

A Commentary on the Book of Daniel

Of all of the prophets, it is evident that Daniel is probably the most thrilling and enlightening to all believers. Along with Isaiah, he is the most disturbing and controversial to the unsaved biblical “scholars” of this day and of millennia past. To the possessors of faith his writings are indispensable when seeking to best understand some of the New Testament prophecies and themes, especially regarding the Book of Revelation, and many other predicted end-time events. Daniel can correctly be called the prophet of the “times of the Gentiles”, in as much as those times began with the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, and will end in accordance with the prophecies God gave him to reveal. What is so troubling to the “attacking critics”, those who try to discredit the Bible, is the incredible accuracy of historical events he was given to predict, many that have already occurred hundreds of years after they were revealed. They obviously doubt the supernatural, and therefore refuse to believe in the foreknowledge of God and His revealing of these things through Daniel.

They claim that the already fulfilled events couldn't have been anticipated and described with such accuracy unless they were written after the events. However, the Septuagint, a copy of the Old Testament including of course the Book of Daniel, was translated into Greek around 270-300 BC and therefore stands as irrefutable testimony to the fact that the prophecies already fulfilled before the translation could not have been written after the facts they predict. By the time the Septuagint was translated from the Hebrew into Greek, some of the prophecies had already come to pass, while many others have occurred since then. History, records they're exactly as God had given them to Daniel. There also remain many prophecies yet to be fulfilled during the end portions of these end times. How is it possible with such a track record of 100% proven prophecies, that anyone can doubt the accuracy of those yet to be fulfilled? I believe that what we see occurring in the world today will very soon bring about the fulfillment of the last group of Daniel's prophecies.

I've read somewhere that 25% of the Bible is made up of specific predictions. The main subject of all biblical prophecy is Christ Jesus. In fact, the whole Bible is mostly about Him. It's this fact I suspect more than anything else, that is the reason that the veracity of the Bible is so vehemently attacked by “scholarly” non-believers. As Jesus said in John 15:18 *“If the world*

hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” That hate of Jesus has never lost its strength, and I believe has greatly increased during these end times years. Many of the great Universities such as Harvard and Yale were originally schools where the Holy Bible was studied, believed, taught and praised as the inerrant Word of God. Today these schools still have theological departments, however as far as I can see they are all controlled and filled with so-called “theologians” whose main purpose is to seek to discredit Scripture wherever it is possible to do so. Their “callings” are Satan-directed and center around what is called “Biblical Criticism”. Many of the Doctorates of Theology” were “earned” by “scholarly” doctoral thesis which challenge the authenticity of the Bible. As un-believers, their professional “assignments” are to discredit the inerrancy of Scripture from every direction. It appears that many become “attack specialists” in a variety of ways. These are diabolically conceived and assembled so as to deal with every avenue of thought.

Some of these categories go by such titles as Higher Criticism, Historical Criticism, Literary Criticism, Source Criticism, Form Criticism, Traditional Criticism, Lower Criticism, and Statistical Criticism. Can any true Christian doubt the fact that these “lettered” theologians and Bible “experts” are agents of Satan, whose assigned missions are to search every possible way to discredit the infallibility of Scripture? If these “Bible Scholars” were not so dedicated to trying to prove the “truth” of their unbelief, and instead read all of Scripture from an unbiased perspective, they would be greatly embarrassed by the verses, they prefer to ignore if in fact they even know of their existence. For instance in Matthew 24:15 Jesus refers to “Daniel the prophet” regarding one of his prophecies and there admonishes that “...whoso readeth, let him understand, ...” I see this as a call for serious study of what God gave Daniel to write, and also a warning to those who have accepted Satan’s program.

As we begin our study, it is interesting to observe that the first six chapters deal primarily with history, while the remaining six chapters are devoted to prophecy. Also we find that the first chapter, and the first three verses of chapter 2 are in Hebrew. From there on through the seventh chapter they were written in Chaldean, and after that again in Hebrew to the end of the Book. This in itself, and the fact that the Book was written outside of the Promised Land, in a heathen

country and partly in a heathen language, is fuel to the fired up Bible haters. Now let's see what our Lord will provide us with as we study verse by verse what He gave to Daniel to write.

Chapter 1

Verse1:

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

Jehoiakim was the second son of the good king Josiah. He had been appointed to be a vassal king by Pharaoh Nechoh, or Necho, who had killed king Josiah. Jehoiakim is the name Nechoh gave to Josiah's 25 year old son Eliakim when he made him king over Judea. He reigned eleven years as a vassal king under Nebuchadnezzar until about 598 BC and was succeeded by his “son” Jeconiah also called Jehoiachin. It was in 606 BC when Nebuchadnezzar, on his way back to Babylon from having conquered Egypt, came to Jerusalem and forced it into submission.

Verse2:

“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.”

In this verse we see that after conquering Judea around 606 BC in order to prevent the destruction of Jerusalem, Jehoiakim paid tribute from the treasury as well as having lost some of the Temple artifacts. Nebuchadnezzar also took to Babylon some of the royal family nobles including Daniel as well as many highly skilled artisans. The Temple vessels he brought into the temple of his god.

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; 4 children in whom was no blemish, but well-favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.”

These verses are somewhat self-explanatory. The king assigned the chief eunuch the task of separating out the captives. He separated out those with no physical or moral blemish, and who were skillful and already quite knowledgeable in ways that would be beneficial to the king's court. There are differences in opinion as to whether or not this chief eunuch was simply the title of an administrator or whether he was also a castrated man. According to Strong's the word "eunuch" in the Hebrew is "caric" having the root meaning "to castrate, a eunuch; by implication a valet (especially in the female apartments), and thus a minister of state—Chamberlin eunuch, officer." It appears quite clear in Scripture that the word "eunuch" refers always to one who is castrated. This then qualifies him to be of value as an administrator for many of the royal court activities. As a eunuch, he would likely be more trustworthy and dedicated to serving the king. He would have no sexual interests nor would he have his own family to distract or compromise his duties. Scripture gives us other examples of eunuchs as court administrators. Potiphar was "an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard." (Genesis 39:1) Here the word for "officer" is again "caric" or one who has been castrated. This of course could help explain why his wife was so uncontrollably passionate toward Joseph. It may be that Potiphar was already married before he was chosen for, and accepted the position which required castration. We also find a eunuch as the treasure under the Queen of Ethiopia, whom Philip met as he was returning to Ethiopia. Because of the positions that Daniel and his friends were assigned, many believe, as I do, that they were all castrated for the reasons already given.

Verses 5-7:

"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.

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

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

As we can see Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were among the select captives that received special attention so as to best determine the court duties for which they were best suited. Apparently there was a three-year-program of indoctrination and preparation for full assimilation into the court's ways so they could be effective administrators of whatever duties would be

assigned to them. Hebrew names just wouldn't do. They had to go by Babylonian name. Daniel = God is my judge, Hananiah = Gift of the Lord, Mishael = High Place, or one who is what God is, Azariah = Jehovah is keeper, or hath helped. These were changed to Belteshazzar = the Lord's leader, Shadrach = Decree of Moon-god, Meshach = Agile or expeditious; Abednego = Servant of Nebo or Servant of Light. Nebo was a Chaldean idol.

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 eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

I believe that the significance of this verse is of course the word defile. It wasn't necessarily the quality of the food itself, it was the fact that all of the king's food was first consecrated by idols, which made it defiled and unfit to eat by God fearing, God committed people such as Daniel and his friends. We may recall that during one period of Roman rule, Christians chose to defy the law by refusing to commit to the Roman god or to eat the market food all of which had been defiled in a similar manner.

Verses 9 and 10:

"Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of 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."

Obviously Daniel was not only highly intelligent and spiritually right with God, but he was also of a genuinely sweet temper and demeanor. The eunuch feared the consequences of allowing them a diet other than what the king had decreed. His fear was that they would become more sickly as compared to the others under his stewardship by eating only the food that Daniel insisted they be allowed to have.

Verses 11-13

“¹¹ Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king’s meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.”

Somehow Daniel prevailed by calling for a 10 day test to see if God blessed food would keep them at least as healthy as the Pharaoh’s food. Pulse, “veron” “something sown (only in the plural ie: vegetables).” Again, I suspect that absence the idol factor, they would have eaten the types of food that the king ate, such as meat, had it not been idol blessed. I don’t believe that this is any argument for vegetarianism. It was God who made this food especially and uniquely nourishing for them.

Verses 14-16

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

After 10 days it was evident that the “Kosher” food had caused them to have been better nourished than the Pharaoh’s food had been for the others. Of course this contrast was God directed. That convinced the eunuch so he no longer insisted they eat the Pharaoh’s food and instead gave them pulse. Certainly a properly balanced vegetarian diet can be healthier than one overloaded with meat, fat, and wine. Again, I suspect that absent the idol factor, they would not have declined some meat and fat for what, in my opinion, would have been an even more healthier diet.

Verses 17-21

“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. ¹⁸ Now at the end of the days that the

king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hanaiah, Mishael and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. 21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.”

After they had finished their first year of conditioning and preparation, they and all of the others were presented to the king. The king saw that Judea had many very talented and useful individuals. This is what led him to initiate a search and screening program to find all who would be of benefit to serve him and his empire. This would have included the most bright and well-educated, as well as the most skilled artisan craftsmen and other tradesmen. The first year was used to train them in the language, the laws, and the culture. It was also to test their ability and willingness to be loyal subjects. Those who didn't measure up were removed, while the others continued the second year of training. Here we see the hand of God and the blessings He had provided Daniel and his three friends. They had knowledge and skills in all learning and wisdom. Daniel also had understanding of visions and dreams. These things, in so young a group were most certainly special God-given gifts. All teenagers claim superior knowledge and wisdom but I have yet to see or hear any that have anything near what they think they have. These boys were assessed by the king as having 10 times more than any of his wise men. This would seem to have been Daniel's blessing throughout his life which lasted well into his 80's and even to the time of Darius and then Cyrus.

Chapter 2

Verses 1-4

“1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. 2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. 4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.”

Now, we are to see, what is the best known event of this Book, the dream. Soon after Daniel and his friends were admitted to the king’s court, although they were not yet part of the magicians and sorcerers official group. There were four categories of “Magi”. From this verse, we can conclude that each had some kind of specialty within the overall label of “wise men”, or “Magi” as they are called elsewhere. These “wise men” were called in by the king to interpret a troubling dream he had. As earlier noted, starting with verse 4 on through 7:28 Daniel wrote in Aramaic. Given that the “Syrian” name for Syria was “Aram”, it is evident that Aramaic is simply the name of the language of Syria. Aramaic is substantially identical to Chaldalic, the ancient language of Babylon. Again, God’s involvement is revealed. Had these verses and chapters been written in Hebrew, they could not have been understood among the people with whom he lived, that is the Chaldeans. Therefore all that went on, the dream and his interpretation, the king’s pride and punishment, etc. would have been but useless “babble” to the king and his court. “Syraic” appears to be simply a different name for the Syrian language. From Chapter 8 to the end, the visions and other events, it would not have been relevant to the Chaldeans. These later Chapters were written in Hebrew and intended for the Hebrews and for us. To the king’s command it was reasonable for the “wise men” to ask that the dream be told to them so they could interpret it.

Verses 5-9

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

houses shall be made a dunghill. 6 But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. 7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it. 8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. 9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof.”

The king may have actually forgotten the dream. Some believe that he faked loss of memory in order to fully test these “wise men” whom he had so recently inherited when his father died. To interpret a dream was one thing, but to determine what the dream had been would take great supernatural powers. They claimed to have such powers, and did have, as far as what Satan and his demons could provide. However this requirement was way beyond such powers.

Their stalling angered the king, and to him this was evidence of their lack of the great things that they claimed to be able to do. He could not tolerate such limitations. From his viewpoint, if they knew the dream, then anyone could make up an interpretation, and who could know that it wasn't correct or reliable? Obviously he expected too much from these merely Satan empowered men, or anyone else. Here again we see the hand of God orchestrating these events so as to discredit them, and then to elevate Daniel to where He wanted him to be for the many years of great service He had in mind.

Verses 10-13

“10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.”

The Magi were shocked at such a demand. It was obvious to them that such a requirement could never be achieved by anyone. They realized that only in the higher spiritual domain could such knowledge exist. Sadly however, they didn't openly attribute that power to the God. They realized that even their idols could not do this. We should remember that these so-called wise man were inherited by the king as part of what his father Nebopolassar had left him. Having spent much of his adult life in the fields of battle, he may not have known much, if anything about these people, except that they were supposed to have superior wisdom. To him, if this was so, it should have not been the problem they claimed it to be. Hearing of their obvious inability to do this which he thought should have well within their collective abilities, he believed them all to be fakes. In his anger he and concluded that they were less than worthless, and therefore he should be rid of them. It was a broad sweeping decree which included Daniel and his friends. From this we can see that these Israelites had been assigned duties which made them novices within the wise men magi cadre. However, Daniel, was not among those who appeared at his meeting, even though he would have been one of them where this punishment was concerned.

Verses 14-18

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

Apparently the execution order was to be carried out immediately. Once Daniel had the whole story, he asked for an audience with the king, asking him to delay the execution for a short while claiming that he would provide all that the king had asked for. As noted Daniel had not been among the wise men when they had lamented to the king. The king agreed to some short delay which Daniel and his friends used to go home and pray to God for His intervention by putting

into Daniels heart and mind both the nature of the dream and precisely what it meant. What an incredible display of bravery and confidence in God! First, to petition to see the king could have been fatal. However, the king must have remembered the very specialness of Daniel when he had been groomed for service. To presume that through prayer God would swiftly grant his petition, required the kind of faith that few men have ever been reported to have. What we'll find in the second chapter has been called the A,B,C's of praying, because it was so simple so humble, so filled with absolute faith, so easy to understand and to see played out.

Verses 19-23

“19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: 21 and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: 22 he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him, 23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.”

Here we learn that their prayers were heard and their petition granted as they prayed. But Daniel didn't jump up and deal with the issue immediately. First, was the great heartfelt expression of love, gratitude and extoling of the greatness of God. Daniel went into how the Almighty God removes kings and also sets them up. There it's likely that Daniel could see how God had set up this cruel pagan king as His instrument for punishing Israel for so many years of apostasy. We might also note that with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the “time of the Jews came to an end”. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar thus signified the beginning of the “times of the Gentiles” and will end when the “the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). That is when the very last of the people seeking salvation are saved by the Rapture. That will end the Church Age and any need to keep saved Christians here to suffer for no reason. Thus will come the Rapture.

Verses 24-28

“²⁴ Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him: Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation. ²⁵ Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. ²⁶ The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? ²⁷ Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers and the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king: ²⁸ but here 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;”

Apparently Arioch had delayed carrying out the order until the next morning. Also it is evident that at the time that Daniel had to have his desire for an audience with the king “go thorough channels”, and to have given a good reason for the request. The urgency of the situation filled the heart of Arioch as well as Daniel. He didn’t want to kill them any more than Daniel wanted to see them (and himself) killed.

When asked by the king whether or not he could fully provide what he had demanded, Daniel correctly said that no man, only God could know these things. Here Daniel is about to demonstrate his closeness to God, for God had given him the answers. Notice earlier how he expressed his absolute trust in God, such that he stated emphatically that he would be able to know and interpret the dream, even before he had prayed. We should ponder for a moment in awe regarding such an incredible and rare quality of faith. Even at his youthful age, his was a mature faith developed over those relatively few years during which he must have gained a unique closeness to the Lord, and to have been given a keen understanding of our Lord and His ways. Do any of us have anything near such a faith that our prayers will be answered in the way we wish them to be? We must always condition our prayers such that “thine, not mine will be done”. That’s because we have not, and rightly so, the faith that our petition are wholly acceptable to the Lord. Daniel’s life had been, and continued to be totally committed to serving

God, and that God blessed him mightily so that his could always be a reflection of God's will. Not many more than a handful of humans throughout history to this day have ever been so blessed.

Verses 29-30

“29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightiest know the thoughts of thy heart.”

Here Daniel starts not with the dream, but with what thoughts the king had in mind that caused the dream. The king was thinking about what thing would occur in the future. God gave him insights regarding such matters in his dream. It may be that the king had truly forgotten the dream, yet remembered that it seemed to be of great importance, whatever it was. Then Daniel answered that it was the “God of heaven” that revealed secrets about the future through this dream. Finally as a preface to the revelation, Daniel made it clear that his knowledge regarding the dream is not because any quality he had above anyone else. God was the One who revealed the secret so as to both save those who would otherwise be killed, and so that the king would know what were the deeper thoughts of his heart. Claudius Claudianus was a poet of the Roman regal court around 400 AD. He made the astute observation about dreams when he said “the sentiment which we indulge throughout the day often mingle with the grateful slumber of the night.” Here the king's dream was an example of that observation.

Verses 31-35

“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. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like

the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

Finally Daniel reveals in detail all of the elements of the dream. As he described it, the king recognized it to be exactly what he had dreamed. “the form therefore was terrible”. “Terrible” as used here is the Chaldean word “dechal”. It means something to fear, or to be formidable, dreadful, and terrible. There are five or six other words in the Old Testament Scripture that mean terrible, but this word is used here and nowhere else. Because of this, rather than fearful and terrible as we use these words to depict an approaching danger, this being and inanimate object, simply a statue, the “formidable” is more representative and somewhat mollifying of the fear inducing aspects of the definition. As we proceed with the study and muse about what God had here revealed through a dream to a brutal and “terrible” tyrant king, we should be in utter awe! Yet God made it useless to him until He made Daniel his “greatly loved” messenger to recall the dream and convey the interpretation. His chosen messenger, because of his total uncompromising faith, would give him full credit and begin the fascinating process through which the king would become a saint!

Daniel began with the golden head of the awesome image, then the silver bust and arms, followed by the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron and feet of iron mixed with clay. Then he saw the great stone cut without hands that smote the feet and broke them to pieces. This caused the whole thing to fall and also break into pieces as small as to be likened to the chaff on the threshing floor which even a light breeze would carry the pieces away never to be found. Then the stone that did this became a great mountain that filled the whole earth. This expressed the entire surficial aspects of the image in the dream. Before we dig very deep under this surface of the story we’ll stay for a while with Daniel as he interprets the dream. Later chapters will be reminiscent of this image, and the world wide significance it reveals.

Verses 36-39

“³⁶This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. ³⁷Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and

glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth."

The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar and his superior empire. How contrary this is to how we would characterize this cruel despot who butchered thousands and was ready to kill Daniel and his friends and his whole court of Magi because none of them, nor any man on earth could tell him what he dreamed. It was only near the end of his 43rd year reign that we see what God saw in him so as to justify his being considered the very best of a bad lot of successors. The Babylonian empire lasted only about 22 more years after Nebuchadnezzar died. His son Evil-Merodach ruled only 2 years before he was replaced. He was taken down by a military coup. The commander and chief Nerigilissr, who was Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law. He was removed by another coup which replaced him with Nabonidus, a second son-in-law. He chose to go and stay in Arabia, naming his son Belshazzar as co-regent. Because God had so described Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, who knew not yet how things would play out, embraced God's view, and was loyal to this king to the end. We might note that there were two great empires before the Babylon one. These were the Egyptian and Assyrian empires. These are not considered here because they predate the period when God chose to present this incredible prophecy.

The second great empire was symbolized as silver, not as valuable as gold, but also one of great value from God's perspective. Notice that this empire included two arms, hence two segments of the Persian / Mede Empire. Cyrus was a Persian by his father and a Mede by his mother. His mother was the daughter of a Median king Astyages, who was weak and corrupt. A general of his army abandoned the king and gave his army to young Cyrus. Later Cyrus went against this Median king and took over their capital city without a battle. Thus Cyrus managed to bring together both nations in such a way that he and Darius the Mede ruled the Empire together. After full consolidation of the two empires, it was Darius who took the lead in the conquest of Babylon. Of course by then, as noted, Babylon was effectively emasculated through Nabonidus's neglect and because of the incompetence of his corrupt son Belshazzar. This joint monarchy lasted over 200 years, until Alexander conquered it. In verse 39 there is a little about

the third empire except that it was symbolized by brass which was a very useful metal, but not nearly as prized as gold or silver. It would quickly subdue the Persian/Mede Empire and conquer even more territory. What we must understand is that portion of the world beyond, where there were only sparsely settled primitive cultures, was deemed not of sufficient value to be worth conquering. This world empire is better described and clearly identified as Grecian in later chapters.

Verses 40-43

“⁴⁰ And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. ⁴¹ And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter’s 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. 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.”

The fourth kingdom is the last of the satanically facilitated kingdoms. It was represented in the dream image as including the two legs and feet with toes as made of iron mixed with clay. As we learn later this fourth kingdom was, and again will be the Roman Empire. Just like the City of Babylon, the Roman Empire was not destroyed. It merely atrophied. It’s true that the barbarians from the north overran the Empire and sacked Rome in 410 AD. However, when they saw how impossible it would be to occupy and control, they didn’t stay. With its aggressive power no longer a threat, they went home leaving it like a broken sword. Today it exists not as an entity, but as a number of separate entities, such as France, England, Spain, etc. We see today, that is in these end times that they again have sought to coalesce into what they now call, the European Union. This is quite closely retracing the boundaries of the “Holy Roman Empire”. The Roman Empire as depicted by the statue remained as a single entity until the fourth century AD when it split into the two legs.

It was Emperor Diocletian in 284 who actually divided the empire into two parts (legs) thereby laying the foundation of what would be the Byzantine Empire of the east. Then in 312, Constantine relocated the capital of the empire to the City of Byzantium, renaming it Constantinople. As the western leg disintegrated, what was left intact was the eastern leg which became known as the Byzantine Empire. This continued ever weakening until 1453 when it finally was conquered and became part of the Ottoman Empire.

Certainly during its earlier period, the Roman Empire was strong and invincible. The symbolism of iron is most appropriate because it was the strongest metal in use at that time. Verse 40 amplifies this as it speaks of the iron that breaks all that it chooses to break and bruise. This does not speak of it being broken, not yet.

In verse 41 we have the iron mixed with potter's clay as being that of which the 10 toes are made. The 10 toes are representative of ten nations some of which be as strongly united as iron, while others will be as fragile as clay in the unanimity. Could it be that the strong kingdoms are represented primarily by the nations north of the Mediterranean, such as Germany, France, England, Scandinavia, etc. while the weaker unions are mostly south of the Great Sea, namely, the Arab countries. These, for countries, have been notorious for their inability to effectually unite. Notice that nowhere does Scripture actually mention ten toes. We only assume that, and probably rightly so. We get the idea of ten kings from Revelation 17:12. However, these could have been a different group of kings.

Verse 43 provides a very strange message that very many commentaries tend to ignore. I suppose it's because it seems to defy a rigorously defensible interpretation. It's the "mingling of the seed of men" and the fact that they "shall not cleave one to another". Who are "they" that shall not cleave with the seed of man? The "seed of man of course becomes man. At first, one might think to relate this to what happened in Genesis 6, regarding fallen angels mating with the seed of man, i.e. woman. It's been suggested that "they" may be extraterrestrial beings, which, from a Biblical perspective, is absurd. If we hold to the literal statement regarding "they" it's very tempting to reason that in those last days, Satan will attempt to pollute the human race in some manner as he did in Genesis: by reactivating the nephelims strategy. If you can't buy that,

then allegorized the “they “as simply another group of people somewhere forced together who will not be compatible with one another.

This could fit the context of verse 42 if we were to accept the fact that the empire would include Europe to the north and the Arab world to the south. Even among themselves the Arabs are incompatible with one another, and cannot “cleave” within their own society. This is well evidenced by the last five centuries of fighting with one another, and everyone else. This natural lack of cleaving between Arabs and Europeans has recently been circumvented as Satan has orchestrated the huge influx of Arabs into all so-called Christian nations throughout the world as a forced assimilation. This has striking characteristics of what Scripture predicts as the “mire clay”. Could it be that we are now experiencing the fulfillment of the prediction? I suspect that we are! Here is one more thought. We might consider the toes as other specific sub-governments within the empire which totally refuse to cleave due to some form of ethnic, racial or religious reason.

Verses 44, 45

“44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”

Who are these kings? Are they kings as may be represented by the toes? Are they the kings represented by the ten horns on Daniel 7:24? Or are they the 4 kings represented by the statue?

I haven’t found anything in Scripture that clearly tells us that the toes are kings. I am presently under the opinion that their weakness and unreliability are characteristics of the last stages, perhaps of both the original and the final resurrected Roman Empire. Notice the last part of verse 42 speaks clearly of the kingdom which will have those toes. Then verse 44 it speaks of “in those days” which I believe can only be referring to the end of final human empire. Then we read that God shall set up a kingdom. This is when Jesus will break Antichrist’s kingdom, and

all other earthly governments. His kingdom will stand forever, first during the millennium, and then on the eternal new earth.

This is confirmed by verse 45 when the much used analogy “a stone cut out of the mountain without hands” is mentioned. I believe the “mountain” is the Triune Godhead, while the “stone” is Christ Jesus who will destroy all human kingdoms. Thus Daniel completed all that the king had required and more.

Verses 46-49

“⁴⁶ Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him. ⁴⁷ The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. ⁴⁸ Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.”

How shocked, enthralled and amazed was the king by such an obviously God-provided analysis! For a king, especially this one, to “fall upon his face” was astounding, and probably never happened before or since, except when one king was vanquished by another, and forced to do so. His first reaction was to worship the messenger, just as John did a couple of times to angel messengers as recorded in Revelation.

Then in verse 47, the king acknowledges that this was the work of the God of all gods and a Lord of kings. Here we have an example of head belief. It is evident that he had recognized the fact that there is the God of all things. Yet he still included his gods as part of the hierarchy of this ultimate highest God. Isn't that the way of so many professors of the faith? They realize that there is a Creator God, and may also realize that believing in Jesus as Savior is the way to salvation. However, they still cling and pay homage to their little gods, such as sports, TV, cars, pursuit of money, etc. None of these are necessarily bad in themselves, but they tend to be

addictive and demand a great deal of time, that would be better spent in worship and service to our Lord. This is true of both the professors as well as the possessors of the faith. Where possessors of the faith are concerned, a perfect, example of the consequences is found in Revelation 2:4 where the church of Ephesus had “lost its first love”.

After recovering from the effects of this revelation, the king knew he had a winner here in Daniel, and so he gave him the highest position possible under him. He made him ruler of all of Babylon and chief of the wise men, a position Daniel maintained all his life even in the succeeding Persian / Mede Empire. Daniel’s three friends were also given high positions. Daniel sat at the gate of the City. This confirms his political stature. Sitting at the gate was a symbol of power and authority just as it was for Mordecai and others.

Chapter 3

Here we see confirmed that the king's earlier recognition of the great Creator God was but head knowledge to be simply tucked away where it wouldn't interfere with his pride and self-glorification. It surely is a testimony as to how far from the depths of depravity God had yet to raise him before he could be rightly call Saint Neb.

Verses 1-7

"¹ Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was three score cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. ² Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. ³ Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁴ Then a herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, ⁵ that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: ⁶ and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. ⁷ Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."

Probably taking the idea from his dream, the king ordered a huge golden statue be made presumably in his likeness. Assuming an 18-inch cubit, the thing was 90 feet high and 9 feet wide at the shoulders. If we assume that the statue was say 25% of a slab that big it would consist of about 150 tons of gold, if it was pure solid gold. However, it probably was hollow and therefore much lighter than this. In any case, it was a great testimony to the metallurgy and molding crafts, as well as the engineering ability of that period. How to put it together, and erect

such a huge and heavy structure was a colossal engineering feat. This brings to mind the far more ancient structures such as the pyramids, the Inca's worship tower, Stonehenge, etc. These prove that the ancients had very advanced engineering capabilities from a very early time after the flood. However, we should keep in mind the fact that gold is over 6 times heavier than rock. Gold has a specific gravity of about 19.3 while granite is about 3.0. This probably made the statue much heavier than any of the great obelisk. While it is admitted by today's "scientists" they nevertheless, choose to classify those times as being primitive Stone Age, Bronze Age, peoples of low intelligence. In chapter 3 verses 2 and 3 we see what a big deal it was to him as he called all key men from every part of his empire to come and witness his self-proclaimed greatness.

It wasn't merely the greatness of the statue made in his likeness that he commanded them to see, it was a demand that they fall down and worship the image, and thus to worship him as the chief of their pagan gods. The list of musical instruments may be describing the entire assortment normally used for festive occasions. Both the sackbut and the psaltery were similar to lyres. They are small harps, perhaps with different ranges. The dulcimer was some form of bagpipes. As Scripture makes perfectly clear, this statue was far more than an ornament, of a testimony to his greatness. It was a primary and essential item to be worshipped immediately whenever the king chose to have these musical instruments make the announcements. Failure to do so meant immediate death by incineration. I suppose that this was a smelting furnace used to melt various metals for molding into coins, weapons, tools, and every kind of metal objects used in that culture. The furnace had to generate temperatures between 1700 and 2200°F in order to melt the metals then in common use. In order to attain and continue such high temperatures is in itself a most impressive evidence of their technological abilities. Given the nature of the punishment, I suspect that no one disobeyed, except, as we will see next, the 3 Israelite boys. Daniel was away on a mission for the king, or he would have been among them.

Verses 8-14

"8 Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. 9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king live for ever. 10 Thou O king hast made a decree, that

every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image: 11 and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?"

Most or all of the “old guards” the wise men that king inherited from his father remained hostile to Daniel and his friends and were desirous to be rid of them. It probably was difficult for these mature self-esteeming privileged group to accept the leadership of the young wet-behind-the-ears Daniel who was appointed over them. They were no less hostile to his three friends because of the high positions they too had been given. It is evident that this attitude caused them to watch these kids, including Daniel, quite closely hoping to find any flaw that might discredit them. Worship of this new idol was mandated universally to be adhered to under pain of death. When the king was informed that the 3 boys did not worship the statue, he was enraged at the blatant violation of his law. Even though he had recognized their superior abilities and how well they had served him, he ordered them to be executed. There must have been several ways condemned people were executed. However, this great “walk-in” furnace that was so very hot may at that time and place, been the most feared. Finally, the basis of getting rid of these Jews was happily discovered and reported to the king. As noted, he was furious, yet rather than assume the truth of the wise men’s statement, he called in the three to confirm the fact.

Verses 15-18

“15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, 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? 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, answered and said to the king O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee

in this matter. 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

Here we see the king giving them one more chance to obey, or be incinerated. Once a regal order was given, it could not be rescinded even by the king who issued the order. While not so stated here, it was the way of most pagan kings of that era. Simply look forward to the Book of Esther to see this same type of thing that plagued the Jews when Ahasuerus made a decree at the behest of Haman. The threat was real, and had to be carried out.

How sad it is how soon Nebuchadnezzar dismissed the greatness of God, and actually mocked Him, indicating that he believed that even their God could not save them. Of course the boys exhibited a profound faith comparable to that of Abraham and Isaac during the Mt. Moriah episode. They had absolute faith in God, knowing that whatever was His will would be done and whatever it was, it would be best for them. Therefore, even when faced with certain extremely painful death, they would not worship any false god. They expressed that ultimate faith to the king, having no fear or reservation as to whether or not God would do what was right for them. They obviously knew their eternal fate, and were reconciled to going to “Abraham’s bosom” now or later, as God willed it for them.

Dear God, I pray that I, and all others who have been redeemed, could generate such a faith, and never be at all compromising in our commitments to You. Paul expressed it most eloquently in Philippians 1:22 where he said, that as long as he was in Christ, to die was his preference rather than to live, but if he lived then his life would be spent serving and obeying the Lord by spreading His Word and seeking salvation for others.

Verses 19-23

“19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and to cast them

into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hose, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

The king was full of fury. He probably thought how dare anyone, let alone these Jews, these three, hapless, pipsqueaks, defy the great me! Now they'll pay big time! So he commanded that the three be bound and thrown into the furnace after he had ordered it to be made, seven times hotter than usual. Notice in the King James Version that there is the word "one" in front of the seven times. The one has been removed out of most of if not all Bible versions, even the NKJV! By removing the one, the verse clearly speaks of 7 times as hot. That "one" can only mean one seventh hotter. As we'll see next, to have meant 7 times hotter, is not only ridiculous but impossible. A quick read of this, as many commentators seem to have done, even those using the King James Version suggests that the furnace was in fact made 7 times hotter than normal. If the furnace's primary use was to melt metals such as those mentioned earlier, than operating temperatures were already nearly as hot as this, or any type of furnace could achieve.

To make it seven times hotter, was not possible. Cast iron melts at 2200°F. Modern high temperature furnaces only reach about 2970°F. It appears that only special use laboratory furnaces reach as high as 4920°F. Assuming that the highest operating temperature ever needed would have been that required to melt iron, a seven fold increase would have brought the furnace temperature to 15,400 °F which is without question impossible as the evidence proves. Even nuclear power plants operate at only 1340°F. This proves that what was meant was that the furnace was to be heated one seventh hotter than that required to melt iron, or about 2517° F, a temperature as hot as the best fuel and technique could possibly provide. This proves beyond a doubt, that the "times seven" is a misinterpretation of the verse. It's evident that those whose task involved heating and molding metals were capable of working with these temperatures which were found only in the fire and the crucible which contained the metal. The king used his strongest soldiers for the task of throwing the three boys into the furnace. That they died doing

so proves nothing as far as the super heat of the furnace is concerned. They were thrown them into the chimney so that they would fall directly into the crucible. We'll return to this issue after we read the next verses. The technology of that time must have included how to make charcoal because only the burning of charcoal or coke can produce the required temperatures. Wood cannot.

Verses 24-28

“24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. 28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.”

Apparently the king remained in sight of the furnace to see what happened. Obviously, the furnace area was open at ground level, and was of sufficient size for men to both work and walk around. If the boys had been thrown into the chimney, they would have fallen directly into the heated crucible, or into the burning charcoal, if the crucible had been moved out of the way for this particular event.

What is depicted in verses 19 and 20 is what we would call a foundry. This was, and even today, is a building in which men heated a metal to its melting point and then poured it from a crucible into molds, where it was fashioned into that for which the metal was intended to be used. As noted, these ancients must have mastered the technique of making charcoal, which was the only

fuel by means of which they could have achieved the needed high temperatures. To obtain and maintain such heat, the charcoal had to be provided with large amounts of oxygen. This was achieved by huge bellows blowing air over the charcoal. The tremendous heat would be thus concentrated under the crucible and up the chimney.

Feeding in the charcoal necessitated that the fire tenders had to be close enough to the fire to accurately throw it, rake it to its optimal configuration, and yet not be hurt. This was a 24-7 job while it was going on. Those who had to place and maneuver the bolts so that the metal would flow properly also had to be close to the fire. Therefore, just to throw the boys into the crucible or onto burning charcoal bed, from the foundry floor should not have been a fatal effort for the soldiers. The crucible would have had some manner of u-shaped protrusions on the back side. They probably used green sapling poles hooked under them so that two men were able to tip the crucible to pour out the metal. Thus we can see that the foundry building was a place in which men could readily work in close proximity to the fire for long periods of time.

It's likely that the crucible was removed before the boys were thrown into the fire. The crucible would have been too small to have held 3 bodies. Your own imagination should see why. The king may have witnessed the three falling onto the bed of coals, perhaps while standing at the foundry doorway. As evidenced by the above, we can rightly conclude that they were dropped in through the chimney. This is the most certain way in which these "strong" men could have been burned unto death given that the foundry workers were not hurt as they worked closer than these men would have to have been. Because this was the first time for this procedure, the extremely hot gasses surging up the chimney were not fully considered. When the men leaned over the chimney to fit the boys through the chimney opening, this blast, hit them, and killed them instantly. If you have a wood fire in your fireplace or stove, going up on the roof and putting your face in the way of the rising gases emanating from the chimney, will severely fry your lungs, and char your face, and that flue/chimney temperature would be only from a 400-500° F. Imagine what gasses coming up from a fire so hot that it would quickly have melted your cast iron stove or steel fireplace insert.

Then the king saw four climb out of the fire, and out onto the floor area totally unharmed. However, how did he recognize the Son of God as being the fourth person? Up to this point in the narrative there has been no mention of God's Son. From where did he learn about God having a Son? Also how could he know what He might look like? Perhaps Daniel had mentioned the Son, for surely his vast Holy Spirit inspired knowledge of Scripture must have included that fact. Or perhaps it was God Himself who planted the idea into the king's mind. Here again, a number of translators have chosen to tell us that the king saw someone resembling one of their gods. Then in verse 26 we find the king again accepting the boys as servants of the "most high".

Apparently there were many highly placed people in attendance to see this punishment as well as the miracle that followed, that is the emerging of the boys fully clothed, yet freed from their bounds, and without a speck of evidence as to their ordeal. Then the king paid tribute to their God, and their unyielding faith in His power. Finally, not only did he promote the boys to higher positions, but he also decreed that anyone who spoke in any way critical or disrespectful of their God would suffer terrible death, including their homes being destroyed. This would render the violator's family homeless and probably destitute. What a shame that he didn't continue to remember this Great God as he reverted back into worship of himself and his idol gods. Before we move on, here is sort of a "postscript" and summary that contains several additional observations that should make the foundry concept and other evidences more plausible.

1. The fact that those foundry workers who fueled the fire, raked the coals, and managed the molds that formed the molten metal into useful objects, all had to work very close to the fire. They worked for many hours at a time in closer proximity to the fire than the strong soldiers needed to have been in order to accurately throw the boys into the fire. This indicates that there had to be a different reason why they died.
2. In verse 22 we learn that it was "urgent" that they be thrown into the fire as soon as possible. Because the furnace most likely was already very hot due to the normal work that went on there, it wouldn't take long to make it that one seventh hotter.
3. As I consider the crucible, which was an essential instrument involving the normal activity, it's very likely that it was way too small to hold 3 bodies. This is because of the

heaviness of the metals which limited the amount they could manually manipulate the pouring process with the necessary precision. The metal couldn't flow very far in the mold before it would cool to where it would not properly penetrate the intricacies of the mold. Thus the crucible would not have been big enough to hold 3 bodies. It's likely the crucible was moved out of the way so that it would not interfere with the simplicity and assured effectiveness of the punishment mission.

4. This strongly suggests that the soldiers did not throw the boys into the fire from the foundry floor where the workers survived quite well even closer to it than the soldier needed to have been. Lacking any other feasible reason for their death. Therefore they most likely climbed to the roof and dropped the boys down the chimney. Such high heat and large fire would require a large flue. For such an operation it could have been around 24 inches or more in diameter. This was large enough to send the boys down either head or feet first directly into the center of the fire. The fire was in a circular bed probably about 8 feet in diameter. This size based on the crucible being about 4 feet in outside diameter and needing about 2 feet of fire all around it so that the flames would fully heat the sides and therefore heat the whole crucible more evenly. A fire that big with the crucible removed was sure to fully accommodate three bodies dropped into its center.
5. Obviously the soldiers death did not occur after they threw in either of the first two, or else they would stopped before the third was thrown in. It all happened after all three were dealt with. They either peeked down the chimney to see that all went well, or they were exposed them to 2000+° F gases, or there occurred an unfavorable gust of wind. Exposure even for a second either way to the 2000+° F would have killed them.
6. A potentially confirming clue that might support this theory is found in how Scripture describes their actions. In verse 22 we are told that the men "took up" these boys and verse 22 we are told that the boys "fell" into the furnaces. It's a strange way of expressing their having been picked up and thrown into the fire from the floor area from where, we have proven that the soldiers couldn't have been burned unto death. This "taken up" and "fell" fit the chimney idea.

There is another point that is worth making about this matter. Those who are in the business of finding errors in our inerrant Bible will, if they haven't already, find that this almost universally

agreed to interpretation of seven times cannot be true. Those who see this absurdity shake their fists toward heaven in glee, having found an “indisputable” error. However, those who see the truth most likely described, will be able to refute their persuasive satanic claim. If putting Satan in this act seems too aggressive, consider the following. Just about all of the great universities, such as Princeton, Yale, and Harvard were originally Bible teaching believing schools. Today the “Theologians” that fill their departments of Theology are hostile to the teachings of the Bible. Many have received their doctorates in theology by composing theses that center on so called biblical errors. Through Satan’s guidance they have each taken a systematic approach in which to seek errors. This is what they call “higher criticism”. There are 14, or more such divisions. They include Historical Criticism, Literal Criticism, Source Criticism, Form Criticism, Traditional Criticism, Redaction Criticism, Statistical Criticism, Economical Criticism, Rhetorical Criticism, Narrative Criticism, Psychological Criticism, Socio-scientific Criticism, Post-Modernist Criticism, and Feminist Exegesis Criticism. As we can see, Satan has left no stone unturned in order to discredit the Bible.

Verses 29 and 30

“29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.”

The meaning of these verses is self-evident. The king was exceedingly impressed by the great God, the impossible things He could do, and the absolute unyielding faith the 3 boys had in this God. Could this demanding of speech restrictions be the origin of “political correctness” that we suffer from in our day when the evil elite who govern us determine what we suppose a thing, or are allowed to say or not say? While death is not yet the penalty in this country, a violation can ruin ones career and reputation.

Chapter 4

This chapter is unique in all of Scripture in that it was written by the pagan, that is king Nebuchadnezzar himself.

Verses 1-9

“¹ Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. ² I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. ³ How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation. ⁴ I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: ⁵ I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. ⁶ Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. ⁷ Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. ⁸ But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying, ⁹ O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.”

In the first verse we read of how the king gave credit and praise to the Great God and His everlasting kingdom. This was in the context of what had happened earlier when God through Daniel revealed the statue dream and what it meant. However, in verse 2 he tells about a second dream, one he remembered. Therefore he merely asked for its interpretation. He presented this disturbing dream to the whole mixed assembly of his wise men. How strange it was that none of them even ventured a guess as to what it meant. This reluctance was God instigated for His greater glory when His greatly loved agent did provide the interpretation. Remembering the violent consequences that almost befell them regarding the earlier dream, they were afraid to give their opinion even to this request to only interpret a revealed dream. Apparently he gave all

of the others the opportunity before asking Daniel. Here he suddenly blasphemes by saying that Daniel had the spirit of the holy gods in him.

In verse 9 we have the first clear concrete evidence that Daniel was in fact the master of all the magicians, which means all of the entire collection of wise men. Here again, he speaks of the holy gods, as being in Daniel. As we can see from all of this, he still didn't get it, or else he keeps losing it!

Verses 10-18

“¹⁰ Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. ¹¹ The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: ¹² the leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. ¹³ I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven; ¹⁴ he cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: ¹⁵ nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in grass of the earth: ¹⁶ let his heart be changed from man's and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. ¹⁷ This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. ¹⁸ This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou O Belteshazzar declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.”

Then the king described the troubling dream as best as he can remember it. What he saw was a very tall and great tree in the midst of the earth. The tree kept growing until it reached the heavens and could be seen across the whole earth. Verse 12 indicates that its fruit was abundant

and provided shade, comfort and food for all flesh, meaning man and animals. In verse 13 he saw a “watcher”. This is a Chaldean word meaning, “a guardian angel”. This was a God-Authored event where God began His work of drawing Old Neb to a saving faith. The “Holy” one was a Theophany, that is the Son whom he saw and heard. In verse 14 we read that this “watcher” commanded that the tree be cut down, but care be taken to preserve the stump (Verse 15) even with a band of iron or brass. This means that the stump will be cut off, but not totally rejected or dethroned. His kingdom would be preserved so that after 7 years he and it will be restored. Scripture appears to give us ample evidence that all who are saved are blessed by having a guardian angel with us at all times.

Because of God’s foreknowledge, I believe that for all who will eventually become saved are assigned such an angel at the moment of birth, and that he is with us to the end of our lives and possibly even longer. This then was also true for Nebuchadnezzar. In his case, God had a great deal of serious preconditioning, and this would be the final act that broke the back of his unbelief. Surely that must have been comforting to Daniel, but not yet necessarily to the king. It is in verse 15b where we realize that the tree is the king. Then the words go from “tree” to “his” portion to be among the beasts of the grass. He will, for 7 years, eat grass like an animal, as verse 17 tells us. Also, for that 7 years his spiritual heart will be changed to that of a beast. In verse 17 the king recognizes that this dream and its fulfillment is by the decree of the Most High to be carried out by the watchers for the greater glory of God. Notice now it’s more than one watcher or officiating angel. The king, in these verses vacillates between his gods and the Great God. In this verse he speaks of the greatness of the Great God, yet in verse 18, he again claims that Daniel has the spirit of the holy “gods”.

Verses 19-29

“19 Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof, to thine enemies. 20 The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; 21 whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the

beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: 22 it is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. 23 And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; 24 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king: 25 that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. 27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility. 28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of the twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.”

Now Daniel interprets the dream. How sad it must have been for him to do so, because of what it meant for the man whom he had grown to greatly respect, in spite of his crazy dangerous ways. The king saw that Daniel was greatly troubled to have to report this to him, that is what he would go through. So the king said something like “don’t worry about me Daniel, just give it to me straight, I can handle it.” Daniel starts out by pointing out that the dream is for the benefit of the king’s enemies who will glory in what you will go through. Then he describes the magnificence of the tree and how its leaves were fair providing much shade and comfort for many; how its fruit fed multitudes; and how even its branches provided a haven for the fowl. Then in verse 22 Daniel begins to equate the king with the tree and how great he had grown in his power and how his benevolent rule had spread gratitude and respect across the entire earth. In other words, the king’s governance had been a blessing to all of his people. This seems very inconsistent with his expressed tyrannical cruel, and egotistic ways, yet it must have been true.

However, God who formed the dream, as well as Daniel, must have seen the other aspects of his character. Because of this, and because he was destined to be saved, God had to purge him of his negative and prideful ways. Then comes the “punchline” which confirms this. The watcher, that is the Theophany said, cut it down and destroy it, but save the stump by whatever means necessary. Recall a similar analogy in Isaiah 1:1 regarding the “root of Jesse.” In verse 23b the subject switches from the tree to the man who had been symbolized by the tree. It then tells us that his portion will be the grass as with the beasts of the field for 7 years! This was scoffed at as absurd by Bible critics until not too long ago when such a malady was determined to be real. The name given to it Lycanthropy. It’s where a man believes he is an animal and takes on its characteristics such as eating grass. There have been modern examples of this sickness.

This finished Daniel’s interpretation calling it a “decree of the Most High”. In verse 25, Daniel goes on describing his fate. He would dwell not in his castle, but with the beasts of the field and eat grass as do the oxen. Seven times means seven years. The “till” introduces the answer as to why which has already been alluded to in verse 17. It was so he would really know that the Most High God does rule and control all things. This, of course is a fundamental belief that is ingrained in every saved soul. The king had vacillated between believing in his gods and in the God that Daniel had shown him. Thus would now spend 7 years dedicated for the purpose of punishing him, purging him of pride, teaching him humility in the extreme, and finally drawing him to a genuinely uncompromising faith in the Creator God.

Therefore he would be saved and become “Old Saint Neb” which is the title of another commentary. This verse 27 is Daniels desperate plea for the king to immediately correct all of his evil ways as a possible way to preclude, or at least soften the blows of this prophecy. While the description of the king who is likened to the tree indicates his numerous earthly merits, it’s obvious that he had spiritual faults that were most severe and in need of purging. Daniel mentions his need to show mercy to the poor, and “break off” all of his sins into righteousness. As we have seen, and will again see, it was largely his self-glorification and an intense pride that needed to be eliminated from his soul. This is a sin that wells up in all of us at various times, be it in a born-again Christian or not. Thankfully God has chosen not to use this form of punishment during this present age. At least we don’t hear of it.

Verses 28-33

“28 All of this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? 31 While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. 32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.

We should keep in mind the fact that this whole Chapter 4 was authored by Nebuchadnezzar in his own words. Of course, it was written through God’s permission and control.

All this came to pass just as God had fashioned the dream that Daniel had so accurately interpreted. However, God waited 12 months before He caused it to happen. This was God’s expression of mercy and patience whereby He gave the king a chance to repent and set things right as Daniel had pleaded for him to do. Instead he kept on doing what was right in his own eyes, without any real “repentance”. All of humanity suffers from very similar maladies, that is not “repenting” from ways we know are wrong, and not really expecting to “pay the price.” As an example let’s look for a moment at our diets. Much of today’s food intake for the vast majority consist of such things as drinking colas, eating prepared and frozen food, such as TV dinners; not avoiding genetically modified “foods”; eating factory raised beef, chicken, and eggs; drinking pasteurized milk, eating low fat everything as well as “farm raised” sea food; and making carbohydrates such as pasta, potatoes, cereals, and bread as major components of our meals, along with HFCS, soft drinks and other sugar loaded “treats”. Deep frying with vegetables oils and cooking or defrosting with microwaves also contribute to eating unhealthy foods. Compound this with the fact that these “foods” are mostly stripped of most essential

minerals, vitamins, amino acids and other nutrients and you have the so-called “perfect storm” in the context of years of sickness and earlier death.

So how does this relate as an analogy regarding the king’s behavior? It relates only in a tangential way regarding cause and effect. When nothing predicted happened to him immediately, or even for a year after the prediction, he probably began to believe that whatever good he had done was enough so that God had spared him. Perhaps he thought that it was because of the magnificence of his achievements. Remember he made the hanging garden of Babylon which were one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. Admittedly this analogy for the most part is a feeble one, except for one significant aspect. For instance, people can eat for years in the poisonous ways described, and remain complacent and in disbelief that there are in fact debilitating effects going on and growing in their bodies. Then quite suddenly, that is from their perspective, they discover that they have cancer, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, obesity, liver or kidney problems, or any other of an endless number of modern times ailments.

How often do the cause and effect become accurately recognized? Hardly ever, until very recently when doctors have grudgingly admitted that diet and lifestyle just may contribute to these problems. It has been less than 20 years since allopathic doctors stopped scoffing at this cause and effect relationship. I know this from extensive experience at that time when I had a “terminal” cancer. That is why I rail on this issue at every opportunity. It seriously grieves me as I see the ignorance, apathy, disbelief, and general refusal of most people to do anything except “that which is comfortable and pleasing in their own eyes and mouths”. Thus the analogy is most relevant the longer cause and effect are separated in time.

Verse 30 makes it clear as to what triggered the “cutting down” of the tree. God had given him a 12 month reprieve to change his way. Yet at the end of that time he chose to brag (exhibit great pride) regarding his magnificent achievements along with his great power honor and majesty. Those who read Scripture know full well how a great fall is proceeded by pride (Proverbs 11:2, 16:18; 29:23, etc.)

Well the tree finally did fall. Even as he was speaking, those prideful words. God informed him that what had been predicted would now take place. The kingdom was taken away from him, but only for 7 years. Think about this. What is the likelihood of such a powerful monarch being totally removed of his power, while not having conquered or had it been usurped by one of their numerous enemies? For 7 years it was preserved for him. How? By divine appointment. We might say that God was determined to save his soul. Those years of terrible deprivation were to not only to punish him, but also to totally remove pride and bring him to extreme humility, as well as a keen understanding and worship of the One Great God, at the total expulsion of his former idol gods.

It was God's will and it was achieved. But how was this vast empire held in tact for so long without his iron fist leadership? We are not told specifically. However, it's evident God used Daniel greatly for this purpose. Remember, while the king lived, Daniel was the highest authority under him. God filled Daniel with all of the wisdom, discernment, knowledge, understanding and strength needed for this monumental effort, and no one questioned his authority as the king's number one under him. Clearly he was an able administrator and the many governors respected the position and authority the king had given Daniel. Daniel's strong connection to the High God was by then known throughout the empire. This is evidenced by the decree the king posted throughout the empire which made it a capital offence for anyone to speak ill of Daniel's God. It is evident also that the entire military establishment must have remained loyal.

Verse 31 tells us that "a voice from heaven" spoke to the king telling of what would then happen to him. Verse 32 is a continuation of this message from heaven elaborating on what condition he would live under those 7 years. Then there was the "until" which gives the reason for the transformation. It will ultimately cause him to know the power of God, and become a saint!

Verses 33-37

"33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. 34 And at the end of the days I

Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? 36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counselors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor 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 grotesque beast he became. The instant he spoke those self-flattering words, his human persona disappeared and he took on animal characteristics. His hair turned to feather like growth, as did his nails become like claws. This is all the king tells us about it at this time. As we read, we see that verse 32 is from the voice from heaven. In verse 33 it is the king speaking in the third person. Then in verse 34, he speaks again but in the first person, that is at the end of the seven years. Then he continues as the first person voice to the end of Chapter 4, which is generally considered to have all been written by the king, of course under God’s intimate guidance. His punishment and his spiritual conditioning process were completed as predicted.

Then he immediately came to his senses, but now he was filled with a true understanding of God, His power and His purpose. He praised and honored the heavenly God, finally recognizing Him to be the Eternal God, whose reign will never end. In verse 35 he continues this exaltation and absolute power over all creation. In verse 36 he marvels how his glorious kingdom was returned to him. That his counselors and lords all expressed even greater loyalty than before. He ends his discourse by again extoling the King of heaven, recognizing the absolute truth of His ways, and how His hatred of pride causes Him to abase those who express it. Abase: “shphal” “to humble, put down, subdue, humiliate” It is evident that he knew well why God so treated him, and he knew that the righteous God had good reason to do so. That’s the end of his story and any biblical evidence of what he did after he was saved. History tells us that he died less than a year

after his restoration. Because of his sincere impassioned expression of faith, and gratitude, salvation it was imputed as it had been for Abraham. He now resides in heaven.

Before we move on, I am prompted to probe into some aspects of what may have been his physical situation during those years. Babylon city was a huge fortress protected by an impenetrable outer and an inner wall. Herodotus claimed that compound was 15 miles square. This may be an exaggeration. There is a to-scale map based regarding archeological findings that indicates that the wall was about 10 miles long and contained an area of about 3000 acres. Therefore that outdoors was a safe place from his external enemies. He obviously had no intra city enemies, at least none that would hurt him in his animal state. Even so, no one knew the manner of his mental state and what he might do to himself. Given that the Euphrates and a series of canals flowed through the city, who could be sure that he would not seek to drown himself, or do other things that might harm him. Because of this he was either under heavy 24 hour guard where ever he chose to wander, or else he was simply tethered to a post hereby keeping him where even his keeper, probably Daniel, was close to him. It's evident that Daniel loved him, grieved for him, and was attentive to him throughout those 7 years. If during those years he had any recollection of who he was and who he had been, his mental and emotional suffering must have been continual agony. All who will come to a saving faith should realize that they may be subjected to some form of suffering in order to diminish their pride or some other major type of evil that characterizes their way of life. I say this from personal experience as well as the example that God has here given us.

One final comment, regarding Nebuchadnezzar. Secular evidence about him comes from a wealth of information recorded by him on stiles and other forms of inscriptions. What they reveal is a very religious peace loving man. It's true that he assembled a powerful army, deployed it brilliantly, subduing, for the most part, the Assyrians and others who had been his nation's enemies for centuries. As can be seen by the magnificence of his achievements in Babylon, his main focus seems to have been on making the city the most secure, self-contained, prosperous, and comfortable place this side of Eden. Even those incredible hanging gardens are said to have been created to comfort his homesick Persian wife Amytitis. He finished and / or restored what his father had begun, especially the outer perimeter wall. The information on the

stiles, as authored by him, speak of a very religious man. Most of these writings show him praying and exalting one of the major pagan gods to whom he gave much credit for his greatness. This did not appear as a humbling credit. It seems that he somehow separated his ego and pride from the power of his gods, claiming his achievements because of his own greatness. This is a strong message from God, that those who are greatly committed to one of Satan's false gods, are extremely difficult to convert. That they are so deeply committed to a faith is, to the world a beneficial attribute. However, turning that commitment to the True God is something that requires an extremely large amount of God's involvement through a great deal of imposed suffering so as to affect the purging of the old misdirected faith to a true saving faith.

The end of Chapter 4, the one that Nebuchadnezzar wrote is also the end of what Scripture reveals to us about him. The next two chapters deal with historical events that occurred at the very end of the empire. The king died in about 562 BC at the age of about 72. He had finished all of his conquests at age 28, when in 606 BC he took Judea on his way back to Babylon after having conquered the Assyrians and Egyptians in the battle at Carchemish. Except for his dealing with Judea, there is no evidence that he engaged in wars or other conquests after his return to Babylon. The rest of his life was spent growing, fortifying and making Babylon the greatest city of the ancient world.

His son Amel-Marduk (Evil Merdoch) (2Kings 25:27, Jeremiah 52:31) succeeded him. He couldn't handle it and was replaced 2 years later through an army coup by his own son-in-law. He too was weak and also shirked his duties, only to be ousted by his also weak son. He too only lasted a few months which caused another military coup and the ascension, by election of a non-relative named Nabonidus. He ruled for 17 years, but chose to pursue other interests in Arabia rather than in Babylon. To take his place, he installed his son Belshazzar as co-regent. That brings us to the events recorded in this next chapter.

Chapter 5

Verses 1-4

“¹ Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. ² Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein. ³ Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them. ⁴ They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.”

As noted above, Belshazzar, the son of Nebonidus was the last king of Babylon at the time of Darius and Cyrus conquest. As he is described he was the epitome of decadence which had taken over the country after Nebuchadnezzar’s passing. The scene we find in this chapter is clear evidence of abject decadence, at least prevailed in the palace and among the 1000 lords that rules the 120 segments of the empire. In verse two what he did must have effectually ended God’s patience and long suffering with this unworthy fourth successor, that was twice removed from the great king. We might say that God said “enough already”. This debauchery was sickening, but the last straw was when he used the sacred temple vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had so respectfully preserved and protected. Not only were they used by Belshazzar, but also by his wives, and even his concubines. Then they further abased them by using them to pay homage to their various idol gods! That did it! In the midst of this blasphemous behavior, God sent him a final and fatal message, and did so in a most unique and frightening way. We learn later that the Darius who conquered Babylon, had 120 governors of provinces, and that Darius the Great of the Battle of Marathon ruled over 127 provinces.

Verses 5-9

“⁵ In the same hour came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. ⁶ Then the king’s countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. ⁷ The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to

the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. 8 Then came in the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. 9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished,

The next thing we are told is so incredible that unless you are a firm believer in the inerrancy of the Holy Bible, you may find it most difficult to believe, or take literally. This took place in the throne room, a great hall about 175 feet long and seventy feet wide. Many candlesticks lined the walls to provide the needed light. Behind one of them where the light was the brightest, a hand, or part of a hand appeared where the fingers scratched out on the plaster wall a terrifying message. Scripture says that when he saw this "his loins were loosed". I believe that what this means is that he had a sudden case of diarrhea. Who wouldn't? It was the bodiless hand, that generated the terror, even before the meaning of its message was known. Of course the message was written in code which no one there was able to decipher. He called in all of his wise men, and they too were unable to understand what it said. He was so frightened that he offered who ever could, and would decipher the message, not only be given vast riches, but also to have direct rule under him of the entire kingdom. His countenance was so changed due to his fear so as to astonish those around him. He knew that he was in much greater dodo than what was in his pants.

Verses 10-16

"10 Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let they countenance be changed: 11 there is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; 12 forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understating, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Beltshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation. 13 Then was Daniel

brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? 14 I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. 15 And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not show the interpretation of the thing: 16 and I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

In this verse 10, we find the old queen far better informed than this inept fool. This queen was not Belshazzar's wife, for his "wives" were at the banquet. Heroditis claims that this "queen" had been the wife of Nebuchadnezzar's son Evil Merdoch. He tells us that she, being old was not in the great hall, but heard of the problem from her chamber.

There is no evidence that I have found that suggests that Daniel did not continue to be the chief of the wise men throughout these years after Nebuchadnezzar's death until the time of Cyrus and Darius. What is implied here is that Belshazzar and his predecessors thought little of their "priests" and simply kept them around perhaps out of tradition, or maybe for fear of offending their gods? However, we learn later that he did call on them prior to learning of Daniel. How could he not know of the astounding miraculous events that had taken place in about 604BC, about 65 years earlier? Easy. Look at the knowledge of our history in the minds of most Americans. Satan's direct dumbing-down strategy in the schools combined with selected and twisted reporting and withholding of truth, have rendered the population grossly deceived and ignorant of fundamental truths. Belshazzar's ignorance of truths, was not too much different. We must give great credit to the queen for probably being the only one of the "elite" to have been sharp enough to have read, understood and appreciated what happened, and who was responsible, and who could decipher the message.

In verse 11 she reveals who it was that interpreted those strange long past events. However, she had not absorbed the spiritually crucial fact regarding the Great God, and so her report gave

credit to the “spirit of the holy gods”. She pointed out that Daniel was appointed as Master of all of the wise men. We have been given no reason to believe that he wasn’t even then their master. It’s evident that after Nebuchadnezzar died, the relationship Daniel had as friend, confidant, number 2 man etc. did not continue with any of the kings successors.

In verse 12, she finishes her description of Daniel’s unique abilities, and suggested that he be called in to solve the dilemma. In verse 12, this soon-to-fall monarch speaks to Daniel in a deliberately, demeaning way. There must have been more that the queen told him, given that he then knew much of Daniel’s history. It was demeaning because of his puffed up haughtiness and air of superiority as he addressed him as the “captured Jew”. In verse 14 he merely repeats what we know the queen had told him. Apparently, as revealed in verse 15, the wise men, all but Daniel, had already been called in and failed to solve the problem. As their chief, why wasn’t he also called as a matter of course?

Many commentators assume that by then he was at least 83 years old, and perhaps only a titular head of the wise men. His age of 83 is derived from the belief that he was about 18 when he interpreted the first dream, a year after having been taken to Babylon at about age 17. When Belshazzar spoke of knowing about his abilities in verse 16, his “knowing” about Daniel was a most recent event gained from the “queen mother”. Then fears returned to him. He called for Daniel in desperation, promising him great wealth, and a third of his kingdom. He might just as well promised the whole kingdom, for it was too late for earthly rewards, bribery, or anything else, the fact of which only Daniel knew at that moment.

Verses 17-24

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. 18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor: 19 and for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they

took his glory from him: 21 and he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild ass: 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. 22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; 23 but hast lifted 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, has thou not glorified. 24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.”

Daniel had already been aware of the commotion as well as the despicable nature of this king. It could even be, that because of his closeness to God, and his keen knowledge of His ways, Daniel had anticipated that God's patience would soon end. He probably surmised that what was suddenly happening was how God had chosen to end the reign this blasphemous king and his empire. With a just attitude of disdain, Daniel refused these rewards, but agreed to read the writing anyway. Before doing so, he extolled Nebuchadnezzar, as having been a real king. Then he went on telling him how Old Neb's pride was profoundly humbled and brought him to understand the truth of the real God to his everlasting blessing. In verse 23, Daniel tells Belshazzar how seriously he has blasphemed the true God and failed to show any humility. Apparently, the visible portion of the hand that did the writing disappeared.

How might we explain this visible hand absent any attached arm or body? This was probably an angel sent by God, to manifest as a man. He was instructed what to write and to do so by not making himself visible except his fingers and a portion of his hand. This could also have been the Son of God, as a Theophany, but not very likely, because it wasn't the type of first person message that generally characterized His appearance. This was a message sent by God via a messenger. To add some credibility to this idea, consider Jesus' appearance among the Apostles in the secured room. Can we deny that if He so chose, He could have revealed only some portion of Himself? God, to serve His purpose, gives such appearing and disappearing to angels whenever He has reason to do so.

Verse 25-28

“²⁵ And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHAR’SIN ²⁶ This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. ²⁷ TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. ²⁸ PERES: Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”

The meaning of the message is spelled out clearly in these verses. They tell us that God had ended Belshazzar’s reign as well as the entire dynasty. He was determined to have been that much lacking in his leadership. There God had given the empire over to be swallowed up by the Persian / Mede Empire. Could that be what will also happen to the United States by Russia, China and / or Islam? Why couldn’t any of the other wise men interpret the writing?

Dr. Missler noted that the Talmud suggests that the writing was vertical and backwards. The whole message as written consisted of only 10 Aramaic letters. It was such that any experienced scrabble or crossword puzzle player proficient in the Aramaic language might have deciphered in a short time. With God micro managing this entire event, I believe He clouded their minds so as to cause Daniel to be brought into action. This would have restored his stature and was one of the reasons that set the stage for him to be later highly respected by many, the other Magi’s especially by both Darius and Cyrus. Perhaps the cloud that God placed over their minds manifested as fear of being wrong, or for the possibility that bringing bad tidings to the king would cause him to kill the messengers.

Verses 29-31

“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. ³⁰ In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. ³¹ And Darius the Median took the kingdom being about threescore and two years old.”

The condemning message notwithstanding, the king was exceedingly grateful to Daniel and commanded that he be decked out in grandeur and become the third ruler of the kingdom.

Apparently he was to become the number 3 man. Who was number two? He was, in as much as his father was number one, having given him the number two spot as co-regent while he was out of the country. He sure didn't last long after learning what the message said. It's most likely that one of his own followers killed him. All of the 1000-plus people in the hall heard this message attesting to the king's ineptness and total failure. This would have angered many who saw themselves brought down with him. While their fate was uncertain, they knew that it would not be good. Probably one or more pounced on him, killing him in vengeance.

This is far more likely than it having been done by Darius. He had no reason to, and would have probably have preferred to capture him as a trophy of his victory. Remember the Persian / Mede army employed a brilliant strategy by diverting the Euphrates, thus lowering the depth of water enough so that they could pass under the hanging iron grillage that under normal flow condition would have I effect made such a breach impossible. The Medians secured their take over without there having been any fighting. Most of the City's population didn't even know what happened until three days later. This is an excellent example of how inept, careless and complacent was the leadership of Babylon. Those who are really aware of what is going on can see that we are experiencing a genuine reenactment of this by our present corrupt decadent treasonous government's failure going on here in what was once a great and relatively competent government.

The policies and activities of this government are hastening our demise as a formerly free prosperous and intelligent people. Look at how effective government has been in discouraging good education, that which would produce people who can think. Dewey, the self-proclaimed communist and "father" of the American Education knew that independent thinkers would spoil the collective, that is the communist totalitarian agenda. As a result, several generations have been victimized to where the Socialist/Communist way of thinking is by far numerically dominant. Look also for starters, at what government has done to the economy, to free enterprise, to the middle class, to human health and to the protection of the legal residents of this nation. Effectually it's exactly what God predicted for this very near end of the end times. Many people ask where in Scripture is America mentioned, especially regarding these end times. America is not found in Scripture, because it will not play any significant role. It will have been

destroyed from within, and probably also by other powers who see this weakening as the opportunity to further plunder and destroy what's left of the "Great Satan." It will simply become even lower than any of the third world countries that can only look on absent any ability to influence anything.

Verse 31 tells of the age of Darius when he entered Babylon. In order to determine who this historical Darius was, let us examine the relevant portion of the chronology to see what it can tell us.

1. Babylon was conquered by Darius in 536 BC. The evidence of this date taken totally from Scripture, involves a very complex study of the timing of various events identified in Scripture. That study has been carefully achieved and recorded in "Chronology of the Old Testament" by Dr. Floyd Nolan Jones, a very astute Biblicist.
2. This was the Darius who had 120 provinces and died at age 62, according to Daniel 5:31.
3. Next we can turn to the Book of Esther and discover that Ahasuerus had 127 provinces. That Ahasuerus is most often referred to Xerxes who was known to have been the son of Darius the Great.
4. At this point, we can go to secular history to learn a great deal more about both Darius the Great and Xerxes. While not found directly in Scripture, there is a vast amount reliable historical evidence that is not contrary to God's Word. We need only to accept 3 portions of well-documented facts for our current purpose. 1st, is that in 490 BC Darius the Great fought Greece and lost to them in the Battle of Marathon. He died 4 years later. 2nd, that 10 years after the battle, his son Xerxes fought Greece and was also defeated, this time in the Battles of Thermopoli, Salmus and Plataea. And 3rd, that according to history, he was born in 550 BC. Subtracting 486 from 550, we learn that he was 64 years old when he died.
5. If Darius the Great was the Darius of Daniel, then in 536 when Babylon was conquered, he was then only 550-536, or 14 years old. Again we are told in Daniel 5:31 that he was about 62 years old when he conquered Babylon. $536 + 62 = 598$ BC when Daniel's Darius was born. This clue indicates that if he was Darius the Great he would have been 108 years old (598-490) when he fought the Battle of Marathon, which is unlikely.

Approaching the issue from either direction makes it quite evident that Daniel's Darius is not the 490 BC Darius the Great who fought the battle of Marathon. It seems most likely, based on this analysis, that Daniel's Darius (Ahasuerus) was the father of Darius the Great. Then later, we find Darius the Great Empire consisted of 7 more provinces. It's compelling to conclude that he inherited a 120 province empire which he expanded, thereby acquiring the title of Darius the Great. For a broader and in-depth study of Darius the Great and Xerxes, refer to the Christian Musing study called "Hadassah", the Hebrew name for Esther.

Chapter 6

Verses 1-3

“¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; ² and over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. ³ Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”

Apparently the second world kingdom as of 539 BC consisted of 120 provinces, for that is how many princes had been assigned as governors. Again, we might recall that at the time of Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther, 53 years later, than the events of Chapter 6, there were 127 provinces and governors. That was around the year 486BC when his father Darius the Great died and Ahasuerus became king. This could lead us to conclude that the Empire by then had grown having added 7 more conquests. These added by the Darius who because of this was then called Darius the Great.

What did this Darius see in Daniel, this 83+ year old wise man? Was it entirely because of his highly respected life about which he learned regarding the great spiritual and administrative service he had performed for Nebuchadnezzar? It was what he heard about the God-ordained great accuracy of dream interpretations that caused his high respect for Daniel. It also may have other attributes of which we have not been told. However, was all of this an adequate qualification for being assigned number two over the entire kingdom as the number one president (emir) over two other presidents who presided over 120 governors?

The 3 presidents served as both intermediators between the governors and the king, and also as “watch dogs” to make sure that all due taxes were collected and that no harm was being done to the king and his supreme authority. Their duties most likely went even further, that is to detect theft, corruption, insurrection, law violations, etc., before they became serious. As number one over the other two, Daniel had the added responsibility of keeping even them serving the king honestly and completely. Thus Daniel was the most trusted, and powerful man in the entire empire, just under Darius. Obviously, the king was a good judge of character and competence.

Lastly, probably had to do with his well demonstrated closeness to the Great God, and the fact that both he and Cyrus had learned how through one of his prophets, that this God had named Cyrus to be the great king over 100 years before Cyrus was born! (Isaiah 44:28). “That the king should have no damage” indicates that they both had great confidence in Daniel to faithfully and competently serve the king’s interests. Verse 3 somewhat summarizes the above comments. All of these attributes boil down to Daniel’s “excellent spirit.”

Verses 4-9

“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. 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. 6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. 7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.”

We see here again another indication of how the wise men hated Daniel, starting when Nebuchadnezzar assigned him over them. Thus we see that regardless of Daniel’s humble, God-crediting character, and even his highly evident superior qualifications, they failed to lessen their jealousy, envy and bitterness towards him. The wise men, under Darius were not those of Babylon. They were a hereditary group that served their monarchs continuously from the beginning of the Achaemenes Empire around 700 BC. Therefore it is evident why this long established group also had such animosity against Daniel. To them, he was simply an old Jew who had served over their counterparts during the enemy’s reign. To them, he was someone to be eliminated so as to restore their former premiere elite status.

Apparently, they watched him very carefully so as to find a cause against him. However, his superb character, ability, and conduct gave them nothing to say against him. In verse 5 we learn

that they finally found one “chink in his armor”. His God was not their god. They soon saw that he prayed to his God only. This sparked an idea that was sure to do him in. Given that Scripture tells us that a few of the 120 governors, and perhaps others involved, petitioned the king to declare a proclamation stating that anyone who will petition any god, other than theirs, or any man other than the king, should suffer death in the lion’s den. I suppose that the king was mostly preoccupied with many more important things. However, given this seemingly honest, outpouring, of love and worship-like loyalty to him, which he presumed was real and absent any noticeable hidden agenda, he signed the decree. As we have learned from other studies, especially in the Book of Esther, that once a decree was signed even the king himself could not rescind it.

Verses 10-15

“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. ¹¹ Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹² Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king’s decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. ¹³ Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. ¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. ¹⁵ Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king established may be changed.”

Now we find Daniel, who knowing about the decree, went to his house, and opened windows so that all who wanted too, could see him and what he did. He knew that the princes and wise men had influenced the king to issue the decree for no purpose other than to get Daniel out of the way. He knew of their resentments regarding his appointment as number one man under Darius.

He had suffered the same resentment by Nebuchadnezzar's wise men for most of 65 years. At least back then, there was some short term recognition and appreciation of the fact that he saved all of their lives by his God-given understanding of the king's dream. Apparently this new group of enemies could not see why the king had given this old Jew and former slave any such consideration. As we learned, Darius saw much much more in Daniel than anyone else did. Therefore much of Darius' motivation came from God's hidden influence on his heart.

This matter regarding the petition seemed on the surface to be reasonable. After all, it would last only 30 days. That may have seemed strange to him, as well as it should have. Why only 30 days of such adoration? He missed the significance, which to us with hindsight can see that it was for a singular malicious purpose. They didn't want it as a permanent encumbrance, or added aspect of the pagan worship. They knew that they could easily trap Daniel during that time, after which all would be returned to normal, and he would be gone.

Verses 10-17

"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. 11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. 14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king established may be changed. 16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17 And a

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

As noted above, Daniel saw through their ploy and went immediately to his house and openly prayed to his God, deliberately giving them the evidence of his violation of the decree. They wasted no time reporting that Daniel was violating the decree. Of course Darius was livid toward himself for having issued this irrevocable decree which by then he realized was clearly for the purpose of eliminating Daniel. He struggled the rest of the day trying to somehow save this man he so respected only to be reminded by the accuser that it was getting late and high time to carry out the punishment. In compliance to his decree Darius had Daniel tossed into the lion's den. We find next the incredible comment that the king made to Daniel. He actually believed in the supreme power of Daniel's God to the extent that he told Daniel that his God would save him through His miraculous power. The deed was done and the stone cover sealed so that there would be no question as to the legitimacy of the execution. We can safely conclude that the "den" was a pit rather than a cave. We usually assume that a lion's den is a cave with an iron gate or door. However for actually keeping lions, a cave would not have been practical or safe for obvious reasons. Verse 23 confirms this, where we are told that Daniel was taken "up" out of the den.

Verses 18-24

“18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, who thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king live for ever. 22 My God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me, and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. 24 And the

king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, then, 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.”

Clearly the king was very distraught over the situation refusing his usual sleep inducing music. Instead he “fasted” all night. Here the word “fasting” is a translation of the Chaldean word “tuath” which can mean “twisting” and comes from the root word “tavah” which means to “spin”. This is the only place in Scripture that this word is used for fasting. Therefore it does not mean that he simply didn’t eat all night, but instead tossed and turned throughout a sleepless night. His mind also “tossed and turned” all night, probably sometimes in prayer for Daniel, and also in great regret for having so casually signed the decree without first seeking a better understanding of why he had been so vigorously pressured into it.

As we’ll see later, he did figure it out. I suppose he got up at the crack of dawn, when the prescribed punishment was legally completed. He hurried to the den and commanded that it be opened immediately. His fearful heartfelt calling to Daniel was more like a prayer of hope rather than knowing that God had saved him. Justice and revenge came immediately to the conspirators. Who, and how many were the culprits? It doesn’t say. There probably weren’t more than 5 or 6. There couldn’t have been very many of the governors willing to have Daniel killed. It might have included or even been limited to the other 2 presidents, because they probably had more resentment toward Daniel as anyone else.

Verses 25-28

“25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. 27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

Having seen the unbelievable power of our Creator God, Darius proclaimed a God-honoring decree that the entire kingdom should tremble in fear for the God of Daniel. He went on extolling God as the eternal living God, and that His kingdom would last forever, and shall never be destroyed. That sounds like a solemn expression of what may have become a saving faith. Darius was indeed saved, and his spirit for the last 2500 years perhaps have spent much time with St. Neb's spirit discussing many things about their lives which I would very much like to hear.

While Scripture tells us that only the church saints and those faithful who die during the Tribulation (Revelation 20:6) will be kings and priests during the millennium and in the eternal kingdom of God. Therefore, neither Neb nor Darius qualify for those positions. However, if such communication in the after-life does occur, both of them will offer much sage advice to those who do. The chapter ends on a good note. Daniel prospered in the reign of both Darius and Cyrus, as well as that of Nebuchadnezzar. Try to beat that for a long God-honoring and rewarding career!

Before we leave this chapter, I believe it may be beneficial to both summarize what we have already learned about the chronology of the relevant time, but also more about which Cyrus and which Darius were the kings who reigned in that era. Among the things that make this difficult is that the names such as Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus, Xerxes, Artaxerxes are in some cases titles and not actual names. Also there were several successions of Cyruses, Dariuses, and Artaxerxes. Much of the historical data fail to identify where in chronology they appear. The following is a list of those whom are likely to be accurately defined.

1. The Darius of Daniel's time was not Darius the Great.
2. Darius the Great was the one who fought the battle of Marathon in 490BC and died in 486 BC. He was followed by his son named in Scripture as Ahasuerus. This son is also known as Xerxes I and in some places even called Darius.
3. Ahasuerus's son by Vashti was Artaxerxes. This made Esther his stepmother. He is the one who in 445 BC issued the decree to finish the temple wall, a decree that is believed

to have triggered the 483 weeks of years that ended on the very day that Jesus rode the colt of an ass into Jerusalem declaring Himself the Messiah.

4. As we can see the time line doesn't allow for Daniel's Darius to be Darius the Great. Daniel 5:31 tells us that this Darius was 62 years old when he conquered Babylon in 536. This means that he was born in 598 BC. For him to have been Darius the Great of 490 BC, he would have to have been 108 years old at that time.
5. From this we can only conclude that there was a later Darius, most likely his son who was Darius the Great. This seems to fit very well the time frame regarding the two Darius'
6. The first Persian Empire was founded by Cyrus the Great in about 550 BC and lasted about 220 years to about 330 BC. The dynasty is historically called the Achaemenes Empire named after a relatively minor king of that name who ruled Persia from about 705 BC to 675 BC. It was Cyrus the Great, (Cyrus II) a later descendant of Achaemenes who rebelled against the Median Empire which at that time controlled Persia. He conquered the Medes and greatly expanded the empire, setting in place the organization of governors under him to rule the many provinces.
7. Just how Darius the Great (Darius II) came into what seems to be a parallel kingdom with Cyrus is difficult to determine. Cyrus and Darius were related. It has been stated that Cyrus' mother was a Mede which somehow may have made them distant cousins. They were both kindred of this earlier king. Heroditus tells us that somewhere in the saga the native leadership of the Magi debated to determine which form of government was best, He tells us that they examined several forms of government including democracy, deducing that democracy was a poor choice, given that it always leads to tyranny. How very wise the wise men were! Doesn't this explain why, in these end times all nations are being coerced to or are eager to become democracies, and why this nation is crumbling before our very eyes? It's so that tyranny can prevail over the whole earth to make ready for Antichrist!
8. The Bible then speaks of Cyrus as one of the world leaders. The Daniel event occurred about 4 years after Darius conquered Babylon. The best that can be determined is that Cyrus did take over the entire empire. However, somehow by a shrewd political maneuver, he chose to share the kingdom authority with Darius. While taken over by

Cyrus, the Medes probably had a strong loyalty for Darius. To be partners with him in what we call the Persian/Mede Empire probably prevented insurrection, and other forms of debilitating unrest that would have been both costly to put down, and would have greatly reduced “tax revenue.” If one searches through the many opinions on these matters, one can find numerous historians who have a variety of other views. More on this complicated issue is included in other chapters.

Chapter 7

Chapter 6 ended much of Daniel's "hands on" historical reporting. From here on God uses him to express prophetic truths. The first portion of these are prophecies that have already come to pass. These confirm with awesome accuracy what can be found to have occurred in many reasonably reliable, historical writings. Then we find prophecies not yet fulfilled. For those who have studied the Book of Revelation, see today, right in front of our eyes, the fulfillment of these regarding the end of the end times being now played out just as prophesized! Apparently back when Belshazzar was king, Daniel had some awesome and revealing dreams which he here shares. However, because of their incredible accuracy, scoffers have insisted that they had to have been written after the fact. However, the fact is that they were recorded around 540BC in Hebrew / Chaldean and then into Greek about 200 years later, after some of them had already happened! Other predictions such as the two legged Roman Empire occurred just as predicted. The scoffers nevertheless cling to their claims, and ignore the compelling contrary evidence.

The first year of Belshazzar was in about the year 553 BC. Nebonidus had made his son co-regent. This was about 9 years after Nebuchadnezzar died. Thus he had this vision about 14 years before Darius conquered Babylon. In most respects it is the same as his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream found in chapter 3, although here he provides more information.

Verses 1-8

"1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. 2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon its feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 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. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl: the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in

the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

Notice in the first 6 Chapters Daniel spoke in the third person. From here on he spoke in the first person. What were the “Four winds of heaven”? “Winds” can mean “sensible exhalation, reverberance of breath.” This generally means God’s sovereign power to perform His divine purpose (Jeremiah 49:31, Ezekiel 37:9, Zachariah 2:6). The great sea often symbolizes Gentile Nations. (Isaiah 17:12-13; Jeremiah 6:23, 46:7; Matthew 13:4-49; Revelation 13:1, 17:1, 15) The word “strove” as used here can also be translated as “rushing, or gushing”. Therefore it seems likely that four winds are the four instances when God used that power to bring the four mentioned kings to have authority over their respective kingdoms.

In verse 2 we find the first empire being like a lion with eagle wings. This is the imagery which depicts Nebuchadnezzar and his empire. Jeremiah, in 49:19; 50:44, called him “a lion from the thickets of Jordan.” Also sculpted images of winged lions have been found in the ruins of Babylon. Indeed he was fierce and rapid as he assembled his empire. Verse 5 speaks of the Mede/Persian Empire. This was represented in Nebuchadnezzar’s first dream as the silver portion of the image having two arms. This beast was slower, but equally resolute. It first raised itself on one side suggesting the earlier of the two conquerors, that is the Medes whom the Persians eventually assimilated into the Empire, and apparently then allowed Darius to be co-regents in the administration of the empire that lasted about 230 years. According to Matthew Henry, the 3 ribs stuck in the ravenous beasts teeth speaks of three nations not to be conquered and they speak to the beast to leave them alone and go after those more easily conquered. Also, just as the bear moves slower than a lion, so the Persian/Mede empire grew more slowly but considerably larger. “Raised itself on one side” symbolizes its two sides, or two parts.

It was the Median side that rose first and conquered Babylon. The dual leadership of this empire seems to have been a strange and unique phenomenon. In the early days of the united empire, during the reigns of Cyrus I and Cambyses, it was the Medes under Darius, who were the larger, more powerful portion of the empire. This shift of political ascendancy didn't eliminate the partnership. We see this change implied when we read Daniel 6:8, 12, 15 of the royal edict from "law of Medes and Persians." Later "the laws of Persia and Media" are spoken of in Esther 1:9. What may have caused this shift is that Darius the Great lost a considerable amount of his powers and wealth as a result of his attacks on Greece and his devastating defeat at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC. His son was Xerxes, also known as Ahasuerus in the book of Esther. He too expended much military and financial strength ten years later in an unsuccessful attempt to avenge his father's defeat. Thus we could say that during the earlier portion of the empire, the king was Darius, a Median who had the Persian king named Cyrus as his co-regent. Later it was the Persian king Cyrus who had the Median king Darius as his co-regent.

The third beast was like a leopard who had 4 wings on his back. In Nebuchadnezzar's first dream this empire is symbolized by the bronze portion of the image. This suggests that while Nebuchadnezzar was swift on his gathering together of his empire, as symbolized by two wings, this beast was much faster, as symbolized by four wings. Thus indeed was Alexander extremely rapid in his conquests. In only ten years he not only conquered all of the Persian Empire but expanded it into Egypt, India and other countries. He died in 323 BC at the age of 32. "The beast had four heads". This symbolizes the four major generals under Alexander's command. It was to them that he bequeathed the entire empire. These were Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus. The empire was divided among them. Notice that domination was "given" to Alexander, and to these four. This indicates that they were only capable of having done things through God's directed will. This was directed rather than permitted or else the "given" would have been "allowed" or "permitted".

Next we read in verse 7 that his vision included a fourth beast as earlier symbolized in Nebuchadnezzar's dream as the iron legs and feet. There is no doubt that this is a prediction of the Roman Empire. It would be exceedingly great, and was much greater than the previous ones. It would be dreadful and terrible. With its feet it would crush and with its teeth devour all it

chose. It also had ten horns. The teeth and horns were not part of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. As Daniel looked closer he saw an eleventh horn, a little horn that sprung up among them. It was in front of three of the ten which were somehow "plucked up". He saw the little horn as having eyes and being able to speak great things.

Clearly there is a great deal to consider here, and to seek God's aide in understanding what He would have us know more clearly. Surely this vision is related to the earlier dream of this empire which had two iron legs and feet. The two legs relate to the two segments of the Roman Empire, the one centered in Rome, Italy, and the other in Constantinople, Turkey. As we examine the whole of the image, we see the quality of the empires successively diminish in quality from gold to silver, to brass to iron, and finally to an iron mixed with clay. Further probing for understanding at this point is not necessary, because in subsequent verses Daniel will have already done this. One other observation. We see as evident the metal which symbolized each empire grew progressively less valuable as a metal. Conversely, the metals became intrinsically stronger. Gold is structurally weaker than silver, and so on, I believe that downward value was also downward spiritual quality. The downward increase of physical (earthly) strength related to the increase of satanic power over each!

Verses 9-12

'9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. 11 I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. 12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.'

This is a continuation of Daniel's vision, although now, having finished describing the four human world empires, he has been blessed to see and to report what follows. He now focuses on the true Christ in heaven. Here, and as it is quoted in Revelation 1:1-14, are the only biblical

descriptions of Jesus as the Son of God. He is called the Ancient of days, having curly white hair like wool, and wearing an exceedingly white garment. This is describing the Father God. As pure spirit having hair and wearing a garment seem incongruous. His throne was like the fiery flame". This speaks of a judgment throne. "His wheels as burning fire" speaks of Seraphim, or the "the burning ones," as they were called. This and the wheels could also relate to the Cherubim, as described by (Ezekiel 1:19-21; 10:19)

It appears that Daniel's vision was in some ways similar to what Ezekiel was given to see, and later what Paul saw as reported in Revelation. Apparently God showed Daniel the throne room of God where these heavenly hosts spent their time glorifying and serving God. The fiery stream as judgment, and the million are angels God will use to assist in His judgment of the billions of sinners who will appear before Him. We find in several places where God uses thousands and tens of thousands of angels to participate in His works. Typical examples of such use of vast numbers of angels are found in Deuteronomy 33:2; Psalm 103:19-21; Hebrews 12:22; and Revelation 5:11. In Revelation, we read of angels being used as God's agents to orchestrate and announce judgments during the seventieth week of Daniel, and especially during the Tribulation.

When all was in readiness, the Judge sat down on the judgment seat, and proceeded to examine the charges recorded against each of the nations of people. Some may wonder if this is the Sheep and Goats Judgment, or the White Throne Judgment. It will be the Sheep and Goats Judgment, because 100 million is a much too small a number to be identifying those with who will be at the White Throne Judgment. Realize then, those who will attend that judgment will be every unsaved soul who ever lived since Adam. It is likely that even before the flood, when people lived for nearly 1000 years during that 1656 years, there could even then been a population amount several billion of unsaved souls. During the over 4060 years since then there have been countless billions more. If so, then this was the judgment of the Gentiles who didn't help but instead plagued the Jews during the Great Tribulation. Do you think there is anything mystical or coincidental for Daniel to have been given this judgment vision inasmuch as his name means "God is my judge"?

In verse 11 we find that Daniel recognized the little horn as the beast who spoke great words. Blasphemous words are here implied. Daniel's vision apparently spanned some period of time. He first saw the little horn when it first came into being, and saw its entire lifespan to the time it was killed and its body destroyed. A study of Isaiah 14, especially verse 16, is well to consider here as a prophecy involving both Satan and Antichrist. Isaiah 14 verses 12-20 clearly speaks of Satan. *"12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. 16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; 17 that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? 18 All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. 19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet. 20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned."*

Verse 16 however, speaks of a man who did terrible things. I believe that while these Isaiah verses speak of Satan, it is evident the physical aspects of his activities will be carried out by the man Antichrist through the power and direction of Satan, as if done by him. Clearly it is a man and not a cherub who is killed by the sword. There is nowhere in Scripture where Satan is depicted as man. He is a Cherub, a spirit with no embodiment powers. Here, it is speaking of the man Antichrist who in verse 19 is killed by a sword, by his own soldiers. Then his dead body is trodden under feet and given no grave. Why no grave? It is because God will resurrect the beast Antichrist so that he can be cast alive, in his incorruptible body into the lake of fire, as Revelation 19:20 tells us will happen.

The Isaiah 14 verses especially from verse 15 to the end of the chapter may seem confusing until we realize that both Satan and Antichrist are participants. As the great imitator, Satan, seeking to

be as God, has Antichrist as his son, just as God has His Son the true Christ. Jesus speaks of Himself as equal to God when He says “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30), and “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” . (John 14:9) Therefore, as the great imitator, Satan considers that he and his son Antichrist are as one. Completing his vision of the four beasts that precede the little horn, Daniel sees their dominance taken away, yet their cultural influence continue to be prolonged for a long time. We see the truth of this even today when the Middle East cultures still reflect many aspects of the Babylonian Persian Mede and Greek culture. Europe clearly continues expressing much of the old Roman culture.

Verses 13, 14

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

What are we to make of the Son of man vision? The translators realized that this Son was Jesus in that they used a capital S in the word Son. Daniel’s vision is of Jesus ascending through the clouds up to, who is also the Ancient of days, that is Father God. It’s not Jesus’ coming down to the clouds to effect the rapture, but to go to the Father’s Throne 40 days after His resurrection. (Acts 1:9) Here Daniel says that He “came up”. Acts 1:9 tells us He was “taken up”. Both phrases express the same event. Being “taken up” indicates being in the company of angels. Every saved soul / spirit will be “taken up” by angels as he or she leaves their mortal bodies.

Verse 14 substantiates this premise as it tells us that it was “there” when He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that is the kingdom of heaven. (See my commentary of the Difference between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God) Just think of how mightily God blessed Daniel with this vision of the ascension of Jesus, the Son of man to be given this eternal spiritual kingdom. There don’t seem to be any Old Testament descriptions of this that are this crisp and clear. Psalm 2; 22; and Isaiah allude to this but not in such a succinct way.

Verses 15-25

“15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. 17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. 19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; 20 and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. 21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

All of this grieved and troubled his spirit. He makes the point that his spirit was in the midst of his body. This is a very insightful recognition that there was a clear distinction between soul / spirit and the body, even though neither can function alone as a human being. He realizes that this is not just another one of the body's organs, but totally independent of the body. The word “body” as used here is translation of the Chaldean word “geren”. It is only used by Daniel, as we should know, because these first 7 chapters of Daniel are the only verses in Scripture that were written in Chaldean. Here the “body” is defined as “bone” or “skeleton”. Matthew Henry, is well versed in Chaldean, defined “body” as used here, as a sheath or scabbard for the soul / spirit. Then in verse 16 we read that Daniel came near to “one of them” and asked him the truth of all of this. Who are them? They are the same as the ones who in Acts 1:19 who “took Him

up”. Clearly these were angels, and it is one of these angels, of whom he sought the answer, and who then complied. What follows next, is what the angel told him. We learn in more specific terms what we have already inferred from the statue dream. Just as the statue dream of Nebuchadnezzar was interpreted to describe 4 world empires, we here see this confirmed. However, further elaboration regarding these will come later.

These are merely mentioned in this verse 17. Daniel already knew much about the first two beasts because he had served the first and was then serving the second. Based on the symbolism he probably had a pretty good understanding of the leopard with wings. However, it was this fourth and most terrible beast that he wondered about, because it was much different than the others and exceedingly dreadful. He very likely wanted to know more about the little horn with a mouth that spoke very great things. But first, (verse 18) he was told that the saints of the Most High would take that kingdom and possess it forever. That is a one sentence preview of things which he will be told later. It appears to be an insertion out of context, and seemingly out of the chronological order of what is being revealed. Verse 19 indicates that his questions were continued to be answered as he wanted to know more about this beast whom he learned had iron teeth and nails of brass. It devoured all it chose and broke the residue (bones) into pieces and crushed them under his feet.

Next in verse 20 the angel reveals more about its head. After the 10 horns (symbols of power), there was seen that another horn arose. Three of the ten kingdoms fell to this little horn who had eyes and a mouth that spoke great, but evil things. This horn was more stout than the others. Stout means “captain, chief, great, lord, master”. Being stouter than his fellows, finally distinguishes this horn as a person rather than an “it” as would be the case if this was a beast in control of an empire. Throughout the relevant portions of Scripture, “beast” seems most often used to symbolize an empire. Here it seems clear that it can also refer to its head, that is its king. Some commentators suggest that this is a reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, who possessed many of the characteristics mentioned here. Some of this reasoning is based on verse 21 because this did happen during his rule of the Seleucid Empire which controlled Judea most of the time, that is when Ptolemy was over and over again driven from Judea. However, others of whom I am one, see this as Antichrist, and an end time prophecy. Nevertheless, there are prophecies that

can be applicable to more than one event, so the belief that this speaks of Antiochus need not be totally dismissed as to its earlier application. The Ancient of days speaks of Jesus' second coming, and the saints are the Jews who will survive the tribulation, and will possess the kingdom under Jesus during the Millennium. There may also be other times and events that seem applicable. However, this one is surely true in the context of the prophecy as given to us here by Daniel.

In verse 23 the focus goes back to the fourth beast, that is the fourth kingdom which by now we know is the Roman Empire. Again we read how it was given Daniel to see it as devouring, that is taking into captivity the entire earth, which it will literally tread down breaking it into pieces. There is no doubt that what's in verse 23 is speaking of the world wide empire of Antichrist. Through him, Satan will seek to kill every Jew, and to continue his destructive efforts against the whole world and all peoples until God stops him through the vial judgments lest "there should no flesh be saved"(Matthew 24:22) this speaks of the 3 ½ year Great Tribulation after which the saints will possess the kingdom. These are the flesh and blood living Jews who will all be saints and will, for 1000 years, possess the kingdom in the Promised Land under the rule of Jesus as He sits on David's throne. In verse 24, the ten kings, will be rulers over 10 governments that will result from the consolidation of all of the world's nations. Satan and Antichrist will orchestrate this. The other horn which rises is the Antichrist. Apparently he will subdue three of them. The word translated as "subdue" is from the Chaldean word meaning "to abase, humble, put down." By definition, it doesn't appear that this is necessarily the result of any military action. Apparently the other 7 will also be "subdued" but in some other manner.

Verses 25-28

"25 And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and time and the dividing of time. 26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey

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

As already noted, it seems evident that Daniel is referring to Antichrist. "He shall speak great words against the Most High." This thought is repeated in Revelation 13:5 as describing the end time's Antichrist. Then verse 13:7 speaks of him overcoming the saints. Daniel is given to know that he will "think to change times and laws". In preparation for the arrival of Antichrist, Satan is already influencing the world in this, as well as in many other non-biblical ways. One of the European countries, I think it was Holland, changed the 7 day week to a 10 day week. They had to return to the 7 day week because it couldn't be made to work. Furthermore, what do we see throughout the world? Many of the long established laws that held society together are being demolished in favor of socially destructive laws. These changes have gained incredible momentum in the mid 1960's until today. In this context, the world has been turned upside down.

They have also irreparably damaged the cultural, educational, ethical, moral and religious standards that have greatly prospered and advanced civilizations. This of course, as Daniel saw it, represents what we know to be the end of the end times. Many of those who interpret Scripture, conclude that the end times began with the Jews having rejected Jesus when He came as the Messiah. In verse 26, "the judgment shall sit" is the Scripture's way of saying what we might say "the judgment stands". We mean that the judge has decreed the nature of punishment, and it stands, that will not be changed. Here the judge is the Ancient of Days Jesus as He sits on the judgment seat, and will pronounce His judgment. That judgment from our way of expressing it stands, uncontested. The judgment decree tells us that the punishment shall be to take away Antichrist's dominion, that is his power and authority.

Then God shall consume and destroy it completely, in the end. The destruction that will do this, will be rained down from heaven in the form of the vial judgments that occur near the end of the Great Tribulation. Next in verse 27 we see the prophetic vision extolling the coming eternal kingdom. The kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High. Who are these saints to whom it's given who are under the heavens? As Christians we

consider ourselves as saints who will be kings and priests during the millennium and perhaps for ever. However, it's not likely we are them. These saints will be all living Jews who survive the Great Tribulation. These will all be in their land under heaven who will live for 1000 years, and who will then be raptured, to the new earth. (See Jeremiah 31:28-3; Revelation 21:1; in my commentary called "Interpreting the Chronology of the End Times.) I believe that the last phrase of verse 27, tells us that Daniel is no longer speaking of the Jews, but instead of the kingdom of Jesus as He sits on David's throne.

The final verse in this chapter is the final verse of the Book of Daniel to be written in Chaldean. Chapters 8-12 were written in Hebrew. Daniel was deeply troubled by the vision. He took seriously as having been truthfully given to him from heaven. For most of us many more words beyond "troubled" would have been applicable. It is Gabriel who ends his time with Daniel by saying, "Hitherto (that is later), is the end of the matter". This indicates that he will be back again to complete his message.

CHAPTER 8

Verses 1-14

“1 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. 2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. 3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. 5 And as I was considering, behold, a 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. 6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. 7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. 8 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. 9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. 10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. 11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. 12 And a 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. 13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

In Chapter 7 Daniel described the vision he had during the first year of Belshazzar's reign. Now he relates what he saw two years later during the third year of Belshazzar's reign. Shushan was the palace in the City of Susa in the region known as Elam. It was over 200 miles east of Babylon. Elam was where the Median Empire was founded and Susa was its capital city, and Shushan was the palace of the succession of Persian and Median kings. Daniel wasn't actually there, because he was in Babylon. However, the vision emanated from Shushan. Most likely this was because the message that the vision would provide had as its setting, the headquarters of the empire that would soon conquer Babylon. The union with the Persians had taken place, but at that time the Median Empire under Darius was the strongest. In verse 1 Daniel reminds us that this was his second vision. The first had merely provided an outline of what was now to be further revealed. The river Uai flows westward out of the Zogros Mountains, and probably provided water for farming as well as boat transportation to the Tigris River. This huge mountain range extends hundreds of miles both north and south just east of Susa. East of these mountains is India. In verse 3 he saw a ram with 2 horns, but the one that came up last was larger than the other. This is a clear vision that first spoke of a ram, and then of its 2 horns. Horns represent power.

The first horn represented Medea, which at first was the most powerful. However, the other horn, that is the Persian power came a little later, and was even higher, that is more powerful. Hence we have what later, and until this day is called the Persian Mede Empire rather than the Mede Persian Empire. In verse 4 he sees this ram pushing west, north and south as it expands its influence. Obviously, it didn't go east, both because of the great difficulty and the fact that the cost to benefit ratio was far too great. The ram represents the entire Persian Mede Empire with the two horns as the two kings. This is a very strange and unique arrangement that there be a long enduring empire have co-regents able to so govern without seeking one to overcome the other so as to be sole regent. Daniel doesn't tell us much about the empire except that it encompassed as much of the world that it chose to conquer. Then Daniel moves on in verse 5 to describe the power that would next dominate the world. He likens this to a goat. It was the military powers that would travel and conquer so rapidly that figuratively, its feet would barely touch the ground. The notable horn of course was Alexander the Great. In verse 6, we read that

he, that is Alexander came to the ram, that is the Persian Mede Empire. He came with cholera (anger, wrath) against the ram, with his armies destroying its authorities and will to resist.

Verse 8 tells us that Alexander became very great, and at the peak of his strength and power, he too was broken, that is died, and was replaced by 4 great leaders who independently expressed their authority each in their given directions as emanating from Judea. This is an astounding prophetic vision as we read the history of that area. The four “notables” who obtained control were Seleucus, whose Empire included Syria, which was the Asian (east) portion of Alexander’s empire; Ptolemy whose reign was over Egypt (south); Lysimachus who controlled Thrace (north); and Cassander who received Macedonia (west of Thrace) These empires continued for centuries through their descendants. The Ptolemy and Seleucus Empires engaged in almost continuous wars, against each other for centuries. Their conquering desires focused along their borders. Israel was a large portion of that border where much of the fighting, and back and forth control occurred. An item of interest, Cleopatra VII was the last Macedonian descendant of Ptolemy. This is the Cleopatra of fame who seduced Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony, and then committed suicide in 30BC. Thrace was the ancient name of the area which included Bulgaria, parts of Greece, and parts of Turkey.

Verses 9-14

9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. 10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. 11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And a 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. 13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

The little horn was Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was the Greek ruler of the Seleucus Empire from 175-164BC. He is the one who profaned the Temple and severely persecuted the Jews. This led to the Macedonian revolt that lasted from 167-160BC. It was this abomination of desolation that Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:15 and which He said was spoken of by Daniel. (Daniel 12:11). “Toward the pleasant land” speaks of Judea. Verse 10 is not easy to interpret with great confidence. “He waxed great even to the hosts of heaven” this appears to speak of his formidable application of his Satan-provided powers as an Antichrist. The final Antichrist will be viewed similarly by the hosts of heaven. Each will have desecrated the Temple. Here “hosts” refers to the armies of heavenly angels. However, when Daniel tells of him casting down some of the host, it’s likely that he is then speaking of his attempting to trample down every vestige of Judaism. This included the faithful priests, and others who resisted the desecration, as well as the physical Holy Scripture and the many rituals such as circumcision, Temple worship, and other sacred Jewish traditions. The word “host” means a large mass of persons, such as an army. However, it can also mean figuratively “things”. That gives credence to the belief that it was also these “things” that he trampled.

In verse 11 Daniel no longer refers to “it”, the horn, but now refers to “he” the person, symbolized by the horn. Where it tells us that he magnified to the prince of host, it doesn’t mean that God was impressed. It means that he raised himself in his own mind, just as will the coming Antichrist. Then it speaks explicitly that this “little horn” will desecrate the Temple. Where it says that the place of his sanctuary was cast down, it doesn’t mean he destroyed the Temple. He desecrated it by placing a statue of Jupiter in the Holy of Holies along with his own image. This to the Jews was a trampling down of their most sacred place and of their Book of Laws, the Tenach. Notice in verse 13 the host was given him. All of his powers were of course given him by God to do these things. Why? Because the Jews had transgressed greatly for a long time, so God chose to punish them through this hateful vile man and his hosts. We see God initiating punishment of the Jews for their falling away ways, on numerous occasions. Often it has been by invading armies such as during the period of the Judges, and most famously through the Assyrians, and then by Nebuchadnezzar. Antiochus and his empire were allowed to prosper, as was the Babylonian Empire after the Temple destruction. Continuing to verse 13 we find an important question asked by one saint of another saint. There are differing opinions about who

these saints might have been. The word “saint” as used here, according to Strong’s is the Hebrew word “qadech” which can mean “sacred God (by eminence), an angel or a holy One.” In the Old Testament dispensation ones faith and obedience could lead to salvation, just as it was imputed to Abraham (Romans 4:22). The one asking was a human Jewish saint. While the one who answered the question was the Son of God as a Theophany. The answering “man” is the Theophany because of the manner of His answer and the fact that the Hebrew word for “saint” includes the “holy One”. Only God had the power and knowledge to definitively answer the question. The 2300 days is better understood if we convert it into years. It was 6 years 3 months and 19 days. Secular history indicates that Antiochus reign of spiritual perversion lasted about 7 years. We don’t know the point in time when the question was asked. However, the point in time when it would end was specifically defined as being when the sanctuary would be cleansed. That day would be when normal worship services could begin again. It is a date still celebrated as Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights.

Verses 15-27

“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 man. 16 And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. 18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. 19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be. 20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. 23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. 25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace

shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. 26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. 27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterwards I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it."

In this Chapter we are given the interpretation of the vision. Still having the vision, Daniel saw what had the appearance of a man. Then he heard a man's voice from the river telling Gabriel to explain the vision. It seems that the one in front of him was Gabriel. The voice from the river was that of God commanding Gabriel. Who else could have the authority to so speak to this angel? Daniel tells us that he only heard a voice. God has spoken from heaven several times. In this case it sounded to Daniel as if it were coming from above the river. Then Gabriel came closer, and he prophesized the interpretation with a very important statement, the importance of which we should not miss.

What he was about to explain pertained to the time of the end. Notice that Scripture never speaks of the end of time, because there will never be such a moment when time will end. Once God created, time began and will never end. As will later become more clear, Gabriel's statement is speaking of the time following Jesus' second coming. First however, Gabriel explains the meaning of the preceding vision. Daniel went into a deep sleep, however, Gabriel awakened him so that his words would not be in a dream, but in a vision. Here again before we go into the vision's interpretations, Gabriel reminds Daniel that his primary mission is to reveal the conditions related to the "last end of the indignation". We find that this idea of time of the end is expressed in various ways, 11 times as an eschatological expression in the last half of the Book of Daniel and only in this Book. For an understanding of this we must wait until we read Chapter 9. The rest of this Chapter only explains a little more about the governments he saw symbolized as animals. In verse 20, the ram of two horns was the Persian-Mede Empire.

This was followed by the great horned goat which symbolized the Grecian Empire. The horn was the first king, whom we know as Alexander. Next Gabriel even discloses how that empire continued after his death. The empire continued in four parts, as we have already discussed from

the secular historical perspective. Notice that these four would not hold the power he had as a unified empire. “And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full”, they will be brought down by “a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, “shall rise in great power”. Here “dark” is a translation of the Hebrew word “chiydah” that can mean “a puzzle, a trick, conundrum, dark saying, hard question, proverb, riddle.” In verse 24 we begin to get the clue that this will be the Antichrist who will get his power from Satan, of course by the permitted will of God. He will destroy wonderfully. The word “wonderfully” is a translation of the Hebrew word “pala” which can mean to separate, distinguish, great, difficult, wonderfully-accomplish, marvelously wondrous things or works”. Obviously this isn’t the way we use the word. One wouldn’t say that terrorists kill and destroy wonderfully unless of course one was himself a terrorist. Again in verse 24, we read that it will not be by his power. Nevertheless, he shall prosper and practise.

In Hebrew, “practise” has a variety of meanings such as “accomplish, advance, appoint, bestow, fashion, govern, grant, etc. He will destroy the holy people. In this context he is referring to the Jews, God’s chosen.

Who else could it be? The Jews have always been the prime focus for destruction by Satan and his agents. He wants to kill everyone who won’t worship him. However, he will need the compliant Gentiles from which to form his army. Finally he shall stand up (with that army against the Prince) of princes (Jesus) and will be easily defeated. “By peace shall destroy many”. This alludes to the false peace that is said to occur during the first 3 ½ years of the seventieth week of Daniel. It’s false in the sense that many will die through the then all powerful Roman Church. Many will be Jews, because of its millennia’s long bias and hatred. Also Gentiles will be persecuted for their “servant” faith as they come to realize the truth of what the 144,000 will teach them. This will be a period of peace from his evil perspective. Verse 26 ends Gabriel’s message as he confirms its truth. Then he tells Daniel to shut off the vision. This doesn’t mean that he won’t learn more, but not now. It implies that more vision will come after some number of days. Finally we find in verse 27 that the whole ordeal caused him to faint and be sick. When healed he returned to the king’s business. He remained astonished at the vision and apparently shared it with others, none of whom could understand it.

CHAPTER 9

Apparently Gabriel was ordered to proceed no further in his explanations at that time, probably because the stress that Daniel incurred was about all that he could take without getting seriously ill. Further revelation would come later when he was more capable of handling it. This Chapter is the pinnacle of the prophecies given to Daniel.

Verses 1 and 2

“¹ In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; ² in the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”

The issue regarding who this Darius was, has already been explained in the Chapter 5 portion of this commentary. Additional information on the subject can also be found in the Christian Musings study called “Hadassah.” What is of great significance is Daniel’s remembrance of the Jeremiah prophesy 25:11 and 29:10 in the Book of Jeremiah. These read as follows:

Jeremiah 25:11 *“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”*

Jeremiah 29:10 *“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.”*

Upon reading these passages, Daniel realizes that essentially all of these 70 years had already gone by. This both excited and stressed him greatly because he saw how very undeserving his people were to be so blessed. Daniel’s feared that for this reason, God might postpone or rescind that prophecy. Verse 3 records Daniel’s most fervent and humble prayer to God. It was that He would remember and do this even though it was underserving. He prayed as a representative for the whole nation, that God would forgive him as well as the other transgressors.

The word desolation as used here can also have related meanings such as, drought, decay or waste. It obviously was all of that from both the spiritual and physical perspective. It is interesting that back in Daniel 8:13 where the word desolation occurs it is a different Hebrew word which also can mean to stun, devastate, stupefy, lie, make waste, wonder, etc.

Verses 3-19

“3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: 4 and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; 5 we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: 6 neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. 8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; 10 neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. 12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. 14 Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. 16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech

thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

Daniel realized the great significance of the coming event and how it could affect Jerusalem and the whole of the Jewish people. He realized that this would be when his people would no longer need to remain in foreign lands, but would be free to return to their beloved homeland. The magnitude of this brought Daniel to his knees, fasting and praying dressed in sackcloth, the uncomfortable traditional garment in times of great supplication. Although he knew that God would do as He said he would, Daniel nevertheless felt it essential to pray intensely for that to happen. He first prayed for the forgiveness of his own sins and those of his contemporaries, as well as those of all of Israel who had sinned so greatly that God had imposed on them these 70 years of being deprived of their land. We may find it strange that he prayed so passionately for something to occur that his faith assured him would occur.

Might it be that he prayed not only in gratitude, but also out of fear that God might choose to defer that liberation because of His people's continued lack of repentance? In the last portion of verse 4 we see him praying only for the ones who love and obey. Could this have been so few in number that this alone might cause a delay? In verse 5 he acknowledges that all, including himself have committed iniquities, done wicked things, and rebelled from God's ways. By including himself, he couldn't have come up with any he had committed, but assumed that there must have been some that he hadn't recognized. This is something that should concern every saved soul. Having sinful natures, we all have a propensity to sin. Because Satan cannot take away our salvation, he does everything possible to keep us from being right with Lord in the ways we conduct our lives. It's incumbent of each of us to search our hearts daily for the more

subtle sins that we wouldn't recognize, and to pray in all seriousness that God will show us these sins.

Failure to do so will result in our grieving and dampening our indwelling Holy Spirit. When our Holy Spirit grieves, we lose a great deal of His otherwise enthusiastic blessed guidance in our lives, and in our various works and callings. In verse 6 Daniel continues to describe the people's failings at all levels of the society from kings to the people in general. He admits that they all failed to listen to the many prophets that God sent to instruct and to warn them of the consequences of their current, as well as past iniquities. Confusion of faces can best be translated as shamefaced, because the word translated as confusion can also mean shame. In verse 8 he expands on all who were shamefaced. Then he praises God for His mercies and forgivenesses even to these rebellious people. He admits in verse 11 that again in verse 10 that they all have failed to obey God as He had instructed them through the prophets He had sent.

In this prayer Daniel recognizes the justice of all they had and were going through. At Mt. Sinai, God and the people had agreed to a covenant whereby if they obeyed His laws He would prosper them to heights that would exceed that of all other nations. If they transgressed and did not keep their part of the agreed-to-covenant, God wouldn't either, and they would be trodden down below all other nations. The main theme of Daniel's prayer is his confession of all of this, on behalf of his people and himself. Furthermore, he recognized the righteousness of God's and His long suffering patience before He administered His long overdue punishment. Israel's departing, means departing from the law into apostasy. Verse 12 tells us that He had confirmed His words which He spoke, through His prophets against them. The Book of Judges is a confirming narrative of how they undulated from apostasy to faith and back to apostasy 6 times until the time of Samuel and the kings.

Even though they may have recognized the evil of their ways, they chose not to even pray for forgiveness and for the strength to repent of their iniquities (Verse 13). God, in His long-suffering righteousness saw this long practiced evil, and seeing that they chose not to hear His warnings. In verse 15 Daniel remembers the awesome deliverance out of Egypt that made God renowned, feared and respected by many other nations. Even so Israel did not appreciate this

and continued in its iniquities. Now finally in verse 16, Daniel beseeches God in His righteousness to consider their punishment adequate and so to turn away His anger and fury from Jerusalem. Even then they continued to be punished because they had become a reproach, that is a shameful disgrace in the eyes of everyone around them.

With all of this sincerely admitted to, in verse 17 Daniel speaks to God Elohim and then for the Lord's, that is Adonai's sake. Why this petition for the Lord's sake? Because he is speaking to Elohim. Therefore Adonai must be another "God". How can that be unless he is referring to the pre-incarnate Jesus, the Son of God? Daniel speaks of the ruins of the Temple and of Jerusalem which is called God's City. So the shamefulness was not only due to the people's miserable circumstances, but also the ruins and desolation of God's City and Temple. Then Daniel defines what his prayer is for. It's not because of anything good they deserve, it simply was for His divine mercies on behalf of His special, though unworthy people. Notice here in verse 18 he is praying to the Lord (Adonai) and then again to God (Elohim.)

Verses 20-27

"20 And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; 21 yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. 24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be

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

As he was completing his passionate prayer praising God, and confessing his sins, as well as the age long sinfulness of his fellow Jews, Gabriel again came to him. Earlier, in Daniel 5:16 we read that Gabriel had appeared to him in a vision. Now, Gabriel came to him in the form of a man while Daniel was wide awake and praying, as evidenced by him physically touching Daniel. Note, that Daniel, when mentioning the previous encounter, Gabriel, at that time had been “caused to fly swiftly”. The Hebrew word “fly” as used here is only used here even though there are 7 other words that are translated as “fly”. Here the word “fly”, is a prime root word meaning “to tire” (as if from wearisome flight – faint, cause to fly). Thus it appears that even angels can have human feelings such as weariness. So did Jesus. As recorded in previous verses, Gabriel fought for 21 days against the “prince of Persia” who held him back from delivering the message to Daniel. It’s also very interesting that the word “swiftly” is one of 6 words that translates to “swift”. The one used here and only here means “fatigue, utterly exhausted-swift. What a great insight this is regarding the nature of feelings and limitations of angels, even in their spiritual form. Notice that his tiredness came while fighting as a spirit.

We may choose to connect this statement with what Gabriel said in 10:13 about having been delayed 21 days dealing with the Persian prince (fallen angel) who was the spiritual power behind that throne. It appears that during the time when Gabriel was delivering his first message, he was in fact called away to deal with the prince of Persia, and was then delayed there for that 21 days before he could return and finish the message that he had started to tell Daniel. Then in verse 22 Gabriel tells Daniel that now is the time to teach him the rest of the story. Apparently as verse 23 tells us, God gave Gabriel some time off from his dealing with the dark spiritual powers and called him to return and teach Daniel what He wanted him to know. First however he gave Daniel the most precious message from God that anyone could ever hope to receive. “Thou art greatly beloved”. Who loved him this much? God, of course, as well as all the celestial beings in heaven.

Now comes this most incredible message which will tell us of things that will happen during the end times. Seventy sevens of years have been assigned to Jerusalem and to the Jewish people during which time they are all to make an end to their sinful ways so as to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up (close up, make an end) all vision and prophecy, and to anoint (consecrate) the Most Holy. To put it another way, they will, from some point in the then near future have 490 years to get their act straight, that is to be rid of their sinful nature and behavior, making prophets and visions no longer needed, and to finally recognize Jesus as Who He really is. In verse 25 Gabriel goes further in his revelation by setting a date certain for when the anointed Holy, that is, Christ Jesus, the Messiah and Prince, shall come announcing Who He is. This will be 483 years from the time the order is given to restore and build Jerusalem as well as the streets and walls. There were 4 different decrees issued, each dealing with the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple.

1. The first was by Cyrus, who, in 537 BC, allowed all who chose to return, and provided the means for them to rebuild the Temple. This is found in 2 Corinthians 32:24 and in Ezra 1:2-4.
2. The second decree was by Darius as seen in Ezra 6:1-5, 8, and 12. Here again it was to restore the Temple and to return the Temple vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken in 606 BC. Darius' decree also called for the hostile neighbors to leave the builders alone and also he saw to it that the workers were adequately supplied.
3. The third decree was by Artaxerxes in 458 BC who gave Ezra much silver and other needs as well as a letter for him to be presented to those with funds and supplies. It decreed that they should provide to Ezra all he asked for, to finish the Temple construction (Ezra 7:11-26)
4. The fourth and last decree was also by Artaxerxes in 445 BC (Nehemiah 2:5-8, 17, and 18). This was in response to the fact that the walls were needed to be rebuilt because the local neighbors had and were harassing the Temple construction workers continuously to the extent that their efforts to fight them impeded the restoration. This decree was the only one that specifically addressed the need to build the walls and the internal streets.

This last decree is the one Daniel referred to that commenced the 483 year prophecy regarding the coming of the Messiah. He would declare Himself Messiah as He rode the colt of an ass into Jerusalem, 483 years to the very day after this decree was given. Why was this 483 years expressed as 7 weeks (49 years) and then 62 weeks (433 years) which if course added up to 483 years? What is the significance of the first 49 years that warrants it being expressed separately? If there was no significance, then the 483 years would have been expressed as three score and 9 weeks. This question finds no answer in verse 26, but instead implies the same division when it next speaks only of the three score and two weeks. This of course simply indicates that this remaining time period occurs after the 49 years.

The fact that our Divine Author has chosen to express the time in this way is a clear indication that He is pointing us toward something of considerable importance. Here, as in many instances, He has chosen to merely give us a clue rather than spelling it out as a no-brainer. With the clues He provides, He is challenging redeemed serious Bible students to dig deeper and across the whole spectrum of His inerrant Word in order to discover what these clues provide. God is very generous in this respect for those who pray to learn, and to seek His aide in single-minded intensely dedicated petitions. What finally emerges from these petitions are in many instances, divinely revealed.

However, if our hearts and souls are not “right,” that we have spiritual deficiencies that grieve or dampen the eagerness of our indwelling Holy Spirit, the fruit of these efforts will often be blemished and therefore lacking the fullness of what we seek to learn and to share. In this particular situation, we may have been given the answer. Many commentators choose not to address this issue of why the 69 weeks of years is presented as 7 + 62 weeks of years. Some suggest that the first 7 or 49 years, was the time required to rebuild Solomon’s temple which began through Cyrus’ decree in 536BC. The chronological evidences appears to indicate that it was completed in only 20 years, that is about 516 BC. This is so distant from the 49 years, that it cannot be considered to be a viable answer. Dr. Henry Morris, a very astute biblical expositor suggested that this 7 weeks of years could be commemorating the end of the Old Testament Writings. This sounded very plausible, and most likely just the way our divine Author might choose to express what to Him was a very significant biblical event.

There are numerous claims that the Book of Malachi was written between 450 and 400 BC. However does there seems to be any chronological arithmetic from which these claims are validated. If we approach the question from a forward chronological perspective, both the date, and the reason God, chose through Daniel, to express the 69 weeks of years as $7 + 62$ is for that very reason. There is compelling evidence, as already noted, that the so-called 70 weeks of Daniel began when Artexerxes gave his second decree which caused the construction of the walls and streets of Jerusalem to be completed. It is well recognized to have been 483 years to the day when Jesus declared Himself to be the Messiah. This has been determined to have occurred in 445BC. Therefore, that first 7 weeks, or 49 years began in 445BC. Add 49 years to that date and we come to the year 396 BC. Based on this, the first 7 week of Daniel's prophecy is separated out to commemorate the year of the end of the Old Testament journal.

The remainder of verse 26 speaks of the later event which took place in 70 AD. The people of "the prince that shall come" speaks of ancestors of the Antichrist, that is from the people of the Roman Empire. This limitation is not necessarily confined to the Empire that existed as a specific land mass during the first century AD. Over the centuries the people of the Roman Empire moved and occupied other portions of the earth. Regarding the English for instance, who were then part of the Roman Empire, populated North America, Australia, and other places. It is not unreasonable to conclude therefore that Antichrist could come from any of these places as well. This can apply to all of the world Gentile populations. Those people of the prince that shall come who came in 70 AD, and destroyed the temple would come as a "flood" which means a vast number of Roman soldiers. "Unto the end of the wars desolations are determined". This indicates that there will continue to be war desolations until and into these end times. The last 2000 years of the Jewish and Jerusalem's history have been a continuing expression of the validity of this prophecy.

The final verse of this Chapter 9 tells us something about this coming prince. It's implied that he will become a most powerful world leader, and as such will confirm the covenant for 7 years. The word "confirm" here is one of 6 different Hebrew words that define it. Here, and only here is the Hebrew word "gabar" used. Strong's defines it as "to be strong, to prevail, act insolently,

exceed, confirm, be great, be might, prevail, etc.” This means something more than to simply confirm as we use that word today. It indicates an overwhelming authority and convincing power, Antichrist will fully orchestrate the whole event. Through the influence of his Jewish false prophet on the Jewish people, they will be convinced of his authority, and sincerity. Because of this, they will accept and agree to the covenant. Then comes the prophecy, which states that the Antichrist will break the covenant half way through the 7 years by desecrating the holy place and preventing the Temple from being of further use by the Jews in terms of their traditional ways of worship. Antichrist’s act of desolation will continue even until the “consummation.” This word can mean, completion, destruction, be utterly consumed, riddance. This will be poured on desolate (and the desolator, per Schofield). This pretty well summarizes what will go on during the 70 years and how things will end involving the Great Tribulation.

Chapter 10

In this chapter, God through His messenger angel Gabriel, reveals several astounding things regarding what goes on in the unseen spiritual world. In Chapter 7 Daniel has a vision which reveals to him things about the four world empires. Then in Chapter 8, two years later, still during Belshazzar's reign, Daniel again sees a vision which added more information regarding these empires. This time the vision was interpreted by the angel Gabriel. In Chapter 9 in the first year of Darius which would have been 536 BC, Gabriel, then came to Daniel for the 3rd time. This time he revealed the 70 weeks prophecy regarding the end times all the way to the Antichrist's desecration of the Temple. In Chapter 10, we learn that in the 3rd year of Cyrus, Gabriel again came to Daniel to reveal more information. When Cyrus came into power? From other writings, it was only a short time later, probably right after Darius did the conquering. Therefore the 3rd year most likely was about 333 BC at the latest.

Verses 1-21

"1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. 4 An in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; 5 then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: 6 his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. 10 And behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. 11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man

greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. 12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. 15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. 16 And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. 18 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, 19 and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee; be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. 20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. 21 But I will show 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.”

As we recall Daniel 1:21, we realize that he wrote this chapter, 2 years after his retirement, because it tells us that his professional life had ended in the first year of Cyrus. Verse 1 seems a little confusing. “A thing was revealed unto Daniel” must be the thing that was revealed in this Chapter 10 vision. Apparently it is preface to what follows. He is telling us beforehand so that we will understand the thing and this vision. What we will see are events that will occur here very soon during this end portion of the end times which for us, is now happening. This vision again involves Gabriel who did the explaining in the earlier chapters.

Daniel did his intense mourning and fasting for 3 full weeks. During or at the end of that time he was physically by the great river Hiddekel, which was another name for the Tigris River. He

apparently was not far from the eastern edge of Babylon. This is where the two rivers come quite close to one another as they flow southward about another 200 miles where they merge and then flow as one into the Persian Gulf. This was not at Susa, which was about 200 miles east-southeast of Babylon. As noted, he was physically there. In Chapter 8 he speaks of being at Shushan the kings' palace in Susa. However, in that case, he was there only in spirit, perhaps as John was in heaven while his body remained in Patmos. He sat by the river, probably yet praying, when he saw a "Man."

According to the description, it seems evident that it was the pre-incarnate Christ appearing as a Theophany. However, in this unique appearance, He revealed the full glory of His being, perhaps as Jesus did at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:2). Like so many other times when God spoke from heaven, or when His Son appeared as a Theophany, only a specific person or persons were given to hear or to see these appearances. Three clear examples of this have occurred. One was at Mt. Sinai, another at Jesus' baptism, and a third when Saul, (Paul) was on his way to Damascus. In every instance, only those whom God intended that should see or hear were so permitted.

All others present during those events, could only hear frightening noises such as thunder. Here we read that it was a great quaking that frightened the others. Verse 8 tells us that the event drained him of all his strength so that he fell down and went into a deep sleep. It was during that deep sleep that he heard God's words. We are not told what God said to Daniel. However, soon after, we find Gabriel awakening him. Obviously, he did not stay asleep long, for as verse 10 tells us he felt a hand touch him which did awaken him. According to verse 10 this caused him to rise to his knees, and as verse 11 tells us, he then stood up. The sequence of events seem to have been as follows: a) He first, while awake, saw the Son of God who spoke to him. We don't know what He said. However, b) he then fell into a deep sleep, until c) Gabriel touched him and awakened him. Finally the rest of the chapter reveals only Gabriel's dealings in some spiritual confrontations.

What a wonderful message God gave to Gabriel to tell Daniel, that he was greatly loved obviously by God and His heavenly hosts. Remember that Daniel had prayed during the same

three weeks. Verse 12 tells us that Gabriel would have come to him 21 days earlier, that is the same day Daniel had begun his 3 week prayer. He would have come had not the prince of Persia detained him. Right here we have subject matter worthy of many pages of expository. What was going on? God had sent Gabriel on a mission to convey information to Daniel, but was prevented from doing so for 21 days. Obviously God permitted this or it wouldn't have happened. Who was the prince and who were the kings with whom he remained for those days? It is evident that the kings at the end of verse 13 are referring to Darius and Cyrus. Except in verse 20 there's no evidence in Scripture that Gabriel is a warrior angel, He is known to be primarily as the messenger angel.

In verse 13, this is confirmed when we are told that the prince of Persia "withstood him," that is prevented him from delivering his message. Notice that only when Michael the "fighting angel" came to his aide was he able to move on. We can strongly infer that the message Gabriel was told to give Daniel was one that Satan did not want to have revealed. Therefore, his angel, or angels whom he had placed in charge of overseeing and directing the human leadership of the Persian/Mede Empire were told to stop Gabriel. If they could have, they would have killed him, however, neither God's angels nor Satan's angels can die. Finally in verse 14, Gabriel tells that this 4th visit is when he will tell of what will happen in the latter days, that is over the coming expanse of time, along with some of what will happen sometime in the distant future, as well as during the end times.

In verses 15-17 it appears that something else is going on. After Gabriel had spoken as recorded in verse 14, we read that Daniel became dumb, and would only look down. Then in verse 16 someone who had the appearance of a man touched him on his lips which caused Daniel to speak to this person who then stood before him. Daniel then lamented speaking "my lord" saying, "by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me." Here the word "sorrows" can also mean "physical or mental pressure, pain." This was so severe that he had no strength. Why? In verse 17 he explains to this "man" by what at first seems to be a rhetorical question. The King James Version, translators did not capitalize the "L" however, in every time lord is used, it is a translation of Adonai, a word used only when speaking of God. He asked this "man", whom he calls his lord, how he, Daniel, could talk with this "my lord"? He knew that he was speaking

with God as a Theophany. This by itself drained him of his strength and even of his breath. In verse 18 someone having the appearance of a man touched him and thereby strengthened him. God had left, and allowed Gabriel to continue his mission.

While Daniel didn't call him by name, it is evident that after three earlier encounters with Gabriel, he knew that this was the same "man". From verse 19 to 21, it's Gabriel speaking. All he reveals has to do with the spiritual fighting with which he seems to have become involved. He then promises to come again when he will actually tell all that he was commissioned to reveal. Notice in verse 20, that once again he cannot stay to deliver the message. He must leave to resume his fight with the price of Persia, and after that he will be burdened by the prince of Grecia. By our time, Grecia will not be an issue for yet 200 years later. Again, this insight into the spiritual world, is such as to provide the basis for a God-honoring doctrinal thesis. This, of course, will not happen at any of the major universities who offer doctrinal programs. None would allow such a thesis to be acceptable, if it turned out to be biblically supportive. In several places, Scripture has provided also snapshots of what goes on in heaven, and in other parts of the spiritual world.

Jesus, as recorded in Luke 16:20, provides us with a very important look at what goes on in Shoel, while Isaiah, Ezekiel and John provide us with some information regarding what goes on in heaven. Here in Daniel we get a unique perspective of what, where or, and most specifically, what goes on in the spiritual realm which surrounds us. Gabriel was unable to reach Daniel for 21 days. That is when the warrior angel Michael came to help him. This tells us a great deal. It indicates that Satan, through his agent angels and demons, had placed a nearly impenetrable cordon around Daniel or perhaps around the greater Babylon area. Of course God knew this. However, did He inform Gabriel? Perhaps not, because He wanted the episode to play out as it did, so as to demonstrate to us what actually went on in the spiritual world. Immediately after, he would deliver the message he was directed to, and then to return to the fighting. Apparently God gave him what time he needed to do this. We'll learn of the message in Chapter 11. There appears to be no time lapse between the end of Chapter 10 and the beginning of Chapter 11. If we view this as a stand-alone chapter then the primary message of Chapter 10 is to show us a sample of what goes on in the spiritual world.

Chapter 11

Finally Gabriel begins delivering the great near time and end times' prophecy. Which would describe major events that will happen starting soon after Daniel is gone, unto the coming of King Jesus.

It's interesting that Chapter 1 is dated as the first year of Darius, Chapter 10 is in the 3rd year of Cyrus, and chapter 11 again in the first year of Darius. The context of the events indicate that they occurred in a continuous real time sequence so why are they expressed in this manner? It seems evidence that all 3 events occurred in the same year separated by only a few weeks or months. That Cyrus is mentioned, is to show us that he too reined over Babylon concurrently with Darius. Combined with other information regarding Cyrus, it's reasonable to conclude that during the years just before and after the conquering of Babylon, Cyrus was the "larger horn" of the empire, while Darius the "little horn" was the one who conquered and first ruled the City of Babylon, and the whole empire.

Verses 1-20

"1 Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. 2 And now will I show 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. 3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. 4 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 other besides those. 5 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. 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. 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: 8 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. 9 So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land. 10 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. 11 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. 12 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. 13 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. 14 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. 15 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. 16 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. 17 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. 18 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. 19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found. 20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within a few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.”

As noted above, the events recorded in this Chapter took place in the first year of Darius. Here Daniel says that he stood “to confirm and strengthen” Darius. It’s interesting that this newly acquired old Jewish slave could take it on himself to so deal with the king. To “confirm” is the Hebrew word “chazaq” which is used only here and in 2 Kings 15:19. There Menahem king of

Israel (northern kingdom) gave Pul, king of Assyria, a thousand talents of silver so that he could “confirm the kingdom in his hand”. It is evident that the Assyrians took the silver in exchange for agreeing to the preservation, or confirming the continued rule of Menahem. In effect, he was paying tribute to the dominate power for the privilege of continuing to be king over his then vassal state. Strong’s defines the words to mean “constrain, fortify, encourage, help, urgent”, etc. Putting the 2 Kings 15:19 application, and these related expressions together, Daniel’s great spiritual strength, along with his nearly 7 decades of expressed wisdom and sage advice to Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, was a great blessing to Darius. The king’s sudden acquisition of this huge empire of various cultures and political configurations, was staggering to him, especially in his dealing with the populous of this exceedingly great City of Babylon. Daniel would have perceived his internal stress and thus, through the grace of God applied his attributes to “strengthen and comfort him and therefore to help him to become worthy of his great position of authority. Daniel saw in Darius the makings is another Nebuchadnezzar, whom he had respected greatly.

We find in verse 2 that it is Gabriel speaking. Chapter 10 records that he came to Daniel in response to his prayers. Afterwards he would have to return to continue the spiritual battle from which he was given this temporary leave of absence which was only long enough to deliver this message. He immediately got down to business. His first prediction was that there will yet will be 4 kings of the Persia /Mede Empire. The “yet” indicates that there would be 4 more kings after the present ones. These would continue the dynasty, which lasted until Alexander’s conquered it in 331 BC. It was also a Darius who was the king when that happened. “He shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.” The historical evidence indicates that it was Darius the Great who performed the first “stir” by means of the 490 BC battle of Marathon. Stir means “deal with unjustly”. His son Xerxes also did some additional “stirring”.

Surely, assembling a huge army and navy to attack another non-threatening nation for the purpose of empire enlargement and plunder, was clearly an unjust act. What follows in verse 3 is a very brief reference to Alexander the Great who defeated Darius and conquered the Persian/Mede Empire which he expanded considerably. Verse 4 is an amazing prophecy due to its detail and precise fulfillment. “His kingdom shall be broken,” refers to his “untimely death” at age 33. His

entire career of conquest last only 12 years from within the 336 BC to 323 BC period. It's important to note that Darius the Great's excursion into Greece was in 490 BC about 160 years before Alexander began his career. We found in Chapter 8 verse 7 that Alexander came with "choler" (sorely, bitterly, grievously, provoked) in this conquest. This "choler" was the result of a generational handing down of the information regarding what the earlier and Darius, Xerxes had done. For Alexander, it was revenge time.

To have gotten to Susa with his army meant that Alexander probably had conquered many of the Persian/Mede provinces along the way. Apparently, the Darius who was then king, capitulated and offered Alexander 10,000 talents of silver to allow him to retain some continuing position in what then became a small vassal state. Verse 3 ends by telling us that Alexander was in total control of all he chose. Historical records regarding this and the following prophecies are remarkably consistent with God's inerrant truths. During this prophetic era, Satan had not yet gained total control of the acknowledged writers of history, as he has since then.

Then in verse 4 we read that his kingdom is suddenly broken into 4 parts. Also mentioned is that Alexander's kingdom would not only be divided into 4 parts, but that some portion will be lost to other forces. The details of this portion of the prophecy are already explained in chapter 8 as they pertain to verse 22. Next from verse 5 on through verse 35, which is that portion of history following the end of Alexander, Daniel was told in astounding detail all that would happen from then up to the time of the Roman Empire. The king of the south was Ptolemy Sater. He began the dynasty that ruled Egypt. The king of the north was Seleucus Nicator who began the Seleucus dynasty that was centered in Syria. Both empires grew to be very rich and powerful. They were almost continually at war with one another. Israel was a buffer between them, and therefore served as a battleground, being alternately controlled by one or the other. Under Ptolemy II the empire grew more powerful. By the way, it was during his rule that the Septuagint translation was written, and the great library of Alexandria Egypt was constructed. It was where Euclid taught geometry, that is in Ptolemy's palace.

Verse 6 speaks of "end years". This has nothing to do with end times. It is speaking of what would happen "in days to come" when the time for a particular event reaches its assigned

moment. This could be in only a few years to several generations, which is the case here. According to Dr. Missler, a political marriage was arranged between Antiochus II Theos and Ptolemy II Philadelphus' daughter Bernice. To do this, Antiochus had to divorce his wife Laodicea. This failed to achieve its intended purpose, because Laodicea killed both Antiochus and Bernice, thus confirming the prophecy of verse 6 with perfect accuracy and precision. By the way, it is generally believed that it was Ptolemy II who was the one who commissioned 70 scholars in Alexandria to translate the Old Testament into Koine, or commonly used Greek.

Here we find in verse 7 that one of her relatives within the dynasty of Ptolemy would prevail over the Seleucid Empire. History tells us that it was Bernice's brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes that overran much of the Seleucid Empire as far as Babylon. Scripture calls him the king of the north. Again prophecy fulfilled. Verse 8 speaks of this same Ptolemy, carrying great spoils and captives to Egypt. According to Polybius, a Greek historian of that era, Ptolemy carried back to Egypt 4000 talents of gold and 40,000 talents of silver. If true, and at roughly current prices this total would have a value of about 3.5 billion dollars. Polybius reported that he also carried 1200 idols to Egypt. That he, Ptolemy would live longer is exactly what history has recorded. He lived for another 24 years, while his adversary lived 20 more years. Having accomplished his victory, Ptolemy returned to Egypt.

However, 2 years later the sons of Seleucus gathered an army and went back for revenge. Here again we have the word "stirred up". However it is a translation of another Hebrew word "garah" which means to grate, to anger, contend, meddle, strive." Again Ptolemy won, killing all but a remnant of northern army which returned to Syria. Then we find again that the powers of the north were stirred up, against the south. In verse 10, "his sons" refers to the sons of Seleucus II who were Seleucus III and Antiochus III. However, Seleucus III died during a campaign in Asia Minor. Thus, as we see "and one shall certainly come". This was Antiochus III (the Great). Then, after recovering some of the land Ptolemy had occupied, he launched another offense toward Egypt. However, in about 312 BC Ptolemy IV Philopator met them in the Palestine/Lebanon region where he again defeated Antiochus. He chose not to destroy them, but they instead signed a peace treaty which lasted for a while. This is all related to verse 11 where Antiochus III attacked with "choler" which means "sorely grieved, bitterness, provoked, vered".

The king of the north Antiochus III would send a huge army which would again be defeated by the south. History records that Ptolemy IV would take out his revenge on the Jews in Egypt. Verse 12 indicates just what happened. He would enjoy his orgy of destruction but it was short-lived. In verse 13, we see the north again seeking to conquer the south with an even greater army (100,000 soldiers) and much wealth. By this time, the southern kingdom under Ptolemy had conquered several other of their many enemies, such as Philip of Macedon, and many vassal states of the south who were controlled by Egypt. Here we see the relevance of all of this to God's people. These north-south battles many times took place in Israel where His people suffered both because Israel was the battleground, and because of the fact that regardless of who was the occupier, even during peace times the Jews continued to suffer persecution. The "many" that stood up against the king of the south included not only Antiochus but also Philip of Macedonia and other Egyptian vassal states. History tells us that none could stand up against Antiochus III (the Great).

Verse 15 describes some of the victor's activities. Casting on a mount means that they built military mounds, that is ramps against the walls of cities so as to conquer them one by one. This attack would finally vanquish the Southern kingdom. Verse 16 indicates that he became all powerful and did pretty much as he pleased. Thus we see that he occupied and consumed the "glorious land", that is Judea. Apparently, there were several areas of Egypt yet under Ptolemaic control, namely Cilicia, Lycia, and Caria. Antiochus III sent a huge fleet to these places which were along the Mediterranean Sea. However, he was badly defeated by the feigning power we call Rome. This occurred in 197 BC. In order to gain these places which remained in Ptolemy's control, he thought that giving him the "daughter of women", he might reach some area where Ptolemy IV defeated Antiochus. History tells us that this was Cleopatra I. Instead of betrayal, she remained loyal to her husband thereby rendering Antiochus plan ineffective.

There were a total of 8 women that dynasty who were known as Cleopatra. The Cleopatra we know was Cleopatra VII Philopator. She was the last active Pharaoh of Egypt. There was an 8th, which was her daughter. However by then Egypt was part of the Roman Empire. Caesar gave this daughter some small area in Egypt over which she could be the Monarch. Originally,

Cleopatra VII ruled jointly with her father Ptolemy VII, and later with her brothers Ptolemy VIII and Ptolemy XVI whom she married. Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC. This provides us with a reliable understanding of that time period. From our Christian perspective this is all interesting but it's also trivia. The purpose of delving into these historical matters is to show how perfectly God's "prediction" of these things can be seen to have been.

The history related to verses 18 and 19 bring a clearer understanding of what happened. Around 196 BC Antiochus III "turned his face" toward the west," to Greece and Asia Minor. It is said that it was Hannibal who urged him to fight the Romans. They defeated him, with his 80,000 man army in the Battle of Thermopylae. We hear about history repeating itself. Here is a perfect example. Almost exactly 300 years earlier, Xerxes, ruler over the Persian/Mede Empire, was also defeated at Thermopylae by the Greeks. He was then forced to give up all claims in Europe and Asia Minor west of the Taurus Mountains which form the Turkish frontage along the Mediterranean. He also paid a huge 15,000 talents of tribute. It was a prince who caused the reproach, which can also mean disgrace, rebuke, or shame. That prince seems to have been Lucius Scipio, a Roman commander of the force that defeated him. "He shall stumble and fall, and not be found." That seems to tell us that he had used up all of history that God allotted him. History suggests that "he" in verse 20 was Seleucus IV Phileopater who ruled from 182-175 BC. He had succeeded Antiochus III. He severely taxed Israel in order to pay the required tribute to Rome. After 12 years of rule he was assassinated, followed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC).

Verses 21-35

"21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honor of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. 22 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. 23 And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. 24 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 strongholds, even for a time. 25 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. 26 Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. 27 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. 28 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. 29 At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. 30 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. 31 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. 32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits. 33 And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by the flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. 34 Now when they shall fall, they shall be helped with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. 35 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."

He gained the throne not by right or honor, but by numerous intrigues, as verse 21 indicates, that is by flatteries. We all know that he was a vile person, to put it mildly. Verse 22 speaks of his vast army conquering before him. It is Israel among others that would be broken. He would kill the "Prince of the covenant."

This apparently refers to the murder of Onias III, the Israeli High Priest in 171 BC. Like the final Antichrist, of whom he is unique in his likeness. Verse 23, 24 continues to describe his evil doings as he grows and consolidates his control of his conquests, particularly against Israel. Like Antichrist, who will come deceitfully in peace at the beginning of the 7th week of Daniel, Antiochus IV Epiphanes entered peaceably, primarily into places where there was wealth which he would remove, something that even his ancestors had not stooped so low as to do. The

people, is Israel, because among all the nations within his reach they were probably too small in land area as well as in population. However, there was much wealth in the temple which we see he was the first to desecrate in a manner similar to that of what Antichrist will do. “He shall forecast”. The word from which this is translated is the Hebrew word “chashab”, which is a root word applicable to a variety of circumstances. Here in Daniel is the only place in Scripture where it is used. The meanings which are relevant here are “fabricate, and to contrive (usually in a malicious sense).” What else should we expect from an equally vile prototype of Antichrist? “Even for a time” amounted to 11 years (175-164 BC). Nevertheless, he was able to do extensive evil, and cause a great amount of pain, suffering and death to multitudes along with his warring against God.

In verse 25, we read that Epiphanes was covetous of Egypt and gathered a great army to conquer it. Cleopatra I’s son, Ptolemy IV Philometer, who was the king at that time also gathered an even larger army to stop him. However, he could not prevail because of “forecast devices against him”. This is having received false military information provided through Antiochus’ espionage agents who penetrated Ptolemy’s ranks of advisors. Thus we see that this miniature antichrist was a close competitor of the future Antichrist in the realm of deceit and intrigue. Later we’ll see how the two were also closely related in their hatred of God and the Jews. Of course, it all came from their common spiritual father, Satan.

Verse 26 is also speaking of Ptolemy’s failure to prevail against Antiochus. It is expressed as a gathering of trusted agents for a dinner (table) where perhaps strategies were discussed. Apparently some of these were not trustworthy, but instead, were double agents, and surely traitors. Presumably they reported his plans to Antiochus, thus assuring his victory over Ptolemy. After the war Antiochus, far from destroying him as a person, put Ptolemy Philometer under his protection. Verse 27 tells us that both were less than honorable men in that they spoke lies to each other as they sat together at the table. However, neither would prosper from their mischief. Mischief is a translation of the word “mera” which also can be translated as wickedness. It comes from the prime root “raa” which can mean “breaking in pieces, do evil”, etc. We see therefore that “mischief” as we use the word today, is not as serious a matter as it was in Daniel’s time.

Thus we see that neither king was trustworthy, because both had evil in their hearts, and neither would prosper for long. Next in verse 28, we read that Antiochus returned northward with great riches. However, his spiritual father Satan had hardened his heart against Israel, the citadel of God's holy covenant. Apparently, after a while he felt compelled to again attack Egypt. In his previous victory, he had taken its riches but left the governmental structure intact. It's likely that to continue occupying Egypt was more than he felt he could handle at that time. The riches he took, along with the continued demand for tribute were, at least for a while, sufficient to have Egypt as a Vassal state, was the best deal. A later example of this occurred when the Goths sacked Rome. They had conquered and decimated the empire, but were wise enough to realize that they could not occupy and control it. So they left and went home knowing that Rome could no longer be a threat.

This time his venture would be quite different than before. One of his goals was to take Alexandria, which he had not have taken the first time. He failed. Then we find the "ships of Chittim" coming against him. Chittim generally is another name for Cypress. It can also refer to the lands all along the Mediterranean. Here it refers to the Roman fleet that was stationed in Cypress. The presence of the Roman fleet was highly intimidating. He knew that if he didn't retreat they would attack him, and most likely defeat him. So he slinked away and took out his anger, frustration and humiliation against the Jews whom he began oppressing even more horribly. "Intelligence" is a translation of the Hebrew words "biyn" which can also mean "to understand, be cunning, and to separate mentally (or distinguished). It's evident that he knew their religion and culture and hated it.

Certainly "cunning" would be an appropriate description of him in most any context. Verse 31 is telling us that his strength would remain sufficient to do as he chose. In this it was to perpetrate the "abomination of desolation" his most remembered and vile act of his despicable life. He corrupted those who could be corrupted by his cunning flatteries. These were from among the temple priests who could be persuaded by bribes and ego enhancing flatteries. However, it seems that this was a period in Jewish history when the people were going through a period of relative obedience and serious worship in the temple. They had faith in God, and would do great

things because of their faith. After years of persecution and trying to “Hellenize,” them along with seeking to destroy their jewlessness, he broken into the temple and roasted a pig in the sacrificial altar, after which he placed a statue of Zeus on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. This is what caused the Maccabean revolt, (167-160BC) which finally succeeded in removing Antiochus from Judah. The temple was then thoroughly cleansed and “reopened for business” (temple worship) in 168BC on a date celebrated to this day as Hanukkah.

Of course the freedom from persecution didn’t last long, and they were again under the control of Seleucian Empire as a vassal state. There were many wars and intrigues during this later period with much backsliding by the Jews and reversion to a more perfunctory rather than a serious practice of their God-decreed religious lives. In verse 34 the word holpen means “to surround in the sense of protection” This speaks of a protected remnant of faithful while the majority would fall victim to the “flatteries” (malicious contrivances) which would cause them to drift from the faith. As we find in verse 35, some who really understood were tried to make them white even to the time of the end” I don’t believe that this is to the end times, but instead to the end of their lives. Being made white, indicates made acceptable to God unto salvation.

Verses 36-45

“³⁶ And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. ³⁷ 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. ³⁸ But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. ³⁹ Thus shall he do in the most strongholds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. ⁴⁰ And at the time of the end shall the 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. ⁴¹ 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. ⁴²

He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. 44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many. 45 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.”

As we move on in this portion of Daniel, the saga shifts to the end-times, that is the time in which we now live, and also what is now in the very near future. In verse 36 Daniel is learning of Antichrist and a summary of how he will conduct himself during that 70th week of Daniel. The rest of this chapter is about that 7 year period. He will first obtain power over the entire world, thereby doing all according to his will. By the end of the first 3 ½ years he will have extolled himself above all, being the most wise, dynamic, eloquent and persuasive speaker the world has even known and will prosper greatly until the end of the Great Tribulation. Verse 37 is interesting and somewhat subject to several interpretations. Many choose to conclude the Antichrist will be a Jew, because he will have no regard for the true God or any god. However, this is an assumption with little or nothing to back it up. He could be from any other religion for which he has no regard. That he had no desire for women does not mean that he was homosexual, or a eunuch. The last part of verse 36 gives us the answer. The “for” should make it clear.

By magnifying himself above all else, suggests that his self-importance is so great that he will not consider any commoner as worthy of his attention. There could be two other factors involved in this characterization of Antichrist. First, as a false Christ, seeking to emulate Christ Jesus in every visible way, he chose to remain celibate in the likeness of Jesus. Another possibility, could be that like many, driven men obsessed with putting their mission ahead of all else, he may simply consider that he had “no time” for such pleasures. It’s also possible that he simply is deferring these pleasures until he has established his world-wide kingdom and no longer need to pretend to be pious and Christ like.

We live in a society of people who demand instant gratification whenever it is possible. To deliberately defer that gratification through self-disciplining is becoming extremely rare. To save money “for a rainy day” and similar self-disciplining characteristics have become almost extinct. It’s one of the evidences that the end times are here. There is a much used and wise saying that could never be more applicable than today. There are three categories of people: they are those who make things happen; those who see what is happening; and those who wonder what happened. Today, those who make things happen, that is the movers and shakers, are those who Satan directs. Those who see what is happening are either in His camp or are the remnant of saved souls who see what is happening through their knowledge of Scripture. Those who wonder what happened are the ones who see not and care not about what is going on. They live their lives, assuming that today, being much like yesterday, that tomorrow will also not very much different. If they accidentally see something that is a miss, they prefer to dismiss it so as to not let it interfere with their chosen lifestyles.

And so it will be when the one who will become the Antichrist first enters the world scene. It appears that verse 38 is telling us that he is the “God of forces”. The God of forces here is spelled with a capital “G”. This seems disturbing because it appears to be contrary to all that Antichrist stands for. However, the word for God here is the Hebrew word “alewahn”(el-o’ah) That the meaning is not the same as (“elohim”). It is here applied by way of deference to a magistrate, or as a superlative to angels, according to Strong’s. Perhaps in this case, it may be referring to Satan, the god of forces such as the fallen angels and demons. It most certainly is not our Creator God. The Father of all other gods is Satan. Idol worshippers knew only that worshipping idols produced many desired results. They were unaware of Satan’s evil spirits who provided the power that they ascribed to the idols. “He shall do in the most strongholds”(fortress or walled city). This refers to the strange god. There is no reason for us to not believe that he and all the military are demon possessed.

There are numerous interpretations of verse 40. Some, conclude that it is a depiction of the activities of Antichrist as he grows in power after the Rapture. However, it appears that a majority of expositors either choose not to deal with it, or conclude that it is a continuation of the Antiochus – Ptolemy battles. There doesn’t seem to be any historical evidence that such wars

took place. This belief, at least in some cases, appears to have been gleaned from the writings of the late 3rd century philosopher named Porphyry of Tyre. Because verses 36-39 seem to speak clearly of the Antichrist in a manner similar to that described in Revelation 14, that all these verses are describing Antichrist, not Antiochus Epiphanes. This is the basis of Revelation 14. The prediction of him and his abomination of desolation prototype was already described in earlier verses.

As Antichrist takes total control of all kingdoms he will subdivide 7 others by intrigue and deception and will war against three which he will conquer. (Daniel 7:20). What has been confusing is the fact that the first verses of this chapter 11 provide a skeletal interlude of historical events, regarding what went on during Antiochus II Epiphanes' time. Recorded history of that period, coincide quite well, as this study so far has borne out. The "glorious land" of course, is Judea. While Antichrist will overthrow many of the world empires, he will not be allowed to conquer or contaminate Edom, Moab, and a portion of Ammon. Matthew Henry claims that these were excluded from his authority because they had helped him in taking Judea. That does not sound right because of the word "escape."

In verse 42, the word countries can mean a limited area, or the earth as a whole. In verse 43, the word "steps" can mean "to march through, run over." These countries are specifically named for a reason. It is to emphasize the fullness and reach of his assembly of nations. It appears that informants coming to him from the east and from the north will incite rebellion which Antichrist will attack furiously and destroy, killing and enslaving many. It appears that this will occur just prior to the final battle at Armageddon. Planting his tabernacle means he will pitch tents for a while for his army as they gather for that final battle that ends his career. It will be "between the seas". Jerusalem in the holy mountain is actually between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. There it seems evident that the tent city will be just west of Jerusalem close to where the final battle against Jesus will occur. The final words of this chapter speak of his defeat.

This chapter 11 has been a particularity challenging one in terms of feeling comfortable in the sense of having interpreted accurately and sufficiently. For most verses there is historical information that correlates quite well. However, because from verse 37 to the end of the chapter

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are prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled in the end times, obviously there be no historical evidence. Examining the writings of several published and famous expositors is disappointing due to their avoidance of comment, on a number of verses, and the conflicting views of those who have commented. As usual, and as Dr. Missler has said, don't believe anything I say, until you have followed the Berean strategy and check Scripture to see if it is true.

Chapter 12

The final chapter of Daniel consists of only 13 verses, yet they are packed full of prophecies that clearly depict the end time events that are rapidly approaching us in the 16th year of this second millennium since Jesus first came to us as the Son of God, Son of Man. This chapter speaks of the rapture, as well as the Great Tribulation, and what will follow it.

Verses 1-13

“1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, 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. 5 Then I Daniel looked, and behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. 8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? 9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried: but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. 11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. 13 But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

The very first thing we learn from this chapter is that Michael the great prince is the one especially assigned to “stand up” for the Jewish people. This suggests that he has been their assigned protector from the beginning, and will be protecting them in what will happen next all the way to the millennium and beyond. We know that that this is the powerful fighter angel who fought off the “principalities and powers” who were preventing Gabriel from answering Daniel’s plea described in Chapter 9. Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find that Michael is any higher in rank than any other angel. It’s only in 1Thessalonians 4:16 and in Jude 9 do we learn that he is the archangel. Nowhere in the Authorized Version do we find any other archangel. Therefore we can safely conclude that he is the chief angel. However, many tend to believe that there are 7 archangels, based on the Book of Enoch. This, not being part of the sacred cannon, cannot be relied on as true doctrine. That book lists 7 archangels, and even provides their names.

Connected with this fact regarding Michael, we see there is coming a time of great trouble, worse than any that has ever been or ever will be up to that time. Remember that this is speaking only of the Jews who are Daniel’s people. Of course, all saved souls whether Jew or Gentile are in the Book of Life. Again however, as the term “thy people” tells us, this is strictly about the Jews. They will be delivered through the troubled times, that is through the Tribulation. Michael will be there protecting all of those whose names are in the Book of Life, preserving them to the end. In verse 2 we find the prediction of the awakenings. It appears that this is applying only to the Jews. Its context is found in the term “thy people” as found in verse 1. There are other places, especially in Revelation where the fate of all souls, Jews and Gentiles can be found. This is the first time in Scripture that the idea of everlasting life is expressed.

We should also realize that there are 5 resurrection events mentioned in Scripture. Resurrection is not always associated with the rapture. We learn here of only the Jewish portion two particular resurrections, one, of the saved Jews to eternal life, and the other of the unsaved Jews to eternal damnation. Every human being who ever lived and died will be resurrected and given an indestructible body. All those Jews or Gentiles who are resurrected to contempt, will be resurrected to face the White Throne Judgment and then to everlasting damnation in the lake of fire. What does it mean, “they that are wise shall shine”? This to be expressing the status of the

Jews who will have accepted the light of the truth. Then we read that those who were more fruitful during this life in that they “turned many to righteousness,” will shine most brightly even like the stars unto eternity. This indicates that their evangelical fruitfulness will bring them to a higher level of service in the eternal kingdom. This will be especially true of the 144,000.

Verse 4 is a command from God to record no more about those final days. Close and seal the book, that is write no more about these matters. That to seal the book, simply means don't add anything more. Surely what he did write has not been hidden from us because we apparently have, access to all that he wrote. Daniel completed his mission. He may have learned more, but that knowledge was never to be revealed by him. It was Paul, about 600 years later who would provide the rest of the end time's predictions in the Book of Revelation. There will be many running around seeking knowledge. What kind of knowledge? Would it be technological or biblical / spiritual knowledge? The verse could be applicable to both. The technological knowledge they say is doubling every 10 years. However, it is biblical knowledge mentioned here in verse 4. The fact is that true knowledge of Scripture has increased due to a number of factors. These include ?? the text into chapters and verses, the printing press, the translation, especially the KJV, (the earlier, not today) and the very carefully selected application of iPhones and computer internet along with God's provision of insights not previously known. I believe He has provided these to those whom He has called for that purpose.

Then Daniel, as recorded in verse 5 and 6, saw two men, one on either side of the river questioning a third man in white who stood upon the waters of the river. It appears that Daniel had been there having heard at least, the latter part of what Gabriel had said. This seems evident by the fact that they then asked the third man to tell them how long it would be to the end of these wonders they had heard. The man in the river raised his hands and swore by God that it would be 3 ½ years. Given what was just described and referred to in Daniel 9:20, it is evident that the 3 ½ years are those during which the Great Tribulation will take place. Verse 7 is completed by stating that he shall have accomplished the scattering of the power of the Jews. The word “scattering” can be disturbing and misleading given what we find in Revelation. Fortunately, our Lord never throws curve balls. It's all in the translation. The word “scatter” is a translation of the Hebrew word “naphats” which also means dash to pieces, be beaten.”

Revelation tells us that they were to run for their lives into the mountains. They all obeyed and gathered together at Bozra where they stayed under God's protection for the whole of that 3 ½ years.

According to verse 8 Daniel didn't understand. However, he asked a different question, that is not when, but what shall be the end. At that point God said that he had learned all that he was chosen to be given. Notice the "till". The book into which Daniel wrote was sealed because there was nothing more to be revealed until the time of the end. Of course it wouldn't be Daniel who would then write anything. It was continued by John in what is called the Book of Revelation. Remember that the official end times began when Jesus was rejected at His first coming. While Revelation was written only a few years into this period, it must be the reference to the "till" because there is no other writing that provides that information. Also, until the last half of the 20th century, it was not understood and for the most part considered to be just a number of allegories. Before we move on to that last 5 verse of Daniel, let us take a moment to see if we can better identify the two men who were on either side of the river as well as the third one on the river. It appears that this event involving Daniel was what one might call almost a seminal event from the viewpoint of spiritual / human interaction.

From the description of the "man" standing on the waters, it was the Son of God as the Theophany, while the other two "men" one on each side of the river, were God's angels appearing in human form. It makes no sense that these were merely humans who happened to be passing by, nor could the "man" in linen standing on the waters be anyone but the Son of God of the Triune Godhead. Remember that centuries later, Jesus would do the same thing, that is walk on water.

They could have been there through Gabriel's long dissertation as spirits and only when Daniel looked at this end point, they may have revealed themselves physically. Notice it was one of those who asked the question of how long. As we saw, it was the Theophany who answered the question posed by the "man". The Son of God was the one speaking directly to Daniel in verses 8 through 13. The Son of God, in verse 10 predicted (knew) that many in those end times (from

the rejection of Jesus to the beginning of the Great Tribulation) will be purified, made white and tried (saved).

Here He is speaking of the church, that is the one who will hear, understand and respond to His call to the faith. The others who refuse to hear the call, or hear it but run from it will never understand. In verse 11, He is referring to the period of time when Antichrist will reveal himself and desecrate the temple. In verse 8 God swore it would be 3 ½ years or 1260 days. Revelation spells it out repeatedly, as time times and a half times, 3 ½ years and as 1260 days. Now in verse 11, it's bumped up to 1290 days, or 30 days longer. The key to the apparent dilemma is the term "set up". This can also mean "to avenge, bestow, or ordain." The context of this is best found in Revelation. Because there is not error in Scripture, it is evident that this referring to something that takes place for 30 days, after the 1260 days which is the time allotted for the Great Tribulation. Among the things that will happen during those 30 days will be the destruction of the desecrated temple, the casting of Antichrist and the False Prophet into the Lake of Fire, and Satan into the bottomless pit.

Next, in verse 12 our God extends the time another 45 days to 1335 days. What was the purpose of this second extension? For a detailed discussion of 12 things that must be accomplished during these 30 + 45 days before the millennium can commence, see my commentary called "The Chronology of the End times."

Those who are blessed in verse 12, that is those who wait or survive to that 1335 day, are those who physically survived the Great Tribulation, both the saved and the unsaved. They were blessed to have those additional 75 days after which they will enter the millennium period. Many of them may be the saved souls who manage to hide from Satan's slaughter. Among them will be the sheep of the sheep and goat judgment. These are the ones who fed, clothed and protected the 144,000 evangelizing Jews. Remember, that whatever the world population may be at the beginning of the 7 year tribulation half will survive that 1335 days and will live for some time during the Millennium. That is likely to be several billion people. For those redeemed Christians who might wonder over whom they will be king and priests, here's the answer. The final verse of this chapter and of the Book ends with God telling Daniel to go his

way attending to his earthly duties until the time of his end, as an earthly being. Finally God tells him that after he rests, (presumably in Sheol at Abraham's bosom) he will later stand again in accordance with his lot at the very end, that is when the Old Testament saints are resurrected which will be after the tribulation. God's telling him possibly indicates that he will be chosen by lot, that is by rolling of dice where God purpose always prevails. This may have been better understood in his day than in ours. It was to give him comfort in the fact that there was an afterlife which by God's grace, he would have a part.

This brings us to the end of this outstanding valuable book of history and prophecy. Without it, understanding many parts of Revelation would be most difficult or impossible. The many details of what was prophesized to occur during the described historical period, have been found in historical records and have occurred precisely as predicted. With such a track record, why could anyone not take seriously and literally the predictions yet to happen? As we look around us today, it becomes increasingly evident that the time has arrived, and when these predictions are imminent, and in some cases actually beginning. We should also note that where Daniel left off, Jesus Himself in Matthew 24 and other writings supplemented and added to these predictions. Then God gave John the assignment to effectually continue the book that Daniel had been ordered to close. Revelation of course is the name given to it. There the entire aspects of end times, including the very end of this earth are revealed, as well as what will happen even after that.