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Chapter 1

The prophecies in the Book of Daniel are so detailed and accurate that scholars who don't believe in the Bible as the inspired Word of God have trouble accepting Daniel as the author of this book. As we study this book together, I suggest you refresh your memory of the book of Revelation. It has been said that "Daniel is to the Old Testament what Revelation is to the New Testament."

Just by this writing we know that Daniel was a very educated man. He writes in Aramaic, Hebrew, and some Greek.

Verse 1: *"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it."* Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem at the end of the third year of Jehoiakim's reign. History tells us that he took the city in the fourth year (606 BC.). We find this narrative in II Kings 23:36-24:1. It wasn't until Jehoiakim defied Nebuchadnezzar that the Babylonian armies came down on Judah and destroyed it.

Who was Nebuchadnezzar? He was the first great world monarch and ruled the entire known world at that time. His kingdom was Babylon. Remember that about 350 years earlier at the death of King Solomon the kingdom was divided 930 BC. As a result, the two southern tribes came under the rule of Rehoboam and was called Judah. The ten northern tribes came under the rule of Jeroboam and was called Israel. We see this taking place in I Kings 12:2-16. The divided kingdoms would never be reunited again.

As time passed the ten northern tribes were conquered by the Assyrians about 701 BC. And now, here in 606 B.C. the southern kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar. Thus began the Babylonian captivity which we will see will last for 70 years. We will find out in chapter 9 why it was for 70 years.

Verse 2: *"And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god."* Notice it says that the "Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand." This clearly means that God was allowing Judah to be punished. Why? - Idolatry and disobedience. We see this in Jeremiah 25:1-9, 11-12; 29:10-11. We will discuss the seventy years in more detail in chapter 9.

Verses 3-4: *"And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans."* This is fulfilled prophecy! We find its fulfillment in Isaiah 39:1-7 where it says, "At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the

precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” And, of course, among those selected were Daniel and his three friends.

Verse 5: *“And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.”* The young men were to be schooled for three years before they were brought to the king of Babylon. We must remember that their schooling was completely pagan in nature; much like our public schooling today has become. I take my hat off to the public school teachers that are making an attempt to stay true to their faith. Quite frankly, it's a losing battle. I really don't know how much longer Christians are going to be able to work in any arena of the public school system without totally compromising their faith: most already have and just will not admit it.

Verses 6-7: *“Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Beltshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.”* The names of the young Hebrew princes were changed to pagan Babylonian names. Daniel in Hebrew means "God is Judge" while Beltshazzar in Chaldean means "Bel's Prince." Hananiah in Hebrew means "Beloved of the Lord" while Shadrach in Chaldean means "Illumined by the Sun." Mishael in Hebrew means "Who is as God?" while Meshach in Chaldean means "Who is like Shach?" Azariah in Hebrew means "The Lord is my help" while Abednego in Chaldean means "The Servant of Nego".

Verse 8: *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”* Daniel was about 15 years old at this time. And yet he was determined to live a life of purity and commitment to God. That's an awesome thought. It's been said, "If a man is wretched, vile and defiled on the outside, it is first because he is that on the inside." "If a man is godly, holy, and righteous on the outside, it also first began inside." In the end, Daniel was a godly, holy and righteous man inside and out.

Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 12:34-35 when He said, *“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.”* Can you just imagine for a moment the pressure that Daniel and his friends were under to conform? Everything that the Babylonians did by

renaming them, forcing them to eat of the kings diet, forcing them to learn the Babylonian language was all part of trying to force them to break their commitment with God. Babylon wanted them to conform.

That pressure is on us all of the time. Think about your job, school, and even your church. The world wants us to conform as well. But, we as Believers in Christ must resist that temptation, though it be great at times and may cost us at times. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 12:1-2, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

The bottom line is that the world wants us to look like'em and talk like'em, and act like'em. Some would say, "Well, what's wrong with the world?" John answers that question for us in John 15:19 *"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."*

John also addresses this subject in 1 John 2:15-17 when he said, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."* All of us can learn a lot from this example set by Daniel and his friends.

Verses 9-10: *"Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king."* Notice, God blessed Daniel's commitment to live for Him. It has been said, that "God's way may not be popular and the path of holiness may not be well traveled, but it is always the right way."

Verses 11-12: *"Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink."* The word "pulse" means vegetables. In other words, they were saying that they wanted simple yet nourishing food. They wanted food that they were accustomed to and would not violate their consciences.

Verse 13-15: *"Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat."* The Lord proves faithful to Daniel. You know, it's far better to please God, than to please the world. God will always prove Himself faithful if you do it His way.

There is no better example of this than Noah. I heard Adrian Rodgers say one time that it is better to be in the right and in the minority than to be wrong and in the majority. He also said when speaking of Noah, "He went into the ark in the minority, but he came out in the majority!" We would all do well to remember that.

Verse 16: *"Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse."* Thus, we see God's faithfulness. If you do things God's way, He will always bless. That takes so much for us to learn. It is so much easier sometimes to make an easy wrong than to make a hard right. This old world just fights tooth and nail against doing things God's way. That's why they have worked so hard to kick Him out of every public arena. They want Him as far out of sight and mind as possible. I think that they believe that if they are not constantly reminded of Him, that He'll go away and leave them alone. Thankfully, they are wrong.

I've heard those who don't want anything to do with God say, "I don't believe in God." My friend, you don't have to believe in God, but your unbelief doesn't change anything. Similarly, you can say that you don't believe in gravity, but go ahead and jump out of third story window telling yourself that there is no such thing as gravity. Gravity will win every time whether you believe it or not.

Please understand something, your belief or unbelief doesn't make one difference in the world when it comes to the existence of God. He was God when you got here and He'll still be God when you leave. God is real. Hell is real. In the end, you'll face both and neither of them requires your belief!

Verse 17: *"As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams."* Now, this wasn't because of their vegetarian diet! This is not a proof text to be a vegetarian as many have suggested. It was because of their obedience to God and had absolutely nothing to do with what they ate.

However, I do know that in the Garden of Eden that Adam and Eve were vegetarians. It was not until after the fall of creation that Noah was commanded to eat meat. That is why he was told to take two of every unclean and seven of every clean animal (Genesis 7:1-2). He was to eat and sacrifice some of the clean ones upon exiting the ark and still let two go for the purpose of procreation (Genesis 8:20).

I also believe that one day in the Millennium that we will all once again be vegetarians because there will be no more pain or death (Isaiah 11:6-9). Praise God! In the meantime, God told Noah and Peter to eat and be grateful (Acts 10:9-16).

Verses 18-21: *"Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and*

astrologers that were in all his realm. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.” Why do you suppose this happened? Obedience. We in our day, struggle with the concept of obedience. It’s probably the greatest sin that I see in the Body of Christ today. Jesus said in Luke 6:46, *“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”*

There are so many in the church today who give God lip service, but no life service. God wants not only your lip, but your life as well. God told King Saul through the prophet Nathan in 1 Sam 15:22, *“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”*

Did you notice that disobedience is compared to witchcraft? Pray tell me how that there are so many churches in the United States and yet most of them are struggling? They are barely keeping their doors open each week. Why? Disobedient people!

Chapter 2

Verse 1: *“And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.”* In other words, he could not fall back to sleep. The things that he dreamed began to disturb and trouble his mind. What we are seeing here is that God is going to use a pagan monarch to set forth the course of the Gentile nations on the earth which extends from Nebuchadnezzar’s day right down to the end of the age and to the establishment of the kingdom by the King of Kings. As such, King Nebuchadnezzar begins to have these dreams night after night.

Verses 2-5: *“Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.”* In other words, "You are to tell me the dream and the interpretation of it." Of course, they were not up to that. The devil is not omniscient in that he does not know everything. He had no way of knowing what the King had dreamt and therefore was unable to tell it to his little stooges.

Verses 6-8: *“But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.”* In other words, the king is saying that he had forgotten the dream. This may or may not have been the truth. He may very well have been putting his "wise men" to the test! In the end, he accuses them of stalling for time, because their heads had been put on the line.

Verse 9: *“But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.”* This verse leads me to believe that he had not really forgotten the dream, but was testing them.

This reminds me of the Lord Jesus when He began to teach on prayer in Matthew and He said, *“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly”* (Matthew 6:6). Could it be that some prayers need to be offered in secret so that the Devil doesn’t have a clue? After all, the only way that he can know is when we speak it audibly in his presence or the presence of one of his minions! The devil is not omnipresent either!

Verses 10-11: *“The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the*

king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” This was definitely not the right answer!

Verses 12-13: *“For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.”* Now, not only are all of the wise men in Babylon in trouble, but also Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego because they were wise men too. Remember back in chapter 1 it told us that the reason these young princes were brought to Babylon was to be educated so that they might serve in the king's palace (1:20)?

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

Verse 19: *“Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.”* God heard their prayers and granted them mercy. So, Daniel and his friends had tremendous reason to rejoice. Not only because their lives had been spared, but also the lives of the other wise men.

When I see this incident, I think of the blessings that America has enjoyed. These blessings are the direct result God pouring out his blessings upon those who honor him. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:45 that God the Father *“maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”*

This reminds me of a prayer that was said by Pastor Joe Wright before the Kansas State Legislature. When he finished, three members jumped to their feet and indignantly shouted, "He can't talk like that!" One representative called the prayer "gross, divisive, sanctimonious and overbearing." Rep. David Hailey called it "blasphemous and ignorant." This was the prayer: "Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know your Word says woe to those who call evil good but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of your Word in the name of moral pluralism. We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism. We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle. We have exploited the poor and called it a lottery. We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. In the name of choice we have killed our unborn. In the name of right to life we have killed abortionists. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building esteem. We have abused power and called it political savvy. We have coveted our neighbors' possessions and called it taxes. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, O God, and know our hearts today. Try us and show us any wicked

way in us. Cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas and who have been ordained by you to govern this great state. Grant them your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of your will. I ask in the name of your Son, the living Savior Jesus Christ, Amen."

Dr. R. G. Lee used to say he hadn't really preached unless he made somebody "hopping mad." You see, America was blessed because it was founded upon religious freedom. And it will continue to be blessed as long as it puts God first. Of course, that's not the direction that we are headed as the prayer indicated, but God will continue to bless His people in spite of the wickedness around them. But, I believe that one day God will say enough is enough and all bets will be off (2 Thessalonians 2:3-9).

Verse 20: *"Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:"* You see, God was able to do what man in his wisdom and might could not. We need to learn from this; when the blessings of God are upon us, we need to express praise and gratitude.

Peter said in 1 Peter 2:9, *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"* Also, the Psalmist reminded the children of Israel in Psalms 22:3 that God inhabits the praises of Israel.

Verses 21-23: *"And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter."* Daniel is praising God in these verses big time! Imagine, one minute his life is at stake and the next minute God saved it by revealing the dream to him. That's a pretty good reason to praise the Lord.

Verses 24-28: *"Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;"* What a pronouncement! Notice what Daniel says, *"But there is a God in heaven."* Here is Daniel, a slave, standing before the world's ruling monarch declaring the power of God. Man, I wish that we in the church could learn how to do this like Daniel, his three friends, and Pastor Joe Wright from Kansas! And yet, we're afraid somebody is going to see us bow our heads in public and pray! Men need to be

reminded that *"there is a God in heaven."* And that's our job as the church! Have we done that lately? Have you done that lately?

Notice that Daniel also says, *"what shall be in the latter days."* This tells us that King Nebuchadnezzar's dream covers a period from 600 BC until the day in which you and I live, and right on down to the Eternal Kingdom that Christ is going to set up at the end of the book of the Revelation.

Verses 29-30: *"As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart."* Notice the humility of Daniel when he says, *"But as for me this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living..."* Daniel refused to be prideful about what God was doing in His life. He realized that he was simply a tool in the Master's hand and nothing more.

Verse 31: *"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible."* From this point on we will study this great image which has to do with the Gentile Age which began with the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 606 BC and will continue until the return of Christ. This Gentile Age is referred to as the "Times of the Gentiles" elsewhere in Scripture.

Today, we are already seeing signs that this Gentile Age is coming to an end. The first of these great signs was the restoration of Israel as a nation in March of 1948 in fulfillment of Ezekiel 37. And the second was in 1967 when during the 6 Day War when Jerusalem was liberated from Gentile control. The Bible says in Luke 21:24, *"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."* Yes, today Israel is an independent nation as foretold in the Bible and we are awaiting the return of Christ.

As a matter of fact, the only major prophecies to still be fulfilled after the regathering of Israel is the great falling away and the rise of the Antichrist. Notice what Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"* The day that Paul is referring to is the Second Coming of Christ!

Of course, you and I know that one very important event is going to take place between the great falling away and the revealing of the Antichrist: the Rapture of the Church as recorded in Revelation 4:1!

Verses 32-35: *"This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the*

wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” So, here is the image that the king dreamed of. It is made of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay. It is after this that King Nebuchadnezzar makes an image of gold, probably similar to this one for the people to worship in chapter 3.

Notice that Daniel says, *“Thou art this head of gold.”* This probably caused the arrogance to manifest itself in the construction of the image that we will see in chapter 3.

Verse 36: *“This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.”* Now Daniel begins the interpretation of the dream. Remember that the King wanted him reveal the dream first and then interpret it. Daniel just did that when none of the other wise men in the kingdom were able to. Of course, this was only possible because of God.

Verses 37-38: *“Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.”* Notice that Daniel is very quick to acknowledge that the knowledge that he is about to impart came to him from the God of Heaven. He goes on to say that the head of gold represented Babylon over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled.

Verse 39: *“And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.”* The second world empire (v.32) was the Persian Empire under the rule of Cyrus the Great. And the third world empire was Greece headed by Alexander the Great. But, notice that both of these were inferior to Babylon. None will be as great as Babylon was in power and strength.

Verse 40: *“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”* Now we come to the fourth world empire which was Rome. Rome’s power began about 150 BC and ran until about 450 AD when finally the barbarians broke the power and the authority of Rome. And she like Babylon, Persia, and Greece, disintegrated politically.

Notice, that I used the word politically. There is still an aspect of the Roman Empire that has never disintegrated and that is the spiritual aspect. Religious Rome is still very much alive today through the Roman Catholic Church and is still headed by the Pope. Politically Rome disintegrated, but spiritually it’s still a power to be reckoned with.

Verses 41-42: *“And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.”* Notice that this empire is made up of iron (Rome) that is mixed in with the clay. What does this mean? It means that there will be a Revived Roman Empire in the last days. I believe that we are watching this come together as I write this commentary in the rise of Europe.

Verse 43: *“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.”* But notice that it will not last because it is impossible for iron and clay to bond together.

Verse 44: *“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”* Notice, *“In the days of these kings...”* What kings? It is speaking of the kings of the ten toes that are mentioned in v.41. These ten toes speaks of the last world empire that will arise in the last days. We are still awaiting the rise of this last empire. Many feel that it will come out of the Old Roman Empire which makes up the European Community today. In other words, the old Roman Empire will rise up out of the ashes. We can see this in the fact that the clay is mixed with iron that represented the Roman Empire in the legs of the image.

Verse 45: *“Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”* This verse speaks of the second coming of Christ as recorded in Revelation 19:11-16.

It’s interesting to note that here in chapter 2 we are given the human viewpoint on the Gentile powers as a great image. However, chapter 7 gives us the divine viewpoint as wild beasts. It is by putting the two chapters together that we get a complete picture of the "Times of the Gentiles."

I want you to notice something else that I noticed. Notice that the quality of the metals decreases from the head to the toes but the strength of the metals increases. I believe that the symbolism indicates that the autocratic control of the kingdoms will decrease, while the military strength of each kingdom will increase: 1. Head of *Gold* = Babylon (v. 38), 2. Arms of *Silver* = Media-Persia, 3. Belly of *Brass* = Greece, 4. Legs of *Iron* = Rome and 5. Feet of *Iron & Clay* = Future Kingdom of Antichrist. Did you see it? Gold is worth more than silver. Silver is worth more than brass. Brass is worth more than iron. And Iron is worth more than clay. Yet, while Babylon was represented by gold; no one had a mightier military than Rome.

Verses 46-49: *“Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.”* Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed with Daniel's interpretation that he decided to make him *“ruler over the province of Babylon”* and *“over all the wise men of Babylon”*.

God really rewarded Daniel's courage. Notice the results of Daniel's courage: 1. King honored Daniel, 2. King honored Daniel's God, 3. King rewarded Daniel, 4. King promoted Daniel, and 5. King rewarded Daniel's friends.

The phrase "*Daniel sat in the gate of the King*" means that he served as a ruler in the King's cabinet or government. To "*sit in the gate*" back then meant to be in the most prominent place of authority in the city as that everyone who came into the city or exited the city had to go by him.

In the end, God used Daniel to change the King's heart, mind and will. Daniel prayed to God and then told the King the truth. That's what we need today - people who will pray for our leaders and tell them the truth and trust God to take care of the rest.

I believe that the biggest problem in our nation right now is sheer cowardice. Where have the Daniel's gone? We don't have the guts or the backbone that our forefathers did to stand up for what is right. Instead, we want to take the easy way out of everything. The problem is from the White House to the Church House. We have become what I call accommodationists. We accommodate everything and everybody, but God.

Chapter 3

The events in this chapter foreshadow the resistance of the Jews to the worship of the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation period (Revelation 13:12). King Nebuchadnezzar is a type of the Antichrist. The three Hebrew children represent the 144,000 Jews whom God will seal and protect during the Tribulation (Revelation 7:1-8). The golden image represents the image of the Antichrist that will be set up in the rebuilt Jewish temple (Revelation 13:15). The fiery furnace represents the Great Tribulation. Daniel represents the Church, which will not be around during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 4:1).

Verses 1-7: *"Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."* Now we see King Nebuchadnezzar has made an image of gold. Whether this was a representation of his dream or of himself, we do not know for sure. It's amazing to me, how soon old Neb forgot the God of Daniel. After all, in Daniel 2:46-47, *"Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret."* How quickly he forgot!

Verses 8-13: *"Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king."* Now we see the disobedience of the Hebrew children. Were they justified in their refusal to bow down and worship the image? After all, the Bible says in Colossians 3:22 *"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:"* It also says in Hebrews

13:17 *"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."*

These verses are certainly commanding us to obey the rulers that God has placed over us. However, the Bible also clearly teaches us that we are not to obey man at the expense of obeying God. In other words, we are to obey our earthly rulers until they ask something of us that clearly violates God's commands. When that happens, we should never obey man rather God. A perfect example of this is found in Acts 5 when the apostles were told not to teach in the name of Jesus anymore by the high priest. Peter's response was, *"We ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29).

Verses 14-15: *"Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"* The King wants to give them another chance. The very fact that he is offering this second opportunity to them probably means that he had some kind of respect or relationship with them that would warrant it. It's hard to believe that he would have tolerated this from just anyone. Maybe it was because of their friendship with Daniel?

Verses 16-18: *"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."* Notice the faith. Faith is obedience even when you are unsure of the outcome! The writer of Hebrews said in Hebrews 11:6 *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*

Verse 19 *"Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated."* Notice the King's anger. He had invested a lot in these young men and was now very angered by their refusal to obey him. He obviously had some kind of fond feelings for them because he gave them a second chance, but now time was up as far as he was concerned.

Remember that I said that King Nebuchadnezzar is a type of the Antichrist, the three Hebrew children are a type of the children of Israel and the fiery furnace is a type of the Great Tribulation. The fact that the king heats the furnace up to seven times hotter speaks to the fact that the Tribulation will be worse than any plague or calamity the world has ever seen. Jesus said in Matthew 24:21, *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."*

Verses 20-25 *“And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”* We've already established that the three Hebrew children knew that God was able to protect them (v.17). However, there is application for us today. It's the perfect balance for the Christian: living the Christian life on the brink. On the one hand, we know that God can deliver us if so He chooses. On the other hand, we are determined to stand for Him even if He chooses not to deliver us.

Notice that the only things that burned were the ropes binding them. Jesus still walks with us in the midst of our crises. One of Dr. Jerry Falwell's last messages was “The Indestructibility of God's Servant.” In it, he said that the servant of God is indestructible until God is through with him. How true!

Verses 26-29: *“Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, 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.”* It's attitude adjustment time for King Nebuchadnezzar! Remember the Kings question is v.15? He asked, “*who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?*” Well, he got his answer!

The Babylonians believed in "trial by ordeal?" If you were accused of something and the punishment killed you, they presumed you were guilty. If you survived, you were presumed innocent. There survival through the “trial” spoke volumes to the king!

Verse 30: *“Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon.”* Isn't it interesting that Daniel is not even mentioned one time in this chapter? Of course, we do know that if he were there, He would never have bowed to the image, but he apparently was not. Therefore, we must conclude that he may have been away on governmental business.

How does this tie in to the end times? Remember that Daniel is a type of the church. Just as Daniel was not around during the “tribulation” that came upon the three Hebrew children, so too, the Church will not be present when the Great Tribulation comes upon the earth. Remember that the Tribulation starts in Revelation 6, but the Rapture of the Church happens in Revelation 4:1 and v.1 when it says, *“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.”*

As just a side note, the tribulation we face as Christians comes from Satan and the world that is under his control. He constantly seeks to attack us and tear us down. However, the Great Tribulation as described in Revelation 6-19 will come from God as His judgment on the world that has rejected His Son. There is a big difference.

The bottom line is that if you stand for what is right and God will take care of you. Let God do the promoting - you just be faithful.

Chapter 4

Verses 1-3: *“Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.”* Nebuchadnezzar was beginning to sound almost saved. However, we need to understand, though Neb seemed to repent and have a change of mind and attitude, we must question whether or not this change was genuine.

He reminds me of people today. They seem to have genuinely repented, but soon return to the same old pattern. How quickly they forget. The Bible says in 2 Peter 2:22, *“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”*

To repent means to have a radical change of mind and complete change of heart. No repentance, short of repentance toward God with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is genuine and real. A man may see the error of his ways, and feel bad for it, but that is not repentance. Most in prison are sorrow, but only that they got caught! Real repentance means real change!

Verses 4-9: *“I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying, O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.”* Notice that King Neb refers to Daniel as *“master of the magicians..”* It is obvious that King Neb has no spirit of discernment in him at all. If he did, he would have known that Daniel was not a magician, but a prophet of God.

I am astounded by how many people today, have no spirit of discernment. Of course, the Bible speaks of this when it says in 1 Cor 2:14 *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

We as Christians are told in 1 John 4:1, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”* and yet multitudes go about clueless. In the end, any thing or any person that tells you something that does not stack up against the Bible is not of God.

Notice also in this verse that it says, *“..the Spirit of the holy gods is in thee.”* The NKJV says *“the spirit of the Holy God.”* Which is correct? Either King Neb was recognizing the God

of Daniel or he wasn't. If the KJV is correct and Daniel had the spirit of the holy gods (pagan gods), then he would have been no better than King Neb. The NKJV is the better translation. That's a lot coming from a KJV guy like me!

Verses 10-18: *“Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.”* Now the king was looking to Daniel to give the interpretation. Hey, he had done it before. Why not now?

Verse 19: *“Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.”* I think that Daniel realized King Neb would resent the interpretation.

Verses 20-22: *“The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.”* In the Old Testament books of I Chronicles, Isaiah, Nehemiah, Ezra and now, Daniel, we read what a great monarchy Babylon was.

Verse 23: *“And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;”* Who is this "watcher"? If it God or an angel? Some defend both positions, but I really don't know. I told someone the other day that if they would have asked me that question five years ago, I would have known the answer, but today I don't. Oh, there is so much in Scripture that it completely over our mortal heads.

Of course, that's no reason not to study, but even more reason. The Bible says in 2 Tim 2:15, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" It also says in Ephesians 3:8, "*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*" and in Ephesians 3:18-19, "*May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*"

Finally, notice the stump spoke of here. This refers to King Neb himself. It implies that he will not be totally destroyed.

Verses 24-25: "*This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*" He would spend 7 years like this?

Verses 26-27: "*And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.*" Daniel is exhorting genuine repentance on the part of King Neb. Like we discussed earlier, there appeared to be a time that King Neb did come very close but he apparently lapsed again.

Verses 28-30: "*All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?*" It took King Neb twelve months to be lifted up with pride. The Bible says in Proverbs 16:18, "*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*" You see, the king thought that everything that he had belonged to him and was of his making. There is an old expression that says, "*Self-made men worship their creator.*" That is so true. John warned us in I John 2:16, "*For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world.*" It is so easy to get prideful.

Verses 31-33: "*While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.*" He was literally driven from his palace.

Verse 34: *“And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:”* This, again, looks like genuine repentance on the surface, but there is a great question in some minds. I personally think he got saved.

Verses 35-37: *“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”* What a testimony! I pray that it was real for King Nebuchadnezzar’s sake.

Chapter 5

There is a gap of perhaps 20 years between the preceding chapter and this one. King Nebuchadnezzar died and was replaced by a succession of men who were removed by their enemies. His grandson, Belshazzar, was co-ruler at this time with who is believed to be his father, Nebonidas. Cyrus, the King of the Persians and nephew of Darius (King of the Medes), was besieging Babylon. Belshazzar felt safe within the city's walls; because Babylon was extremely well-fortified and supplied with enough food and water to withstand many years of siege.

Verse 1: *“Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.”* For many years scholars doubted the book of Daniel because they could never find any one named Belshazzar. But, one day Sir Rolandson was doing some excavating around the Babylonian city and they found the name Belshazzar. Once more the archeologists spade proves the authenticity of the Bible.

In reality, he was not actually the son of Nebuchadnezzar, but grandson. History tells us that he was co-regent with his father. His father was actually king, but was away with his army fighting Medo-Persia. That's why he offered Daniel a third part of the kingdom (v.16)!

Belshazzar probably held this feast to show the lords he was confident that Babylon wouldn't fall to the enemy outside its gates.

Verses 2-6: *“Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.”* Belshazzar defiled the consecrated vessels his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple in Jerusalem. He used the vessels as wine goblets.

Notice, *“so that the joints of his loins were loosed.”* This was foretold in Isaiah 21:2-5,9, *“A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease. Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it. My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me. Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield. And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.”* It is also spoken of in Isaiah 44:28, *“That saith of Cyrus, He is my*

shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” Also in Isaiah 45:1, “Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;” Babylon was thought to be impregnable. It had a wall some three hundred feet high, eighty feet thick, with these massive towers upon it. It ran for about 15 miles. And then it had also a secondary wall, not quite as large. The river Euphrates flowed through the middle of the city. That was Babylon’s weak point.

History tells us that while everyone was in the palace getting drunk, the drunken soldiers had neglected to bolt the gates where the river entered into the city. So, Darius and his soldiers diverted the river Euphrates and came up into the city from the river. And of course, the Babylonian soldiers were too drunk to defend it. Despite, all of its elaborate fortifications, Babylon had a weakness.

Verses 7-16: “The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king’s wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished. Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.” This queen spoken of here was probably the mother of Belshazzar.

Also, Daniel was now about 90 years old. He was carried away into captivity when he was just a teenager. He was maybe 15 to 17 years of age. That would make him in his nineties as this time. He apparently had been retired for some time and wasn’t known in Belshazzar’s court. The queen-mother spoke highly of Daniel and his wisdom. He had managed to lead a pure and godly life in the pagan court of Babylon.

Verse 17: *“Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.”* The gifts of God are not for sale!

Verses 18-22: *“O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;”* Daniel was a faithful prophet, for he preached to Belshazzar before he gave the interpretation of the writing on the wall. Belshazzar knew the story of Nebuchadnezzar's pride, insanity, and conversion, he was guilty of willful defiance of God.

Verse 23: *“But hast lifted up thyself against the LORD of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:”* Here was his sin. Belshazzar's worship and love had been lavished on material things that were inanimate, and he ignored the God who sustained his life.

Notice *“the God in whose hand thy breath is.”* Paul the Apostle in talking about God to the philosophers on Mars Hill, said *“I want to declare to you the unknown the God. For in Him we live and we move and we have our being.”*

God is much closer to people than they realize. If there is anything that I see wrong in the church today is that we need to become more conscious of the presence of God. King David said in Psalm 139:7, *“...where can I flee from your presence, if I ascend in to heaven thou art there, if I descend in hell thou art there. If I take the wings and I flee to the other most parts of the earth, even there You surround me.”* God isn't confined to one area.

Verse 24-26: *“Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.”* "Mene" means "numbered". King David told us in Psalm 90:12 *“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”*

Verse 27: *“TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.”* "Tekel" means "weighed."

Verse 28: *“PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”* "U-pharsin" is the plural of "peres" which means "divided." The plural was used because Babylon was to be divided by the Medes and Persians.

Verse 29: *“Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.”* At least for the next few hours.

Verse 30: *“In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.”* So, Darius diverted the river Euphrates when the soldiers of Babylon were drunk. The drunken soldiers had neglected to bolt the gates, so Darius and his men were able to get into the city, despite all its elaborate fortifications

Verse 31: *“And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.”* "Threescore and two" is 62.

Chapter 6

Verse 1: *“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.”* In the last chapter, mighty Babylon had fallen just as the Hand of God had written on the wall and Daniel had interpreted it at Belshazzar’s feast. It’s like the old preacher once said, “He should’ve been a’fasting instead’ve a’feasting!”

History tells us that on that very same evening, October 12, 539 BC, King Cyrus and the Medo-Persian army did what no one thought could be done. They got through the walls of Babylon. These were walls that were 350 feet high, 86 feet thick and surrounded by the Euphrates River which also ran through a portion of the city. It is also said that twenty years of provisions were kept in the store houses in preparation against a possible siege. That meant that the city when under attack could merely shut the gates and wait it out.

However, none of that stopped the army of Cyrus for two reasons. First, God had already spoken through his prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah that Babylon would fall. The Prophet Jeremiah had sixty years earlier in Jeremiah 27:7-8 prophesied that Babylon would fall under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson. Also, even more incredible is that three hundred years before the fall of Babylon, it was prophesied by Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 44:28 that Cyrus would indeed be the king that would be raised up by God to bring this judgment on Babylon. Second, in Isaiah 45:1-3, the Lord tells exactly how Cyrus would do it. In Isaiah 45:1 it says, *“Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;”* Both of these things happened. In Daniel 5:6, it says that the when Belshazzar saw the Hand of God, that his *“countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another”*. Also, on October 13, 539 BC, the armies of the Medes and the Persians diverted the Euphrates River so that the river beds that flowed through the city dried up and allowed the armies to crawl under the walls of the city through the water gates. Babylon fell that very same night.

Before moving to the next verse, another interesting tidbit is presented here with the introduction of Darius. There are basically two views as to who Darius was. First, some conclude that Darius was another name for Cyrus. This is pointed out by looking at v.28 which says, *“So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, **and** in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”* However, some would argue that it should read, *“So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Daruis, **even** in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”* Thus, some conclude, they are the same man. The second view is that they were not one and the same person but Darius was simply someone who Cyrus put in charge of Babylon before heading back to Persia.

Verses 2-3: *“And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”* These verses tell us that the king had set up 120

princes or satraps to rule over the kingdom. Over these, the king placed three presidents of whom Daniel was preferred.

That is quite amazing that Darius would choose someone out of the “old administration” to oversee his newly conquered territory. The only reason given is that “*an excellent spirit was in him.*” In other words, Darius saw something special in Daniel.

Verse 4: “*Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.*” Now we see the jealousy that ensued from the other presidents and princes. Their motivation could have been fear. There is no doubt that Daniel’s reputation had preceded him. Surely, if Daniel could reveal dreams, he might be able to see their dreams as well. That could be a scary thought for all of us!

Verses 5-9: “*Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.*” Here we see the old “oh king live forever” trick. They knew that they could not trap Daniel in any other way but “*concerning the law of his God.*” They must have known that he prayed three times every day and that it was the only way that they could trap him. Of course, they appealed to Darius’ flesh to get him to sign the degree. The Bible makes it very clear that we should always beware of flattery. The writer of the Proverbs wrote: “*A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet*” (Proverbs 29:5).

Verse 10: “*Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*” No fear there! Daniel had to have known what they were doing, but clearly showed no fear. As an elderly man by this time, Daniel knew from whence came his favor! It’s been said that the best way to stop knocking knees is to kneel; and that is just exactly what Daniel did.

Daniel, no doubt, knew of the prayer of dedication that King Solomon made when the temple was first built in 1 Kings 8. Solomon said, “*...hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, **when they shall pray toward this place:** and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive...What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands **toward this house:** Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;” (I Kings 8:30, 38-39).*

On a final note, notice that Daniel prayed three times every day. Now I don't think that means that those were the only times that Daniel prayed but those were three times that he went into his chamber and prayed toward Jerusalem as King Solomon had told them to do in 1 Kings 8. However, he also probably knew that King David had written in Psalm 55:16-17, "*As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.*"

Verses 11-16: "*Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.*" There is no doubt that at this point the king had realized that he had been had! These guys had appealed to his pride and set him up. Thus, he immediately goes about trying to get Daniel off the hook, but to no avail. He was bound by the very law that he himself had made.

Notice his final comment to Daniel, "*Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.*" I cannot help but think that this was more wishful thinking than anything on the king's part. After all, he had spent the entire day trying to deliver Daniel himself. Sounds like a lot of Christians I know (sometimes me as well). God becomes the last resort. May that never be so in our lives.

Verses 17-23: "*And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.*" Wow! Notice Daniel's cool response. He simply honored the king. This was true honor, not the "old king live forever" trick that the other guys had played on the king.

Notice that Daniel says that *“God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lion’s mouths.”* Who was this angel? He was the same angel that was in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego! I believe that it was Jesus Christ Himself. It was a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord in the Old Testament.

In chapter three when the three Hebrew children were cast into the fiery furnace, we were asking, “Where was Daniel?” Here in chapter six, we could ask, “Where were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?” The answer is the same. We simply do not know. I look at it this way. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had their chance to stand up for God in chapter three and Daniel had his chance here in chapter six. Guess what? I believe that we’ll all get this chance some day, if not already.

Verse 24: *“And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.”* There are a few things that I glean from this verse. First, the king probably had their entire families thrown into the den of lions out of fear of retribution. Second, it was the oriental custom of the day that the entire family pays for the crime of the father. Third, a spiritual application, our sins affect our entire family and not just us alone.

Verses 25-28: *“Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”*

Well, the king was certainly impressed with Daniel’s deliverance. However, there is still no indication from this that the king placed the God of Daniel over the other gods of Medo-Persia. Only God knows what kind of life transformation might have occurred at this point in King Darius’ life. Either way, God certainly used this situation to bring future blessings upon Daniel for his faithfulness to Him.

Chapter 7

Verse 1: *“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.”* Chapters 7 through 12 are visions which Daniel had; in chronology, the events of chapters 7 and 8 belong between chapters 4 and 5; what happens in chapter 9 happens about at the same time as chapter 6; and the visions of 10-12 take place after the events of chapter 6.

The first of the four visions of chapters 7-12 is the most comprehensive; the other three visions deal with aspects of this first vision. Daniel could have given us more detail; but the Holy Spirit only wanted him to write the main facts - though we might have wanted to know more detail!

Verses 2-3: *“Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.”* Here we see the origin of the four beasts. The Great Sea is most likely the Mediterranean; "To the Hebrews the sea was both dangerous and mysterious, a restless element but not beyond the Lord's power to tame" (Baldwin).

The sea is also sometimes used as a picture of Gentile nations (Psalm 74:13, 89:9; Isaiah 57:20). Also, every one of the empires that will be mentioned by Daniel bordered on the Mediterranean Sea. Some see the winds as a picture of the sovereign power of God striving with men (Psalm 35:5; 48:7; 107:25; Isaiah 27:8; 41:16). While others suggest the four winds to be satanic forces, as mentioned by Revelation 7:1. Either way, here we see four great beasts (large, ferocious animals) emerge; each one is distinct from the other. "The lion devours, the bear crushes, and the leopard springs upon its prey."

Verse 4: *“The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.”* The first beast: a lion with eagle's wings. This beast is quite majestic (lions and eagles are "kings" of their realms); but it is both humbled and "humanized".

Verse 5: *“And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.”* The second beast: a bear. The bear is much less majestic; it is slow, ponderous, and crushing. This one is imbalanced in some way; and it has a voracious appetite for conquest.

Verse 6: *“After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.”* The third beast: a leopard. A leopard is known for its sudden, unexpected attacks; this one is especially swift (with four wings), and has four heads.

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

before it; and it had ten horns." Notice that these fourth beast was very different from the rest before it.

Notice, "*and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it.*" There is no doubt that this is the Roman Empire. Rome ruled the world from 150 BC until around 450 AD.

But how was Rome different from the others before it? They ruled the entire known world too. However, there are two reasons that Rome was different. First, their military might was unsurpassed by any nation before it. Second, Rome not only ruled physically over the nations but also came to rule over them spiritually as well through the Roman Catholic Church.

In many respects, Rome still rules the world to this day! Not physically, but spiritually. Do you remember the statue of King Nebuchadnezzar? The legs of iron were Rome. Bear in mind that there are two of them. That is significant. There were also two arms which represented the Media and the Persian Empire who united into one to conquer Babylon. The two legs of Rome represent Eastern Rome with Constantinople and Western Rome with Rome and Italy.

And then the ten toes indicate a further split in the empire, but it never ceased to exist. It's unbelievable that God gave this revelation to Daniel around 600 BC. That was almost 400 years before Rome even became a world empire!

Just a note, "What is the age of times of the Gentiles?" It began with the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of Babylon in 600 BC and came to an end with the regathering of Israel in 1948. That was 2500 years. No other people group in the world has survived that long and maintained their national identity.

In the culture that I live in presently in the Rio Grande Valley, I see just how remarkable Israel's ability to stay separated really was. Here in the Valley, I see on a daily basis how Mexicans become a part of American society and actually lose their national identity in only three generations. For example, a Mexican couple crosses the border. Normally, both of them speak Spanish only. However, their kids (usually as a result of the public school system) will be bilingual because they will speak Spanish in the home and English in the school. By the time the third generation comes along, English is spoken in the school as well as the home. Usually this third generation doesn't speak enough Spanish to even communicate with their grandparents! What happened? In only three generations, they have been homogenized into American society. Not so with the Jews!

Notice the horns spoken of here, "*and it had ten horns.*" Remember the statue of Nebuchadnezzar again? The ten toes of chapter 2 and the ten horns here in chapter 7 are one and the same. They represent the Revived Roman Empire that will arise from the ashes of the old Roman Empire in the last days before Christ's return.

These ten horns are also seen in the book of Revelation on all three within the Satanic Trinity. Satan has them in Revelation 12:3, "*And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his*

heads.” Antichrist has them in Revelation 13:1, “*And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*” The False Prophet has them in Revelation 17:3, “*So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*”

Verse 8: “*I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.*” This is the Antichrist! Paul calls him the Son of Perdition and the Man of Sin and the Son of Perdition in II Thessalonians 2:3, “*Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*”

This verse is apparently implying that the Antichrist is going to have to fight three of the 10 kingdoms to gain control of the remaining seven.

Notice that he has a mouth “*speaking great things.*” We also see this same description of the Antichrist in Revelation 13:1-6.

Verses 9-10: “*I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*” This is the Lord of Glory. The Son of God: Jesus.

The similarity between the description of the Ancient of Days here and the Son of God in Revelation 19 is apparent. See also Isaiah 63:1-3.

Verse 11: “*I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.*” This is the same horn spoken of in v.8. By the way, the beast and the little horn of verse 8 and the horn of verse 11 are one and the same.

Verses 12-14: “*As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*” “*As concerning the rest of the beasts...*” refers to the ten horns of verse 8. The Lord's kingdom will be the final kingdom which will never pass away. It is the last of all kingdoms.

Did you know that the Lord has promised us that we too shall rule and reign with Him in this kingdom? Revelation 1:6 says, “*and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*” What a tremendous hope.

Verse 15: *“I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.”* His dreams troubled him. Can imagine being Daniel or John and trying to take in all of this information?

Verse 16: *“I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.”* Now we get the interpretation of Daniel’s dream.

Verse 17: *“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.”* These kings are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

Verse 18: *“But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.”* This will happen at the Second Coming of Christ in Revelation 19.

Verse 19: *“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;”* Daniel was still interested in the fourth kingdom.

Verses 20-28: *“And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.”*

Chapter 8

Bear in mind that verses 1-14 are the dream, verses 15-25 are the interpretation and verses 26-27 are Daniel's response to the dream.

Verse 1: *"In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first."* Of the course, the one at the first was the one we studied in chapter 7.

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

Verses 3-14: *"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had there seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."* I went ahead and just read through all of these verses with no explanation because they are explained in detail in verses 20-27.

Verse 15: *"And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man."* This is probably just another angel or it may be the Lord Jesus. We can't be dogmatic.

Verse 16: *"And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision."* Only three angels are mentioned in the Bible by name, Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer. 1. Gabriel seems to be especially chosen to send

messages (cf. 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26). Michael seems to be a warrior (cf. 10:10-13; Jude 9). And last but not least, Lucifer who was the worship leader in Heaven before his fall (Isaiah 14:10-12).

Verse 17: *“So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.”* Notice the fear of Daniel? When I read this verse, I think of John in Revelation 1:17 where it says, *“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:”*

Notice, *“for the time of the end shall be the vision.”* Gabriel is projecting these prophecies all the way down to the *“time of the end.”* If we understand the book of Daniel, a great part of it has to do with the Gentile age and very little in regards to the Jew. His prophecies begin in 600 BC with the birth of Babylon and according to this verse all the way to the end. Of course, we’ve seen that the visions of Daniel confirm this...from the vision of the statue with Neb, the four beasts, to the vision of the ram and the goat.

Verses 18-19: *“Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.”* So, here we see that Gabriel is going to let Daniel know what is going to happen at the end of the time of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24; Rev. 16:14).

Notice, *“for at the time appointed...”* Believe it or not, God already has this thing worked out. God already has the dates set! Luke spoke of this in Acts 1:7 when he said, *“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”*

Verse 20: *“The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.”* The two kings of Media and Persia are Darius and Cyrus respectfully (cf. 3).

Verse 21: *“And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.”* The *“rough goat”* is Greece and the *“great horn that is between his eyes is the fist king”* is Alexander the Great (cf. vv.4-7).

Verse 22: *“Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.”* That great horn between his eyes that is broken is Alexander the Great.

Notice that *“Four stood up for it...”* This is speaking of the four generals Alexander appointed over his kingdom (cf. v.8). Cassander took Macedonia. Lysimachus took Thrace and much of Asia Minor. Seleucus took Syria and Ptolemy took Egypt. However, none of them was ever as powerful as Alexander.

Verses 23-25: *“And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy*

also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." Notice, *"In the latter time of their kingdom."* This is referring to the "four" that "stood up" in the previous verse: Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. However, pay special attention to this *"king of fierce countenance"* that will stand up. Notice the power that he is going to have not only over nations but also over God's people: namely the Jew. This prophecy was primarily fulfilled with Antiochus Epiphanes who rose up out of Syria. However, the ultimate fulfillment of this is the Antichrist.

We initially saw him coming out of Greece in vv.9-12. He rose to power around 175 BC. He plundered the temple in Jerusalem and desecrated it by offering pig's flesh on the altar. He furthermore, made an edict that all in his empire would practice the same religion. Of course, the Jews refused to do this and it led to him ultimately coming to Jerusalem and erecting a statue of the Greek God Zeus in the Temple and forcing the Jews to worship it or be killed. However, this led to a Jewish rebellion that would come to be known as the Maccabean Revolt that is recorded in the Apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees.

The act of offering the pigs flesh on the altar by Antiochus is also referred to by the Jews as the Abomination of Desolation. However, Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew that it will happen again when he said in Matthew 24:15, *"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"*

This future event is also described in the Revelation 13:14-15 where it says, *"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."*

Notice also in verse 23 it says, *"...when the transgressors are come to the full..."* In other words, when the time of the Gentile rule is over or fulfilled. This has to be fulfilled in the end, because there is still transgression today. It did not stop with Antiochus that's for sure.

Notice, *"he shall destroy the mighty and the holy people"* in v.24. Now, of course, this is speaking to the destruction and carnage caused by Antiochus, but it also refers to the future destruction and carnage that will be brought on by the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation (cf. Rev. 6:1-11).

Notice in verse 25 that it says that *"he shall cause craft (deceit/witchcraft) to prosper"*. In other words, the Antichrist will use his power to deceive the people during the Tribulation period. Paul warned of this in II Thessalonians 2:8-11, *"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because*

they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:”

Notice that *“he shall stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.”* This cannot be referring to Antiochus, but to the Antichrist who will indeed try to stand up to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is foretold in Revelation 19:19-21 where it says, *“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”* We see the result of this bold but foolish action in Revelation 20:1-3, 10!

Chapter 9

Before we look at Daniel's prayer, I'm reminded of the story I heard years ago about a little girl and her mother. Every night this mother would kneel on the floor with her little 4 year old to pray. And then one night the little girl asked if she could pray. The mother consented and the little girl began to pray. The more she prayed the softer and softer her little voice became, until her mother could no longer hear her speaking. And then finally the little girl said, "Amen!" The mom said, "Honey, I didn't hear a word you said." The little girl answered, "Mama, I wasn't talking to you." Oh, that we could grasp the true sense of prayer like this little girl.

Unfortunately, we many times turn prayer into a public display of spirituality which is exactly what Jesus told us it should not be in Matthew 6:6, "*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*"

Verse 1: "*In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;*" The first year of Darius would have been the year 538 BC.

Verse 2: "*In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.*" Daniel apparently was a student of Scripture and had been studying the book of Jeremiah. After all, Paul admonished all of us to be in the Word in 2 Timothy 2:15 when he said, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

There are two texts from the book of Jeremiah that Daniel was obviously referring to. The first was Jeremiah 25:11-12 which says, "*And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.*" And Jeremiah 29:10-11 which says, "*For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*"

From the two texts, Daniel was able to determine that Israel was close to being allowed to go back to their homeland. It was simply a matter of mathematics. History tells us that Israel had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BC which means they had been in captivity for 67 years at this time (605 - 538 = 67). That meant that they only had three more years to go! By this, Daniel knew this and understood that their captivity was almost over.

You know, something that amazes me is that Daniel just opened up his Bible.....read Jeremiah 25:11.....and believed it. Can you believe it? He took it literally! Why is it that "Bible Scholars" of our day can't seem to do this? They make every excuse under the sun not to take something at face value from the Bible. "Well, he didn't mean 70 years....maybe God was

speaking in a metaphorical sense." Well you know, in the original Greek...." Why can't we just open up the Bible and take it at face value like Daniel did? It reminds me of Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California who always admonishes pastors to read more and talk less. Sometimes we pastors forget that it's His words that are promised to never return void and not our own (Isaiah 55:11)!"

John the Apostle wrote in 1 John, *"I write these things that you may know..."* We need to stop second guessing God. It's like the old preacher once said, "Where God has put a period, don't change it to a question mark!" God has not, and never has been, in the business of confusing people. The Bible says in I Corinthians 14:33 that *"God is not the author of confusion..."* Our confusion is many times the direct result of our arrogance. It reminds me of a young man who had just received his degree from college and he rushed out in the street and said, "Here I am, world; I have a B.A. degree when someone replied, "Good, now the world can teach you the rest of the alphabet."

One question that must be addressed in this discussion is, "Why 70 years of captivity?" The answer is found throughout the book of Leviticus. Leviticus 25:1-7 states, *"And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat."* He further told them in Leviticus 25:20-22, *"And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store."*

God had commanded the people to work the land for six years, but in the seventh, he asked that they let the land rest. This was for two reasons. The first one was spiritual and the second physical. First, God wanted the people to trust him in the seventh year to meet their needs. That was going to take great faith on the part of God's people. Second, the land needed time to rest in order to replenish itself with the necessary nutrients to produce bountiful crops.

You would think that this would have been an easy and fulfillable request by God. After all, many of the generation that he was speaking to had firsthand accounts of God's mighty hand at work on their behalf on both sides of the Jordan River. However, there is one thing that I have found in my years of study; the two most faithless generations of people found in the Bible where those who lived during the Exodus in the Old Testament and those who lived during the lifetime of Jesus in the New Testament. That's amazing to me because those two generations received and saw more miracles than any generation before or after them and yet they still struggled at believing the promises of God.

In the end, it tells me that signs, wonders and miracles do not increase a man's faith. Look around at those in the prosperity movement today. They are some of the most carnal people I've ever met. Why? – because the demand for signs, wonders and miracles are a testimony to their lack of faith. Remember that faith is a prerequisite for pleasing God (Hebrews 11:6).

The generation in which you and I live today reminds me of the ones that came to Jesus in Matthew 12:38-40 and said, "...*Master, we would see a sign from thee*" and Jesus answered "*An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*" Again, they seek signs because they lack faith!

So, the Israelites had a hard time believing God when he said that he would indeed supply their needs in the seventh year. The end-result of that lack of faith was seventy years of expulsion from the land in order for the land to rest. God certainly has a way of getting his in the end. It says in 2 Chronicles 36:20-21, "*And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years (70 years).*"

There is a principle here that you and I must come to grips with as well. God's expectation is that we trust Him! When we trust Him, He brings about blessing. When we fail to trust Him, He brings about cursing. Deuteronomy 30:19 says, "*I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;*" From this verse we see that the blessing or lack thereof is entirely dependant upon how much we trust Him.

I can think of no greater area than money in which we struggle to trust Him. Malachi 3:10-11 says, "*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.*" God promises blessings for obedience! But if we choose not to trust him, the Bible says in Haggai 1:6-7, "*You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.*" Thus says the LORD of hosts: "*Consider your ways!*" We must learn how to trust God! Also, read Deuteronomy 28. You see, the world says, "Show me and I'll believe you!" God says, "Believe me and I'll show you!"

Verse 3: "*And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:*" So, here is the scene. Daniel knows that the 70 years are almost completed. So, he begins to seek God on behalf of Israel. I'm sure that Daniel was

thinking about how that God had told him about the future of the gentile nations, so why wouldn't he tell him about Israel.

Something else that can be learned from this is that Daniel was at least 90 years old at this time and he was still serving the Lord. We never get too old to serve God. I've said many times that we spend our young life telling God that we're simply too busy and our old life telling him that we've already done our part and need a rest.

Notice, that it says that he was *"fasting with sackcloth, and ashes."* This was the Jews' way of showing God that they were sincere.

Verses 4-5: *"And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:"* Did you notice that Daniel identifies with his nation when he says, *"we have sinned..."*

It's been said that an honest confession will always bring about deliverance. That is so true. It reminds me of what an old First Sergeant in the Marine Corps told me one time, "If you have a good excuse, don't use it and the only thing worse than failure is trying to excuse it." In the end, any attempt to justify ourselves and defend our actions, will get us nowhere with God. But, if we will be honest with Him, He will open the doors of mercy, grace, and forgiveness. God knows who we are.....He just wants to make sure that we know who we are.

Verses 6-7: *"Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee."* In these verses, Daniel confesses that God had kept his part of the agreement, but that the Jews had not. You see, some of God's covenants with us are conditioned on us keeping our side of the bargain.

Verses 8-11: *"O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him."* Here Daniel is acknowledging that God's judgment of the Jews was righteous. God's judgments are always righteous.

Verses 12-13: *"And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from*

our iniquities, and understand thy truth." The Jews were and still are God's chosen people. And as such, they were under a greater responsibility to obey Him...even more so than those who were not.

The Bible says in Luke 12:48, *"But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."* The bottom line is that God holds those of us who know the truth more accountable than those who do not.

Verse 14: *"Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice."* Proverbs 28:13 says, *"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."*

Verses 15-19: *"And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. 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."* Notice that Daniel did not base his request on man's righteousness or goodness, but on God's mercy. Lamentations 3:22 says, *"Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not."*

Verses 20-21: *"And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation."* Now Daniel is interrupted by an angel. This angel introduces himself as Gabriel. The Bible mentions three angels by name; Gabriel, Michael and Lucifer.

Verse 22: *"And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding."* God wants us to understand. Jesus Himself said that Daniel is the key to understanding end time in Matthew 24:15 when he said, *"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"*

Verse 23: *"At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."* Oh, that we would be so set on doing God's will that He would call us *"greatly beloved."*

Notice, "*at the beginning of your supplications the command went out,*" God always answers our prayers the moment we pray them. The answer is yes, no, or wait! Why? Because we are greatly beloved! No one should doubt for a minute that they are not loved! The Bible says that you are loved with an everlasting love! God loves you so much that He gave His only Son to die in your place.

Verse 24: "*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*" Notice the "seventy weeks". This means literally seventy week of sevens. In our European culture we use as our smallest measure of years in decades. That's because we think in groups of ten. The Jews, however, think in Sevens; or what they call heptaths.

So, here we see seventy weeks of seven. Seventy weeks of seven equals a total of 490 years. In other words, this entire prophecy will be fulfilled in a total 490 years. During that 490 year period, we are told that six things will happen. They are listed as follows: finish the transgression, make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy (or Holy Place). The first three were fulfilled in Christ on the cross at His first coming and the last three will be fulfilled by Christ at His second coming in Revelation 19.

Verse 25: "*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*" Notice, "*from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem.*" Both secular and biblical history, tells us that the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem came in 445 BC. It was given at the hand of King Artaxerxes of Medo-Persian Empire at the request of a cupbearer named Nehemiah. We see the account in Nehemiah 2:1-6 where it says, "*And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.*" As a matter of fact, according to recent archeological findings of the official court records by Sir Rolandson in the palace of Shushan, we not only know that this happened in 445 BC, but that it happened on March 14, 445 BC!

Now notice this, "*that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem* (bear in mind that we already know that the commandment came on March 14, 445

BC) *until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.*" Here is another math problem for us to solve. Seven weeks and sixty-two weeks equals 69 ($7 + 62 = 69$) or 483 years.

You and I are looking at one of the greatest prophecies in the Bible. This prophecy literally sets the date when the Messiah will come! It tells us that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah will be 483 years! Are you still tracking me? I hope so!

Now, immediately you and I are tempted to think and add using a Julian calendar that has 365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days on it. That would be a mistake because the Julian calendar was not in use in 538 BC when Daniel wrote this. At that time, the world used the Babylonian calendar which only had 360 days. So, when looking at the prophecy we must look at it in the context in which it was written; Babylon.

The prophecy is simply easier to look at in days instead of years. So, using the Babylonian Calendar, if we were to take 483 years and multiply them times 360, we would get 173,880 days. If we were to add 173,880 days to March 14, 445 BC we would arrive at April 6, 32 AD!

On April 6, 32 AD, Jesus was sitting with his disciples on the Mount of Olives. At that point, according to Luke 19:30-31, Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "*Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, because the Lord hath need of him.*" This was a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; he is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.*"

Verse 26: "*And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*" Notice, "*and after threescore and two weeks*". It actually means "after the seven weeks and threescore and two weeks that were mentioned in v.25." Mathematically that means, $7 + 62$ which equals 69. In years that would be 69×7 which equals 483. Here again, it says that after the commandment to restore and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem until the Messiah would come would be 483 years and then he (the Messiah) would be "cut off." This was a prophecy that the Messiah would be rejected and ultimately crucified.

And sure enough, the same crowd that yelled, "*Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest*" in Matthew 21:9, on April 6, 32 A.D., as Jesus came through the Eastern Gate riding upon a donkey, yelled "Let him be crucified" and "His blood *be* on us, and on our children (Matthew 27:22-25).

Notice, "*but not for Himself.*" Jesus did not do it for Himself. Instead, He did it for you and me! Remember when Jesus prayed in the garden in Matthew 26:39 and said, "*O my Father,*

if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt?" His Father's answer was given in the kiss of betrayal that came from the lips of Judas Iscariot. There was no other way to secure man's eternal salvation but through His death on the cross.

Notice, *"And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."* There is a difference between the *"Prince"* in v.25 and *"prince"* here. The *"prince"* spoken of here was the Roman General Titus who destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple to the ground in 70 AD. It's also interesting that his father was none other than Vespasian who was crowned emperor of Rome just prior to Titus entering into Jerusalem fulfilling the *"prince"* portion of this prophecy.

Jesus spoke of this prophecy in Luke 19:41-44 when he said, *"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."* That prophecy was first delivered here in Daniel, reiterated by Jesus in Luke, and fulfilled in 70 AD by Titus!

Note in Luke 19:44 that Jesus said, *"and they will not leave in you one stone upon another,"* History tells us that as Titus and his army stood outside of Jerusalem; he warned them not to destroy Solomon's Temple. However, as his army sacked the city, a torch was inadvertently thrown into the temple and it burned to the ground. As it did, the gold that inlaid on the walls of the temple melted and ran down in between the joints of the blocks. Thus the soldiers, in their frenzy of greed, took the time to pull each and every stone apart in an effort to claim it; fulfilling Jesus' prophecy!

And then finally, *"The end of it shall be with a flood, and the end of the war desolation are determined."* The end of the nation came and the Jews were dispersed, not to be regathered until 1948. Throughout the history of the Jews, they have been a people that have been hated and plagued by wars and desolations wherever they went. And still to this day, the Jewish people and Israel are very controversial.

Verse 27: *"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."* Before we get into this verse, we must understand that there is a huge gap of time between v.26 and v.27. Why? God had told Daniel that there were 490 years determined for Daniel and the Jews. However, the clock stopped at 483 years because of the rejection of the Messiah as prophesied in v.26. In other words, with the rejection of Jesus, the plan was temporarily derailed, if you will. Of course, it was fully within the foreknowledge and will of God.

The world rejected the peace and the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus came to offer them by rejecting Jesus and instead opting to put Him on a cross. Thus the clock stopped and that left

exactly seven years that are yet to be fulfilled. We call this the 70th Week of Daniel or the Tribulation.

So what happened when the clock stopped at 483 years with the rejection of Jesus? It ushered in what we call the Times of the Gentiles. This time runs from the time of the rejection to the time of the Rapture of the Church in Revelation 4:1. It is also referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:5-11.

So, in affect, God has temporarily stopped dealing with Israel and has begun to focus His attention on the Gentiles. Jesus alluded to this when he said in John 10:16 *"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."*

Well, it's been 2000 years since the clock stopped and it could start ticking any moment now. We know that the Rapture is close because the last major prophecy to take place before the rapture is the re-gathering of Israel back into her homeland. This is prophesied in Jeremiah 23:7-8 when he said, *"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land."*

Also, notice the "he" that is referred to in this verse. Who is this "he"? The "he" in this verse is not referring to the "prince" in verse 26, nor the "Prince" in verse 25. The "he" referred to here is the Antichrist who will confirm a covenant with the Jewish people at the beginning of the Tribulation period which is described in the book of the Revelation.

The Bible says that the Antichrist will arise as a great European leader who will arise from the ten nations that Daniel talked about in chapter 2. The same demon that controlled Titus will control the Antichrist. This antichrist is spoken of in Revelation 13:1-3. When this man is revealed, the seventieth seven will begin.

To kick this last week off, the Antichrist will make or confirm a covenant with Israel. What kind of a covenant? This covenant in v.27 is similar to the covenant that God made with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 when He said, *"...Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."*

The Antichrist will confirm a covenant in relation to the land, the covenant land, the Promised Land, the land of Israel (Gen. 13:14-17; Deut 11:22-25). As you may remember, the Jews never were able to take God up on this offer because of their unbelief. They were not in the land very long until they had compromised. They failed to do what He had requested of them through unbelief.

How many of us have not taken God up on His offer of blessing by our unbelief? “You call me Master and obey me not; You call me Light and see me not; You call me Way and walk not; You call me Life and desire me not; You call me Wise and follow me not; You call me Fair and love me not; You call me Rich and ask me not; You call me Eternal and seek me not; You call me Gracious and trust me not; You call me Noble and serve me not; You call me Mighty and honor me not; You call me Just and fear me not; If I condemn you BLAME ME not!”

So, what’s the application for you and me today? What has God asked us to do as a church? Have we been obedient? What has God asked you to do as His child? Have you been obedient? Deuteronomy 30:19 says, *“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”*

Back to the covenant that the Antichrist will make with Israel during this time will be reconfirmed to Israel, not by God, but by the Antichrist,...the counterfeit messiah, the antichrist, the son of perdition, the man of sin. The Antichrist will become their great champion, their deliverer. They will all say *“Who is like unto the beast, and who is able to make war with him?”* (Rev. 13:4)

The Antichrist in this covenant will agree to protect Israel from all of her enemies that are determined to destroy her. The Antichrist will ensure that no one bothers them. They will have a period of undisturbed peace, in their promised land. In essence, the Antichrist will become everything to the Jewish nation that Jesus was not.

It will be also during this time that the Antichrist will allow them to rebuild the temple as described in Ezekiel 40-48. However, there is a problem, it is commonly believed that the original site of Solomon’s temple is beneath the Dome of the Rock Mosque. It would have to be moved, one way or another. However, recent archeological discoveries have led many to believe that the original site of Solomon’s temple and it’s Holy of Holies is not beneath the Dome of the Rock, but the Dome of the Spirits which is just to the side of it.

There is a verse in Ezekiel that for years confused teachers of the Bible that, in light of this new discovery makes sense. It says, *“He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.* (Ezekiel 42:20).

I believe that the rebuilding of this temple will be the crowning achievement of the Antichrist. He will appease both the children of Ishmael and Isaac.

Notice, *“and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate...”* The Bible says that in the middle of the covenant that the Antichrist makes with the Jews, he will break it by putting a stop to the daily sacrifices and prayers in the rebuilt temple. This occurs at the midpoint of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:15-22). It is also spoken of in II Thessalonians 2:4, *“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”*

Chapter 10

Verse 1: *“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.”* Notice, *“...but the time appointed was long:...”* Many of the things that Daniel prophesied would not take place for years to come. Many of them still have not taken place yet.

Verses 2-3: *“In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.”* Notice, *“I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth,...”* I lot of people really get confused when it comes to the issue of fasting...like it's not biblical or something. Or that it is something that only "charismatics" do. But it's biblical!

It says in Matthew 9:14-15, *“Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.”*

Verses 4-6: *“And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.”* I believe that it is safe to say that this is a theophany. A theophany is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

We see a similar description of Him in Revelation 1:13-15 where it says, *“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.”*

Verse 7: *“And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.”* Sounds like the experience of Paul on the Damascus road in Acts 9:1-7, *“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.”*

Verses 8-9: *“Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.”* Daniel had once again come into the very presence of God. His response was to drop. God’s holiness invokes feelings (and rightly so) of inferiority. Take a look at Isaiah 5:8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22, 6:1-5 where the same happened.

Verses 10-12: *“And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.”* Notice, *“...and to chasten thyself...”* This refers to Daniel’s fasting as a reason for God answering his prayer. Remember that it was the prayers of Daniel that brought the angel in the first place (8:18).

Notice also in v.12 that *“...words were heard, and I am come for thy words.”* I think the reason, that we don’t see more of the power of God, is that God’s people are not asking for it. We’re too busy with own Christmas lists. The Bible says that the *“prayers of a righteous man availeth much.”* James 4:3 tells us, *“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”*

Verse 13: *“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.”* Notice that a demon called the “prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood this messenger that was dispatched to Daniel. This should not surprise us at all. The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:12, *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

The battles that we fight in this life are not against other human being. Oh, many times, in our flesh, we try to put a face on our enemy. It may be our pastors, church members, family members, friend, etc...but ultimately, we are fighting the Devil. He is indeed the God of this world and we would do well not to forget it.

It reminds me of when the Devil took Jesus up to the pinnacle of the mountain and Luke 4:5-7 and *“shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.”* He then said to him, *“All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.”* How could the Devil have made such an offer? We have to remember that when God created the heavens and the earth and man, he gave man dominion over the earth...however, when he sinned...that dominion was apparently turned over to Satan. So, just as there was and is still a prince of Persia, there is no doubt a prince over where each of us live as well!

Verses 14-20: *“Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. And when he had spoken such words unto me,*

I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.” Notice, “...and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come...” So, with the fall of the Medo-Persian empire game Greece led by none other than Alexander the Great. Greece was the third world empire and like others before and after it, there is a demon setting at the helm.

Verse 21: *“But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.” Notice, “...and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.” It’s interesting that in Scripture every time we see Michael, he is in a fight. That is apparently his job description. Just as Gabriel is the proclamation or messenger angel, and Lucifer was the worshipping angel, so Michael is the warring angel.*

We will see him fighting for Israel in Daniel 12:1, *“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”* We also see him engaged in conflict in Jude 1:9 *“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”* And then finally, we see him going at it again in Revelation 12:7-8, *“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.”*

Chapter 11

Verses 1-2: *“Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.”* Notice, *“yet three kings in Persia.”* There were three kings that followed Darius. These were Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, and then Darius I Hystaspes (also called Darius the Great) and the fourth referred to here was Xerxes or Ahasuerus who is spoken of in the book of Esther.

Verse 3: *“And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.”* This might king is Alexander the Great of Greece (10:20).

Notice, *“and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity.”* In other words, Alexander had no heir. Therefore his kingdom was divided among four of his generals. They were, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy (8:8). Cassander took Macedonia, Lysimachus took Thrace and much of Asia Minor, Seleucus took Syria, and Ptolemy took Egypt

Now, vv.5-20 deals with two of these generals; specifically Seleucus of Syria and Ptolemy of Egypt.

Verse 4-5: *“And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those. And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.”* Notice *“the king of the south”*. This is referring to Ptolomies of Egypt.

Verse 6: *“And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.”* This speaks of a time when Ptolemy I of Egypt gave his daughter to Antiochus of Syria in a peace agreement.

Notice, *“but she shall not remain the power of the arm.”* History also tells us that shortly after this arrangement Antiochus was murdered.

Verse 7: *“But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail.”* These speaks of when Ptolemy III invaded Syria in 246 BC.

Verses 8-14: *“And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north. So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own*

land. But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress. And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand. And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it. For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches. And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.” This is just a description of the many wars that were fought between these two empires.

Verses 15-20: “So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand. But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed. He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him. After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found. Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.” This is speaking of Antichus III who defeated the Egyptian army. And it included the giving away of a daughter again to Ptolemy IV (v.17).

Verses 21-35: “And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time. And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed. Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land. At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall

stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.” Now we come to a personality that we should all be familiar with, Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus had made several attempts to defeat Egypt and then turned in anger of the Jews (v.28). In his route of the Jewish city he set up a statue of Zeus to be worshipped (v.31). Those who resisted were simply killed (vv.32-33). He is indeed a type of the Antichrist.

Verses 36-45: *“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”* Now the passage takes a turn and is no longer speaking of Antiochus, but the Antichrist.

Chapter 12

Verse 1: *“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”* Notice *“at that time”*. What time is being referred to in this verse? It’s the time of the end which will occur in the Tribulation when the Antichrist is being defeated.

Notice also *“shall Michael stand up”*. As we have discussed before, Michael’s name means *“who is like God”* and he is one of three archangels that are mentioned in the Bible. He is called an archangel in Jude 9 when it says, *“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”* The other two archangels mentioned in Scripture are Gabriel and Lucifer. However, Michael appears to be a special guardian of the affairs of Israel. We see a glimpse of this in Daniel 10:13 when it says, *“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.”*

Notice also *“and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.”* Jesus spoke of this time in Matthew 24:21 when he said, *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”*

Notice *“every one that shall be found written in the book.”* This book is mentioned in Revelation 20:15 when it says, *“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

Verse 2: *“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”* These two verses speak of two resurrections. One resurrection will be to eternal life and the other will be to shame and everlasting contempt. The word resurrection means *“a rising from the dead or coming back to life.”*

We see in the Bible that even the Old Testament patriarchs believed in the resurrection. In Genesis 22:5 Abraham said to his servants, *“...Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.”* He apparently felt that God would raise him from the dead after he had sacrificed him.

The writer of Hebrews speaks to this event with Abraham when he said in Hebrews 11:17-19, *“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”*

We also see that the prophets foretold it. Isaiah said in Isaiah 26:19 *"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."* Also, Hosea said in Hosea 13:14 *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."*

As a matter of fact, Jesus foretold His own resurrection when He said in John 10:18 *"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."* Also cf. Luke 24:1-8. One such resurrection occurred in Matthew 27:52-53 after the resurrection of Jesus. And we are told in the Bible that two resurrections are yet future. Jesus said in John 5:28-29 *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

Of these future resurrections, one will be to eternal life and the other will be to shame and everlasting contempt. Notice that both of these resurrections are for those who are in the graves. We are told in Revelation 20 that they are separated by a period on one thousand years.

The first resurrection occurs at rapture of the church. Paul speaks of this when he said in I Thessalonians 4:13-17, *"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*

Another interesting fact about this first resurrection is that it appears to be in three phrases. It includes, the resurrection of Jesus, the Church with Old and New Testament saints and finally (3) Tribulation saints (Revelation 6:9-11). However, the second resurrection occurs at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ. Revelation 20:5 tells us that everyone else will be in the second resurrection which is unto death when it says, *"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."* Also, Revelation 20:12-13 says, *"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."*

Verse 3: *"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."* This is many times referred to as a soul-winning verse. Which it is, but it specifically refers to the time of the Tribulation. In other words, "The wise are those who will see through the Antichrist's deception and will lead others to truth during that time."

Verses 4-8: *“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?”* It’s interesting to note that even Daniel did not fully understand everything that he saw and wrote. I can relate to that!

Verse 9: *“And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.”* In other words, he is saying, "I’m not going to tell you." We also see this same thing happening in Matthew 24:3-4. However, we do notice that Jesus did begin to tell the disciples in the NT.

Verse 10: *“Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”* This verse is referring to the Church Age which began at Pentecost in Acts 1 and will conclude at the Rapture of the Church in Revelation 4:1.

Verse 11: *“And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.”* This is speaking of the mid-point of the Tribulation period when the Antichrist commits the Abomination of Desolation. Notice that it says, *“one thousand two hundred and ninety days.”* That’s 3.5 years

Verse 12: *“Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.”* A thousand three hundred and five and thirty days is 45 days past the Second Coming of Christ.

Verse 13: *“But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”* This is a promise of Daniel’s resurrection one day!

Biographical Data

Dwayne was saved at the age of nine at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina and baptized by the late Dr. Harold B. Sightler who to this day is one of Dwayne's great heroes of the faith. Much of his vision and expository style of teaching were shaped while sitting under this man's ministry as a young boy and later as a student in Bible College.

Like many young people who struggled through the teenage years, Dwayne was no exception. After graduating from high school in New Orleans, Louisiana, he joined the Marine Corps. It was during this time while stationed at Camp Pendleton in California that he had the opportunity to attend Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, rededicated his life to the Lord and answered God's call to the ministry. Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa has also greatly influenced his ministry.

He was licensed to the ministry in 1991 by Iglesia Bautista Hispana in Greenville, South Carolina and ordained in 1995 by Calvary Chapel in Greenville, South Carolina and again by the First Baptist Church in San Benito, Texas in 2001.

He holds several degrees including a Bible Diploma from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia; a Th.B. in Bible from Tabernacle Baptist College in Greenville, South Carolina; an M.R.E. from Andersonville Theological Seminary in Camilla, Georgia and a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Louisiana Baptist University in Shreveport, Louisiana. He is currently doing additional studies at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia.

He is married to the former Jannett Perez of New Orleans, Louisiana. She holds a degree in Computer Electronics Engineering and both a Bachelor and a Master of Religious Education. They have two sons; Dane and Brandon.

He has served as Assistant Pastor and Worship Leader at Calvary Chapel in Greenville, South Carolina (1991-1997); Missionary to Zacapa, Guatemala (1997-1998); Senior Pastor of Borderland Calvary Chapel in San Benito, Texas (1998-2008); Missions Pastor and High School History Teacher at First Baptist Church and School in Brownsville, Texas (2008-2009). He currently teaches and serves as Campus Pastor at the Calvary Chapel Bible College in Lima, Peru.

He is also the founder of Dwayne Spearman.org through which he shares his love for the Word of God. You may contact him and keep up with his ministry at www.dwaynespearman.org.