 Gabriel. This angel is mentioned four times in Scripture (9:21; Lk 1:11, 19, 26). The name denotes one who is strong in the Lord (Gabriel means "strength of God") because of a relationship with him.

8:17 Son of man. See note on 7:13. The "strong man of God" (see note on v. 16), the angel Gabriel, was speaking to this exalted mortal.

At the time appointed by God the vision shall be fulfilled. See also verse 19 ("the appointed time of the end"). This expression does not necessarily have to do with the absolute end of history. It occurs in 11:27 and 35 in contexts that probably refer to the end of the persecutions under Antiochus IV.

8:19 That which is to come in the last end of the wrath. The "timed wrath" may here refer to the time of God's judgment on his people Israel during the period of their subjection to the Babylonians, Persians and Greeks.

8:20 The ram. See notes on verses 3–4.

8:21 He goat ...horn . See notes on verses 5 and 8.

8:22 Four. See note on verse 8.

its place, *means that* four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his strength.²³ And at the end of their empire, when the prevaricators are come to the full, a king of arrogant countenance and expert in enigmas shall raise *himself* up.²⁴ And his power shall be strengthened, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy marvellously and shall prosper and do *according to his will* and shall destroy the mighty and the people of the saints.²⁵ And with his understanding he shall cause the deceit in his hand to prosper, and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace he shall destroy many; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes, and without hand he shall be broken.²⁶ And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told *is true*; therefore shut thou up the vision; for it *shall be* for many days.²⁷ And I Daniel was broken and was sick *certain* days; and after I rose up, I did the king's business; but I was astonished at the vision, and there was no one who could understand it:

Daniel, considering the time of the captivity,

9 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;² in the first year of his reign, I Daniel saw diligently in the books the number of the years, of which the LORD spoke unto Jeremiah the prophet, which would conclude the desolation of Jerusalem in seventy years.

makes confession of sins

³ And I turned my face unto the Lord God, seeking him in prayer and supplication, in fasting and sackcloth, and ashes:⁴ and I prayed unto the LORD my God and made my confession and said, Now O Lord, *thou* great God who is worthy to be feared, who keeps the covenant and the mercy with those that love thee and keep thy commandments;⁵ we have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly, and we have been rebels, and we have departed from thy commandments and from thy judgments.⁶ We have not hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, who spoke in thy name to our kings and to our princes, to our fathers, and to all the people of the land.⁷ O Lord, the righteousness *belongs* unto thee, but unto us the confusion of face, 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 lands where thou hast driven them because of their rebellion with which they have rebelled against thee.⁸ O Lord, to us *belongs* confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.⁹ Of the Lord our God is *the ability* to have mercy and to forgive, even

8:23–25 See notes on verses 9–14. Some interpreters have found a picture of the antichrist in the descriptions of the horn of this chapter (v. 8) by viewing Antiochus IV as a type of any powerful opponent of God's people in the future.

8:25 Many. The faithful Jews, as well as "the mighty" or "the strong ones" of the verse 24.

Prince of princes. A reference to God.

Without hand he shall be broken. Antiochus IV was not assassinated, nor did he die in battle. His death in 164 B.C. resulted from a physical or nervous disorder. For variant accounts of his death see 1 Maccabees 6:1-16 and 2 Maccabees 9:1-28.

8:26 Shut thou up the vision. A "seal" was used either to authenticate or certify something or to close up or secure something for confidentiality or safekeeping. The second sense seems most fitting in this context (see note on 6:17).

For it shall be for many days. Literally, "[the vision] pertains to many days." The conquests of Alexander (333-323 B.C.) occurred nearly two centuries after Daniel's vision (c. 550 B.C.), while Antiochus IV was active about a century and a half after Alexander (171-164 B.C.).

9:1–27 Vision of the Seventy Weeks. Daniel recorded an account of a revelation he received concerning Jeremiah's prophecy about the 70 years of Jerusalem's desolation. The vision followed Daniel's prayer in which he confessed the justice of Jerusalem's desolation and sought the favor of God for the restoration of the city and the temple. This vision revealed that the time of Judah's exile was extended because the people of God had not yet repented of the sins that had brought exile upon them.

9:1 The first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus. See notes on 5:30–31 and 6:1. The term "Xerxes" (not the same person mentioned in Est 1:1) may be a royal title rather than a personal name. The first year of Darius's reign was 539 B.C.

9:2 Saw diligently in the books ... the LORD spoke unto Jeremiah

the prophet ... the desolation of Jerusalem in seventy years. See Jer 25:11–12 and 29:10. Daniel was concerned because the 70 years of exile had nearly come to an end but the Israelites were not ready to return to the land. Interpreters differ on the dates of the beginning and ending of the 70-year period and on whether it is to be understood as a round number, suggesting a human lifetime, or an exact time period. Some date the period from 586 B.C. (the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar) to 515 B.C., when the restoration of the temple was completed under Zerubbabel (Ezr 6:13–18; Zec 4:9). Others date the beginning of the period to the year of Daniel's own captivity (604 B.C.; see note on 1:1). Daniel was also undoubtedly aware that Isaiah had prophesied Israel's release from exile under the Persian ruler Cyrus (Isa 44:28; 45:1–13). As Daniel apparently did here, the writer of Chronicles cited Cyrus's release of the exiles as having taken place in 539 B.C. as the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy (2Ch 36:21). In the literature of the ancient Near East 70 years was a standard time period during which a god would punish his people for disloyalty. This period could be lengthened or shortened by the reactions of the people. For this reason it is not surprising that there would be some flexibility in the ways different Biblical writers applied the number to Israel's history.

9:4–19 Daniel's prayer is rooted in a covenantal understanding of the Lord's relation to his people (blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience; see especially vv. 5, 7, 11–12, 14; Lev 26:14–45; Dt 28:15–68; 30:1–5). For a similar prayer see Ne 9. The prayer contains four parts: (1) worship (v. 4); (2) a confession of sin (vv. 5–11a); (3) recognition of the justice of God in his judgment on sin (vv. 11b–14); and (4) a plea for God's mercy based on concern for his name, kingdom and will (vv. 15–19). The prayer is grounded in God's promises (v. 2), was voiced in a spirit of contrition and humility (v. 3) and provides a model for appropriate elements of effective prayer.

though *we* have rebelled against him¹⁰ and have not listened to the voice of the LORD our God to walk by his laws, which he set before us by the hand of his servants the prophets.¹¹ And all Israel transposed thy law, departing by not hearing thy voice; by which the curse has fallen 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 has confirmed his words, which he spoke over us and over our judges that governed us, by bringing upon us such a great evil: that *such* has never been done under the whole heaven as has been done upon Jerusalem.¹³ As *it is* written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us, and we never sought the face of the LORD our God, that we might be converted from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.¹⁴ And the LORD hastened upon the chastisement and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God *is* just in all his works which he has done, for we did not listen to his voice.¹⁵ And now, O Lord our God, who hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and hast won for thyself a very clear name as appears unto this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

and prays for the restoration of Jerusalem

¹⁶O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, 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 all thy people is given in 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 made desolate, by the Lord.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 *confiding* in our righteousnesses, but in thy many 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.

Gabriel informs him of the seventy weeks

²⁰And 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 I *was* even yet speaking in prayer, and that man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, flying swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening sacrifice.²² And he caused me to understand and spoke with me and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to cause thee to understand the interpretation.²³ At the beginning of thy supplications, the word went forth, and I have come to teach it unto thee; for thou *art a man* greatly beloved: therefore understand the word, and understand the vision.²⁴ Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the prevarication and to conclude the sin and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness and seal the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the Holy of Holies.²⁵ Know therefore and understand *that* from the going forth of the word to cause *the people* to return and to build Jerusalem unto the Anointed Prince, *there shall be* seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks,

9:21 Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning. See [note on 8:16](#).

9:24 Seventy weeks. The "seventy 'sevens'" (lit., "seventy weeks") represent 490 years (see [note on 9:24–27](#)). The 70 years of exile (v. 2) are multiplied seven times in accordance with the pattern of covenantal curses ([Lev 26:14, 21, 24, 28](#)). God extended the exile because of Israel's continuing sinfulness. Just as the 70 years of exile predicted by Jeremiah may have followed a standard formula (see [note on v. 2](#)), the period of 490 years probably represented a standard formula as well. For instance, the intertestamental, non-canonical book Jubilees structures the whole of history into periods of 490 years. It is likely, therefore, that Daniel had in mind not a precise calculation of years but broadly defined segments of time. This extension of time was not absolute; it could be lengthened if the people continued to rebel or shortened if they repented.

Are determined ... to. Six things were to be accomplished during the period of "seventy 'sevens.'" As with all Old Testament prophecies about the restoration from exile in the latter days, these six items are fulfilled in the work of Christ in bringing the kingdom of God (see theological articles "The Kingdom of God" at [Mt 4](#) and "The Plan of the Ages" at [Heb 7](#)). The New Testament teaches that the kingdom was inaugurated in the first coming of Christ, continues now and will reach its consummation at Christ's return. Therefore, some aspects of these predictions are more closely related to Christ's first coming, others to his second coming and still others are fulfilled by both his first and second comings.

9:25–27 The "seventy weeks" of years are divided into three subunits of 49 years (seven "sevens"; v. 25), 434 years (sixty-two "sevens"; v. 26) and seven years (one "seven"; v. 27). Interpreters differ over whether these subunits are to be viewed as a continuous sequence or as subunits separated by time intervals. Many attempts have been made to understand this chronology as precise numbers of years, but all attempts fall short of completeness due to the fact that these numbers were intended as round figures of representative periods of time. Although Daniel's calculations are not to be taken as precise, the basic pattern of his prediction may be discerned without falling into speculation. The order to rebuild Jerusalem (v. 25) was followed by seven "sevens" or 49 years (v. 25), at which time the rebuilding of Jerusalem was completed (see [Ezra](#) and [Nehemiah](#)). This was followed by sixty-two "sevens" or 434 years (v. 26), at which time the Messiah was cut off (v. 26; see [note](#)). The single "seven" was fulfilled during or near the time of Christ's earthly ministry (v. 27).

9:25 Anointed. Two interpretations of this figure are possible: (1) He is the Messiah, the Christ. (2) He is a king whom God has anointed as his instrument in accomplishing his will (cf. [Isa 45:1](#)). While most interpreters take the anointed one and the ruler in verse 25 to be the same person, there is some disagreement as to whether or not this figure is identical to the person or persons referred to as "anointed one" and "ruler" in verse 26. In verse 26 the ruler appears to act against God. If the same ruler is intended in both verses, he is most likely not to be equated with the Messiah.

while the street shall be built again and the wall, *even* in troublous times. ²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks the Anointed *One* shall be killed and shall have nothing: (and the ruling people that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; whose end *shall be as* a flood, until at the end of the war it shall be cut off *with* desolation.) ²⁷ In one week (they are now seventy) he shall confirm the covenant by many: and at the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and because of the many abominations, desolation shall come, even until complete destruction shall be poured out upon the abominable *people*..

Daniel, having humbled himself, sees a vision

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia the Word was revealed unto Daniel, whose name *was called* Belteshazzar; and the Word *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long: and he understood the word, and had intelligence in the vision. ² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three weeks of days. ³ I ate no pleasant bread, neither did flesh nor wine come into my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all until the three weeks of days were fulfilled. ⁴ And in the twenty-fourth day of the first month as I was by the side of the great river, which *is* Hiddekel; ⁵ and lifting up my eyes, I saw, and behold a man clothed in linens, whose loins *were* girded with very pure gold: ⁶ his body *was* like the *stone of Tarsis turquoise*, and his face as a *bolt of lightning*, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to brilliant brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of *an* army. ⁷ And only I, Daniel, saw that vision: for the men that were with me did not see the vision; but a great fear fell upon them, and they fled and hid themselves. ⁸ Therefore I was left alone and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me, for my strength was turned into dismay, and I retained no strength. ⁹ Yet I heard the voice of his words, and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I placed into a deep sleep on my face, and my face *was* toward the ground.

Being troubled with fear, he is comforted by the angel

¹⁰ And, behold, a hand touched me and caused me to move upon my knees and *upon* the palms of my hands. ¹¹ And he said unto me, Daniel, O man greatly beloved, pay attention to the words that I shall speak unto thee, and stand up upon thy feet: for I am sent now unto thee. And as he was speaking this with me, I was trembling. ¹² And he said unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst give thy heart to understand and to afflict thy soul before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come because of thy words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days: and behold, Michael, one of the

9:26 The Anointed One shall be killed. This is either a reference to the crucifixion of Christ or to judgment that God would bring against a king who had overstepped his bounds as God's instrument of judgment (see [note on v. 25](#)).

The ruling people that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. A reference either to the Greek Antiochus IV Epiphanes as a precursor to the Roman general Titus (see "Introduction: Purpose and Distinctives") or directly to Titus and/or his armies, who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

9:27 In one week (they are now seventy) he shall confirm the covenant by many. The most likely antecedent of "he" is "the Anointed One" or the ruler" ([v. 26](#)). It is popular to interpret this statement as descriptive of an agreement that the antichrist will establish with Jewish people who have re-gathered in the land of Israel during the "tribulation" period, but this outlook is less likely. In the middle of the "seven" he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. This may be a reference to the termination of the Old Testament sacrificial system by the atoning death of Christ. It is also possible that it refers to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes or Titus (see [note on v. 26](#)). Some interpreters take the less likely view that this is a reference to the antichrist's prohibition of "sacrifice and offering" (perhaps standing for religious practice in general) by the re-gathered Jewish people after three and a half years ([Rev 11:2](#); [12:6](#), [14](#)) of the "tribulation" period. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation. Daniel most likely described the destruction of the temple under either Antiochus IV Epiphanes or Titus (see [note on v. 26](#) and "Introduction: Purpose and Distinctives"), rather than actions of a future antichrist. Phrases similar to "an abomination that causes desolation" occur in [8:13](#), [11:31](#) and [12:11](#) (see [their notes](#)), as well as in 1 Maccabees 1:54. Daniel [8:13](#) and 1 Maccabees 1:54 refer to the activities of Antiochus IV. Daniel used the same language to describe one who would defile the temple in the time near that of the Messiah. Jesus alluded to this abomination in [Matt 24:15](#) and [Mk 13:14](#).

10:1–11:1 The Angel's Message to Daniel. Daniel was prepared by an angelic being to receive a revelation pertaining to "a time yet to come" ([10:14](#)).

10:1–12:13 Vision of the Future of God's People. The prophet turned his attention to a final, lengthy vision that focused on the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (see "Introduction: Purpose and Distinctives") and looked beyond that reign as well. This material divides into four main sections: the angel's announcement to Daniel ([10:1–11:1](#)), events from Daniel until Antiochus IV Epiphanes ([11:2–20](#)), the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes ([11:21–12:3](#)) and a final message to Daniel ([12:4–13](#)).

10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia. In 537 B.C. See [notes on 1:21](#), [5:30](#), [6:1](#) and [9:1](#). The repatriated exiles were at this time back in the land to rebuild the temple ([Ezr 1:1–4](#); [3:8](#)), but they would soon have to give up the rebuilding ([Ezr 4:24](#)).

10:2 Was mourning. Daniel probably mourned because of the state of Jerusalem ([Ne 1:4](#); [Isa 61:3–4](#); [64:8–12](#); [66:10](#)).

10:5 A man clothed in linens. Verses [5–6](#) give a detailed description of an angel, perhaps Gabriel ([9:21](#)) or the one who spoke to Gabriel ([8:16](#)). His appearance was similar to that of the glory of the Lord ([Eze 1:26–28](#); [Rev 1:12–16](#)). For other references to angels see [Jdg 13:6](#), [Eze 9:2–3](#); [10:2](#) and [Lk 24:4](#).

10:7 Great fear. See [Isa 6:5](#) and [Lk 5:8](#).

10:12 Thy words were heard, and I am come because of thy words. The vision and revelation that Daniel received came as a direct response to his prayers.

10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia. In the context it is apparent that this prince refers to an evil, but powerful, spiritual being (cf. [Job 1:6–12](#); [Ps 82](#); [Isa 24:21](#); [Lk 11:14–26](#)) assigned by Satan to activity pertaining to Persian rule. Similarly, the archangel Michael is called "the great prince who protects" Israel ([12:1](#)). The host of heaven are said to fight for Israel elsewhere in the Old Testament ([Jdg 5:20](#); [2Ki 6:15–18](#); [Ps 103:20–21](#)).

chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴Now I am come to make thee know what shall befall thy people in the latter days, for there shall still *be* vision for *several* days. ¹⁵And as he was speaking such words unto me, I looked toward the ground and became dumb. ¹⁶And, behold, *one* like the similitude of *the* son of man touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke 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. ¹⁷For how can the servant of my Lord talk with my Lord? for as for me, for in that instant I had no more strength in me, neither was there any breath left in me. ¹⁸Then there came again and touched me *one* like the appearance of a man, and he comforted me, ¹⁹and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace *be* unto thee, be of good cheer, and be well. And as he spoke unto me, I was strengthened and said, Let my Lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. ²⁰Then said he, Knowest thou why I have come unto thee? Because now I must return to fight with the prince of the Persians; and when I am gone forth, next the prince of Grecia shall come. ²¹But I will interpret unto thee that which is written in the scripture of truth: and *there is* no one that holds with me in these *things*, but Michael your prince.:

The overthrow of Persia by the king of Grecia

11 And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood to encourage and to strengthen him. ²And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall yet be three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall obtain far greater riches than *they* all; and by his strengthening himself with his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. ³And a valiant king shall stand up, that shall rule over *a* great dominion and do according to his will. ⁴But when he is reigning, his kingdom shall be broken and shall be divided by the four winds of heaven, and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion by which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

Leagues and conflicts between the kings of the south and of the north

⁵And the king of the south, and of his principalities, shall make himself strong; and he shall exceed him and make himself powerful; his dominion *shall be* a great dominion. ⁶But at the end of *some* years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement, but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm; for she shall be given up and those that brought her and he that begat her, and those that were for her in *this* time. ⁷But of the new shoot from her roots shall *one* stand up upon his throne and shall come unto the army and shall enter

Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me. Michael is depicted as the commander of the holy angels in [Jude 9](#) and [Rev 12:7](#). Here a glimpse is given into the spiritual battles waged in the heavenly realms that affect events on Earth (cf. [Eph 6:12](#); [Rev 12:7-9](#)).

10:20 I must return to fight with the prince of the Persians. See [note on verse 13](#).

The prince of Grecia. This is a fallen angel or demonic power assigned by Satan to participate in the affairs of the Greek kingdom (see [note on v. 13](#); see [Jn 14:30](#); [Eph 6:12](#)). Although both Persia and Greece would conquer God's people, Daniel was to understand that their power would be limited by the power of God, whose purposes always prevail.

10:21 The scripture of truth. A metaphor for God's knowledge and control over all of history.

No one ... but Michael. Michael's interest in protecting Israel (see [note on v. 13](#); cf. [12:1](#)) corresponded with that of the messenger, who was directly concerned about God's purposes.

11:1 In the first year of Darius the Mede. Earlier the angel who was speaking to Daniel had given assistance to Michael (see [note on 10:13](#)), perhaps in connection with the Persian decree to permit the Jews to return to their homeland.

11:2-20 From Daniel Until Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The revelation given to Daniel in 11:2-20 concerned ancient Near Eastern history from the time of Daniel until the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The prophet's vision was unusually detailed, describing intricate interconnections among events far beyond that normally given to an Israelite prophet. Such details drew the attention of early readers of this book and demonstrated Daniel's reliability.

11:2 There shall yet be three kings in Persia. Cambyses (529-523 B.C.), Pseudo-Smerdis or Gaumata (523-2 B.C.) and Darius I (522-486 B.C.).

The fourth. Xerxes I (485-464 B.C.).

Riches. See [Est 1:4](#).

He shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. Xerxes waged a number of campaigns against Greece, beginning in 480 B.C.

11:3 A valiant king shall stand up. Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.). See [notes on 7:6](#) and [8:5](#) and [8](#).

11:4 His kingdom shall be broken ... divided by the four winds of heaven. See [notes on 7:6](#) and [8:8](#).

11:5 The king of the south. Ptolemy I Soter (323-285 B.C.).

Of his principalities, shall make himself strong. Seleucus I Nicator (311-280 B.C.). Seleucus broke with Ptolemy, became king of Babylon and controlled territories from the Indus River in the east, to Syria in the west.

11:6-20 Verses 6-20 contain detailed predictions of relations between the king of the North (the Seleucid kingdom) and the king of the South (the Ptolemaic kingdom). This section may be divided into three parts: (1) events concerning Laodice and Berenice ([vv. 6-9](#)), (2) the career of Antiochus III ([vv. 10-19](#)) and (3) the reign of Seleucus IV ([v. 20](#)).

11:6 The king's daughter of the south. Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.).

To make an agreement. Refers to a marriage alliance (c. 250 B.C.) between Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.) of Syria and Ptolemy II of Egypt.

She shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm. Laodice, the former wife of Antiochus, instigated a conspiracy that resulted in the poisoning deaths of Berenice, Antiochus II and their infant son.

11:7 The new shoot from her roots. Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 B.C.), the brother of Berenice (see [note on v. 6](#)).

Shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north. Ptolemy III attacked the Seleucid kingdom, had Laodice (see [note on v. 6](#)) put to death and returned to Egypt with considerable booty.

into the fortress of the king of the north and do in them *according to his will* and shall prevail:⁸ and even their gods, with their princes, with their precious vessels of silver and of gold, shall be taken captive in Egypt; and for *some* years he shall maintain himself against the king of the north.⁹ Thus shall the king of the south enter into the kingdom and return to his own land.¹⁰ But the sons of that one shall be stirred up and shall assemble a multitude of great armies and shall come in great haste, and overflow and pass through and turn and come with wrath unto his fortress.¹¹ Therefore the king of the south shall become furious and shall come forth and fight with him *even* with the king of the north; and he shall put a great multitude into *the* field, but all that multitude shall be given into his hand.¹² Therefore the multitude shall be filled with pride, his heart shall be lifted up, and he shall cast down many thousands, but he shall not prevail.¹³ And the king of the north shall put another multitude greater than the former in *the* field and at the end of a time of some years shall come in great haste with a great army and with much riches.¹⁴ But in those times many shall stand up against the king of the south, and sons of robbers of thy people shall raise themselves up to establish the vision, but they shall fall.¹⁵ So the king of the north shall come and cast up a mount and shall take the strong cities, and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be *any* fortress that can withstand.¹⁶ And he that comes against him shall do according to his own will, and there shall be no one that can stand before him, and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.¹⁷ He shall then set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom and shall do upright things with him, and he shall give him a daughter of *his* women to persuade her, but she shall not stand, neither be for him.¹⁸ After this he shall turn his face unto the isles and shall take many, but a prince shall cause him to cease his affront and shall even turn his reproach upon him.¹⁹ Then he shall turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall and not appear again.²⁰ Then shall succeed in his throne a taker of taxes *who shall be the* Glory of the Kingdom, but within few days he shall be broken, neither in anger, nor in battle.²¹ And a vile *person* shall succeed in his place, to whom they shall not give the honour of the Kingdom: nevertheless he shall come in with peace and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.²² And with the arms they shall be overflowed of a flood before him and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.²³ And after the union *made* with him he shall work deceit and shall rise and shall overcome with few people.²⁴ With the province in peace and in abundance, he shall enter and do *that* which his fathers have never done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall distribute prey and spoil and riches to his soldiers; and against the fortresses he shall forecast his devices, even for *a* time.²⁵ And he shall stir up his forces and his heart against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall move to the war with a great and mighty army, but he

11:9 Shall the king of the south enter into the kingdom and return to his own land. This refers to the unsuccessful campaign of Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226 B.C.), the son of Laodice, against the Ptolemaic kingdom in 240 B.C.

11:10 The sons of that one. Seleucus III Ceraunus (226-223 B.C.) and Antiochus III the Great (223-187 B.C.).

Shall be stirred up and shall assemble a multitude of great armies. Antiochus III fought with the Ptolemies from 222-187 B.C. and for a time gained control of Canaan, as well as western Syria.

His fortress. This probably refers to Raphia, a Ptolemaic fortress in southern Canaan. A major battle was fought there in 217 B.C.

11:11 The king of the south. Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-203 B.C.). **Fight with him even with the king of the north.** Antiochus III. He suffered great losses (over 14,000 men) at the battle of Raphia in 217 B.C.

11:13 The king of the north shall put another multitude greater than the former. In alliance with Philip V of Macedon, he raised an even larger army to invade the Ptolemaic kingdom. Ptolemy IV died in mysterious circumstances and was succeeded by Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181 B.C.), his four-year-old son.

11:15 He king of the north shall come and cast up a mount and shall take the strong cities. This refers to the victory of Antiochus III at Sidon over the Egyptian general Scopas in 198 B.C. It marked the end of Ptolemaic rule in the area only much later referred to as Palestine.

11:16 The glorious land. The promised land (see [vv. 41, 45; 8:9](#)).

11:17 Shall do upright things with him, and he shall give him a daughter. Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus III, was given in marriage to the boy king Ptolemy V.

She shall not stand. Cleopatra aligned herself with the Egyptians rather than with her father. She sought Roman help against the attempt

of Antiochus III to take coastal cities in Asia Minor controlled by the Egyptians.

11:18 A prince shall cause him to cease his affront. The Roman general Lucius Cornelius Scipio defeated Antiochus III in several battles and forced him to cede Asia Minor to Roman control (the Peace of Apamea; 188 B.C.). At this time the second son of Antiochus III, later to be known as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, was taken hostage to Rome.

11:20 Then shall succeed in his throne. Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175 B.C.), the elder son of Antiochus III.

A taker of taxes. Heliodorus (see 2 Maccabees 3:7-40).

11:21-12:3 The Rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Daniel turned to the most important character in the history outlined thus far: the great Antiochus IV, who persecuted the Jews and defiled the temple. The prophet concentrated on his accession and character (11:21-24), his career (11:25-31), the conditions of God's people during his reign (11:32-35), a summary of his religious attitudes (11:36-39), his heart's ambition (11:40-45) and a description of his defeat (12:1-3).

11:21 A vile person shall succeed in his place, to whom they shall not give the honour of the Kingdom. This is the infamous Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), brother of Seleucus IV but not his legitimate successor, since Seleucus IV had a son, Demetrius Soter, also known as Demetrius I. See [verses 23-24](#) and [notes on 8:9-14](#).

11:22 Shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. Perhaps this is a reference to the assassination of the high priest Onias III by the supporters of Antiochus IV (175-163 B.C.) in Jerusalem in 171 B.C. (cf. 2 Maccabees 4:32-43 [an Apocryphal book]).

11:25 The king of the south. Ptolemy VI Philometor (181-146 B.C.), son of Ptolemy V and Cleopatra and nephew of Antiochus (see [note on v. 17](#)).

He shall not prevail. Antiochus IV defeated Ptolemy VI at Pelusium, located on the border of Egypt (cf. 1 Maccabees 1:16-19).

shall not prevail, for they shall betray him.²⁶ Even those that ate his bread shall break him, and his army shall be destroyed; and many shall fall down slain.²⁷ And the heart of both these kings *shall be* to do evil, and at the same table they shall speak lies; but it shall not prosper, for the time appointed is not yet come.²⁸ Then he shall return into his land with great riches; and his heart *shall be* against the holy covenant; and he shall do *exploits* and return to his own land.²⁹ At the time appointed he shall turn toward the south, but the latter *coming* shall not be as the former.

The invasion and tyranny of the Romans

³⁰For the ships of Chittim shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved and return and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return and have *an* understanding with those that have forsaken the holy covenant.³¹ And arms shall be placed on his behalf, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that makes desolate.³² And with flatteries he shall cause to sin those that violate the covenant, but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*.³³ And the wise among the people shall give wisdom to many, yet they shall fall by the sword, and by fire, by captivity, and by spoil, for *some* days.³⁴ And in their fall, they shall be helped with a little help, but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.³⁵ And *some* of the wise shall fall to be purged and cleaned and made white, *even* to the time of the end because even for this *there is* time appointed.³⁶ And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god and shall speak marvels against the God of gods and shall prosper until the indignation is accomplished, for the determination has been made.³⁷ Neither shall he care for the God of his fathers, nor the love of women, nor care for any god, for he shall magnify himself above all.³⁸ But in his place shall he honour the god of fortresses, *a* god whom his fathers did not know; he shall honour it with gold and silver and precious stones and with things of great price.³⁹ And with the *people of* the strange god that he shall know, he shall make strong fortresses, increase their glory; and cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.⁴⁰ But at the end of the time the king of the south shall lock horns with him, and the king of the north shall raise up a storm against him with chariots and with horsemen and with many ships, and he shall enter into the lands and shall overflow and pass over.⁴¹ He shall come to the glorious land, and many *provinces* shall fall, but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom and Moab and the first of the sons of Ammon.⁴² He shall stretch forth his hand to the lands, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.⁴³ And he shall take over the treasures of gold and of silver and of all the precious things of Egypt, of Libya, and Ethiopia where he passes.⁴⁴ But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and to kill many.⁴⁵ And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas, in the desirable mountain of the Sanctuary; and he shall come to his end, and shall have no one to help him.:

11:28 He shall return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant. As a result of intrigues in Jerusalem against his supporters, Antiochus IV plundered the temple on his return from Egypt to Antioch in Syria (cf. 1 Maccabees 1:20-28).

11:29 He shall turn toward the south. Antiochus IV invaded Egypt again in 168 B.C.

11:30 The ships of Chittim shall come against him. Roman armies under Gaius Popilius Laenas forced Antiochus IV to retreat from Egypt. **Indignation against the holy covenant.** Antiochus determined to exterminate Jewish religion.

11:31 Take away the daily sacrifice ... abomination that makes desolate. The desecration of the temple in December 168 B.C. by Antiochus IV (cf. 1 Maccabees 1:54,59; 2 Maccabees 6:2 [Apocryphal books]; see notes on 8:11; 9:27; 12:11).

11:32 The people that do know their God shall be strong. Refers to those who opposed Antiochus IV and remained faithful to the Lord even unto death (1 Maccabees 1:61-63 [an Apocryphal book]).

11:34 They shall be helped with a little help. Possibly this is a reference to Mattathias, an elderly priest, and his five sons (John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan), who waged a guerrilla war against Antiochus IV. Mattathias died in 166 B.C. His sons carried on the struggle and became known as the Maccabees. Victory was achieved under Judas Maccabeus in December 165 B.C., when the temple was cleansed and the daily sacrifices restored (cf. 1 Maccabees 4:36-39).

11:35 The time of the end ... time appointed. See note on 8:17.

11:36-39 This king "will do as he pleases ... [and] magnify himself above every god". (v. 36). He will "show no regard for the gods of his fathers" (v. 37) but will "greatly honor those who acknowledge him" (v. 39).

11:36-12:3 At his proudest moment this king will be destroyed right at Mount Zion in the heart of the Holy Land (vv. 44-45). His defeat in 12:1-3 is described in terms of the absolute end of history. Because these prophecies have not found a historical fulfillment, it is difficult to discern how literal or metaphorical they are, and our interpretation must be guarded. Certain details in 11:36-12:3 cannot be easily harmonized with the time of Antiochus IV. For this reason many evangelical interpreters understand these verses to be descriptive of the antichrist who will persecute God's people just prior to the second advent of Christ (cf. 12:1-3). Yet this understanding requires the assumption of an extended time interval between the events depicted in 11:21-35 and those in 11:36-12:3, which the text does not communicate. It is possible that these prophesied events were averted, altered or delayed (see "Introduction to the Prophetic Books").

11:36 Until the indignation is accomplished. Just as in 8:17 and 11:35, the time of persecution is subject to God's control.

11:40 At the end of the time. See note on 8:17.

11:41 Glorious land. Canaan (see vv. 16, 45; 8:9).

11:45 He shall come to his end, and shall have no one to help him. See Joel 3 (see also Zec 14:1-4; 2Th 2:8; Rev 16:13-16; 19:11-21).

Michael shall deliver Israel from their troubles

12 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who is for the sons of thy people, and it shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there were people until now, but in that time thy people shall escape, all those that are found written in the book. ²And many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall be awakened, some for eternal life, and some for shame *and* everlasting confusion. ³And those that understand shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and those that teach righteousness to the multitude as the stars in perpetual eternity. ⁴But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end: many shall pass by, and knowledge shall be multiplied.

Daniel is informed of the times

⁵Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, another two who stood, one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. ⁶And *one* said to the Man clothed in linens, who *was* upon the waters of the river, When *shall be* the end of these wonders? ⁷And I heard the Man clothed in linens, who *was* upon the waters of the river, who raised his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by the Living one in the ages that *it shall be* for a time, times, and a half; and when the scattering of the power of the holy people shall be finished, all these *things* shall be fulfilled. ⁸And I heard, but I did not understand; then I said, O my Lord, what *is* the fulfillment of these things? ⁹And he said, Go thy way, Daniel, for these words *are* closed up and sealed until the time of the fulfillment. ¹⁰Many shall be purified and made white and purged, but *the* wicked shall get worse; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. ¹¹And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away until the abomination of desolation, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days. ¹²Blessed *is* he that waits and comes unto one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. ¹³And thou shalt go to the end and shalt rest, and thou shalt raise up in thy lot at the end of the days.

12:1 At that time. Michael, the angelic protector of Israel, will not permit God's people to be persecuted forever. He will judge those who oppress his people. Michael, the great prince who protects your people. See [note on 10:13](#).

A time of trouble. See [Matt 24:21](#) and [Mk 13:19](#), where Jesus drew upon these prophecies about Antiochus IV to describe the time of the Roman siege against Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Thy people shall escape. This deliverance is not necessarily from martyrdom (v. 2) but from the power of Satan (cf. [Mt 6:13](#); [2Ti 4:18](#)). As such the verse assures God's people that he will deliver them from Satan's temptation to apostatize during the time of distress.

12:2 Shall be awakened, some for eternal life, and some for shame and everlasting confusion. This is a prediction of the bodily resurrection of the godly and ungodly prior to a final judgment ([Mt 25:46](#); [Jn 5:28–29](#)).

12:4–13 A Final Message to Daniel. The book concludes by setting out a future course of events and by promising Daniel rest in the eternal state.

12:4 Shut up the words. The act of sealing was understood as giving something a mark of authentication (see [note on 8:26](#)).

12:7 A time, times, and a half. See [note on 7:25](#).

12:8 I did not understand. Daniel did not comprehend the angel's response (v. 7) to his initial inquiry (v. 6), so he rephrased the question.

12:11 The daily sacrifice is taken away until the abomination of desolation. See [note on 9:27](#). The simile activity of Antiochus IV prefigured this activity of the Roman Titus in A.D. 70.

12:12 1,290 days ... 1,335 days. The angel clarified his previous answer (v. 7; see [note on v. 8](#)). The significance of these time frames is obscure.