

Daniel

a commentary

by R.F. (Bob) Knox, Jr.

A Word of Explanation

Bible Used:

King James Version — henceforth highlighted in bold red (Electronic version).

Comparative Bibles Used:

American Standard Version (1901) — henceforth designated as ASV (Electronic version).

Young's Literal Translation — henceforth designated as YLT (Electronic version).

New King James Version — henceforth designated as NKJV (Electronic version).

Text which appears in **blue** indicates a quotation other than the KJV.

Text which appears in **green** indicates a question.

Bold, black underlined letters are the phonetic spelling of Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek letters of the corresponding word considered from the text.

Historical Background

Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, came to power in around 626 B.C. and began reigning at Babylon which he made his capital.

"According to four cuneiform tablets, discovered in the British museum by D.J. Wiseman in 1956, the Egyptians received a crushing defeat inflicted upon them at Carchemish in 605 B.C. 'One result of this victory (at Carchemish) was that the Babylonians seem to have demanded hostages of Judah as evidence of good faith toward Babylon, and it was this group which went into captivity (as hostages) in that third year of Jehoiakim (Dan. 1:1, 3), including the young man Daniel'" (Hailey, p. 19).

Historians state that Nabopolassar died in 605 B.C. and Nebuchadnezzar began his reign then. This was the beginning of the seventy years of captivity, at the end of which also saw the end of the Babylonian Empire. The great Neo-Babylonians Empire lasted for just seventy years, replaced by the Medo-Persian Empire which late was known only as the Persian Empire.

Daniel — Chapter One

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

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

One of the first things which should be considered in this study is that GOD had warned His people many times about what would happen to them if they rebelled against Him. These warnings began shortly after the Hebrews left Egypt and GOD gave them a covenant through Moses. Listen to GOD’s warning against rebellion carefully.

“The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy GOD hath given thee” (Deuteronomy 28:49-52).

When looking at the history of the Hebrew people from the time of Moses, one sees the above passage played out in the time of the judges, the divided kingdoms and finally the destruction of the Jewish nation in A.D. 70. Consider an announcement made shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon and prayfully

consider why this destruction came upon them.

“Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it: And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke Me to anger. For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before Me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked Me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 32:28-30).

Critical scholars see a problem between verse one of the text and Jeremiah 25:1. The present text states that Nebuchadnezzar came up against king Jehoiakim in his third year, whereas Jeremiah 25:1 shows Nebuchadnezzar’s coming against Jehoiakim in the fourth year of his reign. There is no problem between these passages, because the Babylonians and Jews used two different methods of calculating the beginning of a king’s reign. Using the Jewish method, Nebuchadnezzar came to the throne in the fourth year of Jehoiachim’s reign (Jer. 25:1; while in the Babylonian method, Nebuchadnezzar would have come against Jerusalem in his third year. When the Jews considered time, they looked upon any part of a year as being a whole year. In their way of reckoning time, since Nebuchadnezzar became king toward the end of the year, they considered it a whole year. On the other hand, the Babylonians did not count a king’s reign as the first year until a whole following year had past.

“According to the Babylonian way of designating time of regnal activity, only the first full year reign was called the first year of a king’s reign. The year in which the king ascended the throne, whether the first of the year or later, was not designated his first year, but “the year of the accession to the kingdom” (Butler, p.

25).

Something of interest here is the small phrase informing one that Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem with his armies **“and besieged it.”** The text does not say Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, but it simply says he besieged it. **How could he have then taken captives back to Babylon, as indicated by Daniel?** It is believed that an agreement was reached where a vassal was placed on the throne in Jerusalem. But in order to maintain loyalty, the best of the nobles and young men were taken back to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar as hostages. **How better to keep a people in submission than to threaten their children’s lives if they rebelled?**

Dan. 1:2 “And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of GOD: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.”

“And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of GOD; and he carried them into the land of Shinar to the house of his god: and he brought the vessels into the treasure-house of his god.” (ASV)

“And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand” The significance of this is that Jehoiakim was now under the authority of Nebuchadnezzar — he was his vassal. **But why would GOD allow a foreign power to conquer His people?** The answer is found in 2 Kings 24:3-4.

“Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove *them* out of His sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with

innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.”

Note that it was the sins of Manasseh which caused the enslavement of Judah to Babylon. Jehoiakim was the fourth king after Manasseh.

“The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation” (Numbers 14:18).

Consider just how evil Manasseh was according to 2 Chronicles 33:6-10.

“And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of GOD, of which GOD had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put My name for ever...So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken” (Emphasis added).

Considering the above passage, it is little wonder that GOD was fed up with Judah’s adultery.

GOD also gave (allowed) Nebuchadnezzar to take some of the vessels and article found in the Temple back to Babylon. The significance of these vessels is seen in fulfilled prophecy. Almost a hundred years before the time of the present text, King Hezekiah of Judah had been very sick. In fact, GOD had sent Isaiah to him with the message to set his affairs in order, because he was going to die (Isaiah 38:1). At that time, Hezekiah had prayed with tears for more time, and GOD had granted him fifteen additional years. When

he recovered from his illness, **“Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah”** (Isaiah 39:1). It was then that Hezekiah did something very foolish. Filled with pride, he showed the messengers of this prince all of his treasures. Because he did this, GOD sent Isaiah back with the following rebuke.

“Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon” (Isaiah 39:5-7).

That is the background of what is seen in Daniel chapter one. Before moving forward, though, there is something else which should be seen about Hezekiah. He did not care if Judah’s riches were carried away, nor did he care that his offspring would be made eunuchs.

“Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days” (Isaiah 39:8, emphasis added).

When Nebuchadnezzar came the first time, he took part of Judah’s treasures and many of the best minds of the nation, including **“Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.”** Twice more Nebuchadnezzar would come back: 597 B.C. and 586 B.C. In the latter date, he completed the looting of the nation and completely destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. **What did Nebuchadnezzar do with the vessels he took from the Temple?** He put them in **“the house of his god.”** The Babylonians worshipped many gods, so **Who was this particular god?** Nebuchadnezzar was named after one of these gods (Nabu), but Nabu was Nabopolassar’s god (Nebuchadnezzar’s father). According to Jeremiah

50:2, Nebuchadnezzar's patron god was Marduk, the chief god of the pantheon. **Why did Nebuchadnezzar place these items in "the house of his god?"** In those times, people thought that, if they defeated an enemy, it meant that their god was more powerful than the god of their enemy. Thus, they would store the captured god's treasures in their god's house — a sort of trophy room. Nebuchadnezzar was honoring his god for giving him (he thought) the victory. Interesting, they did not feel like this was denigrating the god's "they captured," for remember, for as polytheist, they thought all god's should be honored.

The text says that GOD delivered Jehoiakim into Nebuchadnezzar's hand, but **What happened to him? Was he taken to Babylon (Shinar — Isaiah 11:11; Zech. 5:11)?**

"According to Josephus, when Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem in 598 B.C., he had Jehoiakim put to death and thrown outside the city walls, without any burial" (Edward P. Myers/Neale T. Pryor/David R. Reichtin, p. 34 — henceforth referred to as MPR).

This would fit the prophecy of Jeremiah 22:18-19.

"Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

Dan. 1:3 "And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;"

"And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring in certain of the children of Israel, even of the seed royal and of the nobles;" (NKJV)

Ashpenaz is called the “**master**” of Nebuchadnezzar’s eunuchs. This word comes from **rab**, which is variously translated as “*master, captain, or chief.*” It was an important position, as indicated by the context. It was his responsibility to choose out specific individuals who would have already had a good education and prepare them even further to serve the king. No doubt he would have also had the task to weed out any who would have been disloyal to their new master.

When did this education begin? Plato said that the Persians began their education at the age of fourteen and finished at seventeen years of age (MPR, p. 36). It is not known when the Babylonians began their advanced training, but it is not beyond the realm of speculation to think it might have been about the same time frame.

The word “**eunuch**” has been troubling to some. The original here, {**saw-reece**} **saw-reece**, usually designates someone who has been castrated, but it also can refer to someone who is a high ranking official. It is this author’s belief that some try to shy away from the word “castrate,” either because they are uncomfortable with the practice (cruelty of it) or think it not polite to use such terminology. Nevertheless, it was a common practice among those who kept harems to have those who guarded them, or might have contact with those of the harem, to be castrated. While the word can be used to designate either meaning, the safest course here seems to be to take it as one who has been castrated. Another thought about castration is that since he could not have children and a family, then he would more likely to devote himself totally to his work.

Ashpenaz was told to bring “**of the children of**

Israel” to be trained for service to Nebuchadnezzar. The word **“children”** (**bane**) speaks of a **“son”** (Strong, BDB), i.e., a male descendant. The age of these young men is not revealed, but it is thought by some that they would probably have been around seventeen, when one considers that they were already thought of as being well educated. These young men were to be chosen from the royal family, **“princes”** (**par-tam**) — a **“noble, nobleman”** (BDB). This makes sense, since these would have been the people with the best education in their time. Another thing to consider, is that it makes sense to take the most educated people from the various nations which were captured. This would allow the king to draw from a wide variety of knowledge in striving to rule his kingdom.

Dan. 1:4 **“Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.”**

“youths in whom was no blemish, but well-favored, and skilful in all wisdom, and endued with knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace; and that he should teach them the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.” (ASV)

The qualifications of those who were to go through this special training are continued here. The first of these is that they could have **“no blemish, but well favoured.”** The phrase **“no blemish”** is from **{moom}** **moom**, which Strong defined as being from a root meaning **“to stain.”** BDB said it means **“blemish, spot, defect”** and could refer to either physical or moral defect

or stain. The Israelites would have been familiar with this requirement, for their priests were not allowed to have a blemish (Lev. 21:17-23). Nor were the sacrifices they offered to Jehovah allowed to have any blemish (Lev. 22:20-21). Those who were to serve the king were to be **“well favoured.”** The NKJV has *“good-looking.”*

These candidates needed to be **“skilful in all wisdom.”** The word **“skilful”** comes from the word **saw-kal’**, which Strong defined as *“to be circumspect and hence intelligent.”* BDB said it means *“to be prudent, be circumspect, wisely understand, prosper.”* Baker/Carpenter said this word is *“a verb meaning to act with insight, to be prudent, to give insight, to teach, to prosper, to consider, to ponder, to understand, to act prudently, to act with devotion”* (p. 1137). This qualification would necessitate that these young men who were chosen for these positions would have been in their late teens, i.e., so that they would have more than a little education and knowledge.

Next they were to be **“cunning in knowledge.”** The word **“knowledge”** comes from **dah’-ath**. Baker/Carpenter said that *“in Proverbs 24:3-4, it is the third word in a chain of three words describing the building of a house by wisdom, the establishment of that house by understanding, and finally the filling of the rooms of the house by knowledge”* (p. 245). The idea seems to be that Nebuchadnezzar wanted these men to be well rounded in the ability to obtain information, process it and apply what they learned. It should be considered that they had books on a wide range of subjects in which to consult.

“We gain some idea of the literary resources of the seventh century before Christ when we are introduced through

archaeology to the vast library of Ashurbanipal (704-681 B.C. just prior to Daniel's day) which contained 22,000 volumes of cuneiform (i.e., 'wedge-shaped' writing) clay tablets" (Butler, p. 28).

They were skilled in mathematics, astronomy and other sciences.

"The Pythagorean theorem was known by the Babylonians more than a thousand years before Pythagoras...as early as the code of Hammurabi (1700 B.C.) Physicians performed delicate operations on the human eye...chemistry and metallurgy were everyday sciences in Daniel's day" (Butler, p. 29).

Next, these young men had to be adapt at **"understanding science."** Note how the NKJV translated this — *"possessing knowledge and quick understanding."* The word **"understanding"** comes from **bene**, which Strong defined as *"to separate mentally (or distinguish), i.e., (generally) understand."* BDB said it is *"to discern, understand, consider."* Baker/ Carpenter said it is *"a verb meaning to discern, to perceive, to observe, to pay attention to, to be intelligent, to be discreet, to understand; in the causative sense, to give understanding, to teach"* (p. 195). The word seems to indicate one who learns quickly because he pays attention. It is a person who answers discreetly and can speak in such a way that others can understand the knowledge he puts forth. The word **"science"** comes from **madda'**, which simply refers to *"knowledge,"* but it also carries the idea of being able to gain practical knowledge through reasoning (Baker/Carpenter, p. 574). It is the ability to reason through one's studies and not simply parrot what one has been taught by another.

"And such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace" The NKJV says, *"serve in the king's palace."* The Hebrew word is **'amad** (*"stand"*).

Interestingly, if one stands in the presence of a ruler, he stands there in order to serve him.

“Whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans” Nebuchadnezzar wanted young men who could learn the language (“**tongue**”), who had the ability to learn. Learning the language would allow the king to communicate with them more easily, if they became proficient in it. This would have been important, because he had all of these advisors upon whom he relied. Without the ability to communicate ideas smoothly and efficiently, there would definitely be misunderstandings. What was the language of the Babylonians at the time of Daniel? Aramaic. However, most of the literature of that time would have come from the library of Ashurbanipal (704-681 B.C.) And would have been written in Akkadian. **“The tongue of the Chaldeans”** simply refers to the Babylonian language.

Dan. 1:5 “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.”

“And the king appointed for them a daily portion of the king's dainties, and of the wine which he drank, and that they should be nourished three years; that at the end thereof they should stand before the king.” (ASV)

“the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank” A major problem is created for these Jewish boys. The term **“meat”** simply means food. Notice the description of this food in other versions: *“king's dainties”* (ASV), *“king's delicacies”* (NKJV), and *“food that the king ate”* (ESV). One could not expect the king

to eat the same food that say a ditch-digger or common laborer would eat. The king would have had the very best of food. No expense would be spared. But in that which he ate there would be foods which were absolutely forbidden to a faithful Israelite — things like pork, catfish, et cetera. The reader is encouraged to turn to Leviticus chapter eleven, where he will find a list which outlines what made various foods either clean or unclean for Israelites. This was not a list developed by man — this was restrictions placed on them by GOD. If the Israelites wanted to remain in a covenant relationship with GOD, they had to abide by these restrictions. Furthermore, the king's wine, being of alcoholic content (fermented), would have been forbidden. These young men (Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) were going to have to make a choice: do what GOD commanded or what Nebuchadnezzar commanded. To disobey the king, as will be seen later, could easily get one killed.

“so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king” Those who were being trained for high positions, as counselors and scholars, were to be fed what Nebuchadnezzar considered to be the best food. He wanted them to have every advantage, in order for their education to be successful. During their three years of education, they would be given every thing they needed to be successful when they appeared before the king for their “final exam.”

Dan. 1:6 “Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:”

“Now among these were, of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.” (ASV)

Attention is drawn to four young men who were from the tribe of Judah, of the royal seed. Note the meaning of these Hebrew names and then compare them to the names the Babylonians gave them in the next verse.

Daniel — *“Judge of God”* (Strong); *“God is my judge”* (BDB).

Hananiah — *“Jehovah has favored”* (Strong); *“God has favored”* (BDB).

Mishael — *“who (is) what God (is)”* (Strong); *“who is what God is”* (BDB).

Azariah — *“Jehovah has helped”* (Strong and BDB).

All of these names honored GOD.

It is also noted that context indicates that these young men were only part of those who were taken from Israel (v. 3). **“Now among these”** were Daniel, Mishael, and Azariah. This seems to indicate that, of the **“children of Judah,”** only these four continued to obey GOD’s dietary restrictions.

Dan. 1:7 “Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Beltshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.”

“And the prince of the eunuchs gave names unto them: unto Daniel he gave the name of Beltshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.” (ASV)

Consider the meanings of these names which, instead of giving honor to Jehovah GOD, gave honor to the gods of the Babylonians.

Beltshazzar (**Daniel**) — *“lord of the straitened’s treasure”* (BDB); *“Bel (Lord), protect (him or his life)”* (Baker/Carpenter).

Shadrach (**Hananah**) — *“royal”* or *“the great scribe”*

(BDB); *“I am fearful (of God)”* (Baker/Carpenter).
Meshach (**Mishael**) — *“guest of a king”* (BDB);
“Who is like Aku?” or *“Who is that is Aku?”*
(Baker/Carpenter).
Abed-nego (**Azariah**) — *“servant of Nebo”* (BDB &
Baker/Carpenter).

Generally speaking, Daniel’s Hebrew name is used in this book. Interestingly, when his Babylonian name is used, it usually appears in the following form — **“Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar.”** But when his three friends are mentioned, their Babylonian names take front stage, except when Daniel speaks of them. Daniel uses their Hebrew names.

As seen in the following verses, Daniel will object to eating the special food (and wine) from Nebuchadnezzar’s table. *Why did he not object to being given his Babylonian name which honored their pagan god(s)?* Mosher (Keith, Sr.) Made this observation: *“He said it did not matter what they called Daniel. Because they called him a name which would be defamatory did not make him that kind of person.”* Daniel, as will be seen, was determined that he was not going to defile himself before his GOD. The food of the king was strictly forbidden for a child of GOD to eat. If Daniel and his friends ate that kind of food, drank that kind of wine, they would have defiled themselves and one would not be studying them today. On the other hand, it did not defile them because others called them whatever name they desired. Mosher then pointed out that *“Daniel objected to what was important, that which would defile him, but did not make a big deal out of what was not important.”* An example of Mosher’s reasoning is illustrated in the life of this author. When he was in Junior High School (showing my age), he had

a math teacher who called him “Bobbert,” because he was constantly asking questions. **What difference did it make what the teacher called him? Would the name “Bobbert” cause him to flunk the class? Did calling him “Bobbert” change his personality or cause him to be someone he was not or make him disreputable? No! So what difference did it make?** Mosher’s point was that one should strenuously object to anything which would keep him from being faithful to GOD, but in those matters which do not matter, one should let it go rather than causing unnecessary turmoil.

“These young Jews had no choice what the Babylonians chose to call them, any more than we today have a choice as to the various terms selected by our enemies to describe us. They simply had to learn to live with those names...The new names given to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah made no difference at all as regards their inner character...Daniel and his three friends were not changed into idolaters because they were given these fancy new Mesopotamian names by those who had power over them to do so” (King, p. 107).

In King’s commentary he listed a number of Biblical characters who were given different names: Joseph (Gen. 41:45), Haddassah (Esther 2:7), Eliakim (2 Kings 23:34, and others. These were given by men. But when GOD changed a man’s name — **that mattered!**

There is another possibility as to why their names were changed. It is possible that their original names were too difficult to be pronounced by their captors. This writer has know a number of people from other lands who come to the United States to live, whose names were too difficult for most American tongues to pronounce. These people usually took another name which was more pronounceable or accepted a nickname by which to be called.

Dan. 1:8 “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he

would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." (ASV)

The reason Daniel made this request has been stated earlier. The first thing one should notice here is that Daniel **"purposed"** something **"in his heart."** The word **"purposed"** comes from **{soom} seem**. BDB defined this word as *"to put, place, set, appoint, make... to set, ordain, establish, found, appoint, constitute, make, determine, fix."* Baker/Carpenter said *"the primary meaning of the verb is to put, or to place"* (p. 1112). This verb shows that Daniel determined, purposely set his mind to, or made something to be of primary importance. *Where did he appoint this item to be of primary importance? "in his heart"* One cannot determine or decide some course of action in the blood pump; therefore, the heart refers to something else. The word **"heart"** here, comes from **labe**. Strong stated that it is *"used (figuratively) very widely for the (feelings), the will and even the intellect; likewise for the center of anything."* BDB defined it as the *"inner man, mind, will, heart, understanding."* In his thinking, in his mind, Daniel appointed something to be of primary importance. His intellect would be used to determine a particular course of action, to make something his chief goal. *What could be so important?*

"that he would not defile himself" The word **"defile"** comes from **gaw-al'**. Strong said this word

means *“to soil or (figuratively) to desecrate: stain.”* BDB defined it as *“to defile, pollute, desecrate.”* Baker/Carpenter it as *“a verb meaning to defile, to pollute, to stain, to make impure”* (p. 176). Daniel was determined that he would keep himself (including his mind) pure and unpolluted from anything GOD said would make him impure, would stain or soil him in GOD’s eyes. **What was it which would cause him to be defiled before GOD?**

“the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank” It was noted earlier that the king had appointed the food and drink for these men because he wanted them to have every advantage in their education. He wanted them to be healthy, so he was providing what he believed would accomplish that goal. But, as noted earlier, GOD had determined the kind of food which was best for his people, and it did not include the king’s dainties or his wine. Daniel and his friends had a choice to make: defile themselves before GOD or possibly anger the king and be put to death. They chose wisely to honor their GOD’s command, which meant that they were willing to accept whatever consequences their decision might bring upon them.

“therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” (It is pretty well established that he spoke not only for himself, but also for **“Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.”**) Besides the dietary restrictions GOD had placed upon His people, there is something else which may have been a consideration with regard to defiling themselves. It may be that he was afraid that, if he ate these foods, he would be defiled because these foods had been offered to idols. For those who offered these foods to their god(s), it symbolized communion with the god(s), i.e.,

worship to them.

“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous GOD” (Exodus 34:14).

Possibly both thoughts play into the idea of being defiled.

One should ask himself today if he is as loyal to GOD’s will as was Daniel. The laws are not the same for Christians as they were for those under the law of Moses. But it takes the same kind of loyalty to be pleasing to GOD, to keep oneself pure and undefiled before Him, today as it did then.

The question might also be asked, **Where did Daniel learn to be so steadfast in his loyalty to GOD?** Probably from GODly parents like those John and Timothy had.

“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before GOD, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:5-6, emphasis added).

“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (2 Timothy 1:5, emphasis added).

“I know the price of success, hard work, and unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen” (Frank Loyd Wright, quoted by King, p. 109).

“A man can be as great as he wants to be...if you are willing to sacrifice the little things in life and pay the price for the things that are worthwhile, it can be done” (Vince Lombardi, IBID, p. 110).

Dan. 1:9 “Now GOD made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the

eunuchs.”

“Now GOD made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs.” (ASV)

A clear, obvious case of the providence of GOD is presented here. No miracle accomplished this, but the mysterious works of GOD’s providence helped Daniel. Consider how this came about. Daniel in striving with all his might to serve GOD correctly, would not have acted as a “normal” captive at first. Those who were chosen from the nations to serve in the capacity of eunuchs to the king came from the highest echelons of power in their home countries. They would not have been used to being treated as servants and, therefore, would have tended to resent their present circumstances. But a child of GOD would have accepted his new position as GOD’s will and would therefore act with respect toward his captors. As one travels through the book of Daniel, he sees exactly that from Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah toward their masters. This would have obviously impressed their masters and caused favor and compassion to be expressed toward them. Whatever was in the providence which cause these Hebrew boys to receive favor and compassion from their overlords is beyond comprehension of mortal minds.

Note that the same GOD who gave Daniel favor and compassion in the eyes of the eunuch **“gave Jehoiakim king of Judah”** into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (v. 1). Throughout this wonderful book, the sovereignty of GOD is going to be seen and proclaimed over and over again. Just as Nebuchadnezzar’s army did not give him the victory, no man in and of himself caused the eunuch to show such

tender regard and compassion to these four boys.

Dan. 1:10 “And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.”

“And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? so would ye endanger my head with the king.” (ASV)

That the king would have punished the eunuch is beyond question. **But would he have scourged him, imprisoned him, or taken his life?** To **“endanger”** one does not necessarily mean that his life would be taken. The circumstances would obviously play a part in what happened to him. Nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar (as an absolute monarch) could have taken his life on a whim if he chose. Further, there is no doubt that Melzar (**mel-tsawr**) was afraid that, if he presented these boys in an unfavorable light before the king, he could lose his life.

One might also consider how this appeal might have sounded to Melzar. This writer can almost see his puzzled look as he wondered, **“Why would anyone only desire vegetables when you could have the delicacies of the king?”** It might also be pointed out that some try to use this passage (and others) to dictate that people must be vegetarians. Even if they could successfully argue their case, it must be remembered that no one lives under the restrictions of the Law of Moses today. The New Testament shows that some tried to enforce

the dietary restrictions of the Old Testament on Christians, but the Christian does not have those restrictions. Paul wrote about them in 1 Timothy 4:2-5.

“Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which GOD hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of GOD is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of GOD and prayer.”

What about the word **“sort?”** One might be inclined to think of this in some sort of derogatory way. But the word is not used in that way. The ASV translates this word as **“age.”** This then lends credence to the thought that there was a certain age group from which these students were chosen to be trained in all of the **“wisdom”** of the Babylonians. Thus, it is not, in this writer’s mind, speaking of an ethnic group — Jews.

“One man feared the lord Nebuchadnezzar and the other feared Nebuchadnezzar’s Lord” (McGuiggan, quoted by MPR, p. 44).

Dan. 1:11-12 “Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.”

“Then said Daniel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.” (ASV)

The word **“Melzar”** seems to refer to a title rather than to a proper name. The word **“Melzar”** comes from **mel-tsawr’**, which Strong defined as *“of Persian*

derivation; the butler or other officer in the Babylonian court.” BDB defined it as meaning *“guardian, an officer of the court.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as identifying *“a person as an overseer, someone in authority over designated areas or persons”* (p. 621). All agreed that their definitions were rather dubious, i.e., uncertain. The one thing which one can be certain about is that, whoever this was, he had charge over the men chosen by Ashpenaz, the master of the eunuchs. It is this individual who favored Daniel and to whom Daniel made the request not to eat the king’s food. Remember that Daniel had approached his masters politely and with respect.

Daniel answered the fear of his master by proposing a test. The word **“prove”** comes from **naw-saw’**, which Strong defined as *“to test; by implication to attempt.”* BDB said it means *“to test, try, prove, tempt, assay, put to the proof or test.”* Baker/Carpenter said this word is *“a verb meaning to test, to try, to prove”* (p. 736). Daniel proposed that the test last ten days and that they be tested at the end of that time. Obviously, they were to be checked to see if they were any worse off than before the test, the same, or better off. The word **“day”** comes from the word **yome**, which by itself can refer to a day, a week, a year, or any unspecified amount of time. A peculiarity about this word is that, when it appears with a number — such as five, ten, twenty-two, or any other number — the number causes it to represent that number of twenty-four-hour time periods. In the present case, it is speaking about ten literal twenty-four-hour days.

Daniel proposed that he, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah be given **“pulse to eat, and water to drink,”** instead of the food from the king’s table. The word

“pulse” comes from **{zat-ro'-ah} zay-raw-ohn'**, which is defined by Strong as *“something sown (only in the plural), i.e., a vegetable (as food).”* BDB said it simply means *“vegetables (as sown).”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a masculine noun denoting pulse, vegetables”* (p. 306).

“This Hebrew word could be translated in a general sense as vegetables. It involves more than legumes (peas and beans) and would include wheat and other grains so that bread would be in their diet” (Butler, p. 35).

King believed that it could also be fruit (p. 116), because fruit comes from seeds. The assumption is that, if they looked no worse than the others who were eating the king’s food and drinking his wine, then they would be allowed to continue eating only vegetables from then on. Daniel was simply asking to eat common food, not the food of the rich. Modern nutritionists have long shown that eating more fruits and vegetables with less flesh is indeed a recipe for better health.

Some take the position that Daniel made his plea not to eat the king’s food to Ashpenaz, who turned him down. Those who make that assumption then say that he revised his request to Ashpenaz’s subordinate (Melzar) by asking for a trial period, the test. This writer cannot say if two people were asked for permission to eat vegetables or not, but he sees no reason to assume that two were necessarily asked. What is important is that Daniel showed his steadfast loyalty to GOD’s law regarding their food consumption. His determination is remarkable — he did not give up in his desire to remain faithful to GOD. Many might have half-hardly tried once and then give up saying, *“Well I tried, so time to give up.”* But not Daniel.

Dan. 1:13-14 “Then let our countenances be looked

upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.”

“Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days.” (NKJV)

Consider how wise and reasonable Daniel's proposal was. **The schooling would go on for three years, so what could it hurt to use ten days for such a test?** If the results were not excellent, which they were, then go to plan “B.” It is this writer's belief that there was only one plan “B” for Daniel and his friends if the Babylonians tried to force them to eat the king's food — refusal to eat his food and, thus, possible death. But GOD had plans for Daniel and his friends, and their request would be honored after the test period.

Note that what Daniel proposed was closely monitored and controlled. They would not eat part of the king's food and part pulse. They would only eat pulse. It was not that the others with whom they were to be compared would eat part pulse and part from the king's table. Daniel and his friends would not drink a little wine and a little water, but only water. At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his friends would be compared to those who had eaten only from the king's table and drunk from the king's wine cellar. The request was logical and fair, so Melzar agreed to it.

There has been some discussion among scholars regarding those to whom Daniel and his friends were to be compared. Some believe it was with other Hebrews who compromised their faith in GOD. Others believe it

was a group of mixed youth from all of the conquered nations who were being trained in this school. This writer says, “Who cares?” They were either improved in appearance, there was no change, or they looked worse.

Dan. 1:15-16 “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. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.”

“And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties. So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.” (ASV)

At the end of the test days, there was a marked difference between the two groups. Daniel and his friends appearance was better, and they were “**fatter in flesh.**” The word “**fatter**” is not a reference to obesity, as it is usually used in today’s society. The Hebrew word “*indicates sufficiency and prosperity*” (Millard, quoted by Coffman, p. 23). It is a simple statement declaring that they were healthier than the other students in the school.

“This term is also used regarding the good cows of Pharaoh's dream...which were set in contrast to those that were gaunt (Gen. 41:2-3)” (MPR, p. 47).

As Stan Stockton pointed out, “*The experiment succeeded for two reasons: (a) Daniel's faith and the providence of God; and (b) the diet itself*” (Denton thumb drive). Neither the diet nor Daniel’s faith by itself equaled success — **it took both.**

“The Bible does not really teach that ‘God helps those who help themselves,’ but it does teach that He rewards those who are moved by faith and who diligently seek Him (Heb, 11:6)” (MPR, p. 46).

“It is worth noting that nutritional experts today advocate a diet mostly composed of fruits and vegetables for optimum health” (King, p. 119).

There is something which the reader should always remember from this context and which is illustrated by Daniel and his friends. It is **always** right to do right! It is **always** wrong to do wrong. It is **always** destructive to compromise between GOD’s instructions and the desires of the world. Someone may say, **“But what about one’s opinions?”** First, it must truly be a matter of opinion when a decision is made. Second, if the matter is an opinion, then one’s opinion is as valid as another’s, and either choice is proper. Yet, there is a qualifier which should be considered in the second point. The decision should be made out of love and concern for the other person or group. One should always act out of kindness and goodwill toward others, in obedience to GOD’s expressed will. More religious discussions turn into antagonistic because of a failure to recognize opinions for what they are — opinions — and then failing to ask, **“Is what I am saying my opinion, or is it what GOD said in His word?”**

Dan. 1:17 “As for these four children, GOD gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.”

“Now as for these four youths, GOD gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.” (ASV)

Since the vegetarian diet immediately precedes this passage, it is pointed out that it was not what caused them to be gifted with **“knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom.”** The vegetarian diet helped to provide good health for them, but it was GOD Who “gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom.”

It is observed that all four of these youth were given knowledge and skill. But Daniel was given more than that. In addition he was given **“understanding in all visions and dreams.”** Why the difference between these youth’s gifts is not revealed. Stockton gave an interesting take here with regard to providence and miracles.

“This verse shows a distinction between the providence of God and his miraculous dealings with mankind to accomplish His will, God worked providentially through these four young men and their ‘knowledge and skill,’ but God worked miraculously through Daniel by giving him understanding in all visions and dreams” (Denton thumb drive).

He also quoted Rex Turner with regard to the providence portrayed in this passage and some of the differences between providence and miracles.

“God’s providence prevailed for those youths in every way, but God did not do for them that which they could do for themselves. They are to be credited for their having learned and made good use of all the knowledge and opportunities that were afforded them...The subject of ‘divine providence,’ necessarily infers God’s intervention into natural laws. This God does, or has done, by two radically different means, namely by miracle and providence...With respect to God’s two channels of operation — that is, miracle and providence — a person should observe: (1) that the method of accomplishment is different; (2) that the purpose of the events are different; (3) that the awareness of the observer is different...” (IBID).

The statement made that *“God did not do for them that which they could do for themselves”* is a very obvious

difference between His working in providential ways through miracles. A miracle is something that cannot be done through natural law. Thus, when Nebuchadnezzar dreamed (Dan. 2 & 3), it was Daniel who was able to interpret his dreams, not Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (even though they were full of **“knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom”**). When an interpretation of the handwriting on the wall was needed, it was only Daniel who could give the meaning (Dan. 5). **Why?** Because only GOD could provide the meaning of the dream. No man by his own intelligence could reveal the dream or its meaning.

Dan. 1:18-19 “Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.”

“And at the end of the days which the king had appointed for bringing them in, the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.”
(ASV)

Final exam time had come, and hopefully graduation. Now those who were involved in the studies for three years, including Daniel and his friends, were brought before Nebuchadnezzar for their final exam. In his examination (**“communed”**) of those who had been brought from the various provinces to this school, none excelled as did Daniel and his friends — **“ten times better”** than the others was

Nebuchadnezzar's assessment of them.

"Naturally, in the course of this investigation, certain ones began to shine more brightly than the others through their general demeanor, physical attributes, incisive analysis of problems, and native intellectual abilities" (King, p. 123).

None were found to excel to the degree that these four Jewish boys had. Thus, they were chosen to stand in the king's presence, i.e., act as part of his chief advisors. Till this day, an oral exam is given after one has completed his advanced studies.

Dan. 1:20 "And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm."

"And in every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm." (ASV)

One cannot help but wonder if Nebuchadnezzar publicly announced that these Jewish boys were ten times better than all of his **"magicians and astrologers"** (this would have included all of his wise men). If he made such an announcement, it probably began the jealousy and resentment which will be shown later in the book of Daniel toward these four boys.

The result of Nebuchadnezzar's examination should hardly be a surprise, since **"GOD gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom"** (v. 17). This advantage they had also required hard work on their part. If they had been lazy, refusing to put the effort into improving the abilities they were given, they would have been miserable failures. GOD has given all certain abilities. The question then becomes whether

each has used what he has been given. One should learn that from the lesson Jesus taught on the talents in Matthew chapter twenty-five. GOD held those individuals accountable as to how they used what they had been given. The one who did not use his abilities to produce more was called a **“wicked and slothful servant”** (v. 26), but those who used their talents to the best of their abilities were commended and given more talents because they used what they had been given.

The word **“magicians”** (**khar-tome**) is believed to have been taken from the Egyptians and refers to someone *“skilled in the use of ancients hieroglyphs...it occurs in the Bible only in reference to soothsayers of Egypt in the accounts of Joseph (Gen. 41:8, 24) and of Moses and Aaron at the court of Pharaoh (Ex. 7:11, 22; etc.”* (King, p. 125). The word **“astrologers”** (**ash-shawf**) *“is of Akkadian derivation, coming from the term ‘asipu, meaning ‘exorcist’ or ‘incantation priest’”* (King, p. 125). The LXX follows the Masoretic text and calls them charmers and magi.

Dan. 1:21 “And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.”

“And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.”
(ASV)

The importance of this verse is that it shows that Daniel spanned the entirety of the captivity in the position he held of advising kings of two kingdoms (Babylon and Medo-Persia). The Critics say that Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus’ reign, based on this verse; but from Daniel 10:1, it is learned that he continued to serve well into the reign of Cyrus. GOD had revealed to Nebuchadnezzar how kingdom would follow kingdom,

and how these world kingdoms would fall and be replaced by a world kingdom which would exist until the end of time, and in its eternal stage forever. Daniel would see the first of these kingdoms fall and the second one come into existence.

Daniel
Chapter
One

Daniel Chapter One

1. Who was the father of Nebuchadnezzar?

2. When did Nebuchadnezzar begin his reign?

3. What three events took place about the time of Babylon's victory at Carchemish (605 B.C.)?
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.

4. What passage in Deuteronomy tells of the covenant GOD made with His people (Hebrews, Israelites)?

5. Name several times in Jewish history that the punishments seen in the above passage of Deuteronomy were administered by GOD.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.

6. From Jeremiah's record, why did GOD send the Babylonian destruction upon Judah?

100. What did the king declare about Daniel and his friends?

101. What three parts were involved in Daniel's and his friends being declared better than all the scholars in Nebuchadnezzar's empire?

A.

B.

C.

102. What would have happened if they had been lazy in the pursuit of their studies (Give a reference for your answer.)?

103. What is the importance of verse twenty-one?

7. How do the critics of Daniel attack Daniel in the very first verse of this book?

8. What is the answer to the critics of question #7?

A.

B.

9. What is the importance of the phrase "besieged it" (B.C. 605)?

10. From what Hebrew word does the word "Lord" come in verse two?

11. To what does the word translated "Lord" in this verse refer?

12. What king did GOD blame for Judah's subjugation by the Babylonians (give reference)?

13. What relationship did Jehoiakim have to the king of question #12?

14. How evil was Manasseh (name some things he did).

15. Manasseth made Judah do worse than whom?
16. What did Nebuchadnezzar take from Jerusalem in B.C. 605?
17. In Isaiah 38, Hezekiah was told he was going to die, at which time he pleaded for more time. Why did Hezekiah, at the time he prayed, need more time?
18. What happened after Hezekiah got well?
19. For what foolish thing did GOD rebuke Hezekiah after Merodachbaladan's envoy went home?
20. What two things did Isaiah by the mouth of GOD tell Hezekiah would happen to his descendants because of his foolish actions?
- A.
- B.
21. List the years when Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem with his armies?
- A.
- B.
- C.

91. How did GOD reward Daniel and his friends for their faithfulness?
92. What additional reward was given to Daniel?
93. How is knowledge normally attained by individuals?
94. What did the vegetarian diet **give** these four?
95. What did the vegetarian diet **not give** these four?
96. To whom were Nebuchadnezzar's dreams not revealed?
- A.
- B.
97. What happened at the end of the three years of their schooling?
98. To what does the phrase "therefore stood they before the king" refer?
99. Of what did the king enquired of the students at exam time?

83. What kind of food did Daniel ask they be given?

84. What kind of food is referred to in the previous question?

85. To what other kinds of food would that also refer?

86. What are some important points revealed in Daniel's request?

A.

B.

87. Melzar's fears were _____.

88. To whom were Daniel and his friends compared at the end of this test?

89. How did Daniel and his friends look compared to those who ate the king's dainties?

90. What are three GREAT lessons to be learned from this text?

A.

B.

C.

22. Where did Nebuchadnezzar place the items taken from the Temple in Jerusalem in B.C. 605?

23. How did the Babylonians consider YHWH?

24. What did the Jewish historian Josephus say Nebuchadnezzar did with Jehoiakim?

25. Who was Ashpenaz?

26. The word eunuch is used in the Scriptures to designate what two things and sometimes both?

A.

B.

27. What is the original word for "children" in verse three specifically designating?

28. Considering the context, why does it make sense that those of the king's family and princes be chosen for this education?

29. To what does the phrase "no blemish, but well favored" mean?

30. Who else did GOD require to have no blemish and be well favored (give reference)?

31. What else did GOD require to have no blemish and be well favored (give reference)?

32. What would the qualification to be skillful in all knowledge require?

33. What does the original word for “**cunning**” mean (v. 4)?

34. How is the word “**knowledge**” (**dah'-ath**) used in Proverbs 24:3-4?

35. How large was the library of Ashurbanipal as found, so far, by archaeologist?

36. What skills regarding the human eye were written about in the time of Hammurabi?

37. What theorem was known by the people by the time of Hammurabi (B.C. 1700)?

38. What definition of **bene** (“**understanding**”) did Strong give for this word?

39. What implication also applies to the word **bene**?

40. To what does the phrase “**ability in them to stand in the king's palace**” refer?

76. To what does the term “**Melzar**” refer?

77. How did Strong define the word **met-tsawr** (“**Melzar**”)?

78. How did Baker/Carpenter define the word **met-tsawr** (“**Melzar**”)?

79. How did Daniel approach Melzar?

80. How did Daniel counter Melzar's argument?

A.

B.

C.

81. The word “**day**” in verse 10 is **yome**, how is this Hebrew word used in the Bible?

A.

B.

C.

D.

82. What peculiarity does the word **yome** have?

67. What is seen about GOD throughout this book?

68. Who gave Nebuchadnezzar's army victory?

69. Who brought the end of the Babylonian empire?

70. Why might the prince of eunuchs hesitate to grant Daniel's request for different food?

71. What might the eunuch's thoughts have been about the king's food?

72. What did the eunuch obviously think about the food Daniel and his friends requested?

73. How is the word "sort" translate in the ASV and NKJV (v. 10)?

74. When the eunuch said, "the children which are of your sort," to what was he referring in verse ten?

75. McGuigan wrote "One man feared the _____
_____ and the other feared
_____."

41. Why did those who stood in the king's court need the ability to learn languages?

42. How many languages did Cleopatra VII know?

43. What was the tongue (language) of the Chaldeans?

44. What did the king provide for these students?

A.

B.

45. What problem did this create for these Hebrew boys?

46. How long were the students in this school to be fed the king's food?

47. What four Hebrews are pointed out in verse six?

48. By these boys being mentioned, what possibility does this imply about any other Hebrews who may have been in this school?

49. Why was it a general practice to rename slaves or hostages?

50. Why do you suppose Daniel did not object to being called by a name representing a pagan idol?

51. Did calling Daniel by an idol's name make him unclean?

52. What would make Daniel unclean?

53. What is the idea behind the phrase "Daniel purposed in his heart?"

54. What was the primary reason behind Daniel's purpose found?

55. What does BDB reveal about the word labe ("heart" – v. 8)?

56. What was so important to Daniel that he made this vow?

57. What are some of the ideas associated with the word gaw-al' ("defile")?

58. In this text, what specifically would have defiled Daniel and his three friends?

59. What specifically did Daniel choose to do so as not to violate GOD's law?

60. Where did Daniel probably learn to be so steadfast in his loyalty to GOD?

61. What did it take to make a John (Give reference)?

62. What did it take to make a Timothy (Give reference)?

63. Of what does verse nine seem to be a case?

64. How might a worldly captive act toward his captor?

65. How should a captive act toward his captor?

66. How did Daniel act toward his captors?

A.

B.

C.

King had a section in his commentary on Daniel, in his opening remarks for chapter two regarding the kind of dreams people have, which is very informative and enlightening. It begins on page 130 and is recommended by this author as being well worth obtaining and one's consideration.

Daniel — Chapter Two

Dan. 2:1 “And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.”

“And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams; and his spirit was troubled, and his sleep went from him.” (ASV)

There has been a lot of controversy created in recent years by the “historical critics” regarding the phrase **“the second year.”** Their objection is that Daniel would not have been numbered among the “wise men” of Babylon until he had finished his third year of training mentioned in chapter one. But when one views how the Babylonians numbered a king's reign, the problem vanishes (as do all of the historical critics' attacks on the Bible). One of the many authors who commented on this solution was Butler, whose thoughts are presented below.

“According to Babylonian reckoning, the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar would be the third year of Daniel's training. First year of reign for a Babylonian emperor was called The Year of Accession, his first year of reign would really be his second year, and his second year would really be his third year on the throne” (p. 57).

It should also be remembered that Daniel had been

sent back to Babylon to begin his training while Nebuchadnezzar was still campaigning in Judaea, **before** he actually became king. It was during that time that his father died (Nabopolassar), and Nebuchadnezzar went back to claim his throne. Thus, Daniel would have already been training for some time when Nebuchadnezzar became king. Understanding these things, there is absolutely no problem with the dates given.

Those critics who attack the date given in this chapter should also contemplate additional information given in chapter one. In Daniel 1:18, Daniel and his friends had been brought before Nebuchadnezzar at the end of their training, examined by the king (v. 19), and implied at this time to have been promoted (Daniel) to be the head of the wise men. It would have been shortly after their promotions that the events of chapter two occurred.

The word **“dreams”** is from **chalom chalom**, which *“refers to the sensations or images passing through one’s mind during sleep, usually during the night”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 340). This was one of the ways GOD sometimes communicated with man in the miraculous age. When He spoke to them in this manner, He communicated an important message to man, and (as in the case here) the message was often prophetic. These prophetic dreams were usually given through on of His prophets, but sometimes — again as is the case in this text — to a heathen. These visions were not like the ordinary dreams of man today, which are often silly, sometimes frightening, but do not reveal a message from GOD. Today, GOD does not verbally speak, nor does He speak through dreams and visions

to man. In these last days, GOD only speaks to man by His Son, and then only through the written Scripture.

“GOD, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Many today falsely claim that man needs a miraculous energy working mysteriously on him by the Spirit of GOD in order for him to understand the Scriptures. But that is not what the Scriptures teach. The Scriptures teach that when one reads and studies them, he can understand what GOD says.

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of GOD which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Ephesians 3:2-5, emphasis added).

“Divinations and omens and dreams are folly, and like a woman in travail the mind has fantasies. Unless they are sent from the Most High as a visitation, do not give your mind to them. For dreams have deceived many people, and those who put their hope in them have failed” (Sirach (180 B.C.), quoted by King, p. 133).

The word **“spirit”** (**roo'-akh**) is interesting, because it can refer to one's living spirit, but it can also refer to (among other things) the *“mind”* (BDB). It is this writer's belief, though many translators disagree with him, that **“spirit”** would be better translated here as “mind.” This dream caused Nebuchadnezzar's mind to toil for the meaning, even causing it to register fear. The verb **paw-am'** (**“troubled”**) means *“to stir, to be stirred, to be troubled”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 911) and reduces one

to a state of agitation. This is the position in which Nebuchadnezzar now found himself. He had a dream which he understood had an important message, and he somehow understood that it had something to do with himself, which it did. Let one not forget that the Babylonians firmly believed that their dreams revealed the future, and so they put a great deal of energy into studying the stars and a false science of astrology.

“Astrology is a range of divination practices, recognized as pseudoscientific...that propose that information about human affairs and terrestrial events may be discerned by studying the apparent positions of celestial objects” (Wikipedia).

A true **scientific study** of the stars and space indeed has value (outer space travel, etc.). But only those who are ungodly try to con people out of their hard-earned money by falsely (lying) claiming they can predict the future through their study of the stars. Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams were so troubling to him that they caused him to lose sleep. Probably all people, at one time or another, have known what he was going through. This writer often has dreams about past events (Vietnam) that wake him up, and (because of such) he cannot resume his sleep. **So what did the king do?**

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

“Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the enchanters, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.” (ASV)

Nebuchadnezzar called for the phony predictors to

come before him so that they could pretend to tell the meaning of his dreams. But Nebuchadnezzar had a surprise for them, a rather unpleasant surprise at that. Who were these “wise men” and what were they supposed to be able to do?

The word **“magicians”** comes from **kar-tome’**, which Strong defined as *“a horoscopist (as drawing magical lines or circles).”* BDB said they were a *“diviner, magician, astrologer, engraver, writer (only in a derivative sense of one possessed of occult knowledge).”* Baker/Carpenter defined this word as *“a masculine noun meaning engraver, a writer associated with the occult”* (p. 378). It might be remembered that Pharaoh had some dreams which troubled him and his magicians could not interpret them. When GOD spoke through a dream, no human could decipher what it meant unless GOD revealed its meaning by a prophet or specially chosen person to do it.

The word **“astrologers”** comes from **ash-shawf’**, which is defined by Strong as being *“from an unused root (probably) meaning to {lisp}, i.e., practice enchantment; a conjurer.”* BDB said it means a *“necromancer, conjurer.”* Baker/Carpenter says it is *“a masculine noun meaning enchanter, conjurers of spirits, necromancers, or astrologers”* (p. 107). These are primarily people who claim that they can talk to the dead and, thus, give important messages to the living, i.e., act as a go-between for the dead and the living.

The word **“sorcerers”** comes from **kaw-shaf’**, which Strong defined as *“properly, to whisper a {spell}, i.e., to enchant or practice magic, witch.”* BDB defined it as *“to practice witchcraft or sorcery, use witchcraft; sorcerer, sorceress.”* Baker/Carpenter defined this word as *“a verb meaning to practice magic, to practice*

sorcery...the exact meaning of the word is obscure, it involves the use of supernatural powers” (p. 529).

The word **“Chaldeans” {kas-dee’} kas-dee’-maw** refers to *“the inhabitants of Chaldea, living on the lower Euphrates and Tigris; those persons considered the wisest in the land” (BDB).* Baker/Carpenter defined this word as *“a proper noun designating Chaldean, Babylonian: the Gentile name of the inhabitants of a city (Babylon) and area (Babylonia) located in southern Mesopotamia on the Euphrates River...located ca. 50 miles south of modern Bagdad, Iraq” (p. 528).* Another way of saying all of this is *“the natives of the area who were considered smarter than imported scholars.”* Hailey thought it possible that the Chaldeans were part of the Babylonian priesthood (p. 35). Coffman stated that the term Chaldeans *“came to be applied to the astrologers, soothsayers, magicians, enchanters, diviners and wise men as a class” (p. 31).*

“Herodotus referred to both ‘Chaldeans’ and ‘Babylonians,’ specifying that the former were ‘the priests of Bel’” (MPR, p. 60).

When these magicians, astrologer, sorcerers, and Chaldeans were ordered into the king’s presence, there was only one thing to do. **“they came and stood before the king”**

Dan. 2:3-4 “And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.”

“And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in the Syrian language, O king, live for

ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.” (ASV)

One might wonder why it is pointed out that the Chaldeans used the Syriack (Aramaic) language to answer the king. Mosher wrote that *“Aramaic is thought to have been the court language of Daniel’s day”* (Denton thumb drive). One of the things which should also be noted here is that the Syrian (Aramaic) language is used from this point until the end of chapter seven of Daniel. Further, when the Hebrews (Israelites) returned to their homeland after the captivity in Babylon, they spoke the Aramaic language. Considering this, it is reasonable to assume that Aramaic had by this time become their primary language.

Nebuchadnezzar informed his wise men that he had had a dream that agitated [**“troubled”** (**paw-am’**)] him greatly. He desperately wanted to know what it meant, which seems to imply that somehow he believed that this dream involved his future, or some future event. It is also noted that it was the Chaldeans who spoke, probably as the spokesmen for the entire group. Since they claimed to be able to interpret dreams, their question was quite logical. They requested that he tell them the dream.

“Is it not true, that if a man can reveal the future, he should have no trouble remembering someone else’s dream? Something had compelled the king to believe that the alleged wise men could do neither” (Coffman, p. 32).

Coffman and others believe that Nebuchadnezzar remembered the dream, but purposefully told them that he did not remember it. This would fit the above quotation by Coffman above. This writer believes that Nebuchadnezzar truly did not remember his dreams, but like all who have truly forgotten some information,

when another speaks that information, then it comes back to his memory. Whether this was a test of his “wise men” or not, it gave GOD an opportunity through Daniel to prove his deity.

“If the king related the fact of his dream to the Chaldeans, they could have set about at once to compare the details with their astrological charts, cast their horoscopes, made their incantations, submitted the dream to their magic and have come up with an interpretation (which by the way, would probably have been flattering to the king’s ego and favorable to his whims of government and indulgence)” (Butler, p. 59).

“These fellows were highly intelligent and extremely skilled at deduction and imagination” (King, p. 143).

In other words, they were skilled deceivers and liars.

Dan. 2:5-6 “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. But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.”

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

The gist of these two verses is either death and dishonor or life and great rewards. The word **“dunghill,”** though implying *“ruins,”* has been mistranslated in the ESV [actually not translated

(probably to be less offensive to “sensitive minds”)]. (This is one of the major problems this writer has with the ESV, because they do quite a bit of “implying” instead of **accurate translation**.) The word **“dunghill”** comes from **{nev-aw-loo’} nev-aw-lee’**, which Strong defined as *“to be foul; to stink: dunghill.”* BDB said it means a *“refuse-heap, dunghill, outhouse.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“an Aramaic feminine noun indicating a refuse heap, a dunghill”* (p. 717). The text possibly implies that their families would suffer greatly, if they were not killed (cf. Dan. 6:24).

The punishment decreed by the king seems very barbaric, especially by western standards. Yet, it must be considered that, even today, there are nations which think nothing of inflicting punishments just as barbaric as those punishments inflicted by the ancients. In Muslim nations like Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, et cetera, hands are cut off for stealing, women are stoned for adultery (seldom are men stoned for this offense), heads are chopped off, and other punishments often for minor offences. Until this point in time, the king’s wise men probably thought it was going to be *“just another day at the office.”* But if they had such a thought, they quickly realized that the stakes were a lot higher. MPR stated that the Aramaic here literally reads, *“You will be made into limbs (or members)”* (p. 65).

Dan. 2:7 “They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.”

“They answered the second time and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.” (ASV)

As one reads this verse, he can almost hear the fear

and panic in their reply to the king. They knew they were phoney. They knew that, by purely human resources, no man could do what the king demanded. Therefore, they knew they were as good as dead men walking.

Consider also that, when the Chaldeans first spoke to the king, they said, **“O king, live forever.”** Now there seemed to be a subtle change to **“Let the king tell his servants the dream,”** i.e., a pleading with him. Their first statement, while polite, seems simply to state a common greeting to the king. But their second seems to humble themselves as *“servants, slaves”* (**ab-ad**). There also seemed to be some begging going on, because they knew they could give him nothing of which he had asked.

Dan. 2:8-9 **“The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.”**

“The king answered and said, I know of a certainty that ye would gain time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye make not known unto me the dream, there is but one law 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.” (ASV)

Nebuchadnezzar accused his “wise men” men of stalling for time (**“ye would gain the time”**). This writer

would dare say that, if one today knew he was a phony with a death penalty for failure staring him the face, he would stall for time too.

"The word for gain (zeban) literally means to 'purchase,' 'buy,' or 'barter'" (King, p. 8).

The last phrase in verse eight has puzzled those who study this book. Nebuchadnezzar was either saying (1) *"The dream is gone from me"* or (2) *"The edict (for punishment) is gone forth from me."* It should be considered that, whichever the phrase refers to, it is a **certainty**. If it refers to the dream, it is a claim that the dream has been forgotten by him. If it refers to the edict, he was simply guaranteeing that he would exercise the declared penalty for failure. This writer believes that both were meant by his statement. Hailey thought the king was accusing them of stalling for time until he forgot the matter or until some more important matter would occupy his mind (p. 37). The fact is that, if the king could tell them the dream, they would have been manufacturing an explanation for it. Zerr thought that they may have been hoping that, with a little time, the king might have remembered the dream (p. 222).

The reader also might consider the wisdom and logical thinking of Nebuchadnezzar. He correctly reasoned that if they truly had the ability to reveal the future through dreams, then they also should have the ability to reveal the dream in the first place. If they could not reveal it, then they had been lying to him all along.

This whole passage shows GOD was working behind the scenes to accomplish His will. Further, even in these last days (period of time) in which one lives today, GOD is still working, not in miraculous ways as He often did then, but through His providence (cf.

Romans 13). Speaking of providence, consider the words of King here.

"If we fail to embrace this thoroughly biblical notion, then for all intents and purposes we view God as 'dead' in our own time"
(p. 148).

King also pointed out a major difference between Daniel and these "wise men" which is worth one's consideration (p. 149). Both groups asked for time to reveal the dream and its meaning. Daniel assured the king that if he was given some time, **he would** reveal the dream and its meaning. The "wise men" declared that they could not reveal the dream no matter how much time they were given — such a thing was impossible. It is clearly understood, as seen in verse twenty-eight, that Daniel attributed his knowledge not to human ability, but to the revelation provided by GOD.

Dan. 2:10-11 "The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore *there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.*"

"The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter, forasmuch as no king, lord, or ruler, hath asked such a thing of any magician, or enchanter, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is no other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." (ASV)

There are several things of interest in this passage. The first is an admission by these fakers that no man on earth could do what the king had asked them to do.

The second thing this author considered is a question. **Were they chiding the king because he asked them to do what everyone knew was impossible?** He draws this conclusion based upon the king's reaction after they spoke. The king became **"angry and very furious"** (v. 12). The word for **"very"** is from **sag-ghee'**, which is defined by Strong and BDB as **"exceedingly."** Nebuchadnezzar became exceedingly furious at their response. Strong defined the word **"furious" (kets-af')** as **"to become enraged."** **Why such rage, if he had not been insulted by their words?**

The third thing noted by this author is the admission that their gods were not real. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that they said they could not give nor interpret the dream. They said only the **"gods"** could give Nebuchadnezzar what he asked for, but note that they said in effect, *"Our gods cannot give the answer."* On the other hand, Daniel affirmed that no **man** could give the dream, but his GOD could. Thus, a clear and absolute statement was made — there is a GOD in Heaven, and none of those things made with human hands, or imagination, could be a god! The contest seen here is between the wise men of Nebuchadnezzar (who claimed supernatural ability) and their gods and GOD's wise man (who had supernatural ability) and his GOD. They stated that the gods do not live among men (flesh), so they could not tell them the dream. If they could not tell a dream and its meaning because the gods do not live among them — **How did Daniel then reveal the dream and its meaning?**

"If he (Daniel, RK) can in fact deliver what they could not, then they have admitted beforehand that he is genuinely in touch with the divine and that they and their methods are just as surely out of touch with the divine" (King, p. 151).

Dan. 2:12-13 “For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise *men* should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.”

“For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree went forth, and the wise men were to be slain; and they sought Daniel and his companions to be slain.” (ASV)

After the “wise mens” last statements, the king issued his decree to kill all of them. Their statements had made the king “**very furious,**” i.e., as stated above, “*exceedingly enraged.*” Butler stated that “*the verb used here indicates an anger which grows until it reaches the point of violence*” (p. 64). Observe that where the KJV says, “**the wise men should be slain,**” the NKJV says, “*they began killing the wise men.*” The ESV says, “*the wise men were about to be killed.*” At the minimum, it would be agreed by all that the king’s men were rounding up the wise men in order to execute them. Further, it is possible that some of them might have suffered death before they got to Daniel and his friends. The Scriptures do not tell one whether they were being killed as they were found, or whether they were just being gathered for a mass execution. Verse fourteen possibly indicates they were being slain as they were found.

Dan. 2:14-16 “Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise *men* of Babylon: He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why *is* the decree so hasty from the

king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.”

“Then Daniel returned answer with counsel and prudence to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, who was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Wherefore is the decree so urgent from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. And Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would appoint him a time, and he would show the king the interpretation.” (ASV)

“Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom” The word **“counsel”** comes from **ay-taw**, which Strong defined as *“prudence.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“an Aramaic feminine noun indicating counsel, discretion. It refers to the manner in which someone replies or acts with discernment, prudence, and wisdom”* (p. 825). The word involves a number of things referring to governing oneself with proper reasoning and considering the consequences of one's actions before acting. Another way of considering this is that Daniel answered Arioch with caution and judgment. The word **“wisdom”** comes from **the-ame**, which Strong defined as *“flavor; figuratively judgment.”* BDB defined it as *“taste, judgment, discretion.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“an Aramaic masculine noun meaning taste, judgment, command, flavor”* (p. 406). From these words, it can easily be seen that Daniel used his words carefully and with respect for the position of **“Arioch the captain of the king's guard.”** This guard, which also probably acted as the king's bodyguard, was obviously gathering up all of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel wanted to know why this decree had been

issued with such urgency. The word **“hasty”** comes from **khats-af**, which Strong defined as **“severe.”** Keil said it meant **“to be hard, sharp, to be severe”** (Hailey, p. 38). Arioch gave Daniel an account of the events which had taken place. After receiving this information, **“Daniel went in”** and made a request of the king. The phrase **“went in”** comes from **al-al**, which Strong defined as **“thrusting oneself (in), to enter.”** BDB defined it as **“to thrust in, go in, come in.”** Baker/ Carpenter said it is **“an Aramaic verb meaning to bring in, to enter”** (p. 839). Consider court protocol which is still practiced today. **Would one think that he could just walk into the presidents office, or the office of the prime minister, or any leaders office whenever he wanted to, without an invitation?** The answer is obviously no, and if he tried to **“thrust”** (force) his way into that office, the result would be disastrous. One might recall Esther, who took her life into her hands by walking into the presence of Ahasuerus without an invitation. At the time of the text, Daniel went into the presence of a very angry and unhinged king who could have easily had him killed.

Note that Daniel gave the king a guarantee **“that he would shew the king the interpretation.”** This shows the level of trust and faith that Daniel had in his GOD. He seemed to understand that GOD had a plan for him and his friends, so he would not die or be punished for this intrusion. It is interesting here to consider that the king gave Daniel his request for more time, when he had refused the Chaldeans’ request for more time. **Did he view Daniel as more trustworthy than they? Did he have knowledge of Daniel’s abilities (“Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams”)?** Is it proper to assume that Daniel actually saw the king, or

did another take his request to him? Another possibility is that is an abbreviated account, which leaves out the information of proper procedures being accomplished before Daniel's entrance before the king. Whatever the case may be, it seems obvious that Daniel not only had the favor of Ashpenaz (prince of eunuchs) but also had somehow gained favor with the king.

There is also something else which interests this author here. It is obvious that, when Arioch came to Daniel, Daniel did not know what had happened earlier before the king. This shows that a prophet was not gifted with all information all the time, not even when it involved himself or a matter which was of great importance as the interpretation of this dream. He was only given information by GOD when it was necessary to accomplish His purpose(s). How could the prophet Moses know about what happened at creation or how man had fallen in the garden? Only when GOD told him what had happened, only when man had a need to know were these things revealed. GOD expects man to do his part in gaining what information he can and doing his assigned work.

Dan. 2:17-18 "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the GOD of Heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon."

"Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: that they would desire mercies of the GOD of Heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his companions should nor perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon." (ASV)

When Daniel got home, he made Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah aware of the situation for which they would be praying. So often people will request the prayers of the saints, but the saints have no clue about what they are to pray. **How can such a prayer be effective?** It is this author's view that if it is important enough for prayer to be sent to the Father, it is important enough for one to know the prayer is about.

The **"secret,"** that which is unknown, involved both the dream itself and the interpretation of the dream. It was appropriate that they should pray for GOD's mercy here, for if GOD did not mercifully grant their petition, not only would they die, but also many of the other "wise men" would die too. Consider verse twenty-five here, where Daniel asked Arioch not to kill the wise men. This prayer was not only for the righteous, but also that those unrighteous phonies would not die. Daniel interceded for the unrighteous as powerfully as he did for the just. GOD's people should carefully consider this thought. It is one's duty to do good to all men; sure that involves praying all, no matter who they are or what they have done.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:18).

"that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon" Again it is asked, does this phrase give more evidence that some of the wise men had been killed?

Consider something else in connection with the next verse. They had faith that GOD would answer their prayer, but they did not know positively that their prayer

was according to His will. They did not know if He would tell them the dream and its meaning. Thus, they offered their prayer and went to bed. They left all in the hands of GOD. They did not fret, nor did they try to figure out a way to “help” GOD in this matter. They gave the problem to GOD and went to sleep. A good lesson for one today.

Dan. 2:19 “Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the GOD of Heaven.”

“Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the GOD of Heaven.” (NKJV)

Sometime after they went to bed, Daniel received a vision. The word **“vision”** comes from **khay’-zev**, which is only found in the book of Daniel. Strong defined this word as *“a sight,”* and BDB defined it as *“vision, appearance.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“an Aramaic masculine noun meaning a vision, a revelation”* (p. 324). Mosher said that *“Jesus’ Bible, the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament), adds that the answer came that very night”* (p. 97). A vision could be seen either while one was awake or asleep. What is noticed here is how GOD on this occasion chose to communicate with both Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar — in their beds at night. One cannot help but wonder how dreams were differentiated. **What did GOD do that caused them to understand the difference between a common dream, which all have, and one where He spoke to them through the dream?**

As soon as he awoke, the text indicates that Daniel gave praise to GOD for answering their prayers. This is something every child of GOD should carefully consider

doing when an answer to his prayers has been fulfilled. It is not enough to ask GOD for blessings. Like Daniel, one needs to focus on gratitude through thanksgiving.

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto GOD” (Philippians 4:6, emphasis added).

Ingratitude was definitely not a part of Daniel’s makeup.

Dan. 2:20 “Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of GOD for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His:”

“Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of GOD for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are His.” (ASV)

Daniel **“answered”** (**an-aw’**). GOD showed Daniel the dream and its meaning, so Daniel responded to Him. The word **“Blessed”** is from **ber-ak’**, which Strong defined as *“to bless, kneel.”* Baker/Carpenter said this is an Aramaic verb which is used in two ways: (1) *“to kneel,”* as in Daniel (6:10), when he knelt in prayer in his room toward Jerusalem three times a day, as was his habit; (2) *“to bless, to praise,”* as in the present text (p. 166). The word is used in this text to expressed that Daniel praised GOD.

For what did Daniel praise GOD? There are a number of things listed here and through the next few verses. First was his praise for wisdom. **Whose wisdom? Is this verse speaking about the wisdom that GOD has and has revealed over-all, or is it the wisdom GOD had given Daniel?** Considering the context in verse twenty-three, the wisdom spoken of here must be the matchless wisdom of Almighty GOD. Second, Daniel praised GOD for His power (**gheb-oo-raw’**). As he will show, GOD’s power is unlimited. He can do whatever He sets His mind to do. The only thing GOD

cannot do is that which is contrary to His nature. In the verses which follow, Daniel will show the evidence of the **“wisdom and might”** of GOD, which is **“for ever and ever”** (eternal).

“Wisdom would qualify Him to formulate decrees and might would furnish the ability to do them” (Zerr, p. 222).

Time places no restrictions upon GOD. He always has been, and He always will be.

Some believe that Daniel and his friends, after praying to GOD, went to bed with heavy hearts. This writer does not so see Daniel and his friends doing this, as the Persian king Darius later did, twisting and turning all night without sleeping in his concern over Daniel in the lion’s den. This writer sees Daniel and his friends going to bed with lighter hearts because they had given the problem to GOD and trusted Him. Their great faith and trust in GOD probably gave them a good nights sleep.

Dan. 2:21 “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:”

“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 have understanding;” (ASV)

The Babylonian belief system can basically be described as believing that the stars determined one’s fate, based on the date of his birth. This is basically the doctrine of fatalism, i.e., what will be will be and there is nothing one can do about it. It means if the one wearing the explosive vest was to die, the bomb would go off. But if the stars said it was not time for him to die, then there would be a malfunction of the explosive.

This is also the doctrine of Calvinism, which states that one is born into this world, chosen beforehand by GOD either to be eternally lost or saved, and there is nothing he can do about that eternal destiny which was chosen for him before time ever began. (This writer once heard a preacher say he could be caught in the very act of adultery or murdering someone when the Lord came and he would go to Heaven because he had been chosen before time to be saved.) Under the Babylonian system, if the stars said that one was to be a great influence in the world, then no matter what obstacles might appear, he would be great. Daniel showed that these ideas simply were not correct. **Daniel declared that GOD is in control of everything!** If GOD desired, He could transpose winter and summer. GOD removes rulers and causes others to rule, according to His will. Americans have the silly notion that they choose who will sit in the White House, but the Bible shows that GOD is the One who chooses America's leaders, and the leaders of all nations. If One is able to change (depose) a nation's leaders, He is also able to fell an empire. This was a particular lesson that Nebuchadnezzar, and all leaders of all time, needed to understand. GOD was going to set up four kingdoms after the Babylonian empire and, at the appropriate time, He would remove all of them except the last one — His eternal spiritual kingdom.

“He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding” Note the astute words of King here regarding the above passage.

“All of the power man has of acquiring knowledge, all the faculty he has for using that knowledge properly and for his benefit, every whit of it is given to him by GOD” (p. 167).

It should be obvious, when one reads Daniel, that

Nebuchadnezzar needed to learn Who made him king and gave him the ability to make Babylon great.

Dan. 2:22 “He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him.”

“He revealeth the deep and secret things; He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him.” (ASV)

“He revealeth the deep and secret things” The word **“deep”** is an Aramaic adjective (**am-eel**). Strong defined it as *“unsearchable.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“profound, deep”* (p. 846). It speaks about GOD’s ability to reveal to man what only He can know. In the present text, it is shown through man’s inability to know the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Even Daniel, a prophet of GOD, could not know it until GOD revealed it to him.

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our GOD: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

“Daniel praised Him because He revealed to men the unknown and unknowable things apart from the revelation...The light which makes these things known dwells only with Him” (Hailey, p. 41).

“He knoweth what is in the darkness” This phrase simply declares that nothing can be hidden from GOD’s vision. This included the darkest recesses of a man’s mind, no matter how well he may be able to hide what is there from others. Daniel was speaking about *“impressive truths which man could never have discovered by his unaided instinctual or intelligent powers”* (King, p. 169).

“He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death” (Job 12:22).

“And the light dwelleth with Him” It is amazing how many passages of Scripture connect GOD and light, whether it speaks of physical or moral light.

“Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee” (Psalm 139:12).

“But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of GOD, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

A profitable study for students of the Bible would be to take a good concordance and look up the word “light.”

Dan. 2:23 “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.”

“I thank Thee, and praise Thee, O Thou GOD of my fathers, Who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast now made known unto me what we desired of Thee; for Thou hast made known unto us the king's matter.” (ASV)

Daniel, as he should have, gave GOD all the credit for the abilities he had and for providing the information he needed for the king. Note that he said GOD gave this information to him, but then mentioned his friends' involvement in the prayers for that information. He said the information had been made known to **“us.”** Even though GOD had delivered it to him, he obviously told them about this vision and was willing to share in the

credit. This is seen in verse forty-nine regarding his request for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, after his own promotion.

Note also the link between **“GOD of my fathers”** and **“hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee.”** This writer has pointed out in his other writings the belief that this phrase refers to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. GOD had provided divine information to them, just as He had now done for Daniel.

Dan. 2:24 “Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.”

“Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had appointed 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.” (ASV)

It seems that with haste Daniel went to Arioch to inform him that he could now tell the king what he wanted to know. Also, though it cannot absolutely be known, it is possible that Arioch was then in the process of actually killing the wise men of Babylon. Note Daniel’s concern for the wise men as he told Arioch, **“Destroy not the wise men of Babylon.”** Daniel knew they were imposters and what they were doing in pretending to be able to tell the future was against GOD’s will. Nevertheless, he saved their lives. Daniel showed that he had the heart of GOD, because what these men were doing was wicked in GOD’s sight, yet

he saved them from death.

“As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel!” (Ezekiel 33:11)?

When the wicked die, their fate is sealed, and GOD’s children should never rejoice in their deaths. **Why?** Because GOD does not rejoice at such. One cannot help but notice the difference between the wise men and Daniel. Daniel was concerned with saving them and was interceding for them. But in chapters three and six, they will actively seek his life and his godly friends lives. Again a contrast between the righteous and wicked.

It is also seen that Daniel was using the proper channels (protocol) to approach the king. He did not take it upon himself to burst into the presence of the king with his news. One cannot help but think that Arioch probably benefitted as being the one who found the dream-teller.

Dan. 2:25 “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.”

“Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the children of the captivity of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.” (ASV)

Arioch did not waste any time once Daniel told him that he knew the dream. He hurried in to the king with this good news. Again, this seems to imply that the executions had been taking place, or possibly were about to take place. King states that the verb **“haste”**

“describes a man hurrying into the presence of the king in a state of excitement and fearful trepidation” (p. 174).

Roper made mention that Arioch was taking a big chance in bring Daniel before the king and making the claim that he would give him what he wanted. If Daniel failed, **What does one think would have happened to Arioch and Daniel?** Arioch had to have great faith in Daniel’s ability to produce the required results. One wonder where he got his faith in Daniel.

A side note here: a number of author’s state that Arioch did not find Daniel, as he claimed in this passage. Verses thirteen and fourteen clearly show that Arioch went out to gather the wise men to be executed and found Daniel. Yes, later, after receiving the revelation of the dream from GOD, Daniel did seek and find Arioch. But initially, Arioch was hunting the wise men, which included Daniel.

In speaking to the king, it is noteworthy that Arioch brought out the fact that Daniel was one of those taken captive in Judah. This would possibly remind the king that this was no ordinary wise man. It would possibly have reminded him of his interview with Daniel and his friends, in which he had found them to be **“ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm”** (Daniel 1:20, emphasis added). Note that considering the next verse, Arioch only said that Daniel would give the **“interpretation,”** something that none of the wise men in the whole world could do. It should be remembered that the “wise men” had told the king correctly that no mortal would do what the king asked of them (Dan. 2:10).

Dan. 2:26-27 “The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to

make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;”

“The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered before the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded can neither wise men, enchanters, magicians, nor soothsayers, show unto the king;” (ASV)

One is reminded here that, among the Babylonians, Daniel was known as Belteshazzar. Remember that Arioh’s introduction only mentioned that Daniel could give the interpretation. It was natural then for the king to ask if he could reveal the dream and its interpretation.

Daniel began by stating that the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers had been honest in saying that no man (regardless of his position) could have done what the king demanded from them. At this point of Daniel’s reply, one can almost see Nebuchadnezzar start to bristle, ready to condemn these men again. But Daniel will explain what he just said. One can excuse the king, if he was possibly, if he was possibly suspicious as to whether or not Daniel could do this. At this time, Daniel was still a very young man, and the king must have had many advisors who were quite a bit older.

Daniel was about to show that a contrast exists between human wisdom and knowledge (v. 27) and divine wisdom and knowledge (v. 28). Human knowledge and wisdom have limitations, but GOD does

not. The wisdom of GOD made the heavens (Psa. 135:5) and founded the earth (Prov. 13:19). His counsel and wisdom cause rulers to rule (Prov. 8:14-15). His wisdom provides for man (Eccl. 2:26). His wisdom sent prophets and apostles to guide man toward salvation (Luke 11:29), et cetera.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

“Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not GOD made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of GOD the world by wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:20-21).

Dan. 2:28 “But there is a GOD in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;”

“but there is a GOD in heaven that revealeth secrets, and He hath made 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:” (ASV)

Between the last verse and this one, the contrast is clear between human knowledge and wisdom and the knowledge and wisdom which GOD possesses. Only He knows what the future holds. Only He can make known what will come to pass. Only He knows what is best for man. Further, one is to be reminded that Daniel was careful to tell Nebuchadnezzar that, by himself and his own abilities, he could not tell him the dream or give him its interpretation. Daniel gave GOD, as all should, credit for what he was allowed to do in His

service. Also, one should note that a contrast is drawn between the gods of Babylon and the GOD of Heaven. The gods of Babylon could not give the king what he wanted to know, but the GOD of Heaven could and did. **What did GOD desire for the king to know?**

“what shall be in the latter days” Young gave a good description as to what the **“latter days”** refer.

“It (latter days, KM) is a phrase that belongs to the field of eschatology and contains a note of epochal finality. It thus has primary reference to the period which would begin to run its course with the appearance of God upon earth, i.e., the days of the Messiah. While it is true that the entire contents of the dream do not fall within the Messianic age, nevertheless the principal point, the establishment of the Messiah’s kingdom, does fall therein” (Quoted by Mosher, Denton thumb drive).

When exactly did the last days begin? Some believe it was when Jesus was born, i.e., when GOD came to earth to dwell among men. While this writer quibble with those who hold that position, he holds to the idea that the last days refer to the first Pentecost after His resurrection, i.e., the beginning of the Christian age. Note what Peter told the people on that day, when the apostles were accused of being drunk because they were using the languages of the people gathered from the nations to proclaim the beginning of the church, the kingdom of GOD on earth.

“For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith GOD, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:15-18, emphasis added).

All who live after the first Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection are living in the **“last days,”** i.e., the last

dispensation of time (the Christian dispensation). Note what GOD said in the Hebrews letter.

“GOD, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1-2, emphasis added).

Since Jesus lived under and obeyed the Law of Moses, that time could not be the last days. The last days will continue from that “first Pentecost” until the Lord comes in judgment, when time will end.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10, emphasis added).

“A survey of fourteen instances of the phrase ‘in the latter days’ (in Aramaic and Hebrew) indicates that it refers to the future, but the exact time can only be decided by the context” (Roper, p. 78).

Dan. 2:29-30 “As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and He that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.”

“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 hath made known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but to the intent that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that thou

mayest know the thoughts of thy heart.” (ASV)

There is continued heavy emphasis on the fact that no man (in and of himself) could do what Daniel is about to do. The emphasis is upon what GOD has provided for him to do.

The phrase **“O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter”** is very interesting. Hailey put forth the idea that Nebuchadnezzar was thinking about what was to become of the kingdom of Babylon in the future, as he lay in his bed. The dream was an answer from GOD to his musings (p. 44).

Daniel gave two reasons in the present verses as to why the interpretation had been made known to him. First, **“for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king.”** Consider who was making known the interpretation. It was Daniel, and by extension his three friends. Their lives, like the lives of the Babylonian wise men, had been threatened with death because of the inability of any mortal to interpret this dream sent by GOD to the king. Therefore, by its revelation, all of their lives would be spared. GOD had work for Daniel to do, and that work was not finished. Nebuchadnezzar could not have killed Daniel at this time no matter how hard he might have tried to do so. This will be seen in the next chapter regarding Daniel’s three friends — GOD had a point to be made about His sovereignty. Second, **“that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.”** GOD wanted Nebuchadnezzar, and the generations to follow, to know this prophecy and its meaning, i.e., what He had planned for the future. GOD revealed the future through the instrumentality of this heathen king, not

through a king of Judah.

Dan. 2:31-35 “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. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

“Thou, O king, sawest, and, behold, a great image. This image, which was mighty, and whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the aspect thereof was terrible. As for this image, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” (ASV)

Little time will be given to the revelation of the king's dream by Daniel. But time will be given to the explanation of the dream. There is one small matter which will be addressed here, and that is the word

“terrible” (deh-khal’).

“The appearance of the colossal image was terrible, not only on account of its greatness and its metallic splendor, but because it represented the world-power of fearful import to the people of God” (Keil, p. 102).

The “stone” cut out of the mountain without hands represents the time when GOD would make His presence known in the world — **“the last days.”** That presence, the Christ, would lead to the establishment of a kingdom which would be far greater than those of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome — **the church.** All of these other kingdoms were basically started by human beings and allowed by GOD. The fact that this kingdom was to be made without human hands signifies that its origins were divine. This divine kingdom would obviously come during the time of the last human kingdom, the time of the Roman Empire. Unlike the kingdoms pictured by the statue (their kings were limited in influence in the world) the kingdom made without hands would truly have a world-wide influence.

“The image of the stone growing until it ‘filled the whole earth’ parallels Jesus’ teaching that: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof’ (Matt. 13:31-32)” (Mosher, Denton thumb drive).

Dan. 2:36-38 “This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the GOD of Heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee

ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.”

“This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the GOD of Heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory; and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath He given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold.” (ASV)

Daniel began telling Nebuchadnezzar what his dream meant by starting with the head of gold. From the description which follows, this author is convinced that the statue was in the shape of a man. One should also note that Daniel appears to give his three friends credit for discovering the contents of this dream and its meaning — **“we will tell the interpretation thereof.”** (Note also verses 17 and 18, where Daniel included his three friends in his petitions to GOD with regard to the king’s dream and its meaning.) This author does not believe he was using the editorial “we.” Daniel certainly would not have included the “wise men” in the word **“we.”** There is also the reward he asked for them in verse forty-nine, seemingly for their part in seeking mercy from GOD. They played a significant part in the action; therefore, they should be rewarded. In athletic terms, Daniel was not a ball hog, i.e., seeking all the glory for himself, when others had a part in what he did (praying with him for the revelation). In fact, Daniel did not seek any glory for himself — he gave all, as should all, glory to GOD. Thus, the **“we”** could refer to GOD and Daniel, as it would seem unlikely that Daniel would not give GOD the credit. The most likely meaning then would be that Daniel gave GOD and his friends the credit.

It has been emphasized in this commentary that

Daniel showed respect for those who out-ranked him in this physical kingdom. That is seen again when he addressed Nebuchadnezzar in verse thirty-seven — **“Thou, O king, art a king of king’s.”** Consider the phrase **“a king of king’s”** for a moment. Daniel addressed him, not as **THE King** of king’s, but **a king** of king’s, i.e., a king among many earthly kings. It is interesting that the title given to Nebuchadnezzar (all lower case) is used in the New Testament with regard to Jesus Christ as the **“only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords”** (1 Tim. 6:15). Daniel was not exaggerating in order to humor or flatter Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was indeed king over all the kings he had conquered, they were his subjects. Note also how quickly Daniel gave GOD the credit for giving Nebuchadnezzar reign over all of these nations and kings.

It is to be noted that Daniel continued to make a clear distinction between his GOD (the GOD of Heaven) and the gods of Babylon. Note that he used the singular adjective to describe GOD. There is no excuse for anyone to ever claim that there are gods, or to compromise the fact that there is only **one GOD**. It is this GOD who gave Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar and allowed him to build a mighty empire and magnificent city. Throughout the Scriptures this is found, i.e., GOD appoints whom He wills to rule the kingdoms and nations of the world.

It is to be noted that each of the four earthly kingdoms noted in this text contributed something to the fulness of time when GOD’s kingdom would be established (Gal. 4:4). **What did Babylon contribute to the fulness of time?**

“Synagogue worship began for the Jews during their captivity

in Babylon, and that service of preaching, giving, singing, and prayer foreshadowed New Testament worship" (Turner, quoted by Mosher, Denton thumb drive).

Consider for a moment the importance of the beginning of the synagogues, which were known to the Jews as *"the gathering together place"* (Mosher). They could not go to Jerusalem to worship. *So how could they continue to be faithful to GOD? How would they teach the generations following about GOD's will? What did they do in the synagogues established in Babylon?* They engaged in a capella singing, prayer, giving to the poor, and homilies (preaching). Note how GOD was preparing for the kind of worship which was to be done in His kingdom, the church. *What distinguishes New Testament worship from that which was done by GOD's people in the synagogues of Babylon?* In addition to a capella singing and prayer, giving to the poor, and homilies (preaching) — the partaking of the Lord's Supper is the one act that Christians are to participate in which sets their worship apart from what the Jews did. Also observe that what they did in the synagogues was different in the way in which they were done compared to worship at the Temple. GOD was preparing for the time, the fulness of time, for the worship of the church.

Dan. 2:39 "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth."

"And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth." (ASV)

The kingdom which came after Babylon is represented in verse thirty-two as having its **"breast**

and his arms of silver.” Nebuchadnezzar was told that this kingdom would be inferior to his. (Regarding the metals used to describe these kingdoms, the implication is that they would all be inferior to His with regard to splendor and value.) This second kingdom would be the Medo-Persian. Babylon ceased to be in 539 B.C. The Medo-Persian empire would last until 330 B.C., at which time they were replaced by the third kingdom, the Greek empire. The Greek empire would last from 330 B.C. until 63 B.C.

Modern critics, i.e., those who do not believe the Bible, who strive to eliminate all miracles and predictive prophecy from its pages, have tried to make the Grecian empire the fourth world kingdom instead of Rome. They have tried to make the Medo-Persian empire two empires Median empire, followed by the Persian empire. As can be seen from information which follows, this is pure dishonesty on their part.

“The Medes and the Persians were repeatedly mentioned in the book of Esther as joint names of a single government (Esther 1:19, etc.)” (Coffman, p. 39).

Coffman went on to show that Media never was a world empire and, in fact, had been conquered by Babylon and the Greeks.

“The Medes first appear in ancient history in the year 836 B.C.; but throughout the greater part of their entire history they were subject to Assyria, Babylon, (subordinate partners with Persia for awhile) and then subject to Alexander the Great” (Coffman, IBID).

MPR spoke of another groups of critics who try to make the fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream the Maccabe an period.

“If the image’s fourth era ended in the Maccabe an period, that would leave no succeeding kingdom. Any who would deny that the stone, the mountain, and the everlasting kingdom of the vision were referring to Christ and His church simply cannot

establish an interpretation that fits the details of the vision”
(MPR, p. 84).

Further, those who imagine the fourth era was the Maccabean era, it would seem, would have to make Rome the stone cut out without hands. But then, the Roman Empire fell, which is contrary to the fact that the stone and mountain represent an everlasting kingdom. O how shallow the minds of those who despise prophetic prophecy are found to be.

“The view that states that this third empire of brass was Persia collapses under the weight of historical fact that it was Greece whose army was clad with bronze and never that of the Persians” (King, p. 207).

When considering these world kingdoms, **How is it that Babylon, was considered the greatest of the four pictured kingdoms, even though it was the smallest in land mass?** Today, people tend to think the bigger the better. Butler put forth an interesting thought concerning this.

“In one sense there is progressive inferiority in the symbolism from one world power to the next. But in another sense there is progressive symbolism of superiority. The former is progression downward in outward magnificence while the latter is progression upward in power and extension” (p. 82).

Dan. 2:40-43 “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. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 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.

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.”

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 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. And whereas thou sawest the 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 doth not mingle with clay.” (ASV)

Rome was indeed a strong kingdom, pictured as being like iron, which was a common metal used in Rome's weapons. But just as iron is strong and could easily destroy many of the metals used in war before it, it also had a weakness. There was a brittleness about it which could be exploited.

“The strongest claim of the Roman Empire to be the iron kingdom is found first in the length of its duration, the best proof of its strength. Babylon lasted only 70 years. The Medo-Persian empire lasted 200 years, the Greek 130 years, while the Roman empire in its undivided state lasted some 500 years” (Butler, p. 84).

“whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided” Everyone understands that clay and iron do not mix together so as to make a strong item. Such an item made in this way would fall apart with its use. This suggests that Rome may have been strong enough to forge a mighty empire, but something in its composition gave it an inherent weakness which eventually would

lead to its destruction. **What was that weakness?** When a nation is made up of many backgrounds, cultures and languages, it is had to amalgamate its people in one united group. When these different groups' first loyalty is to their original homeland instead of their adopted land, division will eventually weaken and destroy the nation. Such people are never truly loyal to their host nation. Rome tried to meld its conquered people into one nation with the same priorities through a common religion (emperor worship), but it failed.

“At the end of Rome’s rule an admixture of barbarous races and civilization began to weaken the empire” (Thomson, p. 71).

Each were more concerned about *“their”* ethnic roots than the good of the whole — so they **refuse to assimilate**.

Dan. 2:44-45 “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. 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.”

“And in the days of those kings shall the GOD of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that a 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.” (ASV)

“In the days of these kings” Which kings? The days of the fourth kingdom portrayed in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, i.e., in the days when Rome ruled the world. **What will happen in those days? “shall the GOD of Heaven set up a kingdom”** Note that Daniel continued to emphasize that there is only **one** GOD, and He is **the** GOD of Heaven. **What was GOD going to do during the time of this kingdom?**

“set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” This kingdom would be different from the kingdoms which Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams portrayed. **How?**

First, this **“kingdom shall not be left to other people.”** Human kingdoms are passed down from generation to generation as the kings died, or through elections, or coups. These kingdoms are not permanent. They generally last until they become so corrupt that they lose the authority to govern. They tend to collapse from the weight of their own corruption. The kingdom that GOD was going to establish would never end, as do the kingdoms of men.

Instead, this kingdom **“shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”** The phrase **“break in pieces”** is from **dek-ak’**, which Strong defined as *“to crumble or crush.”* BDB defined it as *“to break in pieces, fall in pieces, be shattered.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“an Aramaic verb indicating the process of breaking into pieces, crushing”* (p. 246). The fall of nations is a process, their fall does not happen overnight, even though it many times

appears to be so. The fall is preceded by rot and decay from within. The text shows that these kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream would be crushed into such a fine powder that the wind would simply blow them away. The word **"consume"** comes from **soof**, which Strong defined as *"to come to an end."* BDB defined it as *"to be filled, be completed."* Baker/Carpenter said it is *"An Aramaic verb meaning to be filled, to be ended, to end"* (p. 772). The point is that, when these kingdoms fulfilled their purpose, they would be crushed and brought to an end. They would be consumed into the nations which followed them. However, the kingdom which GOD brought into existence would not be like these physical kingdoms. It would **"stand for ever."**

"If it is to be established in the days of the Roman empire and be of eternal duration it cannot be a millennial kingdom for the millennium is allegedly 1,000 years of literal duration" (Butler, p. 88)!

To Butler's point, since a 1,000 literal years has long passed since the days of the Roman Empire, then the millennial doctrine is false.

No human being can ever lead an army that will destroy GOD's kingdom. No human philosophy would ever be able to tear down the walls of truth. GOD's kingdom, His church, will destroy every effort to do so.

What made this kingdom so different that it would stand for? GOD's kingdom was not envisioned, designed or built by fallible human hands or minds. GOD's kingdom was not built on greed and jealousy, as were human kingdoms. His kingdom was not built on the backs of men with great ambition, soaring egos, or human vision. Instead, a **"stone was cut out of the mountain without hands,"** i.e., a humble beginning. This kingdom would be built upon the Eternal One,

upon the confession that **“Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living GOD”** (Matt. 16:16). It would be built on the bedrock [πέτρα (**pet'-ra**)] of truth that Jesus was the Christ. (It is not built upon Peter, as the original word for his name is πέτρος (**pet'-ros**), which means a stone, not a bedrock as does **pet'-ra**. See the difference!) This kingdom would be built on the **“fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”** (Gal. 5:22-23).

Daniel revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that **“the great GOD hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter”** (emphasis added). Obviously, GOD did not make known to the king everything which would happen in the future. The Babylonians had an extreme interest in what the future would hold. Nebuchadnezzar was no different from people of all ages who have wondered what the future would hold as they lay in bed. When Nebuchadnezzar dozed off while contemplating the possible future, GOD gave him the answer through a dream of what the future held in store for his kingdom. **What were the thoughts of the king on his bed? “what should come to pass hereafter”** (v. 29). Look at how Daniel ended the revelation of the dream and its meaning with an assurance. **“the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure”** The word **“certain”** is from the Aramaic **yats-tseeb'**, which Strong defined as **“sure; concretely, certain.”** BDB defined it as **“the truth...reliable, true, certain, sure.”** There would not be any change in this part of history. These nations would come and go until the one came which would never be destroyed was established. This was the promise of GOD. The Ruler of GOD's kingdom

would be **“from everlasting”** (Micah 5:2). This ruler was deity, the Word, the second member of the GODHEAD.

“All the weapons, principles, and human wisdom by which world kingdoms are established, and sustained, must bow in defeat and destruction before the ‘KING OF KINGS,’ by the sword of God’s eternal truth, and the judgment of the King by that truth” (Hailey, p. 51).

It should also be considered here that it was **“a stone”** which was cut out of the mountain without hands which brought an end to these kingdoms of men. Further, this stone would grow into a mighty mountain, which could never happen in nature. This signifies something important. It would grow from a small beginning (Messiah and twelve apostles) into a kingdom with influence all over the world, in all nations (no matter how hard they tried to keep it out of their borders).

“Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matthew 13:31-32).

At this time, this author would like to present some thoughts from a good friend – Keith Mosher. These thoughts are needed in light of the world’s fascination with the false doctrine that GOD’s kingdom is yet to come.

“When did the kingdom of God start on earth? In the days of Roman kings. Too clear. It is not yet to start, it is already here. Paul, and others, were translated into it during their day (Col. 1:13); ‘hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.’ The kingdom of Heaven is the church of Christ on earth. It is what it is! It started in the days of the Roman Empire. Read Acts chapter two. It started in the city of Jerusalem according to Joel and Isaiah. It started when the power of the Holy Spirit

came upon the apostles (Joel 2). So, I have an interesting thought — Isaiah 2, Daniel 2, Acts 2; the kingdom of Heaven started on Pentecost in A.D. 30. In the time of the Roman Empire. No doubt about it! God's kingdom started, in fact, Jesus said to some of the folks standing right in front of Him, that some of them standing there would not die before they saw the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1). They were going to be alive when the kingdom of God comes; for here they are either two thousand years old or they died at the normal age of human beings, but they had to have seen the kingdom of God start way back then.

I get a little disturbed, when I hear people who think they are Christians, arguing that signs of the times must mean that Christ is coming back here to set up His kingdom. Why did He not do it the first time He came? Well, it is said, His own people rejected Him. O, really? So the people had control of what God did? Daniel did not believe that! Listen to him again, verse twenty-one, chapter two. 'He (God, KM) changed the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings.' You cannot get in God's way. Why would you ever teach a doctrine that says because Jesus was rejected the first time in setting up His kingdom by the Jews, that He had to come back to do it? Why would you teach a doctrine that says Jesus was a failure the first time He came here? Why would you do that? (Why would you teach a doctrine that says man is more powerful than GOD? — RK.) And then, why would you apply that thought and misread all of the Scriptures?

When we started chapter one, we read about a king of Judah named Jehoachim. Jehoachim's son was Jehoachin, wicked, , wicked king like his daddy. Not like his grandfather Josiah, but like his daddy Jehoachim, wicked, idolatrous, immoral. Jeremiah said of Coniah (Jehoachin), 'Write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah'(Jer. 22:30). I want you, Jeremiah, to tell every generation from now on that nobody who in the seed line of Coniah can ever sit on a literal throne in Jerusalem. Was Jeremiah right? Because Jesus, the human essence, was in the seed line of Coniah (Matt. 1); since He is in the seed line of Coniah, He cannot, unless Jeremiah was wrong, the Lord cannot sit on a literal throne in Jerusalem. There is another

reason why He cannot — Hebrews 7:14, 'For it is evident,' the Hebrews writer wrote, that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.' If you are of the tribe of Judah you cannot be a priest on earth. And Christ was of the tribe of Judah. But He is going to be a priest and king on his throne (Zach. 6:12-13). If He is going to be a priest and a king upon His throne, then He cannot be one in Jerusalem! First of all, He is the seed of Coniah, and second He cannot be a priest on earth. So where is His throne? In Heaven (Psalm 89). And when did that start? The day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Way back in the first century. The kingdom of Heaven was on earth in the days of the Roman Empire. That is Daniel's prophecy. Now if Christ failed to fulfill that prophecy, He is not the Christ.

He told the Jews of His day. 'Search the Scriptures (the Old Testament – KM); for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me' (John 5:39). When is Messiah coming Daniel? Go back to verse forty-four of Daniel chapter two, 'in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom...it shall stand for ever.' Is that true or not? No more world empires. The only world empire today is the kingdom of God which is the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18; 18:18). When did He come? In the days of the Roman Empire. Now read verse forty-five. Daniel is speaking to Nebuchadnezzar, remember, 'Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break 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.' An honest student of the Scripture, should note, should he not be honest enough to know that Daniel is a true prophet or he is not. Daniel said that kingdom will start in the days of the Roman Empire." (Keith Mosher, Sr.; A study of Daniel, Gospel Broadcasting Network).

Zerr pointed out that "One very important item which must not be overlooked is the mentioned event (small stone's striking the image – RK) was to take place while the Roman Empire was in its full power, not after it ceased to be" (p. 226). Thus, there is no way that Nebuchadnezzar's dream could even begin to say that

there must be a revival of the Roman Empire in order for the Messiah to establish His kingdom. Further, it needs to be emphasized that the four kingdoms mentioned in the dream came one after another in rapid succession. There was no gap between them, just as history records these events. The kingdom of Christ, the church of Christ, will last forever. Christ's kingdom, His church, brought to an end physical world-wide kingdoms, even though some (Hitler, etc.) have tried to establish such.

"There is no greater drama in human record than the sight of a few Christians, scorned and oppressed by a succession of emperors, bearing all trials with fierce tenacity, multiplying quietly, building order while their enemies generate chaos, fighting the sword with the word, brutality with hope, and at last defeating the strongest state that history has known. Caesar and Christ had met in the arena, and Christ had won" (Will Durant, Caesar and Christ, p. 652).

Dan. 2:46 "Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him."

"Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him." (ASV)

"Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel" Lying prostrate was a common way of worship in many ancient lands. But, people would also prostrate themselves out of respect and submission to one who outranked them, especially to monarchs such as Nebuchadnezzar. The phrase **"worshipped Daniel"** presents a problem to the Bible student, as it probably did also to Daniel. A religious act of "worship" is never to be given to a human being!

Worship is only to be directed toward the GOD of Heaven. For a man to accept such as if he is GOD is strictly forbidden.

“thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous GOD” (Exodus 34:14).

The word **“worshipped”** is from the Aramaic verb **seg-eed**. It is defined by Baker/Carpenter as *“to worship, to bow, to lie in worship.”* This word is only used twelve times, and only in the book of Daniel. The other eleven times it is used in the third chapter of Daniel in regard to Nebuchadnezzar’s demands for all the people to worship the golden image. In that context, there is no doubt that it refers to worship, and Daniel’s friends did what GOD would expect them to do, i.e., refuse to worship it.

Why did Daniel not refuse to accept Nebuchadnezzar’s worship as did Paul in the fourteenth chapter of Acts? Or did he, but here there was no reason to record his denial for some reason? Looking at the record of Daniel, it is obvious that he was well pleasing to GOD all the way through this book. Further, just as the people in Acts did with Paul, Nebuchadnezzar commanded that a sacrifice be made to Daniel. Hailey offered the possible explanation that in verses twenty-eight and thirty, Daniel had already told Nebuchadnezzar that it was GOD who revealed the dream and its meaning. Daniel had already shown to Whom the credit should be given — the GOD of Heaven. This author would add the thought, that the difference between the context here and that in Acts fourteen is the timing. Daniel declared before he revealed the dream that it was GOD Who was doing this through His servant Daniel. In Acts, Paul did not realize that they were preparing to worship him, but

when he came to that realization, he emphatically refused it. Coffman considered that verse forty-seven may hold the answer, that it appears Nebuchadnezzar gave answer to something Daniel said, which is not recorded — **“The king answered unto Daniel.”** More will be noted in the study of that verse about his answer. But the point made by Coffman is that Daniel may have set the king straight regarding who was to be worshiped. Butler offered a third possibility, and that is, that it was a common practice among rulers of that time to pay homage to a god through the priest who represented that god.

“Josephus records that Alexander the Great bowed before the high-priest of the Jews, and when asked by his general, Parmenio, as to the meaning of his action, he replied, ‘I do not worship the high-priest, but the God with whose high-priesthood he has been honored’” (p. 93).

Butler went on to point out that Nebuchadnezzar did not in any way call Daniel a god.

Dan. 2:47 “The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your GOD is a GOD of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.”

“The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth your GOD is the GOD of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast been able to reveal this secret.” (ASV)

“The king answered unto Daniel” This phrase, as indicated earlier, indicates that something was said by Daniel between these two verses. If so, then this writer believes it would have been a refusal by Daniel that he should be worshiped.

“Of a truth it is, that your GOD is a GOD of gods,

and a Lord of kings” One of the key words in this phrase is the word **“your.”** He did not say “my” GOD, thus signifying that, despite Daniel’s profession that he was not GOD, despite what GOD allowed Daniel to do, Nebuchadnezzar only thought in polytheistic terms. In his mind, GOD was simply one of many gods and, at this particular time, Daniel’s GOD was superior to his god, because He had enabled Daniel to reveal the dream and its meaning. But his god had not been able to accomplish what GOD had done. He stated that the Lord is the master of kings, i.e., earthly rulers, no matter what their designation may be. Yet, Nebuchadnezzar did not recognize GOD as his GOD, nor did he recognize him as the only GOD.

“a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret” Nebuchadnezzar believed in the ability of Daniel’s GOD to reveal things that no one else, nor anyone who claimed to be a god, could. This was a tacit admission that his gods were inferior to Daniel’s GOD. If the king had simply considered the consequences of his declarations here, he would have given up his false gods and accepted the one true GOD. But he did not, as future texts will reveal. It is often hard for one who has been steeped in the superstitions of false religion for most of his life to give them up for truth. This true whether one speaks of paganism or denominationalism.

Dan. 2:48 “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.”

“Then the king made Daniel great, and gave him many great gifts, and made him to rule over the whole province of Babylon,

and to be chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon.”
(ASV)

It was common for those who did a great service to their rulers to be rewarded with high positions of rank and/or wealth. Daniel was rewarded with both. Daniel was made the chief ruler over the province of Babylon, where the capital was. This would be similar to a governor of a state in the United States. He is voted in to run the affairs of that particular state, but he is still under the authority of the President of the country.

Dan. 2:49 “Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.”

“And Daniel requested of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel was in the gate of the king.” (ASV)

“Then Daniel requested of the king” After Daniel had been given gifts and appointed over the province of Babylon, he made a petition to the king. The word **“requested”** is from **{beh-aw} beh-aw**, an Aramaic verb found only in Daniel. BDB defined it as *“to ask, seek, request, desire, pray, make petition.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a verb meaning to ask, seek, or request”* (p. 149). Consider some of the things seen about the character of Daniel so far in this study. He was brave, respectful of authority (both secular and spiritual), merciful, honorable, loyal, humble and unselfish. Too many people in today’s world would not have acted like Daniel under the circumstances he faced. They show no respect for authority. They are only interested in your well-being if there is something

in it for them. Daniel could have been like Arioch, who claimed that **“I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.”** Instead, Daniel looked at his three companions as having had as important a part in GOD’s granting mercy in revealing the dream and its meaning. Further, when he was rewarded, he insured that they were rewarded as well.

“Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah” were rewarded by being placed in charge of the affairs of the province of Babylon. The original Aramaic word for **“affairs”** is **ab-ee-daw’**. It is used to describe the process of administering to affairs of a city or area. A distinction is made between them and Daniel, in that his was a higher position — **“Daniel sat in the gate of the king.”** Daniel’s position placed him near the king, at the door of the palace, so that he could be summoned quickly for consultation on important matters, official matters of state. Daniel was faithful to GOD, and GOD rewarded him.

“Those who had prayed for Daniel and supported him in the most important ways that they could were given a part of Daniel’s reward” (MPR).

GOD made known to Nebuchadnezzar (through Daniel and the dream He sent to Nebuchadnezzar) that He established physical kingdoms on earth and that, when they served their purpose, He took them away. But unlike physical kingdoms, He was going to establish a kingdom which would never end, one which would be far greater than any other kingdom ever established. Unlike old Israel, the new Israel (the church) would have no borders on earth. Make no mistake, old physical Israel no longer exists! It has been replaced by GOD with Spiritual Israel. All Biblical Christians are a part of

this international kingdom which knows no borders. This new kingdom can never be destroyed as were/are the kingdoms of men. What consolation this should give Christians when all of the turmoil of this life rages around them! Christians belong to a GOD Who is in absolute control. What a blessing, for which one should constantly give thanks to the Father above for such a tremendous blessing.

Daniel — Chapter Three

Dan. 3:1 “Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.”

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

The first thing seen in this passage is that Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, which raises the question, **Was it solid gold or plated with gold?** Most likely it was plated, as an image that was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide would have taken a tremendous amount of gold (Some ancient writer’s believe the nine-foot measurement was from front to rear.) A cubit is generally believed to have been eighteen inches in length. A second question is to be considered, **Where was Dura? Was Dura a city near Babylon or possibly a plain in the province of Babylon?** These questions have no absolute answer today and are simply matters of speculation.

“Dummelow thought it was at the ‘mounds of Dura’ some 12 miles SSE of Babylon” (Quoted by Coffman, p. 50).

“The plain of Dura according to one archaeologist, was about 12 miles southeast of the city of Babylon where there is excavated a rectangular brick structure forty-five feet square and twenty-five feet high which may have formed the pedestal of a colossal image” (Butler, p. 111).

Another unanswerable question is, **How soon after the events of chapter two did the events of chapter three occur?** Further, there is the question of what this golden statue represented. **Was it an image of one of**

the gods of Nebuchadnezzar's pantheon of gods, or did it represent himself as a god? Clearly, whatever this image represented, it was to be worshiped (vs. 11-12), but again, *Which deity?* If this author's guess counts, he believes that it was a statute representing Nebuchadnezzar himself as a god. That the statue was intended to be worshiped is beyond question, since the term for worship is used eleven times in this chapter in reference to this image.

Dan. 3:2-3 "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up."

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up." (ASV)

Officials of every rank and province were commanded to be at this dedication ceremony. Zerr

believed that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not present at this gathering, because they would not have approved of such an image. But this position begs the question: **How would the Chaldeans have known that they refused to bow down to this image if they were not there?** It is also observed at this time that Daniel was not at this dedication, or he too would have been brought before Nebuchadnezzar.

This would have been a very large gathering of officials, since they came from every province over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled. This would have taken at least a few weeks, possibly months, to gather them all at once to this place.

Dan. 3:4 “Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,”

“Then the herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,” (ASV)

The duty of a herald is to shout a proclamation from a ruler to the masses. In this case, it was a command from Nebuchadnezzar. It should be remembered that Nebuchadnezzar basically ruled the whole world. **What were the King’s subjects commanded to do on this occasion?**

Dan. 3:5 “That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:”

“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;” (ASV)

Coffman observed that what is *“of very great interest in this passage is the prominence of instrumental music in the ceremonies of pagan religious rites”* (p. 51). This author would agree, for, even today, one attacks a sacred cow if he points out that instrumental music has never been authorized by GOD in worship. Some would object, saying, *“But instruments of music were used in worship under the Law of Moses, i.e., the Old Testament.”* They will then point to the fact that David used instruments in worship. Their statement conveniently ignores the fact that David was condemned for his use of instruments in worship. One should carefully look at the context of Amos chapter six, where a **“woe”** was used in condemnation of a number of activities in which the Jews were engaging. There, one will observe that King David was particularly singled out for condemnation for his use of instruments in worship.

“That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David” (Amos 3:5, emphasis added).

Note that David was said to have invented **“instruments of musick.”** Instruments of music were known long before the time of David.

“And his brother’s name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ” (Genesis 4:21, emphasis added).

What did David invent? He invented the use of instruments of music in worship, not the instruments used in that worship. Jehovah never commanded instruments of music to be used in approved worship to Himself. Before David, instruments of music were never used in worship to GOD — David **added** them to worship.

“I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the

prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, GOD shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, GOD shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book”
(Revelation 22:18-19).

Anyone who takes away from, or adds to, GOD’s word will have his name removed from the **“book of life,”** i.e., the list of names of the saved. David introduced instrumental music in worship — a man — without GOD’s permission or command!

It might also be noted that some of the newer versions like to insert the word “bagpipe” into this list. The problem is that the bagpipe was not known in the near east, even through the time of the Greek empire, which followed many years later.

Dan. 3:6 “And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”

“and whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” (ASV)

Since the **“hour”** was the smallest amount of time used in that age, the phrase indicates that the penalty for disobeying Nebuchadnezzar’s command was to take place immediately. But this raises a series of interesting questions. *Was a furnace heated up beforehand, because Nebuchadnezzar anticipated rebellion to his command? Was this a furnace already heated up, because it was used daily for hardening bricks or melting metals?* King suggested that this kiln/furnace could have been used to make the bricks for the base of the statute, and then used to melt the

gold for this image. Another possibility is that this was a furnace which was used to punish those who disobeyed various laws of the kingdom. Note that an incident is recorded in Jeremiah where two men were roasted in fire by a Babylonian king.

“And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.” (Jeremiah 29:22).

Before one shrinks in total horror of people being burned as punishment for crimes, one should consider that GOD demanded that the violation of certain sins of immorality were to be punished by burning.

“And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you” (Leviticus 20:14).

“And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire” (Leviticus 21:9).

Further, one should consider the description of the eternal punishment of the wicked as decreed by GOD.

“The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:41-42, emphasis added).

What was so important about this event that it required such an extreme punishment? There is indeed the religious aspect of bowing down. Could it be there is another significance involved in this command? There could easily have been two purposes behind the worship of this image. Was this also a test of loyalty? If so, then anyone who would not bow down in allegiance would have been committing an act of treason against the king and the nation. Such treachery

has throughout history been deemed worthy of a death sentence.

Dan. 3:7 “Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and* worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.”

“Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.” (ASV)

From the original language, the kinds of instruments named here cannot positively be identified, nor is it important to know what they were. The importance is what their noise signified should be done. All of those gathered bowed in worship to the image, except for three individuals — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Dan. 3:8 “Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.”

“Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and brought accusation against the Jews.” (ASV)

What might be the motive for these “**certain Chaldeans**” to be “tattletales?” This writer assumes that they were native-born men, possibly in the astrologer class. In chapter two, verse forty-nine, these Jews had been promoted above them in the province of Babylon and declared to be “**ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his**

realm” by King Nebuchadnezzar. Could it be that they were jealous and resented that these foreigners had excelled them and been promoted above them? What causes jealousy? Jealousy is triggered by a desire to have something that someone else has, i.e., envy. Selfishness would also play into the picture of envy. *“I want what you have, and I think I deserve it more than you.”* As will be seen later concerning Daniel, they used the Jews’ religion against them in order to remove a political opponent. These Chaldeans camouflaged their pettiness and ambition by acting as if they were defending the honor, majesty, and authority of their king. The original word for **“accused”** (KJV), *“brought accusation”* (ASV), (**ak-al’**), is an Aramaic word which *“means ‘ate the pieces of,’ a Semitic idiom for ‘slander’”* (MPR, p. 114). Slander is a common weapon of those who act out of jealousy and envy, especially when competing for power or prestige.

Dan. 3:9-11 **“They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: And whoso falleth not down and worshipping, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”**

“They answered and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image; and whoso falleth not down and worshipping, shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” (ASV)

The phrase **“live for ever”** is found in fourteen verses of Scripture and used as a cordial greeting of respect in most cases. These envious, jealous, selfish, tattlers now reminded Nebuchadnezzar of his command to bow to the golden image and of the punishment he decreed for disobedience.

Dan. 3:12 “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.”

“There are certain Jews whom thou hast appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” (ASV)

The Chaldeans had set the stage with background, and now they made their charge against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. One reminds himself that, throughout this book, false charges are made against the Jews. Anyone who makes himself different, simply because he follows GOD’s will, will experience the same kind of attacks, no matter in what dispensation of time he may live. They will be mocked, denigrated, lied about, wrongfully imprisoned, physically abused, and even murdered if possible.

“whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon” It appears that they were accusing Nebuchadnezzar of making a terrible mistake in appointing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of Babylon. There seems to be little doubt

that they thought it was a mistake to appoint these men over themselves. They implied that these Jews treated the king with disrespect and ingratitude, as if to say, “*You appointed them to this high position, but look how they return your favor — they disobey you, and they refuse to worship your gods.*”

Let one consider the charge of disrespect which was being leveled against these Jews with a question. **Is it possible to respect someone, to show respect for him, without doing everything he does or commands?** As a child of GOD, one is to show respect for those in authority, but that respect does not mean that he approves or does everything those rulers do or command. Further, if a law is made that is contrary to GOD’s commands, God’s servant must not obey that law. **Why?** Because just like these Jewish men, GOD comes first in his life! Also, when a secular law is made that cannot be obeyed because it violates GOD’s law, just like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishach, and Azariah, he must accept whatever punishment the state may impose upon him. **Fair?** No! But GOD’s people are seldom treated fairly by secular governments.

“It (their disobedience – RK) had nothing at all to do with a lack of respect for the king. It had everything to do with their respect for God” (King, p. 255).

A great example of one’s being willing to suffer in order to be faithful to GOD is Moses.

“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” (Hebrews 11:25-26, emphasis added).

Consider the pressure these Jewish boys were under. They could have reasoned, unfortunately, as

many professing to obey GOD do today, *“If I stand up for what GOD says I should or should not do, I will lose my position of prominence and honor. I will lose this very good pay check — so I will just pretend (compromise) to worship this image.”* As will be seen, they did not hesitate to put GOD’s will first in their lives **regardless of the consequences**. As King pointed out, they had been commanded to attend a state function, and they did. But when they were commanded to violate GOD’s law at that public state function — they refused. They obeyed the law of the land where they could without violating GOD’s laws.

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey GOD rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Dan. 3:13-15 **“Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?**

“Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said unto them, Is it of purpose, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that ye serve not my god, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what

time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of 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?" (ASV)

The words **"fury"** and **"rage"** are interchangeable in this text. This then indicates an extreme anger that is manifest because someone dared to disobey him. This should be expected from rulers who were used to having every word they said obeyed.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were brought before the king, but note what Nebuchadnezzar first said to them regarding the accusation made by the Chaldeans. **"Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?"** (*"Did you purposely disobey my order?"*) There seems to be an indication here that he possibly doubted that the Chaldeans were being truthful. **Did he know of the jealousy and envy of the Chaldeans regarding these men? Had there been incidents before that showed their biases against the Jews? Did he have some doubts about the truthfulness of the Chaldeans, because of the high trust he had previously placed in these men?** One cannot help but wonder if he would have given any of these other men a "do-over," as he did these three men.

"who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Even before this statement, it is this writer's belief that GOD would have saved these three men. But after this statement, where Nebuchadnezzar has placed a challenge before GOD, it is a certainty that they will be spared death at his hands. Thinking back over the Scriptures, it appears that when rulers directly challenged GOD, GOD gave them evidence of His

power over them. Consider Pharaoh's response to Moses,

“And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go” (Exodus 5:1-2).

GOD showed Pharaoh who He was by sending tremendous plagues which eventually forced Pharaoh to recognize Him. Consider the challenge to Hezekiah and GOD from Rabshakeh (2 Kings 18). GOD's answer to Rabshakeh was to destroy one hundred eighty-five thousand (185,000) of his soldiers while they slept by the hand of **“the angel of the LORD”** (2 Kings 19:35). It has been said that the builder or owner of the Titanic said, *“that even GOD cannot sink this ship”* when it was launched.

Dan. 3:16 “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.”

“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter.” (ASV)

First, note that these three young men did not show disrespect for the king. They simply answered him. **“we are not careful to answer thee in this matter”** The **“careful”** comes from **khash-akh**, which Strong defined as *“to need;”* and BDB said it means *“to need, have need.”* In the present text **“careful”** is *“an Aramaic verb meaning to need. It indicates some obligation or necessity to do or say something”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 387); *“to be or think necessary”*

(Young). It should be considered that Nebuchadnezzar had given them an opportunity to reconsider their refusal to give homage to his gods. In essence, they were saying that they did not have to reconsider their first decision and their subsequent actions.

“For raw courage in the face of the most dreadful danger, history has nothing that surpasses this defiant reply” (Coffman, p. 54).

These three men truly understood that they served GOD first and their earthly king second. How great is the need today for Christians to be as courageous as they were in putting GOD absolutely first in their lives, regardless of the consequences for violating a civil law.

The absence of a title here is interesting, i.e., they simply called him by his name. This could very easily be interpreted as being disrespectful, but as stated earlier, this writer does not think so. But this writer does think that their words were a slight rebuke. He believes they were letting Nebuchadnezzar know that he was overstepping a boundary which could only be set by Jehovah. **“Thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous GOD”** (Exodus 34:14, emphasis added). Nebuchadnezzar (nor any man) had/has the right to make an idol (image). Secondly, if he does, he has no right to demand anyone worship it.

Dan. 3:17-18 “If it be so, our GOD Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

“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 thy hand,

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

These young men say that, whichever way it goes, whether dying in the fiery furnace, or being saved from it, GOD would deliver them from the power of King Nebuchadnezzar. It should be remembered that they had no revelation as to what GOD would do in this situation. **Would He save them, or (through some purpose He had) let them die?** Whichever was the case, they were determined to obey GOD’s command not to worship the gods manufactured by man. In essence, they were saying that Nebuchadnezzar was wasting his breath in offering them a second chance to obey him. They had supreme trust that GOD would do what was right and best, no matter what happened to their physical bodies.

“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in GOD which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us” (2 Corinthians 1:9-10).

“They preferred death to idolatry.” (King, p. 261).

The phrase **“He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king”** is quite interesting. If GOD saved them from the furnace, they would obviously be saved from the power the king had to punish them. Likewise, if GOD, because of some purpose He had of which they were unaware, let them die in the furnace, they would no longer be under the power of Nebuchadnezzar. Either way, Nebuchadnezzar had **no power** over them **in this matter!** Nebuchadnezzar had boastfully proclaimed, **“who is that GOD that shall deliver you out of my hands?”** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said,

“Jehovah can!”

Earlier it was asked, *“Where was Daniel during this whole episode?”* Hailey made an interesting observation in his comments on these verses.

“This expression of faith was from themselves apart from Daniel. He was not there to give moral support” (p. 61).

What a tremendous example these three young men have left for all who seek GOD’s approval.

Willcut also pointed out a lesson to be learned here. He pointed out that after the events of chapter two, one would think that would be the end of their trials in Babylon. The very next chapter finds them under attack again by Satan’s minions. *“We do not ever reach a place in life where we have it made. We do not get there”* (Denton thumb drive, p. 101). One sees the same lesson at the conclusion of the temptations of Jesus in Luke 4:13.

“When the Devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season” (emphasis added).

GOD’s people must realize that they must not become complacent in their vigilance against the Devil’s attacks — he will never give up until one enters into eternity.

Dan. 3:19-20 “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. 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.”

“Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they

should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded certain mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.” (ASV)

When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were first brought before Nebuchadnezzar, his anger seemed to soften when he saw who was claimed to have defied his orders, and he gave them another chance to obey the order to worship the image. In the present text, his anger was kindled anew when they told him they would not take advantage of his offer, and they would not worship the image or any idol. This probably caused his face to be red with anger and distorted it (“**his visage was changed**”). Their refusal caused the way he looked at them to change, i.e., no longer with favor but with anger **What did he do when this anger was kindled?**

He ordered the furnace to be heated as hot as it could be heated. Consider how unnecessary this would be. At its normal temperature, it would be enough to kill these three. Seven times hotter than it was normally heated was not only overkill, it was also irrational. This is usually what happens when people let their anger control their actions — **they become irrational**. Second, he commanded his mighty men to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and cast them into the furnace. **Why order his “most mighty men,” probably some of his best soldiers, to cast them into the furnace?** These were not dangerous men who might escape, nor had they shown any inclination to resist.

As the furnace was being heated to its maximum, **How does one see Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? Did they start to fidget? Did they show signs of fear? Did Nebuchadnezzar think they would**

plead for mercy and buckle to his demands? The answers to these questions have not been revealed. But this writer believes that their trust, their faith, in GOD was so great that fear was not seen nor felt by them.

Dan. 3:21-23 “Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.”

“Then these men were bound in their hosen, their tunics, and their mantles, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.” (ASV)

When considering the original words for the clothing mentioned here, it is not known exactly what they are or would correspond to today. This is confirmed when one looks at the many commentaries and lexicons, as they list all kinds of different clothing here. It is this writer's view that, whatever they were, they were probably the finer clothes which would be worn in the court before the king.

It would probably be good for one to picture in his mind what one of these kilns/furnaces looked like. They

are believed to have been round and about ten feet or more in diameter with a circular funnel at the top. There was also probably a ramp which led to the opening, where items could be wheeled to the lip of the furnace and could then be thrown into the kiln for processing or where flammable materials would be thrown in to stoke the fire. Toward the base, there would have been a smaller opening, where one could look inside to see how the process was going. This opening would also be used to extract either the bricks or metals which were being processed. These three young men would have been thrown into the furnace at the top. They **“fell down”** into the furnace. A number of writers mention that these young men would ordinarily have been stripped of their clothing, but (because of the haste and anger of the king) they were tied up in all of their clothing and then tossed into the furnace.

Two things are pointed out by the author here. First, they **“fell down bound.”** Second, they fell into the **“midst”** (middle) of the furnace. With a furnace this hot, one would have thought that the binding materials would have burned off. What this suggests to this writer is that whoever was in the fire protecting them (he believes it was the second person of the GODHEAD, but may have been an angel) untied them, releasing them from their bonds. Further, by descending into the midst of the furnace, they would have easily been seen through the small opening at the bottom, in distinction from landing on the sides, where they might not have easily been seen. This way, there was no doubt that they were in the furnace because they would not have been hidden from sight.

Dan. 3:24-25 “Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was

astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of GOD."

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste: he spake and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods." (ASV)

The KJV says that Nebuchadnezzar was **"astonied,"** and the ASV reads *"astonished."* The original word here is **tev-ah'**, which Strong said means *"take alarm."* BDB said it means *"to be startled, be alarmed."* Baker/Carpenter gave a little lengthier definition: *"An Aramaic verb meaning to be astonished, to be amazed. It indicates a state of wonderment and amazement at something or someone or at an extraordinary event or condition"* (p. 1,216). If one puts himself in Nebuchadnezzar's shoes, viewing what he saw, he probably would be alarmed, startled with fear, and amazed at seeing something he knew could not ordinarily happen. It is no wonder then that he arose in **"haste"** — **be-hal'**, which BDB stated means *"to frighten, alarm, dismay."* Baker/Carpenter stated it is *"An Aramaic verb meaning to be in a hurry, to be troubled, to be disturbed"* (p. 121). He no doubt was frightened, alarmed, confused and startled at what he was seeing. **How could this possibly be happening?**

"Did not we cast three men bound into the midst

of the fire?” He seemed to be questioning if he was seeing what he thought he was seeing. How can there be **“four men”** in the kiln/furnace? How could they be unbound and walking around? Why are they not being consumed by these flames? But that was not the only astonishing thing about this event. These men had suffered no damage, no injury, due to the fall into the kiln, nor from the flames which roared around them. Why were they not trying to escape this fiery furnace?

“They were walking about as if for a leisurely afternoon saunter across a green springtime meadow” (King, p. 271).

How could any of this be happening?

“the form of the fourth is like the Son of GOD”

The ASV reads *“the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”* The first question which should be asked here is How would Nebuchadnezzar know he had seen deity if he did see GOD? The KJV indicates that Nebuchadnezzar thought the fourth person in the fire was **“the Son of GOD,”** the second person of the GODHEAD. On the other hand, the ASV indicates that the fourth person was part of the pantheon which the king worshiped — *“a son of the gods.”* Which view is correct? Based on what follows, this writer believes the ASV is correct. Nebuchadnezzar did not in any of the passages which follow convert from polytheism to monotheism! He continued, at least for the time being, to refer to GOD as their god. More will be said about this in the coming verses.

“What the king meant was that the extra person was different in appearance from that of ordinary men, hence he must have been related to the gods” (Zerr, p. 231).

What did Nebuchadnezzar do when he confirmed that the three young men were walking around in the furnace?

Dan. 3:26 “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.”

“Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace: he spake and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the Most High GOD, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego came forth out of the midst of the fire.” (ASV)

He went over to the furnace in which he had had them thrown and called for them to come out of it. He also said something which needs to be examined. He said they were **“servants of the most high GOD.”** It is noted that only the KJV does not capitalize both high and GOD. The other versions consulted by this author capitalized both words, signifying Nebuchadnezzar’s recognition that the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is **THE** GOD. This author **does not** believe the context warrants such an implied conclusion. First, in Nebuchadnezzar’s pantheon of gods, there would be one which he considered more powerful than all of the rest — this would be **his “most high god.”** Second, note what he said in verse twenty-eight — **“Blessed be the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.”** This is not **“his god.”** It is **their GOD**. Further still, note what he decreed in verse twenty-nine — any **“which speak any thing amiss against the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.”** Again, not GOD, but **their GOD**. Nebuchadnezzar **has not converted** to being a monotheist at this point. Nebuchadnezzar was simply admitting that these young men’s GOD was doing something his god could NOT

do.

What did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego do?

They obeyed their king. They obeyed his commands, as they always had, as long as he did not command them to violate GOD's laws. This is a valuable lesson for GOD's servants no matter in what nation or under what form of government they may find themselves!

"As long as the king acted within his own proper sphere of power as an earthly king and did not attempt to intrude upon any of the divine prerogatives, they were his dutiful servants, but if he sought the place of God in their lives then he must always be frustrated in his efforts as regards Jewish underlings" (King, p. 273).

Dan. 3:27 "And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them."

"And the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, that the fire had no power upon their bodies, nor was the hair of their head singed, neither were their hosen changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them." (ASV)

One can only imagine what those tattlers were thinking as they saw these three young Jews completely unharmed after their attempt to get rid of them. They now stood in their midst in the same condition they had been in before being tied up. One thing this writer thinks is safe to assume is that they were not happy about this turn of events. In fact, they may well have been afraid of what these three men might do in retribution for their actions.

One of the interesting things about this account is

how extensive and thorough are the details of the miracle. Anyone who is normally near a fire would walk away smelling of woodsmoke, and if he gets a little closer, the first thing to be directly affected by the fire is the singeing of his hair before his skin would be burned. Yet, not even these small, tiny things were affected.

Another thing which should be noted here is the number of witnesses to this miracle. The list of officials is not as large as that found previously; nevertheless, it is substantial. **Can one not assume that those listed stand for all of those previously listed in verses two and three?** What took place here could no more be denied than the fact of Jesus' resurrection. No one could deny that these Jewish males had refused to bow to the image, even when given a second chance to do so. No one could deny that they had been thrown into the furnace. No one could deny that the furnace was so hot that the soldiers who threw them in died from the flames. No one could deny that, at the king's bidding, they walked out of the flames completely unharmed. All of these government officials were now able to see what the king had seen through the window of the furnace. **What an amazing miracle!**

A side note here: the GOD who protected these three young men from Nebuchadnezzar's furnace is the same GOD Who can protect His servants from the fires of Hell. Something to think about!

Dan. 3:28 *“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.”

“Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed be the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, Who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and have yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own GOD.” (ASV)

There are a number of things of import to be seen in this verse. (1) One sees Nebuchadnezzar forced to debase himself. He had bragged about how there was no god who could keep him from killing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, but he was forced by the GOD of Heaven to “eat those words.” O how bitter that must have been in front of all his nobles. (2) The king showed a “grudging” respect for both GOD and these young men. GOD had demonstrated His power to do what no man nor humanly-devised god could do. He literally saved them out of the fire. Further, there was a respect for these young men who had not hesitated to defy him and offer their lives for their GOD. This will be seen by his actions in verse thirty. (3) Nebuchadnezzar showed respect for their trust, their absolute faith in their GOD, which ties in with point number two. They had told Nebuchadnezzar, in essence, that their GOD could save them if He chose to, but if not, they would die for Him anyway. Again, they did not hesitate. Often talk is cheap, as the old saying goes. But when people truly stand up for their convictions for GOD and His word, others may not like what they stand for, but they often give them grudging respect (at the least) for standing for their conviction, especially if the world exacts a price for their stand. This writer has known Christians in America who have lost their jobs because they would not go along with the sinful activities of their

fellow workers. He has also known preachers of the Gospel whose support was taken away (euphemism for fired) because they would not sanction sin by refusing to preach against it, or because they followed GOD's directives and did preach against it. (4) Nebuchadnezzar's words were forced to be changed by GOD, Who exercised and proclaimed His authority by saving these young men.

Over the years, there has been a lot of discussion by various authors as to whom the **"angel"** is, in this passage. Some advocate that it was one of the created heavenly beings who wait upon GOD. Others advocate that it is the second person of the GODHEAD, i.e., the One known by man as Jesus Christ. The information given does not allow one to absolutely and unequivocally determine exactly who the **"angel"** was. One thing which can be known is that whether he was the Word or one of the created angelic beings — the Father sent him on this occasion. Personally, this writer believes Him to be the second person of the GODHEAD — the Word.

Dan. 3:29 "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."

"Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other god that is able to deliver after this sort." (ASV)

Nebuchadnezzar made a decree, a judgment, a

command regarding the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego because He had rescued them in such a dramatic manner. The decree would severely punish anyone who spoke anything **“amiss”** against their GOD. Baker/Carpenter said the word **shaw-law’** (**“amiss”**) is *“An Aramaic feminine noun referring to anything amiss or offensive. It refers to anything spoken that is not fitting, that is derogatory toward the true God”* (p. 1144). The punishment for violation of this command is in two parts. (1) That person would be **“cut in pieces.”** The word **“pieces”** is from **had-sawm’**, which Baker/Carpenter said is *“an Aramaic masculine noun meaning pieces...It is used figuratively of the limbs of people, a nation, or tongue (Dan. 3:29) that can be torn apart as a form of punishment”* (p. 256). (2) **“their houses shall be made a dunghill”** The word **“dunghill,”** **{nev-aw-loo’} nev-aw-lee’**, means *“to be foul; a sink: dunghill”* (Strong); *“refuse-heap, dunghill, outhouse”* (BDB). Thus, it describes a place of ill odor, a place one would avoid, and where no one would want to build again. This seems to be a common threat by the king for those who disobeyed him. When considering the same threat being made to the magicians in chapter two verse five, one might also see Ezra 6:11 and consider that Jesus said, **“if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out”** (Luke 14:34-35). He said these words when speaking of the influence Christians are to have in this world.

Why did the King place the prohibition against saying anything which would be defamatory about GOD? **“because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort”** The KJV has capitalized the

word “**god**” here to signify that it is the one and only GOD. But this word should not be capitalized, because it speaks of the gods invented by human beings, as is signified by the word “**other.**” There are no other gods! There is only one, **the** GOD of Heaven and earth. The use of the phrase “**other god**” is a reminder to the reader that Nebuchadnezzar is speaking as the polytheist he is. He has not become a monotheist yet, if indeed he ever became one. This author acknowledges that there are those who believe it possible that Nebuchadnezzar did become a monotheist because of these events. With that in mind, note the words of Hailey (p. 66).

“The king found himself in a difficult position. As Leupold aptly observes, he cannot afford to offend his national gods by acknowledging Jehovah as the only true God. Neither can he afford to offend a God whose power enabled Him to perform the miracle he had just witnessed. So, instead of confessing Jehovah as the only true God, he issued a decree that no one should speak a word against the God of the three Jews.”

The obvious problem with this reasoning is probably evident to all. One cannot be a true believer in the one GOD without being willing to acknowledge him as such, even before His enemies. Further, if he had become a believer of only one GOD, he would have issued a command for the people to worship Him. This he did not do.

An interesting thing about a superstition that has been established for centuries in any place or land is what happens if someone tries to change it all at once, and especially from polytheism to a monotheist religion.

“The earlier case of Nabonidus in Babylon and the Eighteenth Dynasty of Pharaoh Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV, Akhnaten or Ikhnaten) in Egypt demonstrate the utter futility of attempting a broad-based religious reform in the ancient near east” (King, p. 280).

In both of the cases above, Nabonidus and Akhenaten thought they could issue a decree to change the worship practices of their people. They both failed miserably. They caused so much disruption in their respective empires that successive leaders led their people back to the old gods.

Dan. 3:30 “Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.”

“Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the province of Babylon.” (ASV)

The original word for **“promoted”** is **tseI-akh’**. Strong defined this as *“to advance”* and BDB defined it as *“to prosper, to cause to prosper.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“an Aramaic verb meaning to prosper, to succeed”* (p. 951). Rather than the idea of promotion to a higher rank, the word seems to imply their increase in financial possessions, riches. It should be remembered that, in chapter two, they had been promoted over the affairs of the province of Babylon. It would not seem that they could be put in any higher position in the province.

Daniel — Chapter Four

Daniel chapter four is a very unusual chapter in the Bible. In fact, there is not another one like it. **How so?** It is a chapter that was written specifically by a heathen to explain what GOD had done to him. It is hard to imagine such a proud, arrogant and absolute ruler writing such a humbling narrative about himself, much less publishing it throughout the Babylonian empire — **but he did**. Yet, it was written because it emphasizes the basic theme of Daniel — **GOD is in control!**

“And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled” (Isaiah 5:15).

Also, it is emphasized, that — though a mortal man wrote it — GOD determined that it be included in this book, thus, making it from the mouth of GOD. It is therefore, just as inspired as are the words of Satan in Genesis chapter three. GOD decreed that they should be written to inform one of needed background.

Dan. 4:1-2 “Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high GOD hath wrought toward me.”

“Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all the peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you. It hath seemed good unto me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High GOD hath wrought toward me.”
(ASV)

Note that Nebuchadnezzar addressed his words to all who **“dwell in all the earth,”** which emphasizes a world-wide empire. The desire he had for all people is

expressed as **“Peace be multiplied unto you.”** The word **“Peace”** comes from **shel-awm**, which Strong translated as *“prosperity,”* and BDB defined as *“welfare, prosperity, peace, well-being.”* Baker/Carpenter said of this word that it is *“most frequently used in the context of a greeting and may be used in both the singular and plural forms with the same meaning. As a greeting, these words signified a wish for peace, prosperity and general good welfare to those who were being greeted”* (p. 1152). In the Hebrew, the compatible word Shalom carries the same concepts as this Aramaic word. This seems to have been a common greeting in Old Testament times which crossed all borders. Nebuchadnezzar expanded his greeting by adding the word **“multiplied,”** i.e., to grow great, to increase.

Nebuchadnezzar deemed that it was good or pleasing to show all people the miracles that GOD **“wrought,”** i.e., *“to do, to be done”* (BDB) to Him. It seems obvious that Nebuchadnezzar considered that it would be good for his subjects to understand some things about GOD through the miracles He had performed, and that he had come to understand. An amazing thing about this chapter is that this was an official document of the Babylonian Kingdom, which was published with the expectation that all in this kingdom would read and contemplate its message.

“This letter would have been copied and sent throughout the Babylonian Empire. It may also have been ‘recorded on a stele and set up in a prominent place’” (MPR, p. 134).

Further, since this document praised GOD, extolled His might and power over an earthly king and world, **Is it any wonder then that GOD chose for it to be contained in His holy Word?** There is another question which this writer believes should be expressed here: **Were these**

simply the words of a king, or did The King place them in his mind — inspired? It might be pointed out here that many writers believe that the first three verses of this chapter actually belong at the end of the chapter, because they give his conclusion of these events. While basically agreeing with this assessment, they (in part) fit the common greeting of that time.

Dan. 4:3 “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.”

“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.” (ASV)

Of course these signs and wonders (miracles) are great, because the only GOD had done them. No human being or god created by man can match what GOD does. But note his next statement and ask, Who told him GOD’s kingdom is everlasting? Something else to consider here is Who taught Nebuchadnezzar the specific and peculiar religious vocabulary that he used? The only way he could have learned that would be by a prophet of GOD, by a faithful Jew. Did Nebuchadnezzar seek Daniel’s help in composing this chapter? This writer believes that Nebuchadnezzar’s words show (at the least) the influence of Daniel on his life. Daniel would not have kept his faith in GOD a secret, nor would Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

“His dominion is from generation to generation”

The word **“dominion”** comes from the word **shol-tawn**, which BDB said means *“dominion, sovereignty, realm.”* Another way of putting this concept is that GOD

is everywhere, and everywhere belongs to Him. He does not have sovereignty for a limited time. His sovereignty is **“from generation to generation,”** i.e., it is eternal. His sovereignty never ends. Even though kingdoms here pass from generation to generation, His continues uninterrupted from things like treason, insurrection, overthrow or elections. Perhaps one should remember the words of the prophet Jeremiah here.

“But the LORD is the true GOD, He is the living GOD, and an everlasting King: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation” (10:10).

This writer appreciates the manner in which Butler expresses this same concept.

“All earthly rulers die; all authority lodged in the hands of earthly monarchs is soon withdrawn; and not one of them can insure that his authority will extend even to the next generation” (p. 145).

Also, one should note how closely the prophecy of Daniel in chapter two and verse forty-four is mirrored here by Nebuchadnezzar.

“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.”

Many writers over the years have said that these verses, beginning and ending, reveal that Nebuchadnezzar became a true believer and worshipper of Jehovah GOD. This writer believes that one can be forced through circumstances and experiences to believe in the almighty power of GOD without rendering obedience and true worship to Him. It needs to be remembered that there is no absolute verification that Nebuchadnezzar became a monotheist

or, that after this experience, worshipped only Jehovah, though one might like to think and hope that he did.

The sentiment of many scholars needs to be **emphasized** about the first three verses of this chapter. It must be remembered that these verses represent the conclusion of Nebuchadnezzar's experience as recorded in the rest of the chapter. In fact, this chapter begins and ends with a conclusion of the king's thoughts about his experience.

Dan. 4:4-5 "I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me."

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. I saw a dream which made me afraid; and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me." (ASV)

Note some of the similarities between chapters two and four. (1) GOD sent a message to Nebuchadnezzar through the agency of a dream. (2) His so called dream interpreters could not tell him what it meant. (3) Both dreams made Nebuchadnezzar anxious and afraid. (4) GOD, through Daniel, revealed the meaning.

Nebuchadnezzar began by stating that he was in his house resting. The term "**rest**" seems to indicate that he felt secure and at peace. This has led some to conclude that the time frame here is after he had completed all of his campaigns against the nations; therefore, it was late in his rule. He further stated that he was "**flourishing.**" This word comes from **rah-aw-nan**, which Baker/Carpenter said is "*a verb indicating to grow luxurious, to be green*" (p. 1068). MPR says that the term for "**flourishing**" literally means "*in full*

leaf" (p. 138). This word was used to refer to a tree limb which was young, tender, developing, and flourishing. Thus, it came to refer to someone who was successful and prospering. But his tranquility is about to be shattered.

"I saw a dream which made me afraid" The word **"afraid"** is from the Aramaic word **deh-khal'**, which Strong defined as *"to slink."* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *"a verb meaning to fear, to slink"* (p. 233).

"The word 'afraid' is even stronger than 'terrified.' He was literally petrified with fear" (Butler, p. 145).

This verb was used of a serpent's crawling away and came to signify someone who was backing away from perceived danger in fear. This dream was intense and had caused Nebuchadnezzar to desire to back away from it, i.e., to avoid its consequences. He seemed to understand that this dream signified something very unpleasant which was in store for him in the near future. Regarding the words **"thoughts"** and **"visions,"** O'Banon had the following interesting thought.

"It is possible that the revelation began when he was weary, and continued while he fell asleep. This would explain both words being used. The reverse is also plausible, that it began as a dream during sleep, and its contents caused Nebuchadnezzar to wake up, yet the revelation continued while he was awake." (Denton Lectures thumb drive).

This author has had this experience a number of times over the years, and quite possibly December 13, 2025 some of his readers may also have had.

"and the thoughts upon my bed" The **"thoughts"** (**har-hor'**) speak of a *"mental conception, fantasy, image"* (BDB) that was passing through his mind. The interesting thing about this word is that it can refer to an image that is seen when one is either awake or asleep. In the present case, it has a qualifier — the word

“dream.” The visions he saw **“troubled”** (**be-hal’**) him, i.e., they **“terrified, frightened”** him (Baker/ Carpenter, p. 121). One can probably recall a dream he has had which was so real that it caused him to wake up in a cold sweat. This possibly describes the way Nebuchadnezzar awoke from his dream.

Dan. 4:6-8 **“Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying,”**

“Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers; and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and I told the dream before him, saying,” (ASV)

Nebuchadnezzar had mellowed. Like before, he called for all of **“the wise men of Babylon”** to come and reveal the meaning of the dream to him. But unlike in chapter two, he did not threaten their lives if they could not reveal the meaning. Just like before, in the end, Daniel came before the king. There is something in verse eight which should draw the attention of the

student. Nebuchadnezzar was writing this letter to the world after the dream had been revealed and fulfilled. Yet, in speaking of Daniel, he called him Belteshazzar, **“according to the name of my god.”** Further, he went on to say that within Daniel had **“the spirit of the holy gods.”** Question: Does the use of these terms indicate that he has given up his polytheistic gods for the one true GOD? To ask seems to answer the question.

Some have questioned why the dream in chapter two was not made known when the “*dream revealers*” were summoned, but in the present text, it is revealed. There is a simple answer to that in that GOD wanted to insure that Nebuchadnezzar understood that He was with Daniel and that He gave him supernatural abilities in chapter two. This brought favor to the Jews and put them in position to help guide the king in important matters that fit GOD’s plans. It also gave the Jews hope and courage. It proved to them that GOD had not forgotten them.

There is another thought which possibly should be considered here. Since these astrologers, et cetera, were supposed to be able to interpret dreams, and since they had all of those charts made out as to what certain dreams meant, **Why did they not offer some kind of explanation for Nebuchadnezzar’s dream?** Remember that, in chapter two, they told the king, **“tell thy servants the dream, and we will (not maybe, not might, but we will) shew the interpretation.”** Could it be that the answer is implied in a well known truth, i.e., that astrologers, palm readers, et cetera tell people what they want to hear? If this was the case, and since these “*dream revealers*” were men pleasers, they may not have revealed what they thought for fear of the

consequences they might receive for telling him its meaning. Remember, Nebuchadnezzar seemed to have some idea that this dream held an unpleasant experience for himself. This writer does not believe the magicians did not have an idea about this dream's possible meaning. They were dishonest. **What did this show about Daniel?** Even though he will hesitate, unlike the magicians, he will tell the king the truth he needed to hear. No matter what, Daniel would tell the king what the dream meant. It would also seem that Nebuchadnezzar had some understanding of Daniel's integrity. Thus, he expected the truth from him.

Dan. 4:9 “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.”

“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.” (ASV)

The name Belteshazzar, as mentioned earlier, was given to honor a particular god which Nebuchadnezzar worshipped. It is not known for sure which god this was, but the best guess would be Marduk, who was the patron god of Babylon (and was also known as Bel). Daniel's title is next given as **“master of the magicians,”** which had been given to him shortly after he arrived in Babylon. *“Leupold thinks a better translation would be ‘chief of the scholars’,”* to which this author agrees (Butler, p. 150). Nebuchadnezzar's reference to the **“holy gods”** is a reflection of his polytheistic beliefs. But Daniel indeed is the recipient of

knowledge imparted to him by **the Holy GOD** of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Nebuchadnezzar's confidence in Daniel's ability to tell him the meaning of his dream is evident — *"no mystery is too difficult for you"* (ESV). *Why?* The evidence confirmed his confidence. He understood that Daniel was receiving divine guidance, even though the king gave the wrong source for that guidance.

Dan. 4:10-12 **"Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it."**

"Thus were the visions of my head upon my bed: I saw, and, behold, a tree in the midst of the earth; and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the birds of the heavens dwelt in the branches thereof, and all flesh was fed from it." (ASV)

The first part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream dealt with a great tree which provided food for all flesh, as well as a dwelling place for them. Note that this tree, which represented Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom, had grown strong and powerful. It was important to the whole earth. Further, it had provided sustenance and peace for all of the empires and the nations it had

conquered, represented by the birds and animals. It truly would have been a magnificent sight. Being in the center of the earth, it was the main, if not the only, attraction for the whole earth.

“Great men and princes are often represented in the language of the prophets under the similitude of trees” (Clarke as quoted by Coffman, p.68).

Coffman then gave a sampling of passages where this is seen: Ezekiel 17:5-6; 31:3; Jeremiah 22:15; Psalm 1:3; 37:35. MPR thought that the image of great trees in the Scriptures *“is often used to represent a man in his pride (Is. 2:12, 13; 10:33, 34; Ezek. 17:1-10; 31: 3-14; Amos 2:9)”* (p. 140). King stated that trees in the Old Testament *“often convey the idea that a person’s growth and even his very existence are entirely subject to the will of God (cf. Isa. 10:33 - 11:1; Ezek. 17:22-24; 19:10-14)”* (p. 298). All of these ideas are present in the life of Nebuchadnezzar. He was indeed a great man, who had grown powerful under the watchful eyes and guiding hand of Jehovah. But then his pride got the best of him until GOD humbled him.

Dan. 4:13 “I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an Holy One came down from Heaven;”

“I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven.” (ASV)

This author sees the possibility that the wording here signifies more than one dream, through the use of the plural word **“visions.”** Also, again noting the wording, that there were two who came down from Heaven — **“a watcher and an Holy One.”** If indeed there were two who came down, the **“watcher”** was probably a created angelic being, since they are seen in the Scriptures to

observe and report to GOD. The **“Holy One”** then would probably be the second person of the GODHEAD, the Word (John 1:1; Rev. 19:13), as He was known before coming to this earth and after He returned to Heaven. Others, such as Hailey, Zerr, Butler and others believe **“the watcher”** and the **“Holy One”** are the same entity, and that entity is comprised of angels of GOD. King believes the meaning here is *“a watcher who is holy”* (p. 299). Whoever the **“watcher”** and the **“Holy One”** are, the impact is that Heaven, and thus GOD, keep track and are aware of what is happening in GOD’s creation. Further, GOD is willing to, and will, step in with a correcting hand when it is needed.

Dan. 4:14 “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:”

“He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches.” (ASV)

The first thing which should be noticed here is a change of language. Before this verse, the tree was referred to as **“it,”** but now it is referred to as **“his.”** This reveals that the tree represents a man.

The watcher **“cried aloud,”** literally *“called with might”* (King, p. 300), or spoke with a loud voice. He issued a series of commands: (1) Chop the tree down, (2) cut its branches off, (3) strip the leaves off the branches, (4) scatter its fruit, and (5) let the animals and birds flee (obviously became the tree’s impending destruction). This tree had been described earlier as a

great tree which had everything everyone needed to sustain life, a glorious tree. Now, this same tree (Nebuchadnezzar) is to be stripped of all of its former glory. Normally when one sees such devastation of a tree, he would conclude that that was the end of the tree's life. But in this case, it will be temporary. The tree remains alive and will flourish again.

A natural question evolves here: **Who was commanded to destroy this tree?** The Scriptures do not say. MPR does state that the verb endings in this verse are all plural, which would suggest that more than one was involved in cutting the tree down (p. 141).

Dan. 4:15-16 “Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.”

“Nevertheless leave the stump of its roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven: and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.” (ASV)

Note the next command: the stump with the roots is to be left. It is to be bound with rings of iron and brass and left in the field. Note is now given that this stump has an identity, i.e., it is a male. It symbolizes someone. The symbolism is that, like the tree cut down, this person is to be humbled. His portion, his possession or lot, is not to be in a palace surrounded by luxury, but

rather in the fields with the animals.

Why is the stump to be bound? Zerr gives one an interesting piece of information here.

“As a rule if a tree is cut down it means the death of the plant, but that is chiefly because the stump is exposed as a flat surface to the sun which will cause it to crack open, admitting the rain and other weather conditions to penetrate further until it reaches the roots” (Vol. 4, p. 233).

This author recently had a valuable tree which appeared dead and talked to a tree farmer about it. He was told that, if there was any hope that the trunk (stump) would produce new growth, he should cut it off at an angle, for the very reasons Zerr gave.

This person’s heart is also to be changed. It is to be changed from the heart of a man to the heart of a beast. This speaks not of the blood pump which beats in the chest of man and beast, but rather that with which he thinks, the Biblical heart which thinks and reasons — the mind. This man’s intellectual ability was to be changed.

“The idea of a man’s heart being changed into that of a beast describes a psychological phenomenon generally known as ‘zoanthropy.’ It is the delusion of one who really thinks that he is an animal and takes on animal characteristics” (MPR, p. 141).

Since it has been designated that this condition is to be temporary, **How long will this condition last?** Until **“seven times pass over him,”** *“seven periods of time pass over him”* (ESV). **How long is “seven times?”** The best guess by many commentators is seven years, but no one knows for sure.

*“The expression **seven times** is sufficiently difficult that it has led to some controversy as to its precise intention...Some scholars have noted that since the Babylonians recognized only two seasons (winter and summer), seven may have described about four years”* (King, p. 302).

The original word for **“times”** is **(id-dawn’)**.

Baker/Carpenter said this is an *“Aramaic masculine noun indicating a period of time, a moment of time”* (p. 800). He went on to explain that this word has many different meanings and ended by saying *“From the context it may refer to a year as a duration of time”* (IBID, emphasis added).

“The Babylonians utilized the numeral as the Jews did, as a letter designating perfection and completion” (King, p. 302).

Hailey (and this author) believed this is not talking about years. The number seven is used in the Bible to signify completion and perfection. Used here, this author believes it means until GOD’s purpose was accomplished.

“In a book like this, where the symbolical use of numbers stands out so prominently, the emphasis obviously rests on the seven as depicting some complete, fully determined period of time, known to God and purposely begun and terminated by God, not necessarily seven years” (Butler, p. 154).

What was the purpose? The humbling of Nebuchadnezzar. This purpose is revealed more completely as the text moves forward. One thing is certain — it would have taken more than a few weeks for the results of his appearance to change as portrayed in the text. As to the idea that this could have been a number of months, this writer does see that as a possibility. Consider that if one’s finger nails and toe nails are not clipped for a number of months, they will begin to look like claws. Further, the portrayals of Nebuchadnezzar seen on carvings and murals of the king had him in long hair. If his hair was not cared for on a regular basis, and it was already long (according to reliefs of him by archaeologists), it would become matted so that it could resemble something akin to feathers.

Dan. 4: 17 “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”

“The sentence 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 lowest of men.” (ASV)

Two major points are made in this verse. (1) GOD is in absolute control, and what He decrees will happen! (2) All rulers are allowed to rule by GOD and set in their positions by Him. That includes governors, senators, congressmen, presidents, dictators, prime ministers, or any other government official which might be named.

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of GOD: the powers that be are ordained of GOD. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of GOD: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (Romans 13:1-2, emphasis added).

“This verse which solemnly declares God’s sovereign providential control over the course of human history is the core of the book of Daniel (Compare: Isaiah 40:15ff, Proverbs 21:1, Romans 13:1, and Acts 17:24-26)” (Culver as quoted by Coffman, p. 69).

Though the identity of the **“watchers”** cannot be positively known, they do fulfill one of the roles of the angels, i.e., heavenly messengers of GOD. The text does not declare them to have made this judgment on Nebuchadnezzar, but they are obviously in agreement with it. Deity, the GODHEAD, made the decree. The watchers simply carried out the decree.

Who does GOD set up to rule over the kingdoms of men? Often He chooses those of the lowest order, the basest of men.

“Very often they are men of low intelligence, of inferior abilities, and sometimes even men of vile and dishonorable moral standing before God” (King, p. 303).

Nebuchadnezzar’s pride probably told him that he was not one of those inferior men (he was obviously intelligent and productive). He was not dishonorable. After all, he thought he ruled the whole world, and no one could keep him from doing whatever he pleased. One of the most difficult things man can do is to look at himself honestly through the eyes of GOD, as revealed in His holy word. It will be seen that Daniel gave Nebuchadnezzar the message and begged him to change his life so that he might possibly be spared this humiliation. But Nebuchadnezzar did not. It should also be understood that those who refuse to obey the GOD of Heaven are pictured as being vile and nowhere as good as they think themselves to be, and GOD’s perspective is the only which counts.

Dan. 4:18 “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.”

“This dream I, king Nebuchadnezzar, have seen; and thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, 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.” (ASV)

The arrogant pride of Nebuchadnezzar is seen in his

declarations — **“I king Nebuchadnezzar,” “my kingdom.”** He concludes the revealing of the dream by instructing Daniel to tell him the meaning of his dream. The king is confident that Daniel will be able to reveal the meaning. This is seen in his statement that the **“spirit of the holy gods”** is in him. Nebuchadnezzar’s confidence in Daniel was justified, because he understood that Daniel was truly in communication with the spiritual world — GOD communicated with him. Involved with his recognition is also the admission that his wise men were incapable of truly interpreting dreams, or looking into the future with any certainty.

Dan. 4:19 “Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.”

“Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was stricken dumb for a while, and his thoughts troubled him. The king answered and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine adversaries.” (ASV)

“Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour” The word **“astonied”** comes from the Aramaic verb **shem-am’**. BDB defined this word as *“to be appalled, be stunned.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“to be astonished, appalled. It means to be taken by surprise, dumbfounded at something, as well as amazed”* (p. 1165). Daniel was caught completely off guard by the revelation of this dream that GOD gave the king. This

is reflected in that he was dumbfounded for **“one hour.”** It is to be remembered that the phrase **“one hour”** was the smallest measurement of time used in the world at that time. Thus, he may have been appalled for a matter of minutes or up to an hour. Considering the meaning of the word **“astonied,”** Daniel’s expression probably showed the amazement which he felt. This astonishment also shows that he had no knowledge of the contents of this dream until it was revealed to him. In the past (chapter two) he knew the contents of the dream before human lips revealed it.

What would the meaning of this dream mean for Daniel and his fellow Jews? This question may have contributed to Daniel’s hesitance here. It has already been revealed that many hated the Jews because of their religion. Further, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had drawn the ire of the *“wise men”* of Babylon because of the promotions given to them by the king. Nebuchadnezzar had treated them benevolently, honorably and with favor because of their abilities (merits). How would they be treated now when the king was no longer in control?

Daniel’s **“thoughts troubled him.”** BDB defined the word **“troubled”** (**be-hal’**) as *“to frighten, alarm, dismay;”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“disturbed”* (p. 121). When one considers the context here, it is quite possible that a close relationship had developed between Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, for it appears that Daniel did not want to tell him. This was not because he feared the king’s wrath at its revelation, but out of true friendship and a desire for the best for his king. This is seen in his statement at the end of this verse where he desired — **“the interpretation thereof**

to thy enemies.”

“let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee” Nebuchadnezzar obviously saw that the meaning of this dream disturbed Daniel, so he told him not let it disturb him. In other words, he seems to have known it was a message of doom by his own reasoning and the way that Daniel reacted when GOD revealed it to him. He wanted to know what lay ahead, regardless of its being good or bad. Consider here that Daniel is going to have to pronounce judgment on his king and that he obviously did not like his task. **BUT**, Daniel did not forsake the obligation GOD had imposed upon him. **Is there a lesson to be learned here for today or any generation?** Man often does not like to hear GOD’s rebukes of his lifestyles, i.e., his sins; but all Christians have an obligation that has been imposed upon them by GOD to tell people the truth they need to hear, even when GOD’s truth condemns them, and quite possibly makes them angry. King made an interesting observation here about Nebuchadnezzar’s desire for the truth.

“He was like the man who visits the doctor to hear the news of what the tests or X-rays may mean for him. Such a fellow does not want to have it sugar coated. He simply wants to know the truth, the diagnosis and the prognosis...” (p. 307).

Daniel wished **“the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies”** It is clear that Daniel did not want this calamity to fall upon the king. Instead, he wished the fulfillment would come upon the king’s enemies. Nor does this author see Daniel as one who would want his enemies to suffer. Therefore, he believes that Butler has the right idea here.

“A more correct translation of the this phrase would render it, ‘this is a dream which would please your enemies, for what it

portends they would surely like to see fulfilled upon you.' Literally, it is translated, 'The dream is for thine enemies...' (p. 158).

One should remember that GOD does not take any pleasure in the death of the wicked but desires that all turn to Him.

"I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die" (Ezekiel 33:11)?

Understanding this, Does one today cheer when something bad happens to those he considers to be wicked (enemies) or desire bad things to happen to them?

Dan. 4:20-22 "The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth."

"The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the birds of the heavens had their habitation: it is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth." (ASV)

The tree which Nebuchadnezzar saw and described in his dream is now identified by Daniel as representing the king. It might be remembered that the prophet

Nathan told a king, **“Thou art the man”** (2 Samuel 12:7), when he had sinned and needed rebuke. The situation here is similar. Nebuchadnezzar needed to be rebuked for his sin of pride (which was represented in the dream), and Daniel was the prophet chosen by GOD to do it. Rebuke should never be a pleasant task, but when it is needed, **love** calls for it to be done. Love does not let someone be hurt, when the hurt or eternal destruction of that person will be the result of holding back rebuke. Nebuchadnezzar’s power and wealth had greatly grown, but his pride had gotten out of hand.

*“In the course of his life the king had lost his perspective on his own humanity and forgotten that he was a mere creature of God and that true Lordship was retained by **heaven**”* (King, p. 308).

It should be remembered here that, just as GOD’s wrath was brought upon the Israelites because of their sins, GOD’s anger is now brought upon Nebuchadnezzar because of his sins, especially the sin of pride.

Dan. 4:23-25 “And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven

times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.”

“And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew down the tree, and destroy it; nevertheless 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; this is the interpretation, O king, and it is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king: that thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen, and shalt be wet 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.” (ASV)

In these verses, the metaphor changes from a tree stump to a man — the king. The **“it,”** is now changed to **“him.”** **“seven times pass over him”** In verse twenty-five, it will be emphasized that it is the king who is under discussion here through five personal pronouns. The interpretation is again emphasized to be the king’s punishment from the King of kings, the Most High and only GOD.

Most commentators believe that Nebuchadnezzar would eat grass, et cetera, because of a mental madness or insanity which came over him. As stated earlier, it simply cannot be known with certainty what caused him to do this, other than the fact that — whatever it was — GOD caused it. Note the descriptions of what it will be like for the king during the **“seven times.”** He will be driven out from the presence of human companionship. Instead of dwelling in his sumptuous palace, his home will be in the fields

with the animals. Instead of a nice, comfortable, warm and dry bed in which to sleep, he would sleep in the uncomfortable fields under the stars, wet with dew and subject to the elements. Instead of eating the dainties of a king's table provided by his chefs, he will eat only what is supplied by GOD for the animals. **How long will this last?** It will not be a permanent condition. His condition will last for **“seven times.”**

“The ‘seven times,’ is not seven years, months or any specific time, but a definite period of indefinite length” (Hailey, p. 81).

The **“seven times”** will last as long as it takes for the king to realize **“that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.”** The whole point of what happened to Nebuchadnezzar was to inform him, mankind in general, and GOD's people that He is in control of rulers and kingdoms. This then meant that GOD rules over all men, regardless of their positions. As such, He has the power to put rulers and kingdoms in power, and He has the ability and right to remove them from office and the earth.

“Our GOD is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased” (Psalm 115:3, emphasis added).

“The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all” (Psalm 103:19, emphasis added).

“GOD reigneth over the heathen: GOD sitteth upon the throne of His holiness” (Psalm 47:8, emphasis added).

It should probably be mentioned here that the Greek translation of the book of Daniel is extremely unreliable. It leaves out many of the details, probably because of an extreme bias toward the one who took Judah into captivity. It also adds details which are at best spurious, if not plainly dishonest, again, because of

prejudice against those who had taken their nation captive. One small example will be given here which should easily show the prejudice of the translator.

“And the vision which you saw, that an angel was sent in strength, and commanded to root the tree up and to cut it down, the judgment of God will come upon you” (Greek translation, emphasis added).

How any translator could be so bold as to part so radically from what GOD said is almost beyond belief!

Dan. 4:26 “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.”

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

Not only had GOD’s decree commanded the tree to be cut down, but He had also commanded that the stump be preserved. Note: **“thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee.”** The word **“sure”** is from the Aramaic adjective **kah-yawm’**. BDB defined this word as meaning *“secure, enduring,”* and Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“something assured, enduring”* (p. 993). In other words, GOD made a guarantee to Nebuchadnezzar that he would return to the throne of Babylon. However, there was a condition which must first be met. He would only return to power once he acknowledged that the GOD of Heaven is in control. This would naturally also be a recognition that he was king only because GOD put him on the throne and gave him this huge kingdom and the power to rule over it.

Dan. 4:27 “Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be

acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.”

“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 there may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.” (ASV)

Daniel now offered advice to Nebuchadnezzar and pleaded with him to accept it. **What advice, counsel, did Daniel give the king?** He told him to **“break off”** something. The term **“break off”** is from the Aramaic verb **per-ak’**, which means *“to discontinue,”* and BDB defined it as *“to tear away.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“break away, to renounce”* (p. 923).

“Rabbinic scholars saw sin as a ‘yoke which was to be broken’ and this text is proof of the propriety of that metaphor” (King, p. 314).

Specifically, Nebuchadnezzar was told to tear himself away from (discontinue, throw away) his life of sin and turn to right doing. The word **“iniquities”** is from the Aramaic feminine noun **iv-yaw’**. Strong defined it as *“perverseness,”* and BDB said it means *“perversity.”*

“Tyrannical behavior, cruelty and violence, and generally highhanded dealings, were quite often characteristic of these rulers” (IBID, p. 315).

How could the king show he had turned, i.e., discontinued doing perversity? “by shewing mercy to the poor” Note that there is something to be done by the king. He must show mercy to the poor in two steps: (1) by changing the way he thought about the poor, and (2) changing his action before them. The phrase **“shewing mercy”** is from the word **khan-an’**, which the lexicons agree means *“to show favor.”* **To whom is the king to show favor? “the poor”** If Nebuchadnezzar did

this, what might come to pass?

“a lengthening of thy tranquillity,” a prolonging (**{ar-kaw’} ar-kaw’**) of his **“tranquility.”** The word **“tranquility”** is from the Aramaic feminine noun **shel-ay-vaw’**. Strong defined it as **“safety,”** and BDB defined it as **“ease, prosperity.”** In the present text, this refers to a peaceful condition, which translates to prosperity and safety in the kingdom. It needs to be emphasized that Daniel wanted the very best for the king. This should also cause one today to wish for the very best for those who rule over him, no matter in which nation he may dwell or what kind of government is over him!

“There can be no mistaking it that God holds all rulers, pagan and godly, responsible for meeting His moral standards in governing (cf. Amos, chap. 1-2)” (Butler, p. 162).

Could that which Daniel prophesied be avoided?

Almost all prophecies in the Old Testament show that they are conditional. On the one hand, GOD prophesied that He would destroy Nineveh (book of Jonah), but when they repented, GOD spared them (conditional prophecy). On the other hand, in the book of Nahum (years later), GOD prophesied the destruction of Nineveh, and there was nothing that could be done to reverse His decision (unconditional prophecy). The language here seems to indicate the possibility of the king’s escaping this punishment **“if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.”**

Dan. 4:28-29 “All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.”

“All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he was walking in the royal palace of Babylon.” (ASV)

Did Daniel's advice have any effect on Nebuchadnezzar? Some would say no, but this author would disagree. He did have **"a lengthening of thy tranquillity"** for twelve months, but then, he went back to his old ways. Thus, the prophecy was fulfilled as to the things he would suffer: dwelling with the animals, eating grass, et cetera. Perhaps Zerr was correct in stating that GOD gave Nebuchadnezzar a year to change, but to no avail (Vol. 4, p. 234). Man is often like Nebuchadnezzar (who was warned by GOD to obey) and, like him, called into judgment very quickly. With all the time GOD gave him to repent, Nebuchadnezzar failed to change. One might ask himself if he is like Nebuchadnezzar — unready to meet the judgment of GOD.

It needs to be pointed out that the ESV, as it does so many times, has taken liberties with the text which are not warranted. The original mentions nothing of the king's walking on the roof of the palace. Rather, it states that he was walking **"in the palace,"** as does the ASV. MPR (in attempting to justify their translating **"roof"** in this passage) referred to 2 Samuel 11:2, where David walked on the roof of his palace and gazed upon Bathsheba with lust. They seem to imply that, because David walked on the roof, Nebuchadnezzar must have also. Such assumption is not warranted. Those who make this assumption need to learn that this section of Daniel was written in Aramaic, whereas 2 Samuel 11:2 was written in Hebrew. The translation of these words are not parallel.

Dan. 4:30 "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the

honour of my majesty?"

"The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling-place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (ASV)

Nebuchadnezzar had the "I" problem. *"Everything that has been accomplished is because 'I' did it. 'I' was the great genius which gave my armies the ability to defeat all the nations. 'I' had the brilliant mind which conceived the beauty and might to design this great city. 'I' am the mighty one, and only 'I' could have accomplished all this."*

"The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after GOD: GOD is not in all his thoughts" (Psalm 10:2-4).

"When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom" (Proverbs 11:2).

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:28).

In many ways, Nebuchadnezzar sounds like the "me generation" of the current day. His motto, like theirs, was, "It is all about 'me'." He, like many, forgot that it was GOD who gave him the mind and know-how to accomplish great things.

That Babylon was indeed a magnificent city is beyond denial. One is encouraged to consider the description of this ancient city in King's commentary (p. 318), where he describes this city based on the writings of the ancient historians Herodotus and Ctesias of Cnidus. A few quotes here will give one a taste of Babylon's greatness and beauty.

“The brick wall (of the city, RK) was fifty-six miles long, 300 feet high, twenty-five feet thick with another wall seventy-five feet behind the first wall, and the wall extended 35 feet below the ground...The famed ‘Hanging Gardens,’ one of the wonders of the ancient world, ornamented the metropolis with lush greenery...An enormous golden image of Baal and the impressive Golden Table (both weighing over 50,000 lbs of solid gold), two massive golden lions, and a solid gold human figure (eighteen feet high) also ornamented the capital.”

In today’s money (12 December 2025), the statue of Baal and the Table would be worth \$6,020,000,000.00. That does not include the two lions and the eighteen-foot-tall human figure. Nor does it speak of the gold, silver, and precious jewels he showered upon the altars of his other gods in Babylon. But note what happened before he could finish bragging about himself.

Dan. 4:31-32 **“While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”**

“While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from Heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee: and thou shalt be driven from men; and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; thou shalt be made 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.” (ASV)

Note the phrase **“While the word was in the king's mouth.”** The picture appears that, when

Nebuchadnezzar started bragging about himself, the voice, i.e., GOD, interrupted him.

"It is a recognized principle of discipline, both as to human beings and dumb creatures, that an act of punishment is the more effective if administered as near as possible to the evil for which it is a chastisement" (Zerr, p. 234).

GOD had had it with Nebuchadnezzar's being so full of himself. GOD had shown him Who was in charge in chapter two and earlier in the present chapter. Daniel had also pleaded with him to repent, but here he was thinking he had accomplished everything on his own. GOD issued a simple statement full of meaning — **"The kingdom is departed from thee."** One almost gets the sense that the king is being told, *"They are coming to get you and drive you from the presence of human company."* It is repeated that he will remain in the company of the beasts in the field until he realizes that GOD is in control. When he gets rid of his pride, when he acknowledges GOD's control, then GOD will give the kingdom of Babylon back to him. GOD had given him ample warning and opportunity (one year) to repent and change — **BUT** he refused GOD's mercy and grace. Today, one needs to consider that all have been given ample opportunity and warning to repent or face the judgment of Almighty GOD.

Dan. 4:33 **"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."**

"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 hair was grown

like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." (ASV)

The moment GOD stopped speaking the pronouncement of punishment, Nebuchadnezzar's punishment began. He was forcibly driven away from men into the fields of the beasts. He began to eat the grass and, when night fell, the dew would have made him miserable until the sun could come and warm him.

“till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws” It is noted in the above quote that both of the words *“feathers”* and *“claws”* are italicized, indicating that they are not in the original. Though that is true, it would seem to this writer that there are only two options regarding the **“eagles”** as to what is being spoken about — either feathers or claws. The same would be true with regard to the **“birds.”** The puzzle for this author is that the king will be in the fields, where his hair and nails will grow until seven times are fulfilled. If the added words are a sense of what is meant here, the nails will become like claws within a year, but for the hair to grow to the length of eagles feathers would take a considerable amount of time, possibly beyond seven years (which most commentators ascribe as the meaning of **“seven times”**). Thankfully, the duration of **“seven times”** if this author is correct in his understanding, simply means *as long as it takes* for Nebuchadnezzar to realize Who is in charge.

Consider for a moment how pathetic this king must have looked. Consider also how humiliated this once proud ruler would have been as he wandered among the cattle (ox) eating grass. Note that nothing is said about his ability to think and reason, for if that had been taken away, **How could he have thought about and**

acknowledged that GOD is in charge of the affairs of men, that GOD dispenses rulership of kingdoms (nations) as He pleases?

Regarding the Bible's description of what happened to Nebuchadnezzar, critics have long stated that nothing has ever been found in the Babylonian chronicles about this incident, so (they reason) this account must not have happened. First, one should consider that things are being learned every day about Babylon and events of that era as the tablets are translated slowly but surely and more are found. Second, consider what Lucas says about a fragmentary cuneiform tablet which has been found and translated.

"A fragmentary cuneiform text seems to refer to some mental disorder afflicting Nebuchadnezzar and perhaps his neglecting and leaving Babylon, maybe putting his son Amel-Marduk in charge for a while, and then of his repentance for neglect of the worship of the gods. Unfortunately the text is too fragmentary for any conclusions to be drawn" (quoted by MPR, p. 150).

Another piece of information is provided by A.K. Grayson from a fragmentary cuneiform tablet about Nebuchadnezzar and his son Evil-Merodach that was found in the British Museum, and which is summarized by King, page 323.

"At one point it seems to refer to King Nebuchadnezzar, who gives to his son Evil-Merodach certain orders which the latter does not heed on account of the former's erratic behavior. It says of him at one point that 'he does not show love to son or daughter...family clan does not exist...his attention was not directed towards promoting the welfare of Esagil (and Babylon)."

Another text is also mentioned by King, page 324 in his commentary on Daniel (This author recommends this commentary for one's library.).

"Interestingly, Abydenus, a Greek historian (whose principal work, [A History of the Chaldeans and Assyrians](#), is known through fragments quoted in authors like Eusebius, Cyril of

Alexander, and Syncellus) wrote in about 268 B.C. that Nebuchadnezzar had been 'possessed by some god' and that he had 'immediately disappeared.' The historical record of his governmental activities during the period 582-575 is deafeningly silent as well."

Perhaps within a few years there may just be conclusive evidence that again proves the Bible record to be correct, as it has so many times through the archaeological spade.

Dan. 4:34 "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto Heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation:"

"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; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom from generation to generation." (ASV)

"And at the end of the days" (however long that time period was). **"I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven"** When he submitted himself to GOD. When he recognized that he could only rule in Babylon because GOD allowed him to be on the throne. When he realized that GOD ruled in the affairs of mankind. **What happened when he accepted these truths?**

"mine understanding returned unto me" The word **"understanding"** here is unfortunate because it gives the wrong idea. If, as stated earlier, Nebuchadnezzar did not have understanding until he looked up to Heaven, he never would have been able to

recognize GOD as the all powerful provider of thrones. He would not have been able to change the way he thought about himself or GOD. The word **“understanding”** in this text comes from the Aramaic masculine noun **man-dah’**. Strong stated that the word means *“wisdom or intelligence,”* i.e., his wisdom was given back to him when he correctly reasoned about Who GOD was and his own position with regard to GOD. Another way of putting this is that, when he got rid of his pride and accepted his humble position before GOD, GOD returned his wisdom and throne. Zerr took the position that GOD returned his wisdom to him, and then Nebuchadnezzar recognized the authority of GOD and his own humble position before Him. **What did this cause the king to do?**

Nebuchadnezzar blessed, praised and honored Him — **“I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever.”** He **“blessed”** GOD, i.e., he kneeled before him (**ber-ak’**). Hailey made an interesting observation about kneeling in praise here.

“It is unclear whether he did this by an outward bowing or kneeling, or mentally” (p. 84).

It is easy to see one outwardly bow, but an inward kneeling before GOD is far more important and a more accurate basis of acknowledgment of the supremacy of GOD in one’s life. He **“praised”** GOD, i.e., he expressed adoration and adulation (**sheb-akh’**) to GOD. He **“honored”** GOD, i.e., he magnified and glorified (**had-ar’**) Him. **Why did he bless, praise and honor GOD?**

Because GOD had humbled him. GOD had caused him to realize that it was GOD Who has dominion over the nations, not himself. He had in essence convinced

Nebuchadnezzar that He (GOD) had no beginning, i.e., He has always been. This was acknowledged by the king through his statements that GOD's **"dominion is an everlasting dominion."**

"Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations" (Psalm 114:2).

His **"kingdom is from generation to generation."** GOD has always been in charge, and now Nebuchadnezzar understood!

"For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

"Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever; and Thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations" (Psalm 135:13).

Dan. 4:35 "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?"

"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?" (ASV)

"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing" The inhabitants of the earth would include both human and animal content. But in context, it most likely is referring to human beings. The text says they **"are reputed as nothing."** The word **"reputed"** comes from the Aramaic verb meaning *"to regard"* (Strong); *"to think, account"* (BDB); *"to regard, account"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 386). The inhabitants are accounted as **"nothing."** How is it that they are accounted as nothing? Do human beings have no

value at all? A comparison is being made between GOD and man. Next to GOD, man was being accounted by Nebuchadnezzar as being of no value. It is not that man has no value in the sight of GOD. Obviously, his soul is of great value to GOD, because of the redeeming ransom paid for it is priceless. But in power, might, mental capacity, and longevity, **What is man in comparison to GOD?**

“He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven” The power or might of GOD is next proclaimed by Nebuchadnezzar by stating that no one in the heavenly host can withstand His **“will,”** i.e., whatever He desires. They cannot successfully overthrow GOD’s will, or stand against that will.

“Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” (Luke 11:2).

It is emphasized, that if no one in Heaven can withstand the desired results of GOD, **How then could anyone “among the inhabitants of the earth” withstand Him?**

The fact is that **“none can stay His hand.”** The word **“stay”** is from the Aramaic verb **mekh-aw’**. It means *“to strike in pieces...specifically to impale”* (Strong); *“to strike, smite, kill”* (BDB). Baker/Carpenter said, *“the term attains the idiomatic sense to restrain, to hinder, to prevent, or to stay”* (p. 592). It might be noted that the same word is used in Ezra 6:11 as a punishment by Darius for anyone who attempted to hinder the Jews from rebuilding the Temple, i.e., impalement. The idea seems to be that no one can restrain or prevent GOD from accomplishing His will, even to the point of taking a man’s life once He has determined a course of action. Hailey quoted Keil as saying, *“to strike on the hand, to hinder [is] derived from*

the custom of striking children on the hand in chastening them" (p. 85). Considering what Nebuchadnezzar has just experienced, he could be saying that GOD cannot be restrained from punishing those who deserve His punishment.

"or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" The idea appears to be that no one has the right to question the actions of GOD. No one has the right to question His judgments, proclamations, or His thinking. Considering what the king had just gone through, and the words which he spoke afterwards, he could well have followed the lead of the Psalmist in saying — **"I know, O LORD, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me"** (Psalm 119:75).

"Nebuchadnezzar is convinced of the omnipotence of Daniel's God! He admits to God's sovereignty in both the seen and unseen world — and that universally so" (Butler, p. 167).

King sums up the gist of verse thirty-five succinctly.

"No human being has the wisdom or the might to challenge the power or actions of the omnipotent and omniscient God" (p. 329).

Dan. 4:36 "At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me."

"At the same time mine understanding returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and brightness returned unto me; and my counselors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent greatness was added unto me." (ASV)

"At the same time my reason returned unto me"

As soon as Nebuchadnezzar recognized the

omnipotence of GOD, GOD returned his wisdom (**man-dah'**) to him. Further, the honor and the majesty he had before his heart was made like that of a beast was returned — he was restored to his throne. **“mine honour and brightness returned unto me”** Strong stated that the word **“brightness”** (**zeev**) refers to **“cheerfulness,”** his countenance. BDB shows that this word can also refer to **“splendor.”** This word is used in a number of ways in the book of Daniel: to describe the splendor of a statue (Dan. 2:3); the glory and splendor of the city (Dan. 4:36); and the refreshing of one’s face after a terrifying incident.

“my counsellors and my lords sought unto me”
“When I recognized the omnipotence of Daniel’s GOD, my counselors again sought my advice.” The phrase **“and I was established in my kingdom,”** may signify a reaffirmation ceremony recognizing him as king. He further added that **“excellent majesty was added unto me.”** The word **“excellent”** comes from the Aramaic adjective **yat-teer’**. Strong defined this word as **“preeminent...exceedingly,”** while BDB defined it as **“pre-eminent, surpassing, extreme, extraordinary.”** Baker/Carpenter says that the **“basic sense is excellence, superiority”** (p. 488). Nebuchadnezzar’s superiority as ruler over the then-known world was returned to him by the One who rules all, by the One who appointed him to the position of king over this vast empire. But note that he added that his majesty, his greatness, was increased from what it had been. But this time he did not claim that he had accomplished anything on his own.

“Does this act of God indicate some acceptable manifestation of faith by this pagan king? Could we say the pagan king has been converted? We do not know!” (Butler, p. 167).

One would like to believe that he was converted, especially since he only had a couple of years to live past this time. There are those, such as Edward J. Young, who insist that he was converted. This author is on the fence, neither convinced that he was or was not converted.

Dan. 4:37 “Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.”

“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven; for all His works are truth, and His ways justice; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.” (ASV)

“I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven” Nebuchadnezzar praised, i.e., he gave adoration to GOD. He lifted up and exalted GOD. He magnified the GOD of Heaven whom he said was the King of Heaven. Kings of that time would have considered themselves all powerful, and whatever they commanded would be done immediately and without question. Thus, by acknowledging GOD as the King of Heaven, he was admitting the absolute sovereignty of the Almighty.

He also admitted three more things about GOD here. (1) He said that all of GOD’s works were truth (just); (2) all of His ways, his *“course of life”* [(o’rakh), are elevated by His judgment, and (3) He was able to *“humble, bring low”* (shaf-al’) all of those who walked in pride. He ought to have known, because he was the “poster child” of the truths he had just proclaimed. One should ask himself if there is anything missing in the praise he offered concerning GOD’s power and ability.

The answer to such a question would be **yes**. This polytheistic king did not state that Jehovah is the one and only GOD. He never stated that he rejected his pagan gods to worship Daniel's GOD only. **Is the final picture of king Nebuchadnezzar, from that in which he was first introduced in this book, that of one who had grown in his appreciation of GOD's power?** Certainly. But that does not necessarily make him a dedicated, faithful servant of Jehovah. It is interesting that there is little in secular history regarding Nebuchadnezzar after this chapter of Biblical history. This author leaves chapter four with a series of questions posed by MPR for one's consideration.

"Was Nebuchadnezzar converted? Did his acknowledgment imply that now he believed in Yahweh as the only God? Was he only affirming his belief in Yahweh as one among many gods? Did he apostatize soon after making these affirmations? We simply do not know for sure" (p. 153).

This is the last one will see of a living Nebuchadnezzar in the Scriptures. According to some, he died just a few years after this chapter's conclusion. Some think as little as two years. Chapter five will show the end of the Neo-Babylonian empire, which took place approximately twenty years after Nebuchadnezzar's death.

Daniel — Chapter Five

Pause is made here, because the last verse of this chapter marks the end of the Babylonian Empire, or more correctly, the Neo-Babylonian Empire. This was the greatest empire known to man, not because of the amount of territory it encompassed, for the three which followed it encompassed more territory than it did. Not because man looks at it as being the greatest, but because GOD viewed it as such: **“head of gold.”** All human empires (kingdoms) have ended in disgrace and ruin. The human empires that ended with the Roman empire were replaced by a spiritual empire which indeed has no borders to contain it, which indeed is a world empire. After the Roman empire there have never been any true secular empires. This last “empire” belongs to the GOD of Heaven, the church which was bought with the precious blood of Jesus, and which will ultimately be brought together as one assembly in the portals of Heaven.

Dan. 5:1-2 “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. 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.”

“Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the Temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines, might drink therefrom.” (ASV)

Chapter five begins rather abruptly by mentioning Belshazzar as the king of Babylon. No record is given in Daniel of Nebuchadnezzar's death, nor of those who ruled between him and the co-kingship of Nabonidus/Belshazzar.

Nebuchadnezzar	605-562 B.C.	33 years
Evil-merodach	562-560 B.C.	2 years
Neriglissar	560-556 B.C.	4 years
Labashi-Marduk	556	9 months
Nabonidus	556-539 B.C.	15 years
Belshazzar	553-539 B.C.	12 years (co-rule)

The above list of Babylon's kings helps one to see that there were about twenty-three years between the death of Nebuchadnezzar and the last king of Babylon.

The text begins with **“Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords.”** Those who deny the historical accuracy of the Bible have in the past often pointed to the mention of Belshazzar here. They said that there was no secular mention of Belshazzar as a king of Babylon. In recent years, as recorded by MPR in their commentary, a number of cuneiform tablets have shed new light which seems to point to his being a king, just as it is mentioned in the Bible record.

“Among letters from the time of Nabonidus, one appears that was written by Belshazzar, calling himself Bel-shar-u-sur ‘Bel, protect the king’” (King, p. 342).

Further, Daniel's indication of a co-regency in verse twenty-nine is also shown in the list of Babylonian kings mentioned above.

“One of the cuneiform documents expressly states that Nabonidus entrusted the kingship to Belshazzar” (Young,

quoted by Coffman, p. 80).

King Belshazzar made a feast for a thousand of his lords, i.e., his princes and nobles. The text says that he **“drank wine before the thousand.”** He assembled these as an army composed of Medes and Persians was surrounding the city of Babylon. The above phrase probably alludes to a practice of ancient kings, who did not eat or drink in the midst of those they ruled over. They generally had a space separated in the hall where such activities were being held. Consider the practice of the Egyptians, as seen when Joseph ate with his servants and his brothers before he revealed himself as family. On that occasion Joseph ate at a separate table from his servants and brothers. It very likely refers to Belshazzar’s sitting, possibly on a raised platform in front of his subjects. **What did he do?**

While **“he tasted the wine,”** he commanded that vessels taken from the Temple of GOD be brought to him. Nebuchadnezzar had taken these items from Solomon’s temple and had stored them in the temple of his god (Marduk) as trophies. As he **“tasted the wine,”** i.e., as the effects of the alcoholic beverage he was imbibing began to adversely affect him, he did something very foolish. It is a well-known fact, verified by scientists and medical authorities, that the first thing alcoholic beverages do is attack the control center of the brain.

*“The Aramaic word for ‘tasting’ (**the-ame**) ‘seems to carry with it the idea not only of sensing the flavor of the wine but feeling its effects’ (Miller as quoted by MPR, p 168).*

As correctly observed by Hailey, this will cause a person to **“act irrationally, irreverently and irresponsibly”** (p. 93).

How did Belshazzar act so irreverently?

Belshazzar not only ordered these vessels brought before this drunken crowd, but he also ordered that they

be filled with wine (alcohol). He wanted **“his princes, his wives, and his concubines”** to drink from these vessels, which action was a reflection on the supposed weakness of the Jews’ GOD and His inability to protect those who worshipped Him.

“The presence of the king’s ‘wives’ and ‘concubines’ was usually not tolerated at banquets. It was, however, permitted when debauchery began to run rampant, adding insult to the holy God of Heaven” (Butler, p. 188).

He disrespected and denigrated the vessels that GOD considered holy. They had been consecrated by His priests to be used in the Temple worship. They were not to be used in a profane way — but that is exactly how Belshazzar and his drunks were using them. Later in this chapter, Daniel will refer to Belshazzar’s grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, as being honored by GOD (v. 18). Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar through the marriage of Nabonidus to a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. It is to be remembered that Nabonidus was not related to Nebuchadnezzar, having usurped the throne. Nebuchadnezzar had not treated the holy things of GOD as common and profane, as did Belshazzar.

“The gods of all people were venerated; a man respected his own gods as well as the gods of others” (Butler, p. 188).

Butler’s comment seems to be true in all societies who serve a pantheon of gods. (It is the idea that *“Your religion is just as good as mine and they can co-exist with each other as long as you do not criticize mine — I’m okay, and you are okay — We are all going to the same place just by different paths”*).

Here is one of the questions which has puzzled this writer is. **Since he would have known that an army was marching upon the city of Babylon, why was he holding a drunken party instead of preparing to meet this army**

in battle? A number of suggestions have been made over the years to try to answer the above question. This writer tends to believe that he was simply foolish and extremely arrogant in believing that the city could not be conquered.

Dan. 5:3-4 “Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the Temple of the house of GOD which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.”

“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 lords, his wives and his concubines, drank from them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.” (ASV)

When the vessels from the house of GOD arrived at the banquet hall, Belshazzar and those in attendance did as he had said they would. They poured wine into them and proceeded to drink from these holy vessels. As they drank and became more intoxicated they began praising the “gods” they had made, i.e., gods manufactured by human imagination out of the materials listed. In giving praise to these make-believe gods, they were mocking **the GOD of Heaven**. They had deceived themselves into thinking these so-called gods had given them power, and might even having deceived themselves into believing they would be saved from the Medes and Persians by them.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1).

They were about to understand that one cannot mock

GOD and expect to get away with it. They were about to reap what they had sown, both in this life and in the next.

“Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Galatians 6:7-8).

They were about to learn that Daniel’s GOD was not to be trifled with or mocked. They were about to suffer the whirlwind of GOD’s wrath.

“As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation” (Proverbs 10:25).

Zerr made an observation that, as this banquet continued, its focus probably changed.

“Thus an occasion that started out as a royal banquet was turned into a drunken, religious service to dumb idols that were made by human hands” (p. 236).

Who were the gods which were probably being praised at this time?

“Marduk (Bel), the patron god of the city (Is. 46:1); Nebo, the god of wisdom, literature, and education (Is. 46:1); Nergal, the god of war (2 Kings 17:30); and Ishtar, the goddess of fertility” (MPR, p. 170).

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

wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

“In the same hour came forth the 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. Then the king's countenance was changed in him, and his thoughts troubled him; and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. 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 purple, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” (ASV)

“In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand” What is the significance of a hand here? In some cultures the hands of the enemy were cut off after a battle, so they could be counted to know how many of the enemy had perished. **Perhaps**, it was a declaration that GOD had not been defeated by Babylon. It was obvious that this hand was alive; therefore, the One behind the hand, which was not seen, was very much alive and in control.

They probably did not even get the words of praise out of their mouths before the fingers began to write on the wall. These words were written **“over against the candlestick,”** which indicates that they were written on the wall opposite the candlesticks, i.e., the source of light in the banquet hall. Interestingly, the archaeology that has been done on the ruins of Babylon have found that the walls of the palace had been covered with white plaster.

What the hand wrote is said to have been seen by the king. Nothing is said about the banqueters' seeing the hand while it did the writing, and perhaps only the king saw this. But if so, they were all able to see what had been written, thus, allowing the **"wise of Babylon"** to see it. **What was the reaction of the king?**

First, his **"countenance was changed."** He went from being cheerful and celebrating to being somber and sober. *"Literally, the text says that 'his color changed'"* (MPR, p. 171). Second, **"his thoughts troubled him."** His thoughts turned from celebration to being terrified (**be-hal'**). Third, **"the joints of his loins were loosed."** The NKJV reads *"the joints of his hips were loosen,"* which is one of the interpretations of **ket-ar'**, (**"joints"**). Fourth, **"his knees smote one against another."** This probably signifies that he was not able to stand because of the fear which came over him. Fifth, he **"cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers."** Belshazzar is a good example of *"Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it."* Just as his forefathers had, he called for the same group of people who could not interpret GOD's messages in the past. Nothing has changed much in modern times, for note how many today rely upon astrologers and fortune tellers who pretend to predict the future. **Do his actions here seem familiar to what took place in chapter two?** Belshazzar asked them to read the writing and give the interpretation. Sixth, he offered them great reward, even to making anyone who could interpret this writing on the wall the third ruler in the land.

Dan. 5:8-9 "Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known

to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.”

“Then came in all the king's wise men; but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were perplexed.” (ASV)

No one in attendance at the moment could read what was written in such a strange language. As pointed out by a number of commentators, it is a useless endeavor to try to figure out what language it represented. It is possible that this was a language conceived by GOD for this very occasion. Since no one could read the text, it is obvious that no one could give the meaning of the words, unless the one who wrote them gave the meaning.

As superstitious as these people were, this writing appears (from the reaction of the king and his court) to have been recognized as a bad or evil omen of things to come. As the context reveals, they would have been correct to believe that something very bad was about to happen. The reaction to the wise one's inability seems to have increased the fear of the king. Further, the “*wise frauds*” were thrown into a great state of confusion and probably even shared in the fear of their king.

Consider also that he had shouted with alarm for the wise to come in hopes of learning the message written on his wall. The text speaks of his being terrified when he called for them. But instead of being calmed, he became more terrified and anxious because he obviously realized this was an important message, yet he still did not know what it meant. The king's fear

probably also infected the nobles who were gathered as guests. From the context, it appears that the king was beside himself because he did not seem to believe that anyone was left that he could consult.

“Effectively, the night’s celebration was over. The Lord, by this miraculous hand and its enigmatic message, had by design changed this evening of revelry into a night of fear” (King, p. 357).

Dan. 5:10-12 **“Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.”**

“Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: the queen spake and said, O king, live forever; let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed. There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made him master of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of dark sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.” (ASV)

“the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house” Who was this queen? Butler postulated that she was the queen mother, the widow of Nebuchadnezzar (p. 194). Others believe she was the wife of Nabonidus, the mother of Belshazzar, which would again make her the queen-mother. Why the queen was not present at the banquet from the beginning is not known. Perhaps, like the Persians (Vashti), it was not proper for the queen to be at such events. **What was it about the words of the king and his lords that prompted her to go into the hall?** Possibly it was the change of the sound, i.e., from joyfulness to wailing in fear. When she came into the hall she expressed respect to the king by saying, **“O king, live for ever,”** which apparently was a common way of addressing monarchs of old.

She said, **“let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed.”** The word **“thoughts”** is an Aramaic masculine noun which *“refers to what a person is thinking about, or to the process itself, what is going through a person’s mind”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1067). One can only imagine what was going through Belshazzar’s mind. Possibly he was imagining all sorts of bad things this omen portended, because it was obvious to the queen, and all in attendance, that the king was terrified (**be-hal’**). She further informed Belshazzar that he did not need to be frustrated [**shen-aw’** (**“changed”**)], implying that there was a solution to his perplexity. **What was the solution?**

“There is a man in thy kingdom” This was not an ordinary man, as she would explain. This man, she said, had **“the spirit of the holy gods,”** and this could be checked in the records of state, by seeing what he had done in the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s. She was of course referring to the events in chapters two and four. Her description of Daniel leaves a vivid picture of the abilities GOD had provided to him.

He was filled with illumination [neh-heere’ neh-hee-roo’ (**“light”**)], i.e., insight into things not discernable to others. She described Daniel as having **“understanding”** (sok-leth-aw-noo’), which indicates insight and wisdom with regard to interpreting dreams. Then she used the word **“wisdom”** to describe Daniel’s abilities. This word (khok-maw’) is interesting because it appears to mirror the Hebrew word hokmah, which is only used to speak of GOD’s wisdom. But then she said his wisdom was **“like”** or similar to **“the wisdom of the gods.”** Thus, she made a clear distinction between Daniel and a god, i.e., she was stating that he was not a god, but had similar wisdom.

The queen next spoke of what Daniel had done in the days of Belshazzar’s father, Nebuchadnezzar. **How could she call Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar’s father when his father, Nabonidus, was not related to Nebuchadnezzar?** There are several possibilities as to how this was true. (1) It could be that it was because they held the same office, i.e., king. (2) Some believe that Nabonidus had adopted Belshazzar, a son of Nebuchadnezzar, to legitimize his claim to the throne. (3) Nabonidus had married one of Nebuchadnezzar’s wives, or married one of his daughters, to which Belshazzar was born. This writer believes number three is the best conclusion to reach regarding

Belshazzar's sonship. At any rate, the queen referred to Nebuchadnezzar as Belshazzar's grandfather. Remember that the word "father" was used in that time to designate any male relative of a person, even an uncle.

Again, she spoke of the wisdom and insight of Daniel as having the ability to interpret the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar. Because he had shown such wisdom, which she attributed to having come from the gods, Nebuchadnezzar had appointed him to be the **"master"** [**rab** ("*captain, chief*" – BDB) of all those who considered themselves as wise men in the kingdom. Baker/Carpenter stated that this word **rab** is "*an Aramaic adjective meaning great, boastful, large*" (p. 1028). Thus, it could refer to Nebuchadnezzar's declaring Daniel greater than the "scholars" of his kingdom, or possibly because he boasted of the greatness of Daniel's abilities.

The queen continued her assessment of Daniel, saying that his spirit is **"excellent"** (**yat-teer'**). This word is an adjective which describes his being outstanding in **"spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts."** The word **"spirit"** probably refers more to attitude than anything else. Knowledge (**man-dah'**) deals with the wisdom and understanding he had. The interpreting of dreams was of course evident in his interactions with Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. Understanding (**sok-leth-aw-noo'**) refers to his insight and intelligence. All of these have been defined earlier in the text. She next said he was excellent at **"shewing hard sentences."** The word **"sentences"** is from **skh-ee-daw'**, which Strong says means "*enigma;*" BDB said it means

“puzzle, riddle.” Daniel was able to explain these enigmas and riddles. She continued by saying that Daniel was capable of **“dissolving of doubts.”** The term **“dissolving”** is from the word **sher-ay**, defined by Strong as *“to (free) separate...unravel;”* and BDB said it is *“to loosen.”* Baker/Carpenter stated it is *“an Aramaic verb meaning to loosen, to dissolve; to solve (problems). It carries a sense of support, to aid, to help”* (p. 1196). The word **“doubts”** comes from the word **ket-ar**, which Strong defined as *“a knot (as tied {up}), i.e., (figuratively) a riddle, also a vertebra,”* and BDB said it means a *“knot, joint, problem...difficulties, doubts.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“an Aramaic masculine noun referring to a difficult problem. It has the sense of a twisted connection (a knot)”* (p. 992). Thus, Daniel had an excellent ability of solving and dissolving complicated problems so that they could be understood (probably easily understood).

The queen finished her glowing recommendation of Daniel by saying that the king's name for this man was **“Belshazzar.”** She ended her recommendation by encouraging Belshazzar to send for Daniel, telling him that he **“will shew the interpretation.”** Note the confidence of the words she spoke with regard to Daniel's ability to reveal the meaning of the handwriting. **From where did this confidence come? How could she be so confident that GOD would reveal the meaning of these words to Daniel?** Past experience was all she had to go by, and that had shown over a period of about seventy years that GOD was with Daniel. It seems that she respected Daniel and his GOD — such is earned. It is not a fluke.

“She could not reveal the words or their meaning, but she could direct the king to the one who could” (Hailey, p. 97).

Dan. 5:13-16 “Then was Daniel brought in before the king. *And* the king spake and said unto Daniel, *Art* thou that Daniel, which *art* of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

“Then was Daniel brought in before the king. The king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, who art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Judah? I have heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in thee. And now the wise men, the enchanters, 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. But I have heard of thee, that thou canst give interpretations, and dissolve doubts; now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.” (ASV)

Belshazzar accepted the queen’s advice, called for Daniel, and Daniel appeared before him. Note the

question the king asked: “**Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry**” (emphasis added)? **What did his question indicate?** That he had no personal knowledge of Daniel and was basically repeating what the queen had told him. **But did he have knowledge of Daniel?** In verse twenty-two, Daniel said the king had knowledge of what happened to Nebuchadnezzar — “**though thou knewest all this.**” Further, he admitted that all of his wise men and counselors could not reveal an interpretation of the writing. Before one gets too critical of these “wise men,” he needs to consider that the message came from GOD in such a way that only Daniel would be able to interpret it. It would have been impossible for anyone other than Daniel to interpret. Also, it was purposefully done in order to glorify GOD before those who had sacrilegiously defiled GOD’s holy things. These events remind one that only GOD knows with certainty what the future holds. So, if man wants to know what the future holds for him, the only place he will find **any answers** is in GOD’s word, the Scriptures. What he will find is that man is heading toward one of two eternal destinies — Heaven or Hell. That is the only thing that any man knows absolutely about the future. Next, the king repeated the offer of riches and position to Daniel, if he could reveal the mystery of this writing.

Consider that man has always reacted the way Belshazzar did. He mocks GOD by relying upon his assumed “great” knowledge, his abilities — until he gets in a bind. This was evident shortly after 9/11, when suddenly church buildings saw a dramatic increase in attendance. Man tends to look at GOD as a **last resort**, when He should be considered as the only One

who can give man the answers he truly needs.

Here is a summary of Belshazzar's speech: (1) He told Daniel that his wise men had failed to divulge the meaning. (2) He basically repeated the queen's words. (3) He repeated the promise he had made for anyone who could reveal the message, because Daniel was not there at the time he made it.

Dan. 5:17 "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."

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

The first thing Daniel stated is that he could not be bought, i.e., the gifts GOD gave him could not be purchased. This very much reminds one of Simon the sorcerer, who tried to buy the ability to give miraculous abilities to others from the apostles (Acts 8:9ff). Daniel told Belshazzar, rather bluntly, *"Keep your gifts. I do not want them."* But he did not stop there and simply walk away. But he continued by saying, **"yet I will read the writing."** Daniel said he did not want any reward from the king...**"yet."** The word **"yet"** is from **ber-am'**, which is defined as *"however"* (Strong); *"nevertheless"* (BDB). GOD had a message for Belshazzar, and Daniel was not going to neglect his duty, as Jonah tried to do. He would reveal the message! In this attitude, Daniel is a great example for GOD's people today. Preachers — **do not preach** for money! Those who preach for money are no different FROM the king's

astrologers, soothsayers, and magicians. Such will compromise and do whatever it takes to gain reward, i.e., their fee for telling people what they want to hear. Daniel put his trust in GOD to take care of him, and GOD will take care of His people today. Do not be like a shepherd who runs away when the wolves come.

“But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep” (John 10:11).

Be like the prophets of old.

“And the king said unto the man of GOD, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. And the man of GOD said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel” (1 Kings 13:7-10).

Tell people the truth they need, no matter what it may personally bring to him! GOD will provide! Those who faithfully proclaim the truth **“shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”** (1 Peter 5:4). Men of God are *“not for sale. They do not work harder, speak better, or give more pleasing messages to their audiences if they are paid a higher price. They do not speak in order to please men but God, and they cannot be convinced to use flattering words by the prizes offered by such materially minded men as Belshazzar”* (King, p. 364).

“But as we were allowed of GOD to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but GOD, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; GOD is witness: Nor of men sought we glory” (1 Thessalonians 2:4-5).

Dan. 5:18-21 “O thou king, the most high GOD gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that He gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the Most High GOD ruled in the kingdom of men, and *that* He appointeth over it whomsoever He will.”

“O thou king, the Most High GOD gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty: and because of the greatness that He gave him, all the peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts', and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; until he knew that the Most High GOD ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that He setteth up over it whomsoever He will.” (ASV)

In this section of Scripture, Daniel rehearsed the events regarding the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar. He declared that the GOD of Heaven, the Most High GOD,

gave Nebuchadnezzar all the power and abilities he possessed. GOD gave him glory and honor which allowed him to exercise *“unhindered, unrestrained power”* (Butler, p. 198). The known world was completely under his control. Whatever the king commanded was done, and no one contradicted his word. He had such power that he could command the death of anyone or commute the death sentence of anyone.

This writer believes there is a possible inference here that, at first, Nebuchadnezzar realized that his abilities were GOD-given. In his pantheistic beliefs, this writer doubts that he understood it was the only GOD who existed, probably attributing these gifts to Marduk, Bel or one of the other gods he worshipped. At some point, he lost whatever humility he had and (through pride) attributed his **“kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour”** all to his own abilities. Lifted up in pride, he said, *“Look at what I did.”* It was then that GOD let him know, just as Daniel said, that he was not the *“get all.”* He was driven from the presence of human company and given the mind of a beast. This continued for an unspecified time (as long as it took) for him to come to his senses. *When did he come to his senses, i.e., his right mind?* It was when **“he knew that the Most High GOD ruled in the kingdom of men, and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will.”** When he realized that GOD is in absolute control, he got his **“kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour”** returned to him by the hand of GOD. It is GOD who appoints nations and their leaders to be in power. He can tear down any nation or ruler that does not fit His grand design.

What was the point of Daniel’s rehearsal of the

events of history surrounding Nebuchadnezzar? They would be used to show that Belshazzar should have learned from the mistakes of another. He should have learned that Nebuchadnezzar, in all of his greatness, was not a “self-made man!”

“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it” (1 Corinthians 4:7)?

Someone once said that man should learn from the mistakes of others, because he does not have enough time to learn all of those lessons by his own mistakes.

How true!

“The important moral of the story is that too many of us tend to fail at learning from the harsh tutorials that others undergo. We see them as they struggle and strive, but too often miss the whole point of their example...What a foolish waste of time”
(King, p. 366)!

Dan. 5:22-23 **“And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of Heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the GOD in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:”**

“And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of Heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine from them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone,

which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the GOD in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.” (ASV)

Verse twenty-two is clearly a stinging rebuke of Belshazzar, because he did not learn from history. His pride had no basis upon which to exist. He had not built any great cities, conquered lands or built monumental buildings. He had **done nothing** except ride the coat tails of those before him and mock GOD. Further, he let his pride lead him to show great disrespect for the GOD of Heaven through the insult of taking His holy things and committing sacrilege in their use.

Verse twenty-three contains a short but definitive assessment of idols — they **“see not, nor hear, nor know.”** Belshazzar is being chastised, because he worshipped all of the gods made of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone, which could not do anything for him. But he denigrated the One Who held his very life in His hands, who could determine his future. He did not glorify the only One Who really mattered, the GOD of Heaven. He mocked GOD, who held his destiny in His hands, whose physical destiny would end that very night.

“Mankind at large have followed the course of Belshazzar — arrogance, materialism, pride and indifference to the lessons of history” (Butler, p. 199).

The sins of Belshazzar are summarized below by King.

“(1) he exalted himself against the Lord of heaven; (2) he committed arrogant sacrilege by having used consecrated vessels from the holy temple in Jerusalem in a profane manner; (3) he worshiped and served idols of man’s making; and, (4) he failed to honor the one true and living God” (King, p. 371).

Dan. 5:24-25 “Then was the part of the hand sent from Him; and this writing was written. And this is

the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.”

“Then was the part of the hand sent from before Him, and this writing was inscribed. And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.” (ASV)

It was a big mistake to use the sacred vessels of the Temple to drink their alcohol, and in their drunkenness to drink toasts to their man-made gods. Because of this great sin, the hand appeared (this writer believes) as soon as they began praising their gods and pretending that they were greater than the only GOD.

Dan. 5:26-28 “This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; GOD hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”

“This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; GOD hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end; TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” (ASV)

The meaning of **“MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN”** is now given.

“MENE” — **men-ay'** — *“an Aramaic verb indicating to number...it has the sense of tested, tried, counted”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 626). **“GOD hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end”**

“TEKEL” — **tek-al'** — *“a verb meaning to weigh. It means literally to find the weight of something, but*

in context, it is used figuratively of the failure of the moral, ethical, and humanness...to meet God's expectations" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1244). **"thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting"**

"PERES" — **per-as'** — *"an Aramaic verb meaning to be divided, to be broken in two. It refers in its participle form to something divided, split-up"* (Baker/Carpenter, p.919). **"thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians"**

The word **"Upharsin,"** as used in verse twenty-five, is the plural of **"Peres,"** used in verse twenty-eight.

Dan. 5:29 "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."

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

One thing can be said about Belshazzar — for all of his faults, he kept his word. He commanded that Daniel be clothed in royal scarlet, a gold chain placed around his neck, and proclaimed him to be the third ruler in the kingdom. Since Daniel had already told the king he did not want any rewards, **Why did Daniel accept them?** According to Coffman, the rules of civility in that time demanded that he accept them (p. 89). He also mentioned that Daniel's acceptance showed that he had meant no disrespect to Belshazzar when he told him to keep his gifts and rewards (v. 17).

Dan. 5:30-31 “In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, *being about threescore and two years old.*”

“In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean King was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.” (ASV)

The very night of the day on which Daniel read the writing on the wall, arrogant and blasphemous Belshazzar died. The text does not say how he died, whether at the hands of the invading army or possibly assassinated by one of his own people.

When studying the information available about the fall of Babylon (October 29, 539 B.C.), perhaps the best source of information is from the Greek historian Herodotus, who visited the city about eighty years after its fall. According to all of the information gathered, Nabonidus fought the Persian army at Opis, near Babylon, and was defeated. Then the combined forces of Cyrus, under the command of a general named Gobryas captured Babylon. According to what is learned from historical sources, the capture of Babylon was accomplished in a very unusual way. Cyrus diverted the Euphrates River, which flowed through the center of Babylon, under the city’s walls. This allowed the soldiers to enter Babylon by walking in the shallow waters of the river bed. To honor the general who led the invading force, Gobryas was made an under king of Babylon by Cyrus. William Shea, in his book Darius the Mede, stated that Cyrus did not take the title of king of Babylon until nine months after its fall, and that Gubaru/Ugbaru took the title of King of Babylon during that time. Since many people of those times had several names, what little historical evidence is

available indicates that this Gobryas is “**Darius the Median**” which is mentioned in verse thirty-one. Further, Daniel stated that Darius was sixty-two years old at the time of this conquest. It should also be noted that many of the scholars have noted that the last verse of this chapter should be the first verse of chapter six, to which this writer tentatively agrees.

“Four prominent references are Herodotus (450 B.C.); Xenophon (360 B.C.); the Annalistic Tablet, translated in 1880; and the Cyrus Cylinder, found in the ruins of Babylon in 1880” (MPR, p. 182).

The last two verses of this chapter mark a very important event, i.e., the fall of the Babylonian empire (v. 30) and the beginning of the Medo-Persian empire (v. 31). The Bible student will remember that both Isaiah (13:1-22) and Jeremiah (50:1 – 51:28) had predicted the fall of Babylon. Daniel, in chapter two, also showed that the Babylonian empire would be replaced by the Medo-Persian empire.

Daniel — Chapter Six

Dan. 6:1-3 “It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. 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.”

“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, who should be throughout the whole kingdom; and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one; that these satraps might give account unto them, and that the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was distinguished above the presidents and the satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.” (ASV)

There are four kings named Darius which are important to a study of the Bible. (1) *Darius the Mede, the son of Ahasuerus, king of the Chaldeans (539 B.C.)*, (2) *Darius, the son of Hystaspes, the founder of the Perso-Arian dynasty (521 B.C.)*, (3) *Darius II was king of Persia during the time of Nehemiah 424 B.C.*, and (4) *Darius III, Codomannus, was king of Persia during its last years at the time of Alexander the Great (336 B.C.)* (Thayer).

“The Nabonidus Chronicle relates that the Persian king Cyrus appointed the general of his army, Gubaru (Gobryas) as the official governor of Babylon as soon as the city was conquered” (King, p. 388).

It is recorded that Darius set one hundred and twenty princes over the kingdom, i.e., the province over which he ruled as an under king to Cyrus — Babylon.

These were known as satraps and (in modern times) would be equivalent to governors. Over the one hundred and twenty princes, he placed three **“presidents”** [**saw-rake**’ – *“an emir”* (Strong); *“chief, overseer”* (BDB)]. The one hundred and twenty princes reported to, and answered to, these three presidents. **What was the purpose of these officials?** To insure that the king suffered no **“damage.”** The word **“damage”** is from **nez-ak**’, which is defined as *“to suffer loss”* (Strong); *“to suffer injury”* (BDB). Baker/Carpenter said this is an Aramaic word which *“indicates, in context, a monetary loss or reduction in the royal treasuries of kings”* (p. 720).

But of all these officials, Darius considered Daniel to be the greatest. He showed himself *“a leader, to show one’s skills and leadership ability”* [**“preferred”** (**nets-akh**’) — Baker/Carpenter, p. 748]. The word **“spirit”** (**roo’-akh**) in this text refers to Daniel’s mind, i.e., his mental abilities. His abilities were **“excellent”** (**yat-teer**), i.e., they were *“preeminent”* (Strong); *“extraordinary”* (BDB); *“superiority”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 488).

“and the king thought to set him over the whole realm” The word **“thought”** is from **ash-eeth**’, *“an Aramaic verb meaning to think about, to plan. It indicates consideration given to something, an intention to do something”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 881). This sets the stage for the events which follow. Darius was considering placing Daniel as the second most powerful man in the kingdom above the other presidents much like Joseph was made second only to Pharaoh. The intention of the king to place Daniel in a position only less powerful than the king seems to have been common knowledge. *“The cream always rises to the*

top.”

Dan. 6:4-5 “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. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his GOD.”

“Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find occasion against Daniel as touching the kingdom; but they could find no occasion nor fault, forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 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.” (ASV)

The presidents and princes sought an “**occasion**,” i.e., a legal cause by which they could accuse him, obviously, of wrong doing, illegal activities. “**occasion**” is from the Aramaic word il-law’, which indicates a basis for charges to be made. But notice where they began looking for something he might have done wrong — “**concerning the kingdom**,” i.e., among the laws of the land. They seem to have thought that they could find some law that he had violated. **What did they find?** No “**occasion**.” No “**fault**.” No matter how hard they dug into his rulings, his judgments, or any action he took — there simply was no corruption (“**fault**” — shekh-ath’) in the life of Daniel. Daniel was no law breaker.

They decided that, since there was nothing in his secular life by which they could charge him, the only way they would find any “corruption” in him, (by which the king would get rid of Daniel for them) would be in

regard to some law in Daniel's religion. Again, they could find nothing for which the king would have dismissed Daniel. *What are they going to do?* The same thing which has been done throughout time — they will make something up with which to convict him.

It should be clear that the basis for their antagonism toward Daniel was jealousy and envy. He had proved so superior to them that they simply could not stand it.

"...jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame" (Song of Solomon, 8:6).

Quite appropriately, what will happen to these envious men is found in Job 5:2.

"For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one."

"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones" (Proverbs 14:30).

Even in his religious practices, or the laws of Daniel's GOD, they could not find anything wrong in Daniel. They quickly realized that the only way they would be able to bring a charge against Daniel was if a new law could be manufactured that contradicted some action of Daniel in his religious observances.

Consider an implication in their thought process regarding Daniel. They were admitting that Daniel would be faithful to his GOD no matter what might face him. They were admitting that the threat of death meant nothing to Daniel when it came to obeying GOD or else. O, that that could be said about every one of GOD's children.

"We ought to obey GOD rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

"The other commissioners sought to make Daniel's integrity before God a crime" (MPR, p. 195).

One might consider that today it is no different when

GOD's people take a stand for what GOD has said about homosexuality, abortion, et cetera. Evil men in government try to make laws legislating punishment for those who stand by GOD's word by calling such "*hate crimes*." This is nothing new for GOD's people in any generation and ought to be expected.

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12).

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:12).

Dan. 6:6-9 "Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree."

"Then these presidents and satraps assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the deputies and the satraps, the counsellors and the governors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a strong interdict, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the interdict, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the interdict." (ASV)

When these schemers came before the king, the first thing they did was lie to him. They said that **“All the presidents...the governors...”** had decided on a law which needed to be enacted which would honor the king. Obviously, all of the presidents had not been a part of this plot (Daniel), nor probably were all of the other officials listed. Most might not even have known about this law until it was published. Note how they were appealing to the king’s vanity. Many ancient rulers thought of themselves as a god. By making a law that disallowed prayer to any deity except Darius, they were (in effect) promoting him as a god. They also understood that once this proposed law was signed, it could not be changed or revoked. O how anxiously with bated breath they must have stood before the king. They also proposed that the penalty for violating this new law was to be death — thrown to the lions. In his vanity, Darius could almost be seen thinking **“What harm would this do, they are just honoring me?”** He would soon see what not consulting with Daniel first before signing such a degree would do. **What would Daniel do?**

Dan. 6:10 “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.”

“And when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house (now his windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem) and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his GOD, as he did aforetime.” (ASV)

When Daniel heard that this proposal had been signed, he went to his house. There is no information given on how long after the document was signed into law that he learned of it. This writer would believe that it was not a long time, probably a few days, depending on where he was at the time. As will be seen at the end of this verse, what he did when he got home was an established habit. His windows were open toward Jerusalem, and he kneeled in prayer to GOD. He did this three times a day, **“as he did aforetime.”** The NKJV translated this phrase *“as was his custom since early days,”* which gives a better understanding here than does the KJV. The important point to be made is that Daniel did not do anything different in his prayer life from what he had been doing. He did not try to provoke a confrontation by doing something he did not normally do. As GOD’s people, one needs to develop good religious habits, so that if a time of conflict comes over what he does, it is not seen as a purposeful act of rebellion. Daniel had always opened his windows toward Jerusalem to pray and had never done these prayers in secret. This is not saying that these were the only times Daniel prayed. It is saying that he had set aside certain times to separate himself from the profane to engage himself in the spiritual realm. It might also be observed that these men had probably been spying on Daniel for some time and had seen him go through this ritual many times. Therefore, they had set up this “ambush” perfectly based on something they knew he would do. They knew the absolute dedication of Daniel to his GOD. Daniel was no coward!

The word **“chamber”** is from an Aramaic feminine noun (**al-leeth’**) meaning *“a second story room”* (Strong); *“roof-room, roof chamber”* (BDB); *“a roof, a*

chamber” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 838). This could have been a room much as one would imagine it today, except the windows may have been latticed (and could be opened) in order to let a breeze blow through. Or it could have been a sort of tower. Whatever form it took, it was a place of solitude, a place to which Daniel often went to meditate and pray.

Note should also be given to the kind of prayer being given by Daniel — a prayer of thanksgiving. One can imagine, given the context, that he was thanking GOD for His protection in the past, for his past deliverance. Thus, he would probably also be asking that, if it was GOD’s will, he would be delivered yet again.

The act of praying toward Jerusalem is believed to have come from 1 Kings 8:46-48, where Solomon prayed for his people and gave them some instructions to follow if they made GOD angry with them.

“If they sin against Thee, (for *there is* no man that sinneth not,) and Thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto Thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; And so return unto Thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto Thee toward their land, which Thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which Thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for Thy name” (emphasis added).

It would seem obvious, as devout as Daniel was, that he knew about the prayer offered by Solomon at the dedication of the Temple.

Dan. 6:11-13 “Then these men assembled, and

found Daniel praying and making supplication before his GOD. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which *is* of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.”

“Then these men assembled together, and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his GOD. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's interdict: Hast thou not signed an interdict, that every man that shall make petition unto any god or man within thirty days, save unto thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, who is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the interdict that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.” (ASV)

These men who had conspired against Daniel gathered themselves, **“assembled”** themselves. The word **“assembled”** comes from the Aramaic verb **reg-ash**, which means *“to gather tumultuously”* (Strong); *“to be in tumult”* (BDB); *“to assemble in a throng, to be turbulent”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1036). The idea is that they gathered in a loud, excited, and emotional throng. **Where had they gathered?** Obviously, by the home of Daniel. They probably became excited by the fact that Daniel had fallen into their trap, just as they expected

he would. They recognized the faithfulness of Daniel to his GOD. They had to be able to observe that he continued his prayer habit to GOD **after** the king signed the law. The word **“supplication”** (**khan-an** — Aramaic verb) is interesting, because it specifies the kind of prayer Daniel prayed at this specific time. It was a prayer for **“favor”** (Strong); **“to ask for mercy”** (Baker/Carpenter, p. 357).

“Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree” One can see them hurrying to the king to tattle on Daniel, and all the while gleefully discussing how they have gotten rid of pious, law-abiding Daniel. They asked, as if they did not know, if Darius had signed the decree which forbade anyone from praying to any god except himself. They also “reminded” the king as to what the punishment was for anyone who disobeyed the king — as if he did not already know. Darius acknowledged signing the law and that their laws said that, once the decree was made, it could not be revoked. Note also that they declared that Daniel was breaking this law three times a day, which suggests that they were keeping a vigil, not just a one-time observation. Consider also that they were not spying on any of the other Jews, only Daniel. This law was aimed only at Daniel by these base men. That does not mean they would not use it against others, at least to keep up pretenses.

“No one else was spied on, no one else was reported as an offender, and no one else was punished for being in violation of the decree” (King, p. 404).

Did they joyfully accuse Daniel of breaking the king's law? Or did they hypocritically act as if they were saddened to tell the king that Daniel was violating the king's law? No doubt on the inside, whether they showed it or not, they were giddy over the news they

bore. Consider that they had not only set a trap for Daniel, but they had also set a trap for their king. This was treason. One cannot help but wonder if his recognition of this influenced his harsh treatment later in the text.

Dan. 6:14 “Then the king, when he heard *these words*, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.”

“Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to rescue him.” (ASV)

One can only imagine the feeling when Darius realized that he had been deceived, conned into making this law. He was immediately “**displeased**” (**be-aysh**’), i.e., **distressed with himself**. *Why would he be distressed with himself?* One would think his displeasure would have been expressed toward those who had deceived him, or toward Daniel for disobeying his law. He was distressed, as the original word expresses, because he had allowed his vanity to cloud his judgment. The reason the law of the Persians could not be broken was so that a ruler would thoroughly think about the consequences of the laws he made.

Now Darius “**set his heart on Daniel to deliver him.**” The Aramaic word for “**set**” is (**soom**) and has the meaning of “*to issue (a decree, to appoint, to place)*” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1113). In the present text, it takes on the meaning of focusing his attention on trying to find a way, a “loophole,” to save Daniel from death. This calls attention to the fact that Darius had a great respect for Daniel, possibly even a strong

friendship with him. Unlike these deceiving counselors, he understood the value of Daniel to himself and to the kingdom.

“He knew he was about to lose his most efficient, trustworthy, and loyal president which did not make him happy” (Butler, p. 232).

So, he tried every way he could think of to rescue Daniel from the lions. Baker/Carpenter state that this word (**shez-ab'**) *“refers consistently to rescuing or delivering a person from an impossible situation”* (p. 1118). One writer thought that Darius might have argued and pleaded with these counselors not to hold him to enactment of Persian law this one time.

So **“he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.”** He **“laboured”** (**shed-ar'**). He *“endeavored”* (Strong); *“struggled”* (BDB); *“to struggle, strive, wrestle”* (King, p. 409). He did not give passing thought on how to rescue Daniel, for this word indicates that he put forth strong efforts to save him. One today might say he racked his brains for a way to save him. **How long did he make this effort?** All day, until **“the going down of the sun.”** Time had run out for his efforts.

Dan. 6:15 “Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.”

“Then these men assembled together unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians, that no interdict nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.” (ASV)

The determination of these men to get rid of Daniel

is on full display. These evil, conniving, worthless counselors come back to the king, basically demanding that he bring Daniel and throw him to the lions. The Aramaic word for **“Know”** is **yed-ah’**, meaning **“to communicate, to inform, to cause to know”** (Baker/Carpenter, p. 421). Darius knew what the law demanded, but they came together to push him to obey it. They insinuated that Darius could not save Daniel. They thought this was the end for Daniel, but they had forgotten something — the GOD of Daniel. The king might not be able to save Daniel, but GOD could and did. Further, there is a sense in which GOD will punish them through His **“minister.”**

“For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of GOD to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of GOD, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Romans 13:3-4, emphasis added).

Dan. 6:16-17 “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. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.”

“Then the king 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. 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 nothing might be changed concerning

Daniel.” (ASV)

One can only imagine, considering verse fourteen, how reluctantly Darius commanded for them to bring Daniel to him. As Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, the schemers would no doubt have been showing signs of joy and victory. They had accomplished their goal — so they thought.

Darius spoke to Daniel. One cannot help but wonder if his words were spoken to Daniel before or after he was thrown into the den. The text seems to indicate that it was after, which might imply that, after the prisoner was placed in the lions’ den, then the lions would be loosed upon him. **What did Darius say to Daniel? “Thy GOD Whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee”** Did Darius say this from wishful thinking? Perhaps. Did Darius say this because he knew of Daniel’s past and especially how his three friends had been rescued from the fiery furnace, and therefore he hoped for a rescue here? Maybe. It appears to this writer from the context, that he knew it was a possibility that Daniel’s GOD would save him; and yet, there was doubt. It is also evident that he did not want to loose Daniel. Note the recognition that Darius had of Daniel’s devotion to his GOD — **“Whom thou servest continually.”** The word **“servest”** is from the Aramaic verb (**pel-akh’**), meaning *“to serve, worship, revere”* (BDB). The word **“continually”** is from the Aramaic feminine noun (**ted-ee-raw’**), meaning *“enduring; constantly”* (Strong); *“perpetuity”* (BDB). It describes something which is done without fail. Daniel always put GOD first in his life, in all of his decisions. No higher compliment could be paid to anyone than this one paid to Daniel by a pagan king.

“a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den” The stone was **“laid”** upon the den, which indicates that the den was below ground. This may have been a special place which was used for the punishment of prisoners and not the place where they were normally kept. **What was the purpose of the signet’s being used?** When they came back to check on Daniel, it would prove that no one had interfered, either to save Daniel or to put him to death in another way. Whatever was going to happen would happen without any human interference. Note that it was not just the king’s signet which was used to seal the entrance, but also those of his lords.

This context brings up an important question: **What should one do if he has made a promise of some kind and later realized, as did Darius, that his promise was actually evil? Should he violate the oath that he made and reap whatever the consequences his action might bring upon him?** What Darius should have done was to violate the law he had signed. **It is never right to do wrong!** It is not a sign of integrity to continue doing what is wrong and harmful to others in order to save face before those with whom he made the promise. Better to shamefacedly admit wrong and change than to stay the course in error.

Dan. 6:18 “Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.”

“Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep fled from him.” (ASV)

After sealing the stone which entombed Daniel with the lions, Darius went back to his palace. He had spent the day trying to find a way to save Daniel from this den of lions, both human and animal. Having failed to find a legal way out, he had been forced to put Daniel in the den, but it is very obvious that he was unhappy that he had allowed himself to have been deceived into this action. One can almost visualize Darius with his head down, slumped shoulders, and grieving face as he walked back to the palace.

Note that Darius did not do anything else that night but fast. Though the word **“fasting”** is usually used to indicate the voluntary giving up of anything for a period of time, here it no doubt speaks of food. Fasting was usually done by the ancients and GOD’s people for the purpose of communing with deity, or with what was perceived by the heathen to be deity. One can only assume that Darius was involved in beseeching his gods to protect Daniel.

It should also be seen that fasting was not something done only while communing with GOD. It was also done in times of great distress. In Nehemiah 9:1, for example, those who returned from the Babylonian captivity **“assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them”** to confess their sins to Almighty GOD. In Esther 4:3, the Jews in Persia mourned with **“fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes”** because of the decree which would allow their enemies to murder them on a designated day. David fasted and prayed for the life of his sick son (2 Sam. 12:16) and only ceased when the child died.

As will be seen in the immediate text, Darius did not just give up eating this night. He did not allow

“instruments of musick” to be brought before him. The phrase **“instruments of musick”** is interesting. It comes from the Aramaic feminine noun **dakh-av-aw’**, which BDB defined as *“diversions, musical instruments, dancing girls, concubines, music.”* Baker/Carpenter defined this word as *“denoting entertainment, musical instruments. It depicts either the lack of musical instruments, entertainers, or some other diversion for rest and relaxation”* (p. 233). The point is that he did not allow anything to divert his attention away from communing with his god(s) on behalf of his beloved and loyal president, Daniel. Further, it is shown that he did this act of fasting and that all it entailed **all night long**. He was so concerned about this matter that he could not sleep. He probably spent the night tossing and turning on his bed.

“He (Darius — RK) was displeased with them (Daniel’s accusers — RK) for their complicated deception of the king, and disappointed with himself on account of his naivete, and at the same time deeply saddened and disturbed for his friend and confidant Daniel” (King, p. 414).

This raises an interesting question: **How did Daniel pass the night?** Surely his night was not like Darius.’ No doubt, Daniel’s sleep was like that of the Psalmist.

“I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety” (Psalm 4:8).

This author likes to think that Daniel and the lions curled up together, and one of them was his pillow.

Daniel 6:19-20 **“Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living GOD, is thy GOD, Whom thou servest continually,**

able to deliver thee from the lions?”

“Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came near unto the den to Daniel, he cried with a lamentable voice; the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living GOD, is thy GOD, Whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?” (ASV)

“Then the king arose very early in the morning”

The phrase **“very early”** is from the Aramaic masculine noun **shef-ar-far**, which Strong defined as *“dawn.”* *“It refers to the time of light breaking forth for a new day”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1191). Considering how Darius spent the night, one can imagine that, as soon as it was proper, he went to check on his valuable and loyal servant. One can almost imagine his running to the lions’ den; hoping against hope that Daniel was alive and well.

“Perhaps we should see the king’s hasty return the next morning...in the perspective of the ancient Babylonian custom that the victim would be pardoned if he were tortured and had not died by the following day” (A. Lacocque quoted by King, p. 416).

Possibly the Persians followed the same practice.

Arriving at the den, Darius **“cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel.”** He shouted with a voice of **ats-ab’** *“pain and grief”* (BDB). Unless one has gone through a serious time where the life of a very close loved one has been endangered, he cannot imagine the grief which was felt by Darius. All he wanted to hear was the voice of Daniel saying *“I am all right.”* He had little to fear on this occasion, for GOD **“stopped the mouths of lions”** (Hebrews 11:33).

Dan. 6:21-23 “Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My GOD hath sent His angel, and

hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his GOD."

"Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My GOD hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad, 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 had trusted in his GOD." (ASV)

Daniel replied to the king's words with a standard reply of the time which conveyed both respect and honor — **"O king, live for ever."** One can only imagine the joy which possessed the king's heart when he heard these words. Daniel continued by honoring GOD and giving all glory to Him for delivering him from the lions' mouths. He proclaimed that it was GOD Who sent the angel to **"shut the lions' mouths."**

"But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:13-14, emphasis added)?

Consider for a moment a list by Coffman of seven functions the Bible sets for angels as they minister to GOD's people.

"(1) in the general sense, as here; (2) to watch over little children (Matthew 18:10); (3) to bear away the souls of the righteous in death (Luke 16:22); (4) to execute the punitive judgments of God upon the incorrigibly wicked (Acts 12:23); (5)

to aid providentially in bringing sinners to hear the gospel of Christ (Acts 8:3); (6) to exercise influence over human rulers and princes as in the case of Persia (Daniel 10:20); and (7) to hold open for ever the 'word of God' until the dispensation is ended (Revelation entire 10th chapter)" (p. 105).

Consider something else about this angel whom GOD sent — he was visible to Daniel. GOD did not leave Daniel to wonder why the lions were not eating him. He knew who had closed the mouths of the lions. Daniel further proclaimed that the lions' had not hurt him, which was proved when the king and those around him examined him. There was not a bruise, not a scratch, on him, neither had his clothes been torn (See Daniel 3:27). One can only imagine the extreme consternation of Daniel's enemies as they looked at him whom they had thought they had gotten rid of standing before them. *Is it possible that a sense of dread might also have begun to settle in on them?* Perhaps they somehow imagined that the lions simply had not been hungry and that was how Daniel had been able to survive.

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7).

Imagine their shock when Daniel proclaimed **why he had survived**, why there was not a mark of harm upon him. He declared that GOD had found no guilt in him! The implication of that is that his accusers were not found innocent before GOD. The word **"innocency"** is from the Aramaic feminine noun **zaw-koo'**, which both Strong and BDB translated as *"purity."* *"It indicates a state of guiltlessness, freedom from guile or blame"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 288). When GOD had examined Daniel, He had found no cunning deceitfulness. Daniel further addressed Darius directly and said he had done the king no **"hurt,"** (**khab-oo-law'**) i.e., He had

committed no crime or wicked deed against Darius. **Did Daniel disobey the law that Darius signed?** Yes! But the implication is that Darius had no right to make such a law. Further, it shows that, when man breaks a man-made law which contradicts GOD's law, he has not committed a crime! The fact is that he had exalted GOD and put Him on the pedestal He deserves — far above man. Notice a subtle implication here. If Daniel had done nothing hurtful or committed no crime against the king, **Would that not also be a proclamation that he had done nothing that would be hurtful to the nation or the people of the king?** Consider how the politicians of the present, and of all ages, tend to act. Daniel understood that his higher position did not excuse him from violating the higher laws of GOD. **Can one violate and be guilty of violating the moral laws of GOD if he does not participate directly in those actions? Is a politician, a leader such as Daniel, guilty when he/she does not participate in the act of abortion but votes for abortion in the legislature? What about the one who votes to put such a person into office? One who votes for the lesser of two evils, Has he not voted for evil?** The lesser of two evils is still evil!

The basis for Daniel's being found guiltless before GOD was that **"he believed in his GOD."** To believe GOD is not simply an intellectual acknowledgment that GOD exists. Belief entails putting one's trust, his absolute trust, in GOD. Such a one will obey GOD in everything He demands, regardless of any consequences the world may impose upon him for his obedience to GOD's laws. Such defined Daniel and should define all who proclaim to believe in Him.

"It should be observed that GOD's response was to one who was faithful both in his responsibility to God and his obligation to the king" (Hailey, p. 119).

Dan. 6:24 “And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.”

“And the king commanded, and they brought those men that had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, before they came to the bottom of the den.” (ASV)

What a turn of events for those who had plotted against Daniel. They thought they had gotten rid of him, but they had actually signed their own death warrants through their actions. GOD had preserved him. Now, according to the practices of that time, the king ordered their execution. Further, following common eastern practice, their whole families were included in their punishment. This was often done to eliminate acts of vengeance.

As the schemers were gathered for the execution, perhaps they might have thought they would escape with their lives because Daniel had. Perhaps they reasoned that maybe Daniel had survived because the lions were not hungry. But the lions had “**mastery**” over them. The word “**mastery**” comes from the Aramaic verb **shel-ate**, which Strong defined “*have power, bear rule, be made ruler.*” BDB defined this word as “*to have power, rule, domineer, rule over.*” The idea is that the lions had power over (they dominated) those thrown into the pit. Further, the text states that, before they hit the floor of the pit, their bones were all broken, i.e., the whole group was torn apart by the lions. They were dead before they hit the ground. Often what

goes around comes around in this life.

“The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken” (Psalm 9:15).

“They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves” (Psalm 57:6).

Someone may ask, **Were the families of these men guilty of plotting and accusing Daniel before Darius? If they were not guilty, Then why were they executed?** Hailey made the following interesting observation.

“This is a graphic and impressive illustration of two Biblical truths: God’s faithfulness in keeping his promise as the avenger of wrongs committed by men (cf. Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19); the far-reaching influence of sin as it affects the family of the guilty party (cf. Achan and his family and possessions, Josh. 7:24). This illustrates the principle of how the innocent may suffer the consequential judgments of the wicked” (p. 120).

Consider that the consequences of one’s action may physically affect his family, so that they suffer because of those decisions (Example: A drunk who drinks up the funds his children need for food.). But that does not condemn them to an eternity without GOD, unless they personally disobey GOD’s laws.

Some have attacked the accuracy of the Bible, alleging that, with the presidents, governors, princes, counselors, captains, and all of their family members, it is absurd to think so many died in the den that day. On the other hand, some try to counter that argument by saying it was only the two presidents and their families who were executed that day. The facts are that it is not known how many accused Daniel before Darius — the number is not given in Scripture! What is known is that however many accused Daniel, that was how many died that day. One needs to be careful in his

assumptions not to go emphatically beyond what is written. Josephus, not an inspired man, said Daniel was not killed because the lions had been well fed before Daniel was thrown to them. He then went on to say that Darius ordered the lions fed and then threw Daniel's accusers to them. Though possible, not inspired. The lengths to which Bible critics will go to discredit the Scriptures is often amazing, and sometimes the lengths to which the defenders of the Bible will go to defend it are as well. Neither are being honest who go to these extremes.

An observation is in order here. Though the law that Darius had signed could not be revoked under Persian law, **Was it not the case that what happened in this account had the effect of voiding the law?** After seeing what had been done to those who accused Daniel, **Who would venture to accuse anyone else of violating that law?**

Dan. 6:25-27 **“Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the GOD of Daniel: for He is the living GOD, and stedfast for ever, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in Heaven and in earth, Who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”**

“Then king Darius wrote unto all the peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, that in all the dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the GOD of Daniel; for He is the living GOD, and stedfast for ever, And His kingdom that which

shall not be destroyed; and His dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in Heaven and in earth, Who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” (ASV)

After Daniel’s deliverance from the lions, Darius wrote a decree and published it for **“all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth.”** The term **“earth”** comes from the Aramaic masculine noun (**ar-ah**). This word could just as easily be rendered “land.” It is widely disputed as to whether or not Darius ruled over the entire Medo-Persian empire or only over what had been the province of Babylon. If the whole empire, then **“earth”** would be preferable; whereas, if he ruled only over the area known as Babylon, then “land” would be preferred.

He declared that, in his kingdom, i.e., the land under his control, men should **“tremble and fear before the GOD of Daniel.”** The word **“tremble”** comes from the Aramaic verb **zoo’-ah**, which is translated by Strong as **“to shake (with fear).”** The word **“fear”** comes from the Aramaic verb **deh-khal**. This word means **“to cause to be afraid”** (BDB). It carries the meaning with it of why one should be afraid, i.e., because of the formidable nature of what is to be feared. Darius listed a second reason to fear GOD — **“He is the living GOD.”** This seems to be a recognition that all other gods, i.e., those manufactured by the minds of men, are not alive. Further, he said that Daniel’s GOD was **“stedfast,”** i.e., He is **“permanent”** (Strong). He is **“secure, enduring”** (BDB). GOD is eternal, everlasting, one Who cannot be replaced or dislodged from His throne. One cannot help but wonder if the things said by Darius in this section were given to him by inspiration.

Note what he said next — **“His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”** Though man often tries to destroy the kingdom of GOD, His kingdom is one which can never be conquered or demolished. It will always exist. Further, **“His dominion shall be even unto the end.”** The word **“dominion”** is from the Aramaic masculine noun **shol-tawn**, which Strong translated as **“empire,”** and BDB defined it as **“sovereignty...realm.”** GOD’s sovereignty, His realm, will last **“unto the end,”** unto the **“conclusion”** (BDB). **Conclusion of what? Was Darius prophesying about the end of time?** If so, his theology here is accurate. He had seen at least one mighty kingdom come to an end, and he probably had knowledge of at least the end of the Assyrian kingdom, as well as the end of the Israelite kingdom. GOD is still GOD after thousands of years, and when time ends, He will still be GOD sitting upon His throne. Great leaders like Alexander and Caesar have come and gone, but GOD does not go anywhere — He will always be on His throne.

Darius ended this decree by mentioning the miracles and signs which were done by GOD in saving Daniel from destruction. As a powerful king, he had tried everything to save him — but he could not. It should be noted that Darius was acknowledging that only GOD could save man from the wicked plots and schemes of evil men. Likewise, only GOD can save man from the wicked plots and schemes of the Devil. One should be thankful to the ever living and faithful GOD Who has provided him with this salvation.

One of the many things which should be considered about this whole affair is the behavior of Daniel’s accusers. On the surface, it appeared that their actions were aimed only at hurting Daniel (killing him). But If

they had been successful in ending his life, they would have been hurting many others. They would have hurt Darius by taking his best, most capable and loyal advisor from him, and they would have hurt the citizens of the kingdom on the same basis. GOD's counsel is always beneficial to man, whether he be kings or serf.

Dan. 6:28 "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

"So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." (ASV)

Daniel's life is an amazing acknowledgment of the power and might of GOD working through those who put their total trust in Him. He served as the chief advisor to the most powerful kings of his time for approximately seventy years. The text says he **"prospered"** during the reigns of Darius and Cyrus, and no doubt this was also true during the reigns of the Babylonian kings which he served. The word **"prospered"** comes from the Aramaic verb **tseI-akh'**, which Strong defined as *"to advance."* BDB said this word refers to showing prosperity, *"be prosperous, have success, be successful."* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *"to prosper, to succeed"* (p. 951). No doubt when one was successful in either the Babylonian or Persian empires, he was richly rewarded with status and wealth.

There has been much discussion among scholars as to whether or not Darius and Cyrus were two names for the same person or separate entities.

"Daniel 6:28 refers to two distinct rulers, with Darius the Mede being subordinate to and contemporary with Cyrus the Great" (King, p. 430).