

Daniel

Introduction

Historical Background

Before we delve into the book of Daniel we must see the historical context of the time that Daniel was written. The ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been taken into captivity around 772 B.C. leaving only the two Southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

Judah, which also included the tribe of Benjamin, was taken into captivity by the Chaldean King Nebuchadnezzar. The Chaldeans refers to the people of a small providence in a southern territory of Babylonia. Later King Nebuchadnezzar II formed a new Babylonian Empire that included nearly all of Babylonia.

King Nebuchadnezzar II did not completely destroy Judah but did conquer it. He also looted the Temple and took the healthiest of the Hebrews back to Babylonia to become slaves in his kingdom. Judah became a vassal of Babylonia and was allowed to keep its king. At this first deportation Daniel was taken into captivity. Eight years later in 598 B. C. there was a second deportation at the time that the Prophet Ezekiel was the prophet of the people of Judah. The third deportation was in 588 B. C. at which time Judah was completely destroyed.

This event in Judah's history was prophesized by the Prophet Jeremiah, ***"The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, these twenty-three years the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened. 'And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear, saying, 'Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds, and dwell on the land which the LORD has given to you and your forefathers forever and ever; and do not go after other gods to serve them and to worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands, and I will do you no harm.' 'Yet you have not listened to Me,' declares the LORD, 'in order that you might provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm. 'Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Because you have not obeyed My words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares the LORD, 'and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round***

about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. Moreover, I will take from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (Jeremiah 25:1-11)

This event was also recorded in the second Book of Chronicles. ***“Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations; and they defiled the house of the LORD which He had sanctified in Jerusalem. The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand. All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon. Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles. Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept Sabbath until seventy years were complete.”*** (2 Chronicles 36:14-21)

In this passage of Scripture we see three reasons for the judgement of God to fall on the people of Judah. They continued to worship false gods and were given to the pagan custom of idolatry. Those who were sent by God to be His messengers were abused and mocked by the people. The people also failed to give the land rest in the Sabbatical year. I might add a note to be aware of as a warning to the societies of the world community. At every level of the societies of the world there is guilt of the same disobedience to God's Word today. We are a people who worship false gods of our own making including gods created in our depraved fantasy. Those whom God has raised up to preach the Word of God are being persecuted even to the point of death. There is a great failure to have responsibility in our commission to have dominion over the earth.

The charge of Idolatry

There is only one God. The God who is also the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The God who created the crown of His creation mankind. Anything that man has made

that become an object of his worship is idolatry. The very first of the Ten Commandments is **“You shall have no other gods before Me.”** (Exodus 20:3) Israel came into being by the divine declaration of God through the seed of Abraham. **“And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.”** (Genesis 12:2) It was through the seed of Abraham that God’s chosen people would come. It was through the seed of Abraham that the Messiah would come. And it was through His Chosen people that God would reveal Himself to the world. The Christian world today has the promise of eternal life by being grafted into the Jewish nation. **“For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?”** (Romans 11:24)

The Jewish nation had more knowledge of God than any other people yet they would not obey His law. Instead of worshiping God who had given them so much they chose to worship objects of the creation rather than the Creator. Their carnal hearts were prone to sin as the Apostle Paul writes, **“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”** (Romans 1:21-23)

The abuse of God’s Messengers and the mocking of God and His Word

Let us realize that not all of the Hebrews were in disobedience to God. As throughout their long history there were always those who remained faithful to the Lord God. As we read recorded in the Book of Kings. **“Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”** (1 Kings 19:18) Though at this time as always the true believers and the faithful were in the minority. And, as always in this time and the present today the faithful were oppressed and persecuted by those who rejected the true God and worshiped in their own false religions.

The prophets of God taught the faithful the truths of God openly without shame and this offended the leaders of the false religions within the lands that God had given them. The unrighteous despised the Word of God because it exposed the falseness of their own twisted beliefs. As it is today the sinful hate the Word of God because it reveals their own wickedness before God and man. Because of this opposition to the truth they treated the messengers and teachers of God shamefully which manifested their rejection of God’s truths. The false teachers displayed no fear of God and put the messengers of God in prison and even murdered many of the prophets that had been sent by God to warn them of their evil ways.

We read of what the Word of God said about their mistreatments in the Bible Hall of Faith. **“Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were**

tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mocking's and scourging's, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect." (Hebrews 11:35-40)

It is clear that throughout the history of the world that the unrighteous have always held the righteous in disregard. Many have placed the blame for the way that God's people have been treated on the people of God themselves. Consider that argument for a moment. Who is it that chooses the saints of God's Kingdom? Let us look to the words of Jesus. **"When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. "A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."** (John 10:4-5) The faithful who are in the sheepfold of God know when He speaks to them and they also know who speaks for God. Because they know the voice of God and His messengers and they do not rebel against them. Those of the world do not know the voice of God and will hate His teachings. They will also rebel against the messengers that have come from God. Satan has so twisted the truth of God that in the days ahead the saints of God will be murdered for their faith in the name of religion. **"They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God."** (John 16:2) This is a prophecy but it has also been true throughout the ages.

They would not observe the Sabbatical Years.

In Genesis Chapter 1 we read that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and on the seventh day He rested. Man was created to work six days and on the seventh day he is to rest and keep the day holy unto the Lord. This principle also applies to all the creation of God. This is a part of man's responsibility to have dominion over the earth. In the Book of Leviticus God instructed man that the seventh year was to be a Sabbatical year. **"The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a Sabbath to the LORD. 'Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, but during the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath rest, a Sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. 'Your harvests after growth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year. 'All of you shall have the Sabbath products of the land**

for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. 'Even your cattle and the animals that are in your land shall have all its crops to eat.' (Leviticus 25:1-7) The Lord God went on further to say that after the seventh Sabbatical year there was to be a year of “Jubilee” in which the land would be returned to its original owner and the slaves were to be returned to their families. God promised that in the sixth year He would bless them abundantly in the harvest of their land. ***“Then I will so order My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the crop for three years. 'When you are sowing the eighth year, you can still eat old things from the crop, eating the old until the ninth year when its crop comes in.’”*** (Leviticus 25:21-22)

The Nation of Israel never kept this command from God’s Word. In four hundred and ninety years all went well for Israel without keeping the Sabbatical law for the land. From their failure to obey God’s command they had suffered no consequence. This was not the way the land was to be mistreated but it also showed a lack of faith in the promises of God that He would bless them abundantly. Now the day of reckoning had come for Israel as they were carried off to Babylon for seventy years. Dividing 490 years by 7 is 70. They were held in captivity 70 years by the Babylonians and their land rested. The debt to the land God had given them was paid. ***“To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept Sabbath until seventy years were complete.”*** (Jeremiah 36:21)

If the Israelite nation had listened to the prophets, the messengers that God had sent to them and repented God would have been faithful to have forgiven them. But this they did not do. The Lord God is a loving and merciful Lord and was patient towards His Chosen people in that He waited 490 years for them to repent. God wanted His people to live by faith in His promises. ***“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”*** (Hebrews 11:6) They like so many trusted in their own way and missed the blessing of an Almighty loving God. In the end they reaped what they had sown by their sin against God’s Word. From the human standpoint it seems foolish to waive the productivity of the land for a year. But God wanted His people to live by faith in Him. For six years they did not trust God openly but in the seventh year they would have had to. Their failure to trust God in keeping the Sabbatical year proved that they did not live in faith at any time.

Author & Date

It is generally accepted that Daniel is the Author of this book. There are several passages that identify Daniel as the author. (8:15,27; 10:2,7; 12:4-5) Daniel’s name means “God is my Judge.” From the seventh chapter on Daniel writes in the first person and is seen as an autobiographical narrative. As a note of interest there are three other Daniels in the Old Testament Scriptures. (1 Chronicles 3:1; Ezra 8:2; Nehemiah 10:6) At an early age

about 15 years, Daniel was taken from his home and family in Judah and deported to Babylon. Many of the best of the Jewish people were taken to Babylon to be brainwashed into their culture. The purpose was so these converted Jewish lads could assist in the management of previously deported Hebrews. Daniel lived a long life of 85 years and most of it was in Babylonian captivity. Daniel was an exceptional person of character and exalted God through his character and service. Daniel achieved the role of a statesman and served as a confidante to kings by royal appointment. Daniel was also a Prophet for the Lord God and served Him speaking His word in two world empires. That of the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians. Jesus Christ confirmed Daniel as the author of this book in the Gospel of Matthew. (Matthew 24:15)

It is probable that the Book of Daniel was written sometime after 536 B.C. but before 530 B.C. The book is a far reaching prophecy of the Gentile world history. The book is often considered as the Book of Revelation of the Old Testament. Daniel's contemporaries were the Prophets Ezekiel, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Zephaniah.

Nebuchadnezzar 2

King Nebuchadnezzar 2 reigned over Babylon from 607 to 562 BC. He extended and secured the empire of his father, Nabopolassar. (626-605 BC) beyond the scripture record, many ancient Babylonian documents report Nebuchadnezzar's accomplishments.

In 626 BC, Babylon, like Judah, was under the domination of Assyria, but in that year Nabopolassar began a revolt that would change the world. In 612 BC, the Babylonians captured Nineveh, Assyria's capital, and again defeated the Assyrians at Haran in 609 BC. By the time of this battle, Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar played a leading role in the army. In 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar defeated the remnant of the Assyrians army at Carchemish; this victory also pushed the Egyptians back within their borders. In the same year, Nabopolassar dies and his son became king.

Following his victory at Carchemish in 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Syria and surrounding areas, including Judah. In that year Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem for the first time. (Daniel 1:1-2 2 Kings 24:1) He took away a number of the Temple vessels and some of the leading young citizens of Judah, including Daniel and his three friends. Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem again in 597 BC. (2 Kings 24:10-17) He later besieged Jerusalem in 588 BC and destroyed the city and Temple in 586 BC, exiling most of the remaining people. (2 Kings 25:1-21)

The most detailed and interesting description of Nebuchadnezzar is found in Daniel. He brought Daniel and his friends to Babylon in order to educate them in the ways of Babylon, but God used Daniel to teach Nebuchadnezzar about himself. Nebuchadnezzar recognized the Lord's great power and wisdom, though he probably never worshiped the true God exclusively. After being humbled for his great pride, (Daniel 4:28-33) Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the Lord's exclusive sovereignty and power. (Daniel 4:34-37)

Chapter 1

Verse 1

The year of King Nebuchadnezzar came to besiege Jerusalem was 605 B. C. during the reign of King Jehoiakim who was stated here as in his third year of reign. This is a conflict with what we learned in 2 Kings 25:27 which implies that he was in his third year as king. The conflict is in the way the Babylonians and the Hebrews count the years of a king's reign. King Jehoiakim was actually in his fourth year as king. (Jeremiah 25:1) Another conflict seems to be that Nebuchadnezzar was not the King of Babylon at the time of the siege. His father Nabopolassar was the King. But King Nabopolassar died later in that same year and according to the dating of the Babylonians Nebuchadnezzar was named as the king at this time. Another possibility is that it was read back so in the accounts we would know who the Scriptures were talking about

Another thing to note is that King Nebuchadnezzar only besieged the City of Jerusalem as the defenses were too strong to be taken. To conquer Jerusalem would have taken a long time and King Nebuchadnezzar's siege was interrupted by the death of his father. This would cause King Nebuchadnezzar to return to Babylon to establish his position as king. Jerusalem was never taken at the time and terms were agreed to.

Verse 2

The siege of Jerusalem was sufficient enough to force Jehoiakim to submit to Nebuchadnezzar. In turn Nebuchadnezzar took part of the temple treasures back to Babylon with him along with the best of some of the young men. The custom of invading kings was to take the articles of the defeated god back to glorify their god. The supreme god of the Babylonians was Marduk, as well the Babylonians had many other gods.

We must point out here that King Nebuchadnezzar did not defeat the God of the Israelites by sacking His holy city. The Lord God handed over the city of Jerusalem to King Nebuchadnezzar according to His plan as judgment for the wickedness of the Israelite people. The Lord God was not defeated by the god of Babylon Marduk. King Nebuchadnezzar was as much a subject of God as King Jehoiakim.

The vessels of the Temple were taken to Babylon and placed in the treasury which was probably the temple of Marduk. This would be a thankfulness offering to the god Marduk. These vessels remained in Babylonian custody until the 70 year captivity was ended by the Medo-Persians.

Verses 3-4

These chosen captives taken from Jerusalem were considered treaty hostages and not as defeated foes of the Babylonian kingdom. For this reason they were treated favorably by the Babylonian court. These young men were taken from the nobility who were educated. They were the people that the Babylonians felt would fit well within the circles of the court. The Babylonian's were looking for the best of the best to invest in them according to how they wanted them to turn out. They would be the ones who possessed wisdom and knowledge. They were the ones who had the best education of the day. By

establishing these young men into the court Nebuchadnezzar hoped to seal the treaty with Israel. This whole exercise was prophesied by the Prophet Isaiah. (Isaiah 39:7)

In this text the meaning of the name Ashpenaz is not known but in non-biblical texts it carries the meaning of “eunuchs.” It has a greater meaning as we also see its usage in Genesis as used in describing the married Potiphar. (Genesis 39:1-6) Here it is indicated as a palace servant or chief men and officers and nobles of the palace. This group would also include eunuchs who were in charge of the harems within the court. It is unlikely that any of these young men were made into eunuchs as they were to be without blemish as the king would want perfect young men in his court. In this day young men the ages of 14 or 15 were considered to be adults. They were to be of the seed of royal offspring and nobility which would have been included in the ones taken captive. This group would have certainly been introduced to peers of the same stature from other nations as well.

These best of the best were to be further education in the Babylonian culture. They were to learn the language of the Chaldeans and the ancient language of Akkadian, taught the wisdom of Babylon the lore of magicians, astrologers, and the great wisdom of the near east. It would have been an educational opportunity equal to that of Moses in the Egyptian court.

Verse 5

The best of the best of Israel was also to receive the best. Every advantage was to be given unto them in food and drink. This was also a time of probation and some would no doubt not make the cut to be received into the court of the king. This training and conversion process was to last for three years. Upon graduation they would be well equipped to serve in the courts of the king.

Verses 6-7

We now focus on four of the young men chosen from the captives of Jerusalem. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. A name change was necessary to indoctrinate the men into the Babylonian culture and to give them acceptable names to serve in the court. It was also the customs of civilizations to name children in reference to the god they worshiped. Daniel meant, “God is my Judge,” Hananiah meant “Yahweh has been gracious, Mishael meant “Who is God,” and Azariah meant “Yahweh has helped.”

Daniel’s name was changed to Belshazzar which means “Bel protect the King.” Bel was a Babylonian god. Hananiah’s name was changed to Shadrach which means “command of Aku” another Babylonian god. Mishael had his name changed to Meshach which means “who is what Aku is.” And Azariah’s name was changed to Abednego and means “servant of Nebo,” a god of vegetation.

The thought may have been that the Babylonians had taken these men from the God of Israel and given them to the gods of Babylon. The Babylonians would soon learn that this was delusional thinking on their part.

Verse 8

As a young Jewish man all of these changes in Daniel's life must have had a shock upon him. Taken from his home to a foreign land and now made to resect gods that was not the God of his people. Daniel was determined not to be unfaithful to his God. (Exodus 34:14-15) There was no knowing how the meat was slaughtered and some of it may have been meat that was unclean by Jewish standards such as pork. (Leviticus 11) The Law of Moses had very strict dietarian standards and this would have been more than an Israelite could in good conscience take. Daniel went further than just refusing the meat but also refused the wine. Perhaps he could not live a life in the luxury of the king's court while his fellow countrymen were going through very hard times in captivity. (2 Samuel 11:11) The greater trouble for Daniel was that the king's food was openly dedicated to the false gods of Babylon. Daniel may have felt that if he partook of the king's food he would be submitting to their gods. This would have been a struggle for Daniel to rebel against his new master, as he would not understand his rejection of their gods. Yet Daniel wanted to be faithful to his God and would not bow down to idol worship. His belief would have been to do so would invoke the wrath of God.

The greater lesson for us is that if we are not faithful in the little things then neither will we be faithful in the greater things. ***“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.”*** (Luke 16:10)

Verse 9

God honored Daniel's commitment to keep the law. God caused Daniel's master to have favor with him and allowed him to remain on his strict Jewish diet.

Verse 10

This was a problem for the master of Daniel. If he defiled the order of the king he could lose his head. If Daniel remained on the Jewish diet and looked poorly in comparison to the others Jewish young men the king would wonder why this was so. He believed like many of us today that we become that which we eat. A poor diet will have its adverse effect. Most likely the master referred Daniel to the steward in charge of the meals that Daniel was to be given. The steward would be much more experienced in dealing with such troubles of diet.

Verses 11-13

When Daniel went before the steward he also asked that his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah also be allowed to eat the food of their culture. Daniel made a wise bargain with the steward that let them eat only vegetables and water for ten days and then compare them to the others. After this they would abide with the decision of the steward. The diet Daniel proposed was not that of a vegetarian but a diet that would not contain anything that was unclean to the Jewish people or dedicated to the Babylonian gods. The steward agreed to the proposal as he would be able to watch over them and stop the experiment at any time. Perhaps he had a sympathetic heart as well.

Verses 14-15

The steward did as Daniel asked and as result of the ten day test they had a better overall appearance than those who ate the king’s food. They were fresher in appearance than the others. In their observance of God’s law they had demonstrated His truth. Given the effects of our own overindulgence we can appreciate how this might be.

Verse 16

The steward seeing the effects of the diet that the request of Daniel and his friends the steward was willing to continue as they had requested and refrained giving them the king’s food and wine. He provided them with only the vegetables and water.

Verse 17

The four young men’s complexions were clear and their minds were sharp as well, and the four continued to grow in wisdom and knowledge. Their minds were alert and they learned their lessons well. They also grew in the knowledge of God, as this is the true wisdom that comes from God. Daniel was especially blessed by God and had the special gift of interpretation of visions and dreams. God was preparing Daniel for his career in the service of his God.

This was a time when men obtained high position by interpreting visions and dreams. For some it was a craft much like today in which they would report what they thought was pleasing to the dreamer. Most could not tell the truth or falsehood of men’s dreams and vision. King Nebuchadnezzar was aware that most were not able to truly discern the meaning of a dream. God had enabled Daniel to tell the truth from the fiction and the ability to discern the meaning of a dream or vision.

Verses 18-20

After the training period had come to an end Daniel and his friends came before King Nebuchadnezzar. The king’s primary concern was not in their appearance but what they had learned. Their performance before the king was impressive as he listened to their knowledge and wisdom. The king declared that they were ten times better that he had expected. This was a good report although an exaggeration, which was common in that day. King Nebuchadnezzar felt them to be better than his own magicians and enchanters. Also they answered his questions with what was most important with good interpretation in matters of the court.

From this time forward by the appointment of King Nebuchadnezzar Daniel had standing in the Babylonian court until its overthrow by the Medo-Persians under the hand of Cyrus. In all Daniel served the Babylonian court for approximately 66 years. During most of that time Daniel was respected by the Babylonian kings that he served.

Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Kingdom
Head of Gold	Lion	Babylon
Chest and Arms of Silver	Bear	Media-Persian
Belly and Thighs of Bronze	Leopard	Greece
Legs of Iron	Forth Beast	Rome

The four world empires of Chapter 2 and 7 have traditionally been identified as shown.

Four World Empires

Two panoramic visions in Daniel present God's sovereignty over history. Nebuchadnezzar had the first vision in Chapter 2, and Daniel had another like it in Chapter 7. In each of these visions, four of the kingdoms of the world are presented.

There have always been questions about the identities of the four empires, but historically there has also been consensus. Hippolytus (AD 170-236), one of the early Church fathers, identified the four kingdoms as Babylonia, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The Church father and historian Eusebius of Caesarea (AD 260-340) initially identified the first kingdom as Assyria, which once also controlled Babylon, but he later agreed with Hippolytus, as did most of the Church fathers. Later, Jerome and Augustine accepted this same understanding, and conservative interpreters largely still agree.

In antiquity and in our era, some interpreters have argued that Greece is the fourth empire, and they treat the Medes as a separate kingdom. This interpretation is due in part to denying the possibility of prediction and assuming that the book was written about 164 BC, when the Roman Empire had not yet arisen. But Media and Persia are usually regarded as one empire, and the Median kingdom had been mostly assimilated by the Persians by the time Cyrus 2 conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

Rome is then seen as the fourth kingdom, but the bestial, demonic, and inhumane characteristics of the vision extend beyond the historical Rome. The visions represent a panorama of the whole world and its governments; all will be destroyed and replaced by the Kingdom of God, the "rock cut from the mountain". (Daniel 2:34) The Metals of the statue become progressively less valuable in Chapter 2, while the animal imagery of Chapter 7 become more menacingly fierce, violent, and inhumane. These features represent a deterioration of human civilization across the centuries, even as the Kingdom of God grows in power and stature. (Daniel 2:35)

Chapter 2

Verse 1

The dreams that Nebuchadnezzar had were intense dreams. As dreams from God must be. The dreams disturbed the king to the point that he could not sleep. They gave him a sense of uneasiness and bothered him throughout his days. Not knowing what they meant but also believing that there was a significant meaning behind them the king sought for understanding. He called for the wise men, the magicians and sooth Sayers in his court. He was not wanting to hear just idle talk but wanted a clear and accurate meaning and interpretation of the dreams. Experience of the past had revealed to the king that the magicians had not always been correct or truthful in their interpretations. In the ancient world the dreams of men were of great importance and they placed great credence upon them.

The use of the word dreams in the text probably means that the king had a succession of dreams rather than just a dream. It may be that he had slipped into and out of the dreams as he struggled for sleep during the night. It could also so mean that the king kept having the same dream for mutable times as the singular word dream is later in the text.

These dreams occurred in the second year of King Nebuchadnezzar and may seem in conflict with the three year training period of Daniel and his friends. As we learned before that the accession year was not counted which by the way we would count the king's reign it would have been in the third year. Reviewing the process we learned that the year that he became king would have been counted as a full year even though it was not. This being the case Daniel and his friends would have past their graduation time.

Verse 2

King Nebuchadnezzar called upon all of the magicians and enchanters, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans. The Chaldeans may have been the natives of Chaldea or a class of Astrologers. These were the wise men of the king's court from who he would seek the answer to the meaning of his dreams. Daniel and his friends were omitted from this group because they were new and may have not fully trusted or expected to be of the wisdom necessary to perform the needed task.

These wise men were not aware of the request that the king would make upon them. The king, most likely, was wanting them to all come to the same interpretation and be in agreement together on the dreams meaning. The wise men would have been confident that they could find the meaning of the king's dreams, as they had in their possession past records in their books of dreams they had relied on before.

The magicians of the court were the ones who could see the future by interpreting it through ritual means. Enchanters were able to divine things by their ability to communicate with the dead. Sorcerers practiced sorcery by casting spells and used chants and spells. The Chaldeans' were of the priestly cast in society who studied the heavens in order to determine the future. Some may laugh at this as a way of means of understanding dreams or projecting the future. But today in our society many of these same type of people make a living practicing these methods.

King Nebuchadnezzar was not a man's fool, he was a wise king of a great empire. The Babylonian empire of that day was the super power of the world. Out of a need to understand his dreams he had called the wise of his court but his confidence in them was not great.

Verses 3-4

This was nothing new to the wise men of the court as they had all been there before the king. To them they were faced with the king having a dream that he wanted to know the meaning of. They asked the king to tell them what the dream was and then they would research the answer. The use of the word Chaldeans' probably means the whole body of the wise men.

King Nebuchadnezzar had also been in this position before and had seen these men interpret dreams for his father. The king was somewhat less than impressed with their abilities. The king wanted no possibility of misunderstanding, as may have been seen in the past, and wanted to be sure that their answer was absolutely correct.

We do not know the discussions that the king and the wise men had but in the end the king laid down the ground work for what they would do. King Nebuchadnezzar demanded that they would tell him what the dream was and then tell him what it meant. If the wise men truly were as they claimed to be they would know his dream without him telling them. If they knew the dream, then they could also know the interpretation.

Verses 5-6

King Nebuchadnezzar knew the dream that he had and did not need to hear it repeated by his wise men. The king also believed that if they were as they say they should know his dream. Here the king emphasizes that they would tell him his dream and then they would tell him its meaning. King Nebuchadnezzar was upset, the dreams had disturbed him greatly, and he desired to know the correct meaning of the dream. There may have been a fear that he thought that the meaning of the dream could be the end of his reign. The king also had a mistrust of the wise men from previous experiences. To make the point at how serious this was the king laid down the rule of what the wise men would do and the rewards or the punishment.

If the wise men could not tell him what the dream was and could not tell him what the dream meant then he would destroy them and their houses. If they were wise men who had special powers through the gods, then they should with no problem fulfill his commands. If the wise men fulfilled their duty, then they would receive untold riches and honor. This is the power of a despot who held the life and death of his subjects in his hands.

Verse 7

The wise men no doubt were terrified and possibly at a loss for words. Again they repeated that if the king would tell them the dreams they would interpret them. They must have felt the weight of the intense fury of the king. They may have even wished that they were in the company of the king's father that they might not be standing before a furious king now with their hearts pounding in their chests.

The king was firm in his decision and recognized that the wise men were now employing tactics to delay time. Now the king repeated that there was only one law for them if they did not do as he commanded. Their methods of deception to delay the king's anger and in hope that something would turn up giving them a solution. King Nebuchadnezzar pressed that if they did not tell him what he needed to know he would fulfill his promise to them. The king demanded that the wise men tell him his dream and then he would have confidence in them that they could interpret it. The king's reasoning was that if god could tell them his dream then that god would also tell them its interpretation. If the wise men could not do this, then their fate in the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar was doomed.

Verses 10-11

With the wise men's lives in the balance their reply was simple in defense. None had the power to provide the king with the answer to his request. That no such request had ever before been placed before the wise men of his court. The king was asking them to do something that only a god could do.

This was an admission by the wise men that they were counterfeits. The wise men had always claimed that they could discern the will of the gods. Now they were having to admit before the king of Babylon that they were not able to hear the gods speak. With this being said the wise of Babylon were unable to give answer to the king's request.

Verse 12

In the mind of King Nebuchadnezzar the wise men had proven themselves to be charlatans. The king became so infuriated that he commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. This was an unreasonable behavior even for a despot of a king in those times. It is speculative to say that this action may have been an indication of the manic-depressive disease that would afflict the king as we will see in Daniel chapter four.

The king's command went forth to his officers that all the wise men of Babylon were to be executed. We do not know if any were able to escape the execution. There would have been little time before the soldiers were made ready to carry out the order of the king. Daniel and his friends would not have been able to escape. Even as they were not yet qualified to be present in the court still they would have been effected by the king's decree.

Verse 14

Only a limited amount of soldiers were charged to carry out the king's decree under the Captain of the king's own guard, Arioch. As the executions began it was a slow process which allowed time for some to escape and Daniel to approach Arioch. Daniel came to him showing sound wisdom and sought to delay Arioch in carrying out his duty.

Verses 15-16

It is presumed that as Arioch carried out the order he would have to read the decree before each execution. If so, this gave time to Daniel to question Arioch what was the purpose for such an order. Upon hearing the reasoning behind the decree Daniel asked the Captain to take him to the king. Before the king Daniel asked for time so that he could find the answer to the king's dream. Because of Daniel's humility and prudence, and that King Nebuchadnezzar truly wanted to know the meaning of his dreams, he granted time to Daniel.

Verses 17-18

Daniel went to his friends and informed them of what was happening. He asked them that they would join him in prayer to God that the secret of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream might be revealed to him.

We must assume that Daniel and his friends lived together in an official dwelling. This would be why Arioch would have known where to find them. Together they approached

God in a thankful manner and desiring His mercies. We should always enter into the courts of the Lord God with praise and thanksgiving. (Psalm 100:4) They acknowledged the Lord that only He could help them in this crisis. It was their desire to continue to serve God and this was why they were asking for His deliverance in this time of trial.

Verses 19-22

God answered their prayer and in the night Daniel was given a vision of the meaning of the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. Surely it had a profound effect upon Daniel and he gave unto the Lord a prayer of praise.

“Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever.” Compare this to Psalm 41:13 and Nehemiah 9:5. The vision that God revealed unto Daniel was a glimpse into the future and this also made Daniel aware that he was serving an everlasting God.

Daniel also recognized the wisdom and might of God that here was the God that controlled the times and the events of history. Here was the God that lifted up the kings and took them down by His own good pleasure. That the God he served not only created the heavens and the earth but also ruled over them. That his God controlled the people of the earth and that He was the God who knew the secret things. That the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob could see through the darkness of the future and all was light unto Him. Daniel was not prideful of the vision that God had given unto him. He knew that God gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who seek understanding. Daniel realized that the wisdom of man came from God and man understands because God reveals it to him. That man himself has no reason to believe that his knowledge and wisdom came from himself.

Verse 23

Daniel who was lost in the awesomeness of God now acknowledges the goodness of God and expresses his gratitude with praise. By Daniel’s praise of God first he shows the true priority of his life, which is God. In thankfulness Daniel acknowledges what God had revealed unto him and his friends. Daniel knew that it was not of himself but of God that the answer to the king’s dream had come to him.

He knew that he had not done it alone. We do well to remember that whatever we achieve we owe equally to the prayers and actions of others. Daniel also knew that the God of Israel had looked down upon one of His covenant children and revealed what also had reference to the promise given unto the fathers. Even in the foreign land of Babylon God, the God of Israel was in action for His people.

Verse 24

Daniel went back to the Captain of the guard Arioch to whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon. Arioch was most likely a good man and had no heart to slaughter the wise men of Babylon. Daniel pleaded before him that there was no need to kill the wise men. That if the Captain would take him to the king he would fulfill the request of the king to have an interpretation of his dream.

Verse 25

Wishing to bring some glory upon himself Arioch went to the king and said that he had found one who could give the king answer to his dream. Arioch stated that “I have found the man.” Arioch had not forgotten that Daniel had already spoken to the king

He knew that the king had already spoken to Daniel but he did not want it forgotten who had brought him to him. He knew that if Daniel succeeded, gratitude would be shown all round, and that the king would not forget who had been responsible for discovering him.

Arioch carried out his duty of identifying who Daniel was. This would be important as the king would want to know to whom he was speaking with.

Verse 26

King Nebuchadnezzar came right to the point of their meeting as he wanted no more excuses. The king wanted to know if this man could do all that the others had said was impossible. Was this man, Daniel also a charlatan?

In the meeting Daniel was addressed as Belteshazzar, which was his Babylonian name. Still being a true Jewish man Daniel preferred to be called by his Hebrew name Daniel. As this name demonstrated that he belongs to God.

Verse 27-28

Daniel first give God the glory for the revelation that the king is about to receive. Daniel contrasted what the wise of Babylon can do with what God can do. Those wise men of Babylon who boasted of their arts and the help of their gods. Yet, they were unable to reveal the truth of the king’s dream. But the God of Israel, the God of the heavens can reveal the secret things as He is all knowing. God is not a secret God and does reveal himself to man and the secret things that He has for them. Therefore Daniel revealed what God had revealed unto him. King Nebuchadnezzar was made known the things that were to happen in his later days. Nebuchadnezzar now knew that the God of the Israelites was the supreme God of the universe and above all other gods.

Daniel spoke in a way that made the king know that the events he was describing were not a near event. It was revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar that the focus is not on today but in the end times of days. In the day when the great purposes of God would become seen. Daniel was not taking about the end of the ages but the end of the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

In the New Testament it is plainly taught that the “end of days” was brought in by the Messiah at the first coming of Jesus. The “end time” began at the resurrection of Jesus. **“For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.”** (1 Peter 1:20) The Apostle John also declared the same, **“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.”** (1 John 2:18)

Verses 29-30

The idea is that while the king was lying in bed thinking about the future and what great things he might accomplish. He may have also got into his mind to build a great statue. Which we see that he does in Chapter 3. As a result of this God was revealing to the king what would be coming after these things.

Daniel wanted King Nebuchadnezzar to know that God was making known to him these events because of who he was and how he had been thinking of these things. It was God, the revealer of secrets that had chosen to reveal them to him. Also that this revelation should come to the king as a warning.

Daniel delivers this message from God with a humble spirit. Daniel is only the messenger being used by God to reveal these things to the king. Daniel is no different than any other man and this revelation was not in any way to glorify him. The focus for Nebuchadnezzar is the message from God and not the one delivering the message.

Verses 31-35

We need not amplify the vision of King Nebuchadnezzar. As most kings of the day it is a great image that could be seen as an idol. Much like many kings had built to glorify themselves. Nebuchadnezzar had seen images as this before in his day and images of multi metals was not a new thing. This image in the dream of the king was huge many times the size of a man, unlike others of the day. As an idol it would have been very impressive as a god. The size of which would place fear in the hearts of men but also was designed to glorify King Nebuchadnezzar. The fearful thing in Nebuchadnezzar was that at the top of the image was a head of gold, then each section downward deteriorated to clay at the base. Either material could have been at the foundation but the clay at the foundation made the total statue weak and top heavy. To see this magnificent image standing and then cut down by a bolder smashing the feet which caused it to fall and become as powder was disturbing. More troubling was that the bolder filled the whole earth and a mountain.

Verses 36-38

The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel both had said that Nebuchadnezzar would be an instrument in the hands of God to bring His judgement upon the world. At this time the kingdom of Babylon was the super power of the day. It was Daniel who was speaking but it was God who stood before King Nebuchadnezzar who had self-centered ideals of his great importance telling him what the future would be for his kingdom.

Daniel used the title of “king of kings” as was also ascribed to Nebuchadnezzar by the Prophet Ezekiel. (Ezekiel 26.7) Considering the attitude of the king this was probably a title used by King Nebuchadnezzar himself and that ego is matched by the image that he built which may have represented himself. It was unusual for monarchs of Mesopotamian times to consider themselves so highly as Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel boldly reminds him that it is God who establishes the throne of Nebuchadnezzar. The king’s greatness is not of himself or the god Marduk, but that it is God who lifted him up. In considering the worlds

kingdom, power, strength and glory as descriptive of King Nebuchadnezzar compare Daniel 5:18 and Daniel 7:14 to note that the day will come of a king that is greater.

Daniel tells the king that the head of the image is gold and that it applies to Nebuchadnezzar. There can be no dispute as Babylon is the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. The head of gold represented the ultimate glory of Nebuchadnezzar. But we cannot just look at the four metals of the image only. The image itself represents idolatry and all the kingdom represented in this image was a kingdom committed to idolatry.

Verse 39

As the king looked upon the image he may have seen his own face looking back at him. But as he looked down what he saw was not the head but that of a body and arms of silver. How hard it must have been for the king to realize that his kingdom would fall to an inferior kingdom. This kingdom was not a singular kingdom as Babylon but a dual kingdom with two arms. An inferior metal, silver, and two kings that would replace Babylon as the superpower. How would this play on the mind of a man who felt that none were as great as he.

It must have pondered the king's mind as to which two of his neighbors would form together and try to defeat his kingdom. How could they, what two could rule the world as one? But we see who they are in Daniel 8:3-4, 20. This future kingdom will not have the glory or the unitedness of the kingdom of Babylon but they will defeat it.

As King Nebuchadnezzar looks further down the image the silver become brass. Here we see the third kingdom which is Greece. (Daniel 8:5-8, 21-22) Being that the metal is brass means that it is even more inferior because of its sustained unity. Thus far the quality of the kingdom is deteriorating. This quality is deteriorating is further caused by the fragility for it splits into four kingdoms. In the end the fragility is what the image is all about because idolatry is at the heart of all the kingdoms represented in the image.

Verses 40-43

Looking further down the image Nebuchadnezzar first sees iron as he looked at the legs. The king would see both the strength and the inferiority of the iron. Weapons were made of iron and would be strength but as he looks to the feet the king sees clay mixed with the iron. This is a strange mixture of strength and weakness as the two materials do not mix together. From the words of Daniel the king realizes that the legs of iron and the feet of clay and iron are the fourth kingdom. Some see five kingdoms represented here but that is not probable. In Daniel 7:3 and chapter 8 it is spoken of as four kingdoms. It is also made clear that the fourth kingdom will be at the end of time.

Four represents universalism of the world against Israel. Four rivers flowed from Eden and fed the world. The wind comes from four quarters. The world is north, South, East and West. The kingdoms of the world are building up to a universal kingdom which consumes the other three kingdoms. It represents the whole as in the end all become part of the whole. The image is the empires of the world incorporating into one world kingdom.

The fourth kingdom carries all the other kingdoms with it. At first it seems to be the strongest of them all but in time it deteriorates and becomes completely unstable. When the fourth kingdom finally falls it takes all the other kingdoms with it. The fourth kingdom is made from all the empires of the world and is weakened by the diversity of its populations. This weakening has been the nature of such empires. They have no unity of culture because of the idol worship of false gods and false religions. Thus they carry the seeds of their own destruction.

There are many speculations as to who the fourth kingdom is but nowhere is that kingdom identified in the book of Daniel. There is a hint in Daniel 11:30 that it may represent the renewed Roman Empire. This is tempting but many empires have come since the Roman Empire. Another view is that the legs became the feet and the feet became the toes. This envisions a continuing flow of empires and represents the theory of growing empires into a final world empire. After Greece will come the fourth kingdom, a kingdom of the distant future which will evolve into the apocalyptic kingdom. This achieves the pattern of four that is required.

This fourth kingdom will begin in strength much as the power of Rome did. Then it will divide into other kingdoms of various strengths. This expresses the fragility of the following kingdoms and moves from strength through diversity to fragile and all in part are represented by false religions.

We will see in Daniel Chapter 8 the gradual movement of these kingdoms. First the one, then two, then four and then many fold kingdoms.

The fourth kingdom is strong as iron. This kingdom will subdue all others by crushing their opponents. As it does it too will crush and break into pieces. This kingdom will be the most terrible of them all and the Roman legions clad in iron certainly fill this mark. For centuries the Roman Empire ruled the known world. As the Roman Empire expanded and assimilated other cultures it became fragile and imploded.

But the Roman Empire as the fourth represents more than Rome. It is man and his civilization at its worst. In the power of greed and fortune the kingdom is determined to crush all its fellowmen. It represents an onward flowing of Empires. Babylon and Rome has left ghost that live on through the ages. The fourth empire is the apocalyptic empire of Gog and Magog. (Ezekiel 38-39 Isaiah 5:25-30; 24 Isaiah 66:15-16) It is the kingdom of man against the Kingdom of God and His people.

Verses 44-45

'In the days of those kings.' This naturally refers back to the previous verse. The final empire is ruled by a number of kings, including kings of the empires described. But in their day a kingdom will be set up, a kingdom, which replaces theirs, which will never be destroyed. Nor will it make alliances with the other kingdoms, yielding its sovereignty to them. It will have total liberty and freedom. It will 'strike' all these empires, and by hitting their weakest point will bring them crashing down. Notice that all collapse, from the gold downwards. The whole basis of these empires, their might, their arrogance, their disunity,

their representing false religion, all collapse together. Truth will triumph. Faith in the God of heaven.

King Nebuchadnezzar may have thought the stone represented his descendants, as hinted in chapter three, but Daniel makes it clear as to what he means later on. The stone is the Kingdom of God and His people, the Kingdom of His Messiah and will be the everlasting Kingdom. This Kingdom is the Kingdom created before the throne of God and will make a decisive impact on the earth. The empires of the earth will be destroyed by the Kingdom of God (Daniel 7:13-14, 18, 37) The Kingdom of God will overcome all other kingdoms and fill the whole earth. (Matthew 13:31-33)

This stone was cut out of the mountains without hands because it was done so by God. ***“We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.”*** (Mark 14:58) The stone has often been referred to as the symbol of the Messiah. (Isaiah 28:16 Psalm 118:22) It is the stone that will cause some men to stumble. (Zechariah 12:3) The Messiah is seen as a stone that destroys the power of the world’s empires by striking the foundations and causing them to fall. (Daniel 7:26) The second stage of the stone is to be the rock of protection for the people of God. (Isaiah 17:10 Isaiah 32:2)

When the Messiah has destroyed the kingdoms of the earth and established His Kingdom then the righteous shall shine as the sun in God’s Kingdom and there no more will be evil.(Matthew 13:43) There will be everlasting peace in God’s everlasting Kingdom.

It was the privilege of King Nebuchadnezzar to have this vision that went far into the future events of the world. The King must have realized through his dream that trusting in world empires was hopeless. If the King did his pride overruled his better judgment. Instead he built a great statue for men to worship. With eyes blinded by his own pride the King missed the point even though he had heard the interpretation of Daniel.

Verses 46-47

King Nebuchadnezzar did honor Daniel for revealing the dream to him. He also honored the God of Daniel. ***“Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.”*** The King had sat patiently listening to Daniel reveal the full meaning of his dream. He must have been in awe as he heard the depth of the interpretation and it must have overwhelmed him, as he fell down before Daniel and worshiped him. For he knew that Daniel was a man that knew the secrets of the gods.

Yet as King Nebuchadnezzar worshipped Daniel, as he could see that the God of Daniel was greater than all the gods the he worshiped still he did not forsake the other gods. As soon after he would slip back into the house of Marduk and sought not Daniel again until he had more secrets to be revealed by Daniel’s God.

Verse 48

King Nebuchadnezzar honored the promises of rewards that he had made. He gave Daniel a position of great authority in the land of Babylon. Daniel asked the king to also appoint Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego powers in the affairs of Babylon as well. The King wanted Daniel within arm's reach in case he needed his wisdom from his God. Daniel became in charge of all the wise men of Babylon and they were thankful for what he had done to spare their lives.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

King Nebuchadnezzar determined to build the image of his dream as a monument to show the greatness of his empire. It is possible that the statue was solid Gold which would have fit King Nebuchadnezzar's ego. Considering the measurements given the Colossus of Rhodes was not as big as the King's statue. However, to build it out of solid gold would have been an extreme drain on the treasury. More likely the statue was gold plated as was customary in that day. (Isaiah 40:19 Jeremiah 10:4) The statue was over ninety feet high and nine feet across. This may or may not have been the actual height as part of that measurement may have included the base that the statue was placed upon.

The statue was placed on the Plain of Dura which was about 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles south west of Baghdad.

Verse 2

Upon the completion King Nebuchadnezzar called all the dignitaries of the land to come and admire the image that he had built. It is then and today that when marvels are presented that dedication honors are given and expected, such was the custom in ancient Babylonian rites. The word "Satraps" is an Old Persian word signifying kingdom guardians. Deputies and governors were Semitic terms which were common at the time Daniel wrote this book. These dignitaries were probably listed in the order according to their rank and grades.

Verse 3

It is likely that not all of the dignitaries of the empire were present. Some would be involved in duties that could not be interrupted while others were away on missions. But it is expected that all who could were there as to have ignored the invitation of the king would have been costly. Their attendance was an expression of their loyalty and submission to the king. Closest to the king would have been his most trusted counselors of the court. Daniel was there as he was the "Rab signin", (chief overseer) of all the wise men of Babylon.

Verse 4

All possible members of the empire where there or their representatives. The list of instruments listed were either Semitic or Greek. Greece traded throughout the empires at that time in history. Babylon was an international empire and all the nations were there. The Babylonians were well known for their love of music. (Psalm 137:3 Isaiah 14:11)

All of the peoples were required to bow down and worship the god of Nebuchadnezzar. This worship of the god was part of the oath of loyalty that they all had taken. This was not an obstacle for the pagan beliefs of the day, as all gods had proven their worthiness. Worshipping another king's god did not mean denying the god they commonly worshiped. But for the Israelites this worship of a foreign god was not possible. The Israelites worship one God and that was Yahweh. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Failure to do so was a fatal error and common in those days. Kings of the day maintained loyalty to their throne with a firm hand. If resistance was allowed rebellion could spread quickly throughout the kingdom. King Nebuchadnezzar was ever aware of the possibility of failure in the kingdom and he was proud of the image that he had created from his dream.

Furnaces were common in the land of Babylon and used for their many building projects. They were used for the baking of bricks or the smelting of metals. It was not an unusual punishment for a man to be thrown into a furnace in that day as a Babylonian letter dating back to 1800 B. C. records. Also in the Assyrian court there was a regulation calling for such punishment in 1130 B. C. (Psalm 21:9; Jeremiah 29:22)

Verse 7

At the sound of the music all fell to their knees and worshiped the golden statue. Not one remained upright, or so it seemed.

Verse 8

The Chaldeans, who were the wise men that Daniel was in charge over may have had a secret grudge against him and his friends. They may not have liked being under the authority of men from Judah. Now they saw an opportunity to shame Daniel. How quickly they had forgotten that it was Daniel that had saved their lives. The failure of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to bow down before the image had played into their hand.

Verses 9-12

The Chaldeans were within their rights to tell the king of the civil disobedience. But it was more than just telling the king but they did so in a mean minded way. They not only told that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not bow down but also added their opinion of the attitudes of the young Judeans as well. The Chaldeans said that they were ungrateful for the privilege that they had been given by their appointments to positions of importance in the court. By not bowing down to the image that the king had set up they were mocking his authority. The implication in their charge is treason. The three Jews showed no regard for the king's authority and would not worship his god.

The Chaldeans showed more than just mere resentment as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not have involved themselves in the magical rites that the Chaldeans performed. Whatever the full reason for the action of the Chaldeans the charges they leveled against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego was fatal. Failure to worship the golden statue was an act of open rebellion. The refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and

Abednego to obey the king's decree undermined it and the king could not allow this to happen or go unpunished.

Verse 13

The king in his anger and rage ordered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be brought before him. We must note here the courage that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had in disobeying the order to bow to the statue. They knew full well that their disobedience would result in their deaths.

Verses 14-15

In spite of the king's anger Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had the respect of the king. They were given a second chance to obey the order and bow down and worship the Golden image that the king had erected. King Nebuchadnezzar also had high regard for the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego because their God could reveal the secrets of the king's dreams. Still it is one thing to know the meaning of dreams of men and another to rescue men from the fires of a burning furnace. So with this second chance to obey the punishment was the same. To fail to bow down would result in being cast into the fiery burning furnace.

It was not so much a surprise for the king that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not bow down. King Nebuchadnezzar knew the reason for their objection to bow down before his god, but they had to remember that his god was the victor and therefore they must submit. Also note that it was a god that he had set up and a god that he had made. He was wanting Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to bow down before a man-made god and not the true God/ (Isaiah 44:17)

Verse 16

With respect for the king Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego firmly stated that they would not bow down to the god of the king. They were willing to face whatever would come with a firm belief and trust in their God. Even with the doubts of the king they believed that their God would deliver them.

Some would thought their action and faith in their God was fanatical but it was not. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not expect to die in the fiery furnace. They knew their God and were willing above all else to obey Him and trust Him for their keeping. It was this very strong commitment that had impressed the king when he had first met them. (Daniel 1:20)

Verses 19-20

King Nebuchadnezzar had been patient with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego but now that they had refused his offer he became enraged. This is the king that before had vowed to kill all the wise men in his land and now again his rage was in full throttle. No man has defiled the king before his face and he had never before experienced such treatment.

Yet there must have been some doubt in his heart. The three exhibited confidence in their God that He would deliver them. The thought of their God gave him pause. Perhaps their

God would deliver them and because of this the king made extra precautions. The king ordered the furnace to be heated up to the maximum possible. This may also be in reference to the divine judgement of his god that they should face the full fury. He would enlist the full power of his god against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

The king enlisted the mightiest of his men in the army to ensure that his god would be victorious. Now King Nebuchadnezzar would see what their God could do against the forces of his god and his mighty men. King Nebuchadnezzar was satisfied that all that could be done was done to show the people that his god was the greater.

Again we see that Nebuchadnezzar was a man who would go to the extremes and this behavior could also be seen as an indication of the mental illness we see of him later.

Verses 21-23

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were bound and taken to the furnace and cast into it. There was no way of escape. For the mighty men who carried out the order of the king their fate also was set. As the heat of the furnace was so intense that they too were consumed by the heat. It was in the furnace that produced so much heat that those near it perished that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast.

As we picture this scene in our minds we find ourselves in silent awe. We can only be inspired by the courage and steadfast faith that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had in their God.

Verses 24-25

It is obvious that the king in his rage was not satisfied to issue the order of execution but to also observe it being carried out. He himself peered in the side of the kiln to see the men burning. It was a portal that was used for the bellows to blow air into the fire to intensify the flames of the furnace as he had ordered. But what he saw when looking in amazed him and sought the advice of his counselors. He questioned them as to how many men had been thrown into the furnace and they concurred that there were three. In the king's astonishment he proclaimed that he saw not three men walking around in the fire but four. The king reported that the fourth man in the furnace was that of the son of god.

There has been argument as to whose god this figure was. But the truth of Nebuchadnezzar was that it was as the son of gods, meaning that it was a divine being. With the knowledge that the king had of these three men it could only be one conclusion that King Nebuchadnezzar meant the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was fulfilling His promise to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. ***“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.”*** (Isaiah 43:2)

Verses 26-27

Then the king called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego out of the furnace. When they came out all the officials of the land saw that the fire had no effect upon them. It is interesting to note that while the fire had no effect on Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego the ropes that had bound them were burnt away.

In the king's statement "You servants of the Most High" King Nebuchadnezzar did not recognize the true God as the only god, but a higher god than his.

Verse 28

Nebuchadnezzar cannot help but recognize the power and the faithfulness of the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Neither can the king fail to recognize that faith that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had in their God and their willingness to yield all to Him.

By the king's words, "His supernatural agency" hold a meaning of greater than an angel but that of an angel of the Lord. The king also stated "They have changed the king's word" which cannot be done to a sovereign lord. Once a king makes a decree it is law and not reversible. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had done that which no man can do, change the decree of the king. And finally the king said, "And have surrendered their bodies". Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had not hesitated to place their whole trust in their God and not worship any other god but their own.

Verse 29

King Nebuchadnezzar was still the all-powerful king who held the power of life and death over his subjects. Yet, he made a new decree that protected the name and reputation of the God of Heaven. The God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Their God had proved that He was supreme over the gods of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. Now to speak amiss of the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would result in a terrible death to the offender. It would also mean the destruction of the offender's property.

Verse 30

As a result Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were promoted to higher positions in the province of Babylon.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

Even though this greeting is sent to the rulers of the empire it is addressed to all the people of the empire. It would have been the rulers of the empires responsibility to proclaim the king's message to his people. King Nebuchadnezzar and kings of other nations called themselves the king of the earth. This greeting was only to the people of the Babylonian Empire as people from other nations were not worthy in the eyes of his court. The Babylonian Empire was very large and contained many nations of people. From Elam and Media in the north and east to Egypt in the southwest.

Verses 2-3

In the last chapter we saw that the fourth person in the furnace was called as the son of gods and not the Lord God almighty which Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the Israelite people worshiped. The term “Most High God” here would have referred to Marduk the Babylonian god that Nebuchadnezzar worshiped. All the false gods of the people were considered as everlasting. But the kings under their rule were mortal as all men are.

Daniel as he recorded this event would have identified God Most High as the true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the maker of the heavens and the earth and who ruled over all creation. This view is in contrast to that of the king who viewed the Most High God as the god over all the other gods.

It is probable that the last phrase shows the influence of Daniel on the king as the wording is similar to a verse in Psalm. “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.” (Psalm 145:13)

Verses 4-5

At this time in the life of King Nebuchadnezzar his life was flourishing. He had gained many victories over his enemies. In his time he was a great historical figure and now in this time he was enjoying his life in the palace. The troubles of the world seemed far away and there was peace in his kingdom. Then the king began to have troubling dreams once again. Because of this he fell into depression and this may be a sign of the troubles that lay in the near future.

Verse 6

We again see the king calling upon the wise men of his court to interpret his dream. Some may think that he would have immediately called upon Daniel, as he was the one through whom God used to interpret the dream of Chapter 2. But time has passed now from those days and the wise men of those days have probably died. The wise men of the day were supervised by Daniel and may have been more effective in giving their advice. As a result the king would have been more tolerant and patient in his more mature years and showed more respect for his present wise men of his court. Because of Daniel’s supervision these wise men of the day achieved greater result.

Daniel was also very busy conducting his duties within the empire and may not have been readily available to assist the king. Nebuchadnezzar did not like to wait for his subordinates and if Daniel was not there then he would have summoned those who were. If they failed then he could have Daniel to fall back upon.

Verse 7

We see here that Nebuchadnezzar had learned from the previous experience that the wise men could not interpret the dream without knowing the dream. Even so as they learn the dream that the king had they were unable to discern its meaning. This may be the case as the dream that the king had was without reference in the Babylonian book of dreams that the wise men would have consulted. The other possibility is that they knew

the meaning of the dream but lacked the courage to tell the king its meaning. The history of the king showed that if he became angry over the truth of the dream it would cost them their lives.

Verse 8

Either Daniel finished his duties and returned to the palace or King Nebuchadnezzar called him to the palace from wherever he was. Nebuchadnezzar calls attention the Babylonian name of Daniel, "Belteshazzar." This is significant because the first symbol of his name is Bel which is the name of one of the Babylonian gods. Thus, the king's reference to the spirit of the holy gods mainly refers to the god Bel. The readers of the Book of Daniel would refer it to the Spirit of God. The king tells Daniel his dream.

Verse 9

King Nebuchadnezzar knew which God Daniel worshiped and served. The king may not have understood Daniel's God or believed in Him, still he trusted Daniel who worshiped the true God. For this reason King Nebuchadnezzar had full confidence in Daniel to give him the meaning of the dream.

In the ancient times trees were used as good illustrations of royalty. Nebuchadnezzar and the wise men would have recognized that the tree in his dream would have referred to the king. The tree in the king's dream was of great height and would have given prominence to King Nebuchadnezzar. The fact that the tree reached to the heavens is reminiscent to the tower of Babel. (Genesis 11:4) This may also signify that King Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest king of the earth.

The tree of the king's dream was also the great provider of the people and animals giving food and shelter. This is the way that kings like to be projected throughout the empire. As the provider and protector of the people of his empire.

Verse 13-17

The taking down of the tree in the king's dream gives us small wonder that the wise men would not tell the king the meaning of this vision. The details of the vision were complex and would have been difficult to have discern. They may have been able to fully understand but to reveal it to the king would have placed their lives in the balance.

The holy watcher would have been heavenly beings watching over the affairs of mankind. Those of the wise men who were not of the Israelite morality would not have seen the event in relations to moral behavior. False gods of the day were not involved in the morals of men as much as they were involved in how men's behavior affect them. Daniel would have had the proper interpretation as to how the behavior of men was towards obedience of God's law.

We must also see here that the holy watcher is not acting on his own behalf but on behalf of the Most High. Daniel in his explanation will have to tell the king why he will have to suffer in his battle with the gods. In that explanation a lesson will be given to the Israelites that they need to be aware of their guilt because of their sins against God.

The call to “cut down” may be a plea to divine helpers or to God in order that the tress would be taken away from the earth. Leaving only the stump of the tree takes away the ability of the tree to give any benefit to the provision and protection of the subjects of the kingdom. The stump will be banded in order to prevent it from splitting. We can see this is a promise from God that the stump will be preserved and will survive. The tree now being with the beast shows a vision of degradation and loss. With the heart being replaced with the heart of a beast means that the ability to reason is now gone. The number of seven shows that the action is of divine nature as the number seven in ancient culture is the perfect number of divine measures.

This decree comes from the holy watchers and is a demand of the Most High is an expression of truth that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the earth. The Most High determines who will rule over the earth and whose rule shall end over the earth.

King Nebuchadnezzar and the readers of this would have believed that the decree came from the Most High of the Gods but the Israelite readers would have recognized the Most High as the God who they served, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

King Nebuchadnezzar now appeals to Daniel to interpret this dream for him, as the wise men of his kingdom were unable to do so. Understanding what the king would have known by the symbolism of the tree he knows that dream concerns him and is anxious to learn its meaning hoping for reassurance. The last dream that Daniel interpreted the king did not come out too badly. But the outcome of this dream was very troubling and the king was afraid.

Verse 19

It was obvious to the king that Daniel knew the meaning of the dream and that it was cause for great concern. He could see that Daniel was upset and was afraid that Daniel would not tell him its meaning and brought even greater fear to King Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was a soldier and had faced many trials and even as he feared the worst wanted to know and asked Daniel to state the meaning. The king also let Daniel know that he need not fear the king's wrath against him. Before disclosure Daniel pointed out that the dream was what the enemies of the king would want themselves to say to him.

Verses 20-22

The tree represented all that the king could hope for, the greatness of his kingdom. His dream had revealed the he, King Nebuchadnezzar was strong and powerful. That he was the provider of his people in provision and protection. That the fame of the king had reached to the heavens of the gods. The king was revealed as the ruler of the world.

Verses 23-26

Daniel made it clear to the king that this interpretation was the command of the Most High God by His holy watcher. Nebuchadnezzar may have seen the holy watcher as a minor god but Daniel knew it to be an angel. The people of Babylon would see that it was the

gods that were acting against their king and therefore would hold King Nebuchadnezzar blameless of any wrong doing.

King Nebuchadnezzar (the tree) would be cut down but not destroyed, a stump would remain bound in brass and iron to preserve him through this time period until he is restored to his kingdom. But the king would not be able to reside with mankind and their society, he would be as one of the beast of the field and feed upon the grass of the field. He would not have shelter and the dew would fall upon him. And this would be the king's state until seven times have past.

The number seven as before mentioned is the perfect number representing that this judgment is of perfect divineness. The time of endurance is not measure in days, years or decades but in the good pleasure of the Most High God. Whatever the length of a period it will be a total of seven of them.

Commentators have many interpretations for the band of brass and iron. It could mean the darkness that will fill his spirit or the lack of reason in the throes of madness, or the chains that madmen are bound in, but through it all the king will be protected by divine activity.

This state that the king would find himself was to last till he knew that the heavens do rule. This is a statement to the divine rule of the Most High God but also holds the idea that there is a heavenly kingdom that rules over the earthly kingdoms.

Verse 27

Daniel's advice to the king is the same advice that we all should take heed to. To repent and turn away from living in the worldly way, to turn away from our adulterous ways of serving the gods of man's making. To repent and serve the true God of the heavens and the earth. Daniel's advice is for the king to put away his selfishness and wrong doings and do what is right in the light of the divine law of God. The king show mercy towards the weak and the poor of his kingdom. If the king would change his ways then the coming disturbance of mind that he would suffer might be delayed or might never even happen to him. We do know that our God is faithful to forgive but King Nebuchadnezzar would not repent and turn towards the Lord God.

King Nebuchadnezzar did not follow the call of the Apostle Paul to put off the old man. ***“That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.”*** (Ephesians 4:22)

Verse 28

The king failed to change his ways and the decree of the Most High was carried out just as He had said. If we do not learn to control the sin in our lives then that sin will become the controlling factor of our life.

Verses 29-30

In a year's time King Nebuchadnezzar was proudly exalting himself by the greatness of his kingdom. The king was boasting of his great achievements and the abundance of his possessions. At this time Babylon was at the full measure of its power and influence. The king felt that the palace of his dwelling was worthy of the gods. If we allow pride to rule our lives then soon we will be humbled. (Proverbs 16:18) This is the cause of the judgment of the Lord God. The Pride of life that King Nebuchadnezzar had in himself.

Verse 31

As the king was boasting of his greatness a voice came down from heaven that his rule was over and that he no longer would dwell with men and would not be restored until he learned that God is sovereign over the earth. The king would become as an animal and feed on the grass of the field a far distance from the palace he was accustomed to. This would last until seven times had passed over him. The encouragement was that this judgment would come to an end.

Verse 33

The king's hair and nails grew unattended and he dwelt in the land as an animal. As he was their king believed to be afflicted by their gods the people left him to his own. None knew how long this affliction would last and would not dare to intervene for fear that once restored he would vent his anger upon them. Perhaps it was the position of Daniel as the master of the wise men of the king's court that held the kingdom together thus preserving King Nebuchadnezzar's throne.

Sir Henry Rawlinson wrote of this time period. "For four years the seat of my kingdom in my city -- did not rejoice my heart. In all my dominions I did not build a high place of power, the precious treasures of my kingdom I did not lay out. In the worship of Marduk my lord, the joy of my heart in Babylon, the city of my sovereignty, I did not sing his praises and I did not furnish his altars, nor did I clear out the canals."

Verses 34-35

"But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, What have You done?" Most likely at the end of the seven times the recovery of King Nebuchadnezzar was as sudden as the affliction. In gratitude that he had been restored the king spoke these words in verses 34-35. Daniel knew the God to which the king was praising and for a king that did not know God he gave a good description. King Nebuchadnezzar recognized that it was not he but another that was all powerful.

Verse 36

The king states to the people of Babylon that he has been restored and was back into his role as their king. The king not only stated that he had been restored but that his ability had been increased.

Verse 37

King Nebuchadnezzar gave testimony to the God of heaven and stated that His ways are true and wise. That His judgments are just and correct. Daniel may have had heavy influence and guidance in the conversion of King Nebuchadnezzar. The king now certainly knew that the Most High God was supreme and was able to humble men of their self-pride.

Chapter 5

King Nebuchadnezzar has died and was succeeded by his son Amel Marduk. (2 Kings 25:27-30) Amel's reign lasted only two years and was succeeded by Nergalsharusur who was Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law. (Jeremiah 39:3,13) Within four years he died and left the throne to his son Labashi-Marduk but was replaced by Nabonidus who came from a noble family of Aramaean in Haran. Nabonidus cemented his position as king by marrying the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. Together they had a son who was named Belshazzar.

Nabonidus left Babylon to campaign in Arabia and spent his time in the city of Teima. His son Belshazzar then took the throne as a junior co-regent and ruled as the King of Babylon. Nabonidus did return year's later but fled from the forces of Cyrus at Sippar. Belshazzar continued to rule on the throne at the time of the opening of this chapter.

Verse 1

Daniel opens this chapter at a feast given by Belshazzar to a thousand of his lords. The use of the number thousand was a number meaning that there were many and may not be the exact number. Feasts of this size were common and typical of the Asian culture. There was much wine to be had and Belshazzar had his fill and was very drunk.

It would have been better if Belshazzar had been on his guard as at the time of this feast the city of Babylon was being surrounded by the Medo-Persians who intended to invade the city. The enemy force was led by Ugbaru a general in the army of Cyrus. In spite of this threat the Babylonians were confident because the city had superior defenses.

Verse 2

King Nebuchadnezzar had captured the utensils from the temple in Jerusalem and they were kept in the palace of the king. Belshazzar knew of these utensils and commanded that they be brought out and used at this feast. It may have been a demonstration of his power and an act of defiance toward the God of his father. Belshazzar may have felt defiant against the God of his grandfather because his city was surrounded by the Medo-Persians and he felt that his father's God should not have allowed that to happen. The utensils from the temple of Jerusalem were sacred vessels and this act of Belshazzar was considered a blasphemous act towards the God of the Israelites. These utensils had in the past been treated with the respect that they deserved. Daniel himself no longer held

the high position that he had under King Nebuchadnezzar and therefore his influence in these matters was not effective.

Verses 3-4

The use of these vessels from the temple in Jerusalem was shamelessly done by Belshazzar and the quest of his court. Because of their drunkenness and the praises sung to man-made gods was a serious blasphemy to the God of Israel.

Verse 5

The place of Babylon has been excavated and it has been found that the walls were indeed covered in white plaster. The white plaster in the light of the lampstand would have made visible the hand upon the wall that we read of in this verse. Only the king is mentioned as seeing the hand writing on the wall but we can assume that all present could have seen as well. It could be that only Belshazzar saw the hand as it was writing as it was he that had ordered the act of blasphemy against the vessels of the temple. Either way if only Belshazzar or all saw the hand the point is that the message it wrote was for Belshazzar.

Verse 6

The effect of this scene had a dramatic effect on Belshazzar to the point that he was terrified. He now realized that the God of his father, the God of the Israelites, was now here to deal with him for his acts of blasphemy.

Verse 6

As we have seen in the past from King Nebuchadnezzar his grandson Belshazzar called for the wise men to come and read the meaning of the writing on the wall. He offered them rewards if they could give a proper interpretation. They were offered to be clothed in purple which would mean that they would be treated as royalty. Also with a gold chain around their neck would showed that they would have an elevated rank. This rank by the words of Belshazzar was that of the third ruler in the kingdom, behind Nabonidus and Belshazzar.

Verses 8-9

The wise of Babylon were unable to interpret the writing on the wall. With none who could say the meaning of the writing on the wall all in the banquet hall were perplexed and knew not what to say.

Verses 10-12

The queen could be the wife of Nabonidus the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar or it may be the mother of the queen the wife of Nebuchadnezzar. Women of this stature retained their position of high esteem. (1 Kings 15:31 2 Kings 11:1-3) Because of her high esteem she could enter into the room without Belshazzar's appointment which would have not been possible for the queen who was married to Belshazzar.

This queen would have to have been a woman of age. She remembered the great man Daniel who had helped King Nebuchadnezzar through these similar situations. She

identified to Belshazzar Daniel a man who was full of the spirit of the holy gods. A man of deep understanding and full of wisdom. The queen described Daniel to be the man that Belshazzar needed now to explain the meaning of the writing on the wall.

Verses 13-16

Belshazzar showed politeness towards Daniel in that he addressed him as “Of the children of the Captivity of Judah” that his grandfather King Nebuchadnezzar had brought to Babylon. Also he called him by his Hebrew name as this was the name that Daniel preferred. It also shows that he had read the brief given to him as to who Daniel was.

Belshazzar also list the qualifications which signify that Daniel was a man who had the wisdom of the gods. Belshazzar was not giving Daniel glory but the gods who Daniel was in touch with. Belshazzar offers Daniel the same rewards as he had offered to the other wise men of Babylon. We also see that Belshazzar was not giving the gods glory himself as he omitted using the word holy in his reference to them. This is in context with his blasphemy of the vessels of the temple.

Verse 17

Daniel, politely, tells Belshazzar to give the rewards to another to show that he is not here to benefit himself. This may have impressed Belshazzar in that he now knew that Daniel was a man who spoke truth. The promises of Belshazzar were empty as it is because by the morning there would be no kingdom of Babylon.

Verses 18-19

There may be a twofold reason in this greeting by Daniel. One to identify Belshazzar as the king which would play to the self-pride that Belshazzar had for himself. The second would be to remind Belshazzar that his greatness came from his father King Nebuchadnezzar. His father had ruled over all the people and no Mede or Persian would have dared to trespass upon his empire. It was also a reminder that Belshazzar was a regent and not a King. But Nebuchadnezzar was the king and was the supreme lord in whom all the people trembled.

It was true that Belshazzar had power like unto his grandfather but his power was only if the true king, his father Nabonidus could overrule him if he so choose. Also the nations that his grandfather controled were now in the hands of the great Cyrus who was at his door and about to take the city from his hand.

Verse 20

Daniel then reminds Belshazzar that Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by God the Most High. That he was likened to a beast in the field and ate grass until he knew that the God Most High ruled the nations of men. That the God Most High appointed the rulers of the world and He also took them down.

Verses 22-23

Daniel spokes words to Belshazzar that at any other time would have sent him to his death. Daniel told Belshazzar that he had not honored the God of the heavens but had

blasphemed Him by drinking wine from the vessels of the temple and made a mockery of Him. That Belshazzar's deeds were far worse than the deeds of his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar.

As Daniel spoke Belshazzar knew that he was without excuse. He had committed all these things against the God of the heavens and had not humbled himself before Him. Belshazzar knew that he had taken the temple vessels and used them to insult the God of the heavens and used them to worship their man-made images and false gods. With the charges that Daniel had made against Belshazzar and the conviction that he must have felt he now must have known that the message from the writing on the wall would not be one of good news for him.

Daniel's purpose may have been to bring Belshazzar to repentance, and may have been also for the benefit of the lords that were present along with their wives and concubines. As late as it was for them there was still time to repent of their evil ways.

These words are also for us today. Many of us are living a life without giving proper fear and honor to the God of the Heavens. We are taking that which is His and using it for our own selfish benefit. We are not involved with the needs of our fellow men and turn our back upon them in the hour of their trial. For us we may not understand the writing on the wall but our God is just and will judge us according to our deeds.

Verses 24-28

The indication of the word "Then" is that the hand of the Lord wrote this message to Belshazzar as a result of the blasphemy of the temple vessels. The words of the message contained no spaces between the words. We do not know what language it was written in only that the Chaldeans could not interpret it.

MENE comes from the root to "count." Thus the meaning would be numbered and Daniel states its meaning as the days of Belshazzar have reached full count. In this Belshazzar now knows that his days of rule are over.

"TEKELE" comes from the root word "weigh," Daniel states that Belshazzar has been weighed and has been found wanting. Belshazzar now knows that he has been judged by God and he has failed the test. This then is the reason that his kingdom is finished. He had been an immoral and religiously poor ruler.

"PERESEN" has two possible roots which mean divided and Persian. This does not mean that the kingdom will be divided between the victors but that the spoils of the kingdom will. The empire itself will be dissolved. The writing of the day speaks of only the Persian Empire. A Persian Empire made up of the Persians and the Medes. This Persian Empire was ruled by Cyrus.

Verse 29

In spite of the terrifying news that Belshazzar received from Daniel he made good on his promise. He commanded that Daniel be clothed in purple and a gold chain be placed around his neck. He was appointed the third ruler of Babylon. While the feast continued

on and Belshazzar unknowing as to when the prophecy would be fulfilled general Ugbaru of the Persians was diverting the Euphrates River to an ancient lake. He therefore was able to slip into the city by way of the dried up river bed and take the city of Babylon without a fight.

The people of the city awoke the next morning to find that they were now ruled by the Persians and the Persian army was enforcing rule.

Verses 30-31

Belshazzar was probably slain in what little fighting there was for the city along with his lords. As a whole the Persians were a merciful people and allowed captured people, as well as the Israelites to worship their own gods. The Priest of Marduk were most likely happy with this result as their God Marduk had been ignored under Belshazzar.

The City of Babylon was now ruled by Darius the Mede under the provision of Cyrus. There are no writings that identify with Darius in recorded history. It may be that the name Darius is a throne name and not the name that he went by. It may also be that the word for king in Persian is Dara but then Darius would not have been king as he took the position held by Belshazzar. Nabonidus was the king of Babylon and was still alive after its fall.

Darius the Mede

Possibly Darius is not a name, but an honored title for Cyrus, who with his army entered Babylon in 539 BC. It is used in inscriptions of at least five Persian rulers, History mentions no specific man named Darius the Mede. In Daniel 6:28 it is possible to translate, "Darius even ... Cyrus." A less likely possibility it that Darius is a second name for Gubaru, Cyrus' appointed king to head up the Babylonian sector of his empire. Gubaru is distinct from Ugbaru, the general, who died soon after conquering Babylon. As previously prophesied, Babylon met God's judgment. (Isaiah 13; 47 Jeremiah 50; 51 Habakkuk 2:5-9)

Chapter 6

Verses 1-2

The first order of business for Darius was to establish an administration over the conquered kingdom. He appointed 120 kingdom guardians over which there were three presidents. The purpose of the guardians was to maintain order within the kingdom and to prevent any rebellion. They also collected taxes and were to report to the presidents.

Daniel was appointed as a president. When Darius took the throne of Babylon Daniel was the third in rule as appointed by Belshazzar. Neither did Daniel have particular loyalty to Belshazzar which would have been less a threat to the Persians. It was also Daniel who had predicted the downfall of the Babylonian empire to the Persians. With these qualifications Daniel was a perfect candidate and would be a great help in cementing the Babylonian empire together under the Medo-Persians.

Verse 3

Daniel proved to be a great asset to the new king and this was due to the Spirit of God working through him. His success as a president impressed Darius so much that he considered Daniel to have complete charge beneath himself.

Verses 4-5

There is no greater arena for treachery than that of politics. A place where men hunger for ways to increase power for themselves at the cost of those who bar their way. As long as Daniel was a fellow president the others were willing to work with him. But as soon as the possibility came that Daniel might have authority over them they decided that they must find a way to illuminate him. They could find no fault or hidden secrets from the past to accuse Daniel with. Daniel was honest and efficient and conducted his affairs to the utmost ability. The king had noticed this in Daniel and this is why he now was a threat to the other presidents of the court.

There was only one area of Daniel's life that they found a possibility to use against him and that was his unwavering loyalty to his God the King of Heaven. They saw this as his weakness and searched a plan to use this against him.

Verses 6-8

The presidents came in great deception using the names of all who were in the royal court. "All the presidents of the kingdom, the deputies and the satraps, the counsellors and the governors." Thus the king would believe that this was a unified effort to bring unity to his kingdom.

This may have been flattering to the king thinking that his popularity was growing within the kingdom. He probably did not see the seriousness of the punishment of death as the degree would only be for thirty days. It was only that all public and religious request be made through him only and this would show to the people that he represented them and was their figurehead. And it was those who he had appointed to keep order in his kingdom that gave the suggestion of such a degree so Darius found no reason not to agree. The degree stated that none could petition a god or man thus limiting the power of the priest as well.

Darius probably did not see that this was a trap for any particular person in his kingdom and it was appealing that the people of his kingdom would want to make him the mediator between the people and the gods. If they were successful in getting Darius to set such a degree it would not be the first time that a monarch was fooled by deceptive means and flattery. Most likely the king saw this as a positive move as there was within the whole of the Persian Empire people who would openly deify their monarchs. Thus, if he advanced this degree it would give him a higher stature in the kingdom.

Once a degree was made by a king it could not be revoked and would stand as law which all would have to abide. (Esther 1:19 Esther 8:8)

Verse 9

Under the advice of his advisers the king signed into law the degree that they had suggested. It was a short term degree and would not have lasting effect which is why the scribes probably did not read it too carefully when writing it into law. Once written the degree would have been presented to the people.

Verse 10

Daniel may or may not have known the full extent of the degree. It is probable that he did not and therefore saw no reason to withdraw from his daily routine of prayer by the window of his dwelling that was opened towards Jerusalem. If he had thought it was a degree against private devotion then he may not have prayed by the window where he could have been seen. Daniel was in position that if it was restrictive of his devotion he could have approached the king to discuss it.

It is possible that neither the king nor Daniel saw the decree as preventing private devotions, for all Daniel had to do was to avoid his window and then no one would have known what he was doing. He knew that the decree had been signed, and possibly that it was ambiguous, but saw no reason in it why he should alter his religious habits of worship. Otherwise why should he not have approached the king about it?

When Daniel prayed he was facing Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 6:21 Psalm 5:7) It was Daniel's practice to pray three times a day. (Psalm 55:17) When Daniel prayed he knelt which may suggest the seriousness of his prayers for Jerusalem. The Jewish people usually prayed standing up. (1 Chronicles 23:30 Matthew 6:5 Mark 11:25 Luke 18:11, 13) In very urgent situations the Jewish people would kneel. (1 Kings 8:54 Ezra 9:5 Luke 22:41 Acts 7:60 Acts 9:40 Acts 20:36 Acts 21:5)

Verse 11

Then those who had plotted against Daniel gather to see if he would pray and make petition to his God in violation to the degree of the king.

Verse 12

Then these men followed the protocol to enter into the presence of the king. They acted as those who had the king's wellbeing in mind and sought a confirmation of the exact meaning and understanding of the degree that the king had signed into law. The king agreed that what they had said was the degree that he had signed and that their understanding was correct. The king also confirmed that it was law and could not be revoked.

Verses 13-14

Then these men leveled the charges against Daniel. First he was a foreigner and one of the captivity of Judah. That he had deliberately violated the degree of the king. And that not only once but continued to violate the degree on a daily bases.

This time the king was not deceived by these men whom he had appointed to administer to his kingdom. The king was able to see full well what the purpose of their plan was and

that they had accomplished this by his own folly. He was angry with these men as he had only viewed the whole matter as a formality of the people's loyalty to him. Now the king set about to find remedy to the situation of the matter that was now law.

The king no doubt consulted the men of the law searching for a way to release Daniel to the punishment for violating the degree. But none was to be found and the degree had been written to advance this very situation. It is possible that during this time of research the layers had informed the king that Daniel's God had in the past been able to deliver men from such a situation.

Verse 15

The men returned to the king and reminded him that the law could not be changed and that it had to be carried out in the full. We see here that they were relentless in the pursuit of Daniel. Without finding legal recourse and the persistence of the administrators the king had no choice but to carry out the punishment of putting Daniel into the lion's den.

Verse 16

Once the king had made the order to carry out the punishment against Daniel no time was wasted. Daniel was brought before the king to answer to the charges made against him. Daniel stood boldly and with confidence that his God would deliver him, as his God had delivered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The king had heard these stories of days ago and this gave him hope that Daniel would be spared. Even so, it was with saddened heart that the king passed the order and Daniel was taken and thrown into the lion's den. Nebuchadnezzar's method was trial by fire but not so with Darius. To the Persians fire was sacred and their method was to throw people to the wild beast.

Before Daniel was thrown to the lions the king gave the best encouragement that he could under the circumstances. "Your God Whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." To the king this was only a hopeful statement, but to Daniel this was a true statement.

Verse 17

The stone was rolled against the opening of the pit and sealed in clay with the king's signet mark and that of the high officials. If it had not been Daniel in the den his signet mark may have also been used. Whereas Daniel was a high official now he was a common criminal.

Verse 18

The king himself was distressed about the turn of events. He was grieved that he had to send Daniel to the lion's den. As a result he took no food and had a night without sleep. The king refused anything that might have given him relief from his sorrow. He did not allow entertainment of other diversions to distract his grief. That he had placed Daniel into the lion's den was by far the worst, still he had allowed himself to be deceived by those who he trusted. It is hard for a king to know that he has been made the fool. It may be that he spent part of the night planning the fate of those who had deceived him.

Verses 19-20

When the morning came the king hurriedly went to the lion's den and called out to Daniel. **"Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"** A king has few that he can trust and Daniel was one of those whom the king had confidence. There was probably a strong bond between the king and Daniel. As this seen tells us.

The lions in the den would have been kept hungry as this was their purpose to devour the ones that were thrown into their den. Daniel would have had to survive through the night giving the lions plenty opportunity to do the work they were kept for. The heart of the king was hopeful that the God of Daniel would deliver him. Daniel had told the king that he served a living God and not a man-made god of silver or gold. Now the king came to see if his God was true.

Verses 21-22

Daniel greeted the king in the proper manner and told him that his God had sent a messenger to close the mouths of the lions. Daniel's God had found him innocent as the king should have as well. Daniel had been betrayed by an earthly king but upheld by the King of Kings his God.

Verse 23

The king's heart was filled with joy and immediately ordered that Daniel be removed from the lion's den. There were no marks or injury to Daniel because his God had delivered him by the faith of Daniel in his God.

Verse 24

Then the king commanded that the accusers of Daniel and their family be thrown into the lion's den. The lions made short work of them and at the result there was nothing left of them but their broken bones.

It was a common process in those days that the accused and the family of the accused would suffer the same fate. It is thought that the reasoning was the root of evil was removed as well as the offender.

We see here the comparison between deliverance and judgment. To those who are Gods and are faithful to Him there is deliverance and to those who set themselves against God there is judgment.

Verse 25

Darius wrote as most kings of the day in viewing his kingdom as the whole of the world, although it was smaller than the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. His greeting was much the same as we saw in Chapter 4:1.

Verses 27-27

Darius is telling all his people that they are to honor the God of Daniel. He also states that Daniel's kingdom shall be everlasting. Darius also testifies that the God of Daniel delivered him from the lion's den. This Scripture from the hand of Daniel is leading up to

what we shall see in Chapter 7. There we will see the kingdoms of the world represented as wild beast which Israel will be delivered from. It is important here for us to learn that God is able to rescue His people and able to perform signs and wonders on their behalf. If God's people did not know and believe this then the events of Chapter 7 would be absolutely horrifying to them.

It is obvious that Daniel had a hand in writing this decree of Darius. You can see the similarity in chapter 2:44 and 4:34.

Verse 28

Daniel refers to the king he serves and then the overlord, Cyrus the Persian.

Chapter 7

In this chapter we revisit the four kingdoms and their kings are seen as wild beast. These kingdoms represent the past, present and the future until the rise of the everlasting Kingdom of God which is the fifth kingdom. We shall see the same kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece and the apocalyptic empire.

These empires behavior is that of wild beast in their savagely, irrationally, and immoral actions. While the people of God behave rationally and morally as men created in the image of God. We also see that the Son of man suffers under the beast but in the end is victorious and receives the everlasting kingdom. Through God's intervention good overcomes evil in the end.

We must remember that this is a vision of Daniel and is not always logical and in chronological order. There are two parallel activities that are described here. That of the wild beast on earth and the activities in heaven with respect to the One on the throne and His attendants, which monitor the activities.

Verse 1

Thus far Daniel has been interpreting the dreams of others but now we see that he himself has had a vision through a dream. The dream does not come in chronological order, if it had we would have seen it earlier in the book. The vision is an expansion of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar from chapter 2 and appears now as the assurances that have been given to God's people that He is able to deliver them. Daniel has the vision and then writes in down that it may become a permanent record along with the interpretation.

Verse 2-4

"The four winds of heaven" indicate that this activity is powered from heaven as the winds of God. God in this book has been titled the King of Heaven. (Daniel; Daniel 4:13 4:37, 26, 31) We have seen reference to the four winds before in the book of the Prophet Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 49:36) The four winds of God has worldwide effect and the Israelite people are well aware as they have been subjected to the winds of God before. (Zechariah 2:6)

The four winds of God break in the great sea which is the Mediterranean Sea. (Numbers 34:6-7; Joshua 1:4; Joshua 9:1; Joshua 15:12, 47; Joshua 23:4; Ezekiel 47:10, 15, 19, 20; Ezekiel 48:28) This probably would have stirred fear into the hearts of the Israelites as they saw the Great Sea as an enemy. (Isaiah 5:30) The Great Sea was restless and tossed up mire and dirt. (Isaiah 57:20) Isaiah also uses the sea to describe the roaring and tumult of nations. (Isaiah 17:12-13) For this reason the Israelite people would not have liked anything arising from the Great Sea.

The first wild beast we see is that of a lion with wings of an eagle. The lion is the king of beast and have been noted for their strength. (Judges 14:18) The lion has been noted for their boldness, (2 Samuel 17:10) ferocity, (Psalm 7:2) and their stealth. (Psalm 10:9) The lion which had the wings of the eagle meant that the wings of the beast were strong. This beast would be capable to bring Israel's enemies against them. (Deuteronomy 28:49) The Israelite's may have seen the wings of the lion meaning that it was carried by God. (Deuteronomy 32:11) By the context of the vision this lion would be a fearsome image and come with great strength and stealth and impose a speedy attack.

The Prophet Jeremiah described Nebuchadnezzar as a lion as one coming to make the land desolate and he is also described as a destroyer of nations. (Jeremiah 4:7) The Prophet Ezekiel uses an eagle to represent Nebuchadnezzar as the one who would transplant Israel. (Ezekiel 17:3) Therefore, this coincides with Chapter 2 that King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon are represented by the gold and the lion with eagle wings.

This interpretation becomes more conformed when we see that the lion had its wings clipped which reminds us of the humiliation that Nebuchadnezzar suffered at the hand of God. Following this period of time the beast was given the heart of a man and stood on two feet. This surely signifies the repentance of Nebuchadnezzar towards the Most High and his return to a rational mind and his spiritual growth. Thus we see the swift flying beast became softened and more human like Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 5

Next we see a beast likened to a bear. The Lion and the bear are often paralleled in Scripture. (Proverbs 28:15; Lamentations 3:10; Hosea 13:8; Amos 5:19) This second empire that we see will be only slightly inferior to the first.

It is difficult to fully understand the meaning of being raised up on one side but the word used is "shetar" and translates to mean magistrate. It therefore could mean rulership and be translated as one rulership. The speculation then would fit with two nations coming under one rulership as the Medo and the Persian. It could also mean that one side was higher than the other signifying two nations with one greater than the other. In Chapter 8 we see one horn was higher than the other. These clues lead to the thought of two empires coming together as one. A great charging bear would certainly be the picture of a great army such as that of Medo-Persia.

The bear has three ribs within its teeth which means that the bear is in the process of devouring and displays the completeness of the bears work. Commentators also see the

three ribs representing the three of the nations that the Medo Persians defeated, Lydia, Babylon and Egypt. We may also note the pattern in numbers. In verse 4 we see the two feet in which the lion stood on two feet. In this verse we see the three ribs and in verse 6 we see the four heads. Then in verse 7 we see the ten horns.

We see that the lion was a beast to be greatly feared as was King Nebuchadnezzar who in his insanity became as a best of the field. Later he regained his humanity and again rose to walk on his two feet. He was also given back the heart of a man and was not as fierce as the beast. Belshazzar failed to heed this warning and thus fell to the Medo Persians. In this verse we see the three ribs which represent the succession of the nations that Medo Persia defeated, Lydia, Babylon and Egypt. The four wings of verse 6 represent the rapidness of Greece's conquest and the four heads are the division that the political powers of Greece suffered after Alexander's death. In verse 7 we see the ten horns of the final beast. These ten horns represent the 10 European divisions of political power that grew out of the Roman Empire.

The command to the bear was to arise and devour much flesh. King Nebuchadnezzar rose up on two feet and regained his humanity but the bear rises up and is much fiercer which is a downward step. We saw from the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream the four world kingdoms would deteriorate as they progress. More brutality is a backward step from humanity. Therefore, in the consecutive order of these nations they are becoming more beastly.

Verse 6

We have seen the lion of Babylon, the bear of the Medo Persians and now comes the leopard of Greece. The Leopard has four wings on its back and four heads leading the way. The leopard is a swift moving creature. (Habakkuk 1:8) Liked with the Lion the Leopard is also a fearsome creature. (Song of Solomon 4:8; Jeremiah 5:6; Hosea 13:7) Commentators have noted that the use of the number four indicate the world wideness of the rule of the Leopard. This beast is also given dominion and will have control over the Mediterranean world.

When Alexander died his kingdom was divided between his four generals. Two of these generals were prominent north and south of Palestine. The Generals were Lysimachus who ruled over Thrace and Bithynia. Cassander who ruled Macedonia and Greece. Seleucus who ruled Syria and Babylonia the territories of the east, and Ptolemy who ruled over Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia.

Verses 7-8

The next beast is the worst of the previous three. It was a beast that Daniel could make no comparison of. That the beast had iron teeth as reminiscent of the fourth empire from Chapter two. It also is a beast that devours and it also stamps with its feet the remaining of civilization. This stamping of feet makes it much more fearsome than the bear. This beast is completely brutal in comparison with the other beast.

From this beast will come ten kings as horns represent power and dominion. (Deuteronomy 33:17 1 Samuel 2:1, 10 Psalm 18:2) These ten kings arise from the fourth beast and the kingdoms are diversified. The bear ruled as one kingdom and from the leopard four kingdoms grew but from this last beast 10 kingdoms will emerge. These 10 kingdoms do not remain united.

As the description of this fourth beast moves it becomes more intense. From the ten horns a smaller one arises. Though the horn is small it will behave as if it is large and there is another difference from the ten. ***"While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts."*** Verse 8. Having eyes as a man signifies that it is human in spite of the great claims it will make. There is a pretense here that it gives the impression of being human, being rational and godly and submitting to God but it is a deception. It is a beast but yet is filled with self-pride. It will make great boast for itself and great claims for its future. "Great claims" indicate that his works are above that of God. (1 Samuel 12:24 2 Samuel 7:21, 23 1 Chronicles 17:19 Job 5:9-10 Job 37:5 Psalm 71:9 Psalm 106:21 Psalm 126:2-3 Joel 2:21) We can see that this beast is preparing the final conflict between him as the anti-god against God.

This beast is so corrupt that it begins to destroy itself. The small horn attacks three of the other horns. From the beast very beginning it is a kingdom that loves war. It has now become divided and has no full control over itself. These kingdoms indulge in civil wars and attack each other. (Mark 3:24-26) This small horn will not only attack the other horns but will mercilessly attack the people of God. But the time of this beast is numbered by the coming judgment of God.

This is a picture of a world that is in constant war with itself. It is a world that is in complete rebellion against God and in pursuing its own way. It is a world that is in constant division and at times comes together for brief moments. It at times forms alliances but ultimately comes under the rule of the little arrogant horn.

This fourth empire is the final world empire of the last days which began with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. We may see its beginning as the Roman Empire but it is not just represented by Rome. The Roman Empire divided into smaller empires under a number of rulers. It is representative of empires in opposition to God's rule and will go on until the end of time and takes place in Rome.

Verses 9-10

As the events of the world are unfolding Daniel gives us a glimpse of the activity of Heaven. Here we are given the viewpoint from the heavenly perspective. This is the view from the watchers.

Thus far we have been given the impression that these events will take place without God exercising His will upon earth. But now through the vision of Daniel we are able to see

what is happening from behind the scene. God is an active God and the world is never left unto itself. The events of the world are being observed by the heavenly watchers and as the reports come into the heavenly court they are examined. It is here that judgments are made as God is constantly aware of what is happening to His own.

There is divine order to the vision of Daniel. We have seen the growth of the three beast in verses 4-6. Then came the fourth beast in verses 7-8. Now we see the heavenly court in verses 9-10. The fourth beast is dealt with in verse 11 and the previous three beast dealt with in verses 12.

Daniel continued to dream as another vision came before him. Daniel's vision now changes scenes as he begins to see what God is doing as these events are unfolding. This new aspect of the vision was in parallel with what the wild beast were doing and the view from the heavenly court. Daniel will see the fourth beast dealt with and then move back into time past to see the judgment upon the previous three beast. There are decisions from the heavenly court at different times and the vision moves forward and backward.

In comparison we can look at the vision of John in the book of Revelation chapters 4 & 5, which also speaks of the scene. We see in John's vision that the court is also observing and in continual worship through the ages. We see in the judgment of the seven seals that it is a flowing judgment and the last seal is but the final summation. The judgments of God are not only in the end time but are made throughout all time.

"Thrones were set up," while the world was carrying in the course of evil, yet the heavenly court was being set up. As the earth was in turmoil the heavens were also busy. Daniel observed in his vision the deliberate placement of thrones in order to deal with the evilness of the beast-like kings of the world. There is but One King who sits upon the thrones which may have been set up from the time of this vision, or they may have been set up from the time that man had first been judged. This would explain the words of the watcher in chapter 4:14-17. ***"He shouted out and spoke as follows: "Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; Let the beasts flee from under it And the birds from its branches. "Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, But with a band of iron and bronze around it In the new grass of the field; And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth. "Let his mind be changed from that of a man And let a beast's mind be given to him, And let seven periods of time pass over him. "This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers And the decision is a command of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men."***

This came from the watchers whose decrees determined the events on the earth, which is in response to the tumult of the events on the earth. Here while the world suffered from

the beast there was unity in the heavens as all centered on the One who sat upon the throne.

There are different views here of the thrones. It may be that there are more than one throne but there is only One who is worthy to sit upon the thrones. It may be that the other thrones are awaiting His arrival along with His people.

The other view is that the thrones are all the thrones of the world but only the One who is worthy will take His place upon all of them. It may also be in reference to the majesty of His throne to the many thrones of the earth. ***"For there thrones were set for judgment, The thrones of the house of David."*** (Psalm 122:5)

Others see it as thrones for the heavenly attendants who are not mentioned as to not take men's eye of the One who is worthy to sit upon the throne. There is no other Scripture that would support that thought in the Old Testament. Occupation of a throne in the presence of the holy One would have to be an exceptional person either human or angelic.

Revelation 4:4 was after the Lamb had been slain at which time the people of God could sit upon thrones with the Holy One. ***"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."*** (Revelation 3:21)

Then the One comes and takes His seat in the heavenly court. He is addressed as the "Ancient of Days." Age is looked as one having the greatest of wisdom and therefore worthy to judge, this in contrast to the earthly beast kings who pass away. He is the everlasting One who is the "Ancient of Days" in the heavens. The "Ancient of Days" was before the beginning.

His clothing was white and His hair pure wool. White is the symbol of purity and He is the righteous One. (Psalm 51:7 Isaiah 1:18 Lamentations 4:7) In the heavenly court all is pure and righteous, and eternal.

His throne is ablaze and the wheels are of burning fire. It is the same as the chariot throne of God in Ezekiel. (Ezekiel 1) The fire is of God's glory and His judgment. (Ezekiel 1:4, 13, 27) It is with fire that all evil will be destroyed. Around His throne was a countless number of heavenly beings serving Him and to enact His will. He is the "Most High" and is above all things sitting on His throne where all bow and worship. Full of power and deserving of all glory. Then the books are opened and the truth of them examined by God. It has all been recorded through time. These are the records brought to the heavenly court from the watcher who has recorded all through time. This is not the scene of the final judgment but the continuing judgment during the time of the four beast dealing with one and then the other. But this continuing judgment certainly leads to the final judgment.

This may serve to explain the activities of Chapters 3-6 when the court sent dreams to warn men, when the court passed sentences on the wicked and punished them, and delivered the righteous.

Verses 11-12

We see in these verses that Daniel's vision is a summary of what happens and what has previously happened. We start at the end and see the effect of the words spoken by the little horn. The beast that the little horn is on will be slain. Its body will be destroyed by the fire of God's judgment that we saw in verse 10.

Then in verse 12 we see the earlier judgments of the court. The activity of God in His judgements through the centuries. Their dominions had been taken away by the sentences of the court. But they had been allowed to remain to the end as other empires until the final end of the fourth beast. They had been preserved for a "season and a time," which was determined by God.

This is consistent with chapter 2 where they were destroyed but allowed to continue without a dominion until the destruction of the fourth beast. Therefore their time on earth is extended but there will be no delay in the complete destruction of the fourth beast. Again we see that God's judgment is a continual judgment and not one judgment at the end of time.

Verses 13-14

We catch a glimpse of the time when the three empires had ended. It is a time when "one like the son of man" comes into the presence of God on His throne. In His appearance he is as a man. Unlike the kings who were likened to beasts this one was rational, spiritual and moral, and revealed the image of God. This one like the son of man represents a King and a Kingdom.

He has come into the presence of God to receive dominion, glory and a kingdom. (Later we will learn that the kingdom and the dominion is given to the saints of the Most High. Thus, the son of man is the representative of His people and comes as the Prince to receive His due glory. He will receive the Kingdom and dominion on behalf of His people. We see this one as the son of David and will be the prince of his people and will be ruler of the everlasting Kingdom. (Ezekiel 34:23-24 Ezekiel 37:24-25 Isaiah 9:6-7 Isaiah 11:1-4 Psalm 89:3-4)

"And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming." The beast came out of the sea but this man came from the clouds of heaven. In world turmoil and dirt the beast would arise. (Isaiah 57:20 Isaiah 5:30) But this man was from the clouds. God usually travels from the clouds. (Psalm 18:11-12) This does not imply a full divinity it does imply a special relationship to God, even more so when he receives an everlasting Kingdom.

Upon arrival in the presence of the heavenly court the Prince is brought before the Ancient of Days. It is then he is given dominion, glory and an everlasting Kingdom. He is also given authority over the world.

In this vision Daniel learns that one day the chosen prince of the house of David would come into the presence of God and receive the Kingdom. But to learn who this prince is

we must turn to the New Testament. In the New Testament we will learn the who, the when and the how.

Jesus came using the title of the "Son of man." Jesus was the Messiah but using the title of the Son of man left no misunderstanding of who He was. Jesus was the true representative of man, the second Adam. Jesus also used the title to make the claim that He was the One who would enter into God's presence on the clouds of heaven. (Matthew 26:64)

After the death and resurrection of Jesus He received His Kingship. As we read in Matthew, **"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'**" (Matthew 28:18) The Apostle Peter testified to this on the Day of Pentecost. **"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."** (Acts 2:36)

Stephen confirms with his testimony. **"And he said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'**" (Acts 7:56) The Apostle Paul also shares this news with the Philippian Church. **"For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."** (Philippians 2:9-11) For this purpose that the followers of Jesus would be transferred from the powers of a darkened world to the Kingdom of God. **"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son"** (Colossians 1:13)

In Daniel we see the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven happened after the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. It was then that He received dominion, glory and His Kingdom. It is true that the full manifestation is yet to be seen and the world awaits for this revelation at His Second Coming. Daniel's vision was not a manifestation to the world but the actual crowning of Jesus in the heavens. The Apostle Paul tells the Ephesian Church that the people of God will receive kingship alongside with Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6)

This is the beginning of the destruction of the fourth beast and will be concluded by the appearance of Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:8) When He comes Jesus will receive His own who remain upon the earth and all will be caught up together in the heavens. It is then that the Lord will take vengeance upon the beast and those who have followed him. (2 Thessalonians 1:8)

Once this has happened the people of God will share with their King the glory of His Kingship. (Revelation 3:21) The Christian has received this Kingship in part now. While yet dead in sin Christ has raised them up to the heavenly places with Him. (Ephesians 2:6) This happens while the fourth kingdom of the beast is present but Jesus ever reigns

in Heaven. His full Kingship will be revealed on earth when He comes to defeat and destroy the fourth beast and his kingdom. (Revelation 19:11-16) He is the smiting stone that will bring the fourth empire to its final end.

Verses 15-16

Daniel was greatly troubled by the vision that he had just seen. It was beyond the imagination of any man that day as well as today. The vision was real and lasting upon his mind and he longed for an explanation to its meaning. Daniel approached one of the heavenly beings that were near to him and asked for the meaning of what he had seen. The heavenly being answered and said that he would interpret the vision for him.

Verses 17-18

The heavenly being states that the four kings will arise from the earth not the sea. The idea of the kings coming from the sea was not a literal happening but one that presented ideas. The kings are the most prominent in their kingdoms but they represent the four empires. In verse 23 we will see that the four empires grow from the works of the four kings. Daniel is assured that the people of God need not be concerned of the four empires as they will inherit the everlasting Kingdom. This vision has no reference to the Millennial Kingdom. The four kings are to be recognized as Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Alexander the Great and the Anti-God.

The holy ones of the Most High does not mean the nation of Israel only. The holy ones of the Most High are those who are faithful to God and His covenant and are therefore separated unto Him. They are the ones who receive the Kingdom not by their own strength and power. But once they have received it they will possess it for eternity.

Verses 19-20

Daniel then inquires of his greatest concern the fourth beast. From an earthly perspective this beast has been the emphasis throughout the vision. In this verse we see an added feature to the fourth beast, he has brass claws. The ten horns are of great interest to Daniel and especially the little horn, the one which caused the fall of the three and had eyes and a mouth and spoke mighty things. The answer will come to him but now the vision moves on.

Verses 21-22

Daniel now sees further into the history that will soon unfold. This new vision is not a recap but a furthering advancement. We now see that God's people will be persecuted and it will be very severe. This persecution is also revealed in the vision of the Apostle John in the book of Revelation chapter 19. It is the little horn that wages war upon God's people and he will prevail against them. His actions against God's people is so severe that it appears as if nothing will save them.

It is then that the Ancient of Days comes and deals with this latest evil as He has with the other empires and the prior part of the fourth beast. Now He brings judgment and delivers a right and fair verdict. Once this is complete the people of God will possess the Kingdom.

This is a description of the final stage of the fourth empire and the final actions of the heavenly court and their work will no longer be needed.

Verses 23-27

The fourth beast represents the final world empire and rises from the Mediterranean. It is diverse from the other empires in that it will be broken up as we had seen in chapter 2. Its first appearance is the Roman Empire which expands into multiple empires. From these empires will come the Anti-God. The Anti-God will only destroy three of the empires and is the ruler of a section of the world but not the whole world.

The Anti-God is unlike any before him and carves out an area in the Mediterranean. His empire is complete within itself and challenges the people of God and all that is of God. He puts himself in place of God.

The Anti-God will wear out the people of God leaving them in tatters. He will attempt to change the times, which is the times that God has within His power. (Ephesians 1:10) The Anti-God will change the law which was given to men in the Scriptures. He will be set on destroying all of God's purposes and His truth.

Unlike God who is in control of time the Anti-God will be given time and a half time, meaning the he is not in control of time to be given him. He is unable to know or set the times in which these events are to happen. This is seen in that he persecutes the people of God intent to destroy all but is cut off because he is unknowing of the time of his reign. We see this in Revelation 12:14.

Verse 26

As with all through history God will sit in judgment. God will judge this evil ruler as He has on the previous empires of the world. The Heavenly court will take away the Anti-god's dominion, it will be rid of and destroyed. God is a consuming fire and His judgment will be to the end, that is, forever. Therefore Satan's final attempt to prevail against God will fail and he will be defeated to the end.

Verse 27

After the persecution of the Anti-god comes the blessing of the Lord. Those who have been battered down will be lifted up. Those who have been faithful to God will receive the Kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms of heaven. This is the promise of God to His people. (Ephesians 2:6 Revelation 3:21) The people of the Most High is not the earthly Israel but the faithful ones to God whoever they may be.

Verse 28

From the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the everlasting Kingdom we have reached the end of the matter. Daniel was not at ease and deeply troubled by this vision that had been revealed to him from God. It was horrifying to think what lay ahead for the people of God. It was not an easy privilege from God to receive such a vision.

Chapter 8

This chapter speaks of the rise of the Greek Empire. We also see the resulting evil king who persecuted the people of God bringing about a transformation to the true remnant of Israel. It was a time that the wrath of God against Israel came to an end until the Jewish nation rejected the Messiah.

There is a note here that we must attend to about the small horn. The small horn of chapter 7 represents a different entity than the small horn of chapter 8. Both these horns have been identified as Antiochus Epiphanes who was a king of the Greek Empire and savagely persecuted the Israel nation.

The meaning of a small horn is that they are kings that have arisen later. They have come upon the scene after others have preceded them. There can be any number of small horns depending upon which beast they appear. The small horn of chapter 7 and 8 are presented so differently that to identify them would be to lose their reality. What interpreters have failed to say is that Antiochus Epiphanes is the example of the Anti-god to come.

We are now at a time when the Babylonian empire is in a weakening state and a new strong power is arising. First there was the Medes and then the Persians under Cyrus II who conquered the Medes in 550 BC. Cyrus then conquered Lydia in 547 BC and Babylon in 539 BC. Cyrus then went on to conquer Egypt. Cyrus was followed by Darius in 522 BC. Darius and Xerxes sought to conquer Greece which were made up of several states and was the only area of the world that was unconquered. They had some success but ultimately failed in their conquest.

Then came Philip of Macedon who united the Greeks and was the father of Alexander the Great. (336 BC) Alexander the Great invaded the Persian Empire and delivered the Greeks in Asia. Alexander defeated the main Persian army in 333 BC. Alexander then conquered all of the Mediterranean world and beyond. Alexander died in 323 BC and his weak son was unable to rule the empire, which was divided into four empires. Two of these empires were Seleucids, Babylon and Syria north of Palestine and Ptolemies, Egypt south of Palestine. Both empires maintained their Greek culture.

Ptolemies ruled Palestine for the next hundred years but little interfered in their political and religious affairs until a king named Antiochus III the Great. (223-187) Antiochus gave great consideration to the Jews. Meanwhile a sect of the Jews began to flirt with the Greek gods. It was at this time Hannibal, encouraged by Antiochus, advanced into Greece where he came into contact with the mighty Romans. (192 BC) The Romans pushed him back from Greece and pursued him to Asia and completely defeated him. Antiochus III died and his son Seleucus IV (187-175 BC) began to be meddling to the Jews in their affairs.

Things took a turn for the worse when the reign of Seleucus IV ended and his brother Epiphanes, (175-163 BC) who had been a hostage in Rome took the throne. Under the

threat of Rome and Egypt Epiphanes unified his empire around Hellenistic culture. Therefore, the people began to worship the Greek gods, which Epiphanes declared himself as the manifestation of Zeus. Needing money for his treasury he plundered the temples.

He was a man that the people did not know their standing. He could mingle in their fun and festivities and yet rob their temples. He was known for savage treatment of the people when he thought they were unreasonable.

Dissension among the Jews largely about the ungodly sects that were amongst them meant that they looked to Epiphanes for assistance. This proved to be a huge mistake. Epiphanes sacked Jerusalem and forbade the practice of Judaism. He destroyed the Scriptures and suspended sacrifices, outlawed circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath day. He also ordered the Jews to make sacrifices to the god Zeus.

Epiphanes erected an altar to Zeus in the Jewish Temple and sacrificed a pig, which was an abomination to the Jews. The Jews revolted under the Maccabees and through good generalship, bravery and fortunate circumstances were able to free themselves from Epiphanes.

Verse 1

Daniel make it clear to us that this is a second vision which occurred two years after the first. This vision was not a dream vision but one in which he was fully conscious. He also states that it occurred during the reign of Belshazzar. This is important in that it was during a time of the Babylonian Empire. This confirms the order to the three empires as Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Greek.

Verse 2

Daniel tells us his location at the time of this second vision. He is in Susa the fortress city in the province of Elam. It is probable that he was there on a mission for the Babylonians. Daniel is now a retired governor and would be one well suited for this kind of mission. From here Daniel may have been able to see the power of the Medo-Persians and realized that the fall of Babylon would soon come.

Susa was Cyrus' capital city in the Persian Empire and a huge fortress city. (Ezra 4:9) At this time Elam was a province of either Media or Persia. The Ulai River flowed by Susa and was a canal which joined two other rivers.

Verse 3

Daniel emphasizes that there was but one ram that had two horns and one that was higher than the other. He also tells us that the higher horn came up last. This was a clear description of the Medo-Persian Empire. Cyrus would be the larger horn, as he was over the whole empire, but below him was his ally the Medes. The Medes had earlier been the most powerful. The general that captured Babylon was a Mede.

It is said that the guardian spirit of the Persians was a ram with clean feet and sharp pointed horns. It is also said that when the king stood at the head of his army he carried

with him the head of a ram. Ezekiel described the picture of a ram to denote a symbol of leadership. (Ezekiel 34:17) Rams are not considered as wild beast but still their appearance is fearsome.

Verse 4

This vision is of a successful empire builder who conquers in all directions. He is all powerful and undefeatable. He is one who had attained great power and authority. He pushed forward with his horns and magnified himself much as Nebuchadnezzar in 4:30. This may be a hint as to why God brought the Babylonian Empire down as God hates the prideful. However, the Persian Empire was more favorable to the Israelite nation as they wanted to inherit more religions.

Verse 5

In verse 21 we are told that this he-goat is the Greek Empire, which is to the west of the Persian Empire. Greece was well known as a good source for trade. Greece also had very effective mercenaries for foreign armies. They had been known to supply the Egyptian and Persian armies with mercenaries. The whole earth means the area of the Mediterranean and even now stretching into Europe. By not touching the ground shows the speed of their conquest and the horn no doubt points to Alexander the Great.

Verses 6-7

The quick approach of Alexander and the savageness of his attack on the Persians quickly defeated them. Alexander then overran Syria and Palestine and finally defeated the Persians at the battle of Gaugamela near Nineveh in 331 BC.

Alexander the Great

Alexander III of Macedon (July 356 BC–June 323 BC), commonly known as Alexander the Great, was a King of the Ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon and a member of the Argead dynasty. Born in Pella in 356 BC, Alexander succeeded his father, Philip II, to the throne at the age of twenty. He spent most of his ruling years on an unprecedented military campaign through Asia and northeast Africa, until by the age of thirty he had created one of the largest empires of the ancient world, stretching from Greece to Egypt and into northwest India. He was undefeated in battle and is considered one of history's most successful military commanders. (Wikipedia)

Verse 8

Alexander the Great because of his overpowering military achievements was highly magnified and achieved a godlike status. At the height of his power he died at the age of 33 years. His death resulted in his kingdom being divided into four empires.

These four empires were ruled by the four generals of Alexander's military. Two of the generals were prominent in the Mediterranean to the north and the south of Palestine. It is believed that the empire was split with these generals ruling these respected lands. Lysimachus ruled over Thrace and Bithynia and Cassander ruled Macedonia and Greece. Seleucus controlled Syria and Babylonia and the territories to the east. Ptolemy

ruled Egypt, Palestine and Arabia. The uncertainty is caused by the twenty year period that it took to settle these empires.

The four winds is seen by some as meaning that the winds came from four directions. That would be true if the statement was just the four winds, but, it is the four winds of heaven. The phrase “four winds of heaven” indicate that they are an activity of God, as He is the King of Heaven. Other references can be found in Daniel 7:2, Daniel 4:37. We see the four winds of heaven bringing fierce activity against Elam in Jeremiah 49:36. Therefore the four winds of heaven will have a worldwide effect. The Israelite nation had been spread in all directions by the four winds of heaven. (Zechariah 2:6)

Verses 9-10

From the four horns, the generals of Alexander, arose a small horn. This horn is different from the horn described in chapter 7 verse eight. Here it is a horn from smallness that is growing and rises from one horn and has different descriptions.

Along with this small growing horn will be the return of sacrifices. This horn is not broken by death but by non-violent means of God. This horn will defy God openly. The heart of this horn is self-magnification.

The small growing horn is most certainly Antiochus IV Epiphanes who lived from 175 BC to 164 BC. Antiochus IV Epiphanes ruled the Seleucid Empire which was in Babylon and Syria which is different from the little horn in Chapter 7 that ruled in the end time. This small horn exceeded to the south and east. Antiochus IV Epiphanes campaigned to the south towards Egypt but was halted by the authority of Rome. Antiochus IV Epiphanes also moved toward the east which is Persia and Armenia.

The “Beautiful Land” means the land of God and His people. This term is referenced in Jeremiah 3:19, Ezekiel 20:6 and Zechariah 7:14. Here we see the lawlessness of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The “host of heaven” can mean the sun, moon and stars and their connection to the gods. (Isaiah 34:4 Jeremiah 8:2) It could also mean the Angels in the court of God. (Nehemiah 9:6)

Antiochus IV Epiphanes thought of himself to be a manifestation of the god Zeus and thus made him over the host of heaven. He was known for his robbing of the temples and treating all other gods with great contempt. He was well known for his sacrilegious attitude towards the gods but the Israelites knew him as blasphemous towards the one and true God. Any who believed in gods other than Zeus was persecuted by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. If Antiochus IV Epiphanes thought there was a way to benefit himself he would even persecute the followers of Zeus and rob their temples.

The “host of heaven” could also mean the people of the God of Heaven. Where in verse 11 we read that he magnified himself to be above the “Commander of the host.” Also in verse 12 the “host will be given over” to the horn, which is Antiochus IV Epiphanes. We also see in Daniel chapter 12:3 that the people of God shine like the stars in heaven. As

we will see in the next two verses that the people of God are trampled down in their mistreatment and persecution.

Verses 11-12

This verse seems to confirm that Antiochus IV Epiphanes magnified himself even over the Commander of the host, which set himself against God and those who worshiped Him. The Commander of the host is referenced in Joshua 5:14 as the Captain of the host. The word for Commander or Captain is SAR which means a head person, captain, chief (captain), general, governor, keeper, lord, master, prince, ruler, steward.

The “taking away” was their acts of worship to God. The Sabbaths, feast, offerings and sacrifices. By Antiochus IV Epiphanes forbidding the acts of worship and the reading of the Scriptures and the ultimate desecration of the Temple he took away from God what was His.

“His sanctuary was thrown down” is that the Temple was desecrated and the altar was replaced with an altar for Zeus and therefore the whole of the Temple was useless for the worship of God. The stars, God’s people were also cast down to the ground in verse 10. The Temple was cast down in verse 11 and the truth was cast down in verse 12.

At this time there was much sin and apostasy in Israel and this gave the evil forces an open to have Antiochus IV Epiphanes cast the people of God down because they had transgressed against God and had also transgressed against Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Because of this the people were being turned away from the truth by the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes who prospered during this time of evil. God’s judgment will come upon him and all who were evil.

Verse 13

We now see a conversation between the holy ones, probably angels. The question is for them how long this devastation will last? Another way to ask this question is to ask how long will this vision last? How long will the Sanctuary and God’s people be trodden under foot? How long before God will justify all that is happening? We see the answer to be two thousand three hundred mornings and evenings before God will justify the books.

The desolation could be the time when the High Priest Menelaus was appointed. He was not from the priestly line and was not a true priest of God. Menelaus stole the Temple vessels and used them for his own purposes. He also slew the true High Priest who was sacred before God. Thus the daily sacrifices ceased and desolated the true Israel.

The two thousand three hundred mornings and evenings presents a challenge in meaning. It could mean 2300 days using the mornings and evenings of Genesis 1. It also could mean 1150 evening sacrifices and 1150 morning sacrifices which have been stopped because of the persecution. The latter idea could be used as an accurate indication for the time that there were no sacrifices.

If it does mean 2300 days, then it is an equivalent time for the five times and a half in Daniel 7:25. “He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.” This would be a time of more than 6 years but less than 7. Seven years is 2520 days and 2300 could be that time rounded off to not reach the perfect 7 year period because God has prevented it.

Verses 15-16

Daniel was wanting to understand the vision that he had just seen. It was then that he heard the voice of a man perhaps coming from above the water of the river which told the Angel Gabriel to reveal the truth of the vision. The voice came not from an ordinary angel but could have been the one dressed in linen in Ezekiel 9:2. This angel was so powerful that he could declare the end of time, Daniel 12:7, and could mark men for judgment. (Ezekiel 9:2)

Verse 17

Daniel was overwhelmed by the presence of Gabriel and he fell down to his face. It was the voice from the river and the Arch Angel Gabriel that made Daniel aware of the presence of God. Gabriel addressed Daniel as a son of man expressing his humanity and weakness. It was also to show that Daniel was one of the people of God.

Gabriel then addressed him as ‘son of man’, a title suggestive of weakness and humanity, and, in the context of Daniel, of one of the people of God. The interpretation does lead us to think of this vision as an end time vision. But we can also see it as a vision for the near future from that time of Daniel. Daniel’s vision first refers to the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire. It then moves to the Greek Empire. The vision then moves to the end time and the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes and the desecration of the Temple and ends with making the Temple righteous. The fourth empire has not yet come up the scene so the purpose of the vision is to bring us up to the end of the vision, the “time of the end.” The concentration of the vision is not on the sweep of history but on the final phase of Antiochus Epiphanes. This is the time that the vision belongs to, the end time.

Verses 18-19

Daniel lying on the ground face down under the overwhelming effect of the supernatural appearance of the Arch Angel Gabriel was touched by Gabriel which brought him into control of his members. Daniel now regained his strength to receive the revelation from Gabriel.

The vision reveals that God’s indignation had not ceased with the return of his people from exile. That had failed to repent and return to true worship of God and be transformed into a holy nation. Their tribulation had continued through the Medo-Persian period to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This being the latter time of the indignation and moving to the end of time. All of this is in the control of God. The result of Antiochus IV Epiphanes persecution brought on the new era of Israel’s purification. Thus this is in preparation for the second coming of the Messiah. This is also the time of the rise of the fourth kingdom

of the last days. It began with Rome and has continued in different forms ever since. The time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes are seen as the pivotal moment.

Verses 20-22

These verses confirm what we have seen thus far of the vision over a span of 300 hundred years. But what we are reading in these verses are leading up to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Verse 23

Now at the latter time of the Greek Empire, at a time when the transgressions of the Israelite nation have reached their fullest, the one spoken of now arises. "A king of strong countenance, and understanding riddles, will stand up." This King is none other than Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He is a hard man with a hard countenance and an unyielding spirit. (Deuteronomy 28:50)

Antiochus IV Epiphanes believed himself to be as a god if not god. He saw himself as a wise man and able to understand the things of gods. This arrogance displeased the Israelites which infuriated Antiochus IV Epiphanes towards the Israelite people. He was a master of deceit and sent a general to Jerusalem and slaughtered many Jewish people on the Sabbath.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes believed himself to be as the god Zeus and thus Zeus was operating through him. Other commentators say that it was God who enabled him in order to chastise His people for their disobedience. None the less it is God who allows these things to happen according to His purpose and plan. Much as the Assyrians and Nebuchadnezzar before him. God had used them as His rod of anger. (Isaiah 10:5) The latter is the more likely thought that was in Daniel's mind.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes is all powerful and is successful in all that he does. None could stand against him and his exploits until the end of his time when he was meat by the Romans. Antiochus IV Epiphanes was not only a mighty warrior but he was able to attack the people of God. That act would lead to his eventual downfall. Antiochus IV Epiphanes was the first real persecutor.

Verse 25

Antiochus IV Epiphanes will have great understanding of his cunningness and deceit by which he will be victorious and reap great wealth. He is a man that cannot be trusted as his focus is on only his self and the power that he can wield. Antiochus IV Epiphanes will view himself as a deity and the ruler of all nations. He will come as a friend but devour as a great foe.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes will stand against the true God and desecrate the Temple of God, ban the practice of circumcision, will not allow worship on the Sabbath and will destroy the Holy Scriptures. But he will meet his own destruction by the hand of God as he is destined for death. Many will fear him but God has him in the control of His hand.

Verse 26

Only a set period of time will remain after the desecration of the Temple. The Jew would have a hard time believing that the Temple of God would once again be desecrated or that God would allow it to be so. But this vision of Daniel's clearly show that these things will come to pass. But this vision is set aside for a time long in the future from their day but is near upon us in our day.

Verse 27

This vision that Daniel had received was of such burden causing great exhaustion that he was ill in his body. So much so that he was unable to carry out his duties for the king. Daniel must have spent much time trying to understand what the Lord God had shown him through this astonishing vision. It is possible that as he tried to explain his vision to others they found it too large for them to grasp and were unable to comprehend it.

Chapter 9

Verses 1-3

In this verse Darius the Mede is called the son of Ahasuerus. This is a name that is applied to royalty in the Medo-Persian Empire and there is no reason Ahasuerus should not be identified as the father of Darius the Mede. Daniel also states that he is the seed of the Medes which refers to the place of his birth and not the kingdom which he rules.

Darius was an under-king ruling the kingdom of the Chaldeans under the authority of Cyrus. Daniel only speaks of his first year of reign which may mean that he died before reaching the second year of reign. It is also noteworthy that Daniel within two years dates his writings in recognition of Cyrus beginning in Chapter 10. There is very little historical fact to give us much information about Darius.

Daniel possessed books and one of them was the writings of Jeremiah in whole or part. Daniel most likely had other parts of the Old Testament as well. It is probable that he had the Book of Deuteronomy. Daniel knew that the prophet Jeremiah had said that Judah's captivity would be for 70 years. (Jeremiah 11:25) Daniel's prayer that follows was plainly influenced by the writings of Jeremiah and the book of Deuteronomy. In his prayer Daniel uses the name YHWH which is found nowhere else in the book of Daniel.

Daniel had been in Babylon since 605 BC which was 66 years and now would have been eighty years of age. As a result Daniel would have felt that God's time was surely near. Daniel set himself to prayer in great earnest. With repentance and humility, fasting and sackcloth

He 'set his face', suggesting firm intention and perseverance. The Lord who is God had promised and He must do it. Note the signs of repentance and humility, fasting, sackcloth.

Verse 4

God was publicly known in Babylon as the God of heaven but in private God's name was YHWH. Or, it may be that as Daniel read the work of Jeremiah he was reminded of the name of God. Daniel has not used this name for God until now in his book but uses it

often in this chapter. YHWH is the name used for God in the covenant and it may be that Daniel is mindful of the covenant that God has with His people. Neither does Daniel take his fellowship with God lightly and maintains a proper fear of the Lord. We ourselves often fail to have proper fear and respect when approaching God in prayer. Daniel approaches Him as the “Great and dreadful God” who would allow His temple to be destroyed because of the sins of His people. (Deuteronomy 7:9)

Daniel’s hope lay in the belief that the God of the covenant would show mercy towards those who were faithful towards the covenant. God is faithful in that He responds to those who are faithful to the covenant commandments. Thus, by their obedience they show that they are truly His people.

Verse 5

Daniel identifies with the people as he expresses the many sins of the people by listing their offenses. Daniel includes himself as well as none are more aware of their sin than the truly righteous.

Verse 6

The Israelite people had added to their sin by not listening to the prophets that God had sent in His name. (Jeremiah 7:25) Verses from Jeremiah indicate where Daniel had gotten his ideas but he must have had memories of their sin from his youth.

Verse 7

Daniel identifies God as the righteous one and that God was just in His dealing with Israel. Daniel states that he knows that God had done all that was possible to turn the people back to Him. God’s people could only avoid their gaze upon the Lord for they had failed their Lord God completely.

Daniel as the king’s administrator he sees Israel in three sections, Jerusalem, Judah, and Israel. Where ever the Israelites were now they would not be able to look God in the face. They all have broken His law and done the things that they should have not. The evidence of their disobedience is seen in the fact that they have been scattered throughout the nations.

Verse 8

Again Daniel repeats his confession of the people’s sin that they all are ashamed before Him. All are responsible for their sinful behavior.

Verses 9-10

Daniel recognizes that YHWH is the faithful and forgiving God of His people. This is because God’s mercy is enduring because of His compassion towards His people. If this was not true of God then His people would have been completely destroyed. They had not listened to the law explained to them by the prophets and therefore were without excuse.

This same prayer of Daniel is true for us today, as we all have fallen short of the glory of God. Like Israel we have rebelled against the Word of God.

Verse 11

Because they have broken the law of God and refused to listen to the prophets of God they have been cursed with these trials and tribulations. God had given them warning through His prophet Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 44:22)

Verse 12

The destruction of Jerusalem was in fact a confirmation of the Word of God. It was His judgment upon His people so that they would know He is God and will do what He promises. This is the reason that this great evil has come upon them. (Jeremiah 35:17 Jeremiah 36:31)

It was not only Jerusalem that was destroyed. Other cities in Judah were lost as well. But Jerusalem was the dwelling place of God and they had lived there with God. Therefore when God allowed the city to be destroyed the Jewish people had lost everything.

Verses 13-14

Daniel acknowledges to the people that they could have turned from their sin and sought the favor of God, but they had failed to do so. They had refused to seek the truth of God's Word and an understanding. Daniel reaffirms that all the evil that has come upon the people is of their own doing. That God is a righteous God and His judgments are just.

There is nothing that the Israelite people could do to earn deliverance from the judgments of God. That would require favor and mercy from God. One cannot receive God's favor without repentance, a return to obedience in His law. A responsive faith and obedience always go together.

Verses 15-16

Daniel now declares God's deliverance of His people from the Egyptians and that it had made an enduring name for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Daniel confesses that he and the people deserve nothing from God. Daniel appealed to God to show His mercy that the approach of the people round about towards the Israelites and God might be shown false. Daniel states that God should show His mercy for the sake of His Holy name and not for the sake of an undeserving people.

Verses 17-18

Daniel now prays for the faithful of the exiles in consideration for the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Sanctuary. Their thoughts and prayers were for the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple in belief that the work of God could not move forward without them. It was not for their purpose that the name of the Lord might be vindicated. Their hearts were heavy that without restoration Israel would not again be able to rise to greatness. They were not listening to the Prophet Ezekiel that the purposes of God to establish is heavenly Temple on a holy mountain far away from Jerusalem and far holier. (Ezekiel 40:2 Ezekiel 45:2-8)

Daniel's plea to God for the restoration of the Temple and the city were not on the bases that they deserved it but that of His mercy. Daniel wanted again for the Lord to shine on

the city and the Temple making it once again His dwelling place. Daniel felt confident that once the Lord looked upon the city and Temple in its ruins He would be moved for His own name's sake. The hope of Daniel rest fully on the mercy of God. Jerusalem was known throughout the nations as the city of the Holy God of the Israelite.

Verse 19

In this verse we see the growing fervency of Daniel's prayer. He pleads for the Lord to forgive, listen, act, and not to put off the work for His names sake. It was not so much for the welfare of the people or for himself but for the reputation of the Lord. Daniel believed that the Lord must act and restore the city and Temple and His people for the vindication of His name.

Verses 20-22

Daniel here summarizes his petitions unto the Lord. Daniel had not only confessed his sin but that of the Israelite nation. Daniel had also prayed fervently for the restoration of the Israelite lands that God had given to them through the covenant of Abraham. Daniel also wanted to see the Holy City of Jerusalem restored and the Temple of God rebuilt so God could once again dwell with His people. The restoration of the Israelite nation and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple was the ultimate hope of Daniel. Daniel's reference was to the Prophet Isaiah who say the dead being resurrected to a new life on this earth. (Isaiah 26:19) Daniel also knew from the prophet that the wicked would face their destruction in the valley of Hinnom, which is on the outskirts of Jerusalem. (Isaiah 66:24)

The angel Gabriel now appeared to Daniel. He appeared as a man and thus Daniel calls him a man. Gabriel had appeared to Daniel before in Chapter 8 and now has returned. Gabriel is an arch angel of the Lord and is sent to deliver the messages of God. Daniel describes Gabriel as flying in weariness. As Daniel addresses him as a man he may view his capabilities as a man. This may have been Gabriel's appearance but this would not have been the case, as the meaning of the name Gabriel is "God is my strength."

We can assume that Daniel had been in prayer throughout the day and now was the time of oblation. Daniel makes note that it is now very late in the afternoon just before sunset. This would have been the time of oblation, the time to make evening offerings to the Lord at His Temple, if he was in Jerusalem and if the Temple was standing. The time of Oblation was a time of worship and prayer even though it was no longer possible to offer sacrifices. In Chapter 8 Gabriel touched Daniel to prepare him to receive the vision, so the use of touching again could mean that Gabriel is again preparing Daniel for the message he has from God.

Gabriel had come to make Daniel to understand his words from God that would follow.

Verse 23

Gabriel first assures Daniel that from the beginning of his prayer God had already sent forth His word of fulfillment. God's answer came quickly not because it was a long day of prayer but that God is gracious towards a faithful beloved servant. The word going forth

sates the power of God's Word. God makes His decree and sends it forth that His will shall be done according to His plan and purpose.

Long prayers filled with rhetoric are not what God sees or hears. God sees the heart and knows what our intentions and motives are and His dealings with us are in that context. Jesus made this clear in Matthew 6:7-8. In his prayer Daniel had not wasted his effort. His prayer brought him closer to God and now he would learn what God is going to do in the future.

The Seventy Sets of Seven

Daniel 9:24-27

The Seventy Weeks are a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ, the Anointed Messiah. The seventy sets of seven begin either with the decree of Cyrus (538BC; Ezra 1:1-4) or with one of the decrees of Artaxerxes. (458 or 445 BC; Ezra 7:8-26; Nehemiah 2:1-10) The death of Christ occurred at the end of 69 sets of seven. The seventieth set of seven is a time yet to be fulfilled. If the decree given to Nehemiah to rebuild the city of Jerusalem is the starting point, then there were very nearly 483 years (69x7) between that date and the death of Christ. With Christ's death occurring at the end of the 69th set and the seventieth set is yet to be fulfilled. There is now a long gap between the 69th set and the 70th. The 70th set is still in the future and is during the reign of the Antichrist during the tribulation at the end of time. (2 Thessalonians 2:5-12; 1 John 2:18-22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 1:7; Revelation 13:1,5; Revelation 16:13-14; Revelation 17:11; Revelation 19:20-21; Revelation 20:10)

Verse 24

Here the seventy sevens are seen as a time to make right Israel and God. This would be a time when the city of Jerusalem and the Temple would be rebuilt which would happen in the first set of seven. Jeremiah had said that the captivity would be for seventy years and Darius allowed the Israelites to return and rebuild. But this time is also making the way for a full and final restoration to bring the whole world into a right relationship with God.

The seventy sevens stand in contrast to the seventy years of Jeremiah's prophecy. All that will happen will be in God's timing according to His plan and purpose. Thus the full and final deliverance will happen according to God's will and not that of man. Gabriel is explaining that the seventy years of Jeremiah is a limited time and the completion of God's plan will happen by His divine intervention. The seventy sevens would be required for God's complete plan to come about. In the Bible the number seven is the perfect number and are seen here as divinely perfect time periods. The divinely perfect time periods would be in harmony with the perfect will of God.

It would be a small interpretation to think that this vision refers to only Israel. The full purpose of God is that Israel would be a blessing to the nations. (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3; Jeremiah 3:17; Zechariah 14:8-9) Israel was not born to be unto itself but to fulfill the purpose of God that the whole world would be blessed through her. (Genesis 12:3) Israel

was to be a kingdom of holy priest according to the covenant made with Moses at Mount Sinai. (Exodus 19:6) God created the heavens and the earth and therefore has a universal view, not just a view of one small tiny nation. Israel was formed to be a benefit to the whole world. The law that God placed upon His people was to be for the sake of the whole world.

We see six purposes of God for the seventy sevens. "To finish the transgression." Since the dawn of man's creation transgression against God's Word has reigned. Man has continued to rebel against God's Word and now it is to be restrained. Our God is longsuffering but at His appointed time the transgression will be brought under control, it will be imprisoned and finally dealt with.

"To make an end of sin." At a point in time God will seal up sin. (Job 14:17) Once sin is sealed up God will bring the actions of men into account. This probably has in mind the binding of the Evil One and ending the power of sin over men's lives. This could only be effected if the debt of sin were to be paid in full. (Hebrews 9:26) God is able to transform lives through the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18) allowing men to be blameless before God. The final outcome for sinful behavior would be dealt with by God's mercy and judgment.

"To make atonement for iniquity." This would require a reconciliation for the sins committed so that man could come to God and be received without the shadow of past sin. (2 Corinthians 5:19; Ephesians 2:16) Removing man's transgression would break down the barrier between God and man.

"To bring in everlasting righteousness." The stain of sin would be forever removed before God as men will live in perfect righteousness. (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 2:21) This is the accomplishment of the perfectly Righteous One who came in the name of God. He gave His righteousness to men by sacrificing Himself for the sin debt of man. (Romans 5:17; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

"To seal up vision and prophecy." This states that God's plan is complete and we no longer will be looking to the future fulfillment.

"To anoint the most holy place." The anointing is a new dedication to God, all will be set apart for Him. This could mean the anointing of the everlasting King and the Holy Sanctuary in the heavenly Jerusalem. (Exodus 40:9; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21) This prophecy will be completed upon the return of Jesus Christ.

Verse 25

The Word went forth to restore Jerusalem and the Temple in response to Daniel's prayer. This began with Darius who sent the people back to Judah to rebuild the Temple. That would also include the building for those who were responsible for the Temple. This work began by decree of Cyrus in 538 BC. (Ezra 1:2-4) Nehemiah was sent in 445 BC to fortify the city by the rebuilding of the city walls. (Nehemiah 2:8) This constructive work on

Jerusalem did happen in times of trouble as Israel did still have their enemies. At one point the work was suspended. (Ezra 4:21-24)

It was the authority given to Nehemiah to rebuild the city that got the progress back on track. We can see the hand of God in assuring that the work would go forward according to His plan.

Verse 26

We see here that the anointed one, the prince, is the Son of God Jesus Christ. Compare this verse to the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah gives us a picture of the anointed one who came to proclaim the truth to Israel. (Isaiah 49:1-6) The anointed one will be charged falsely and tried, He will be spat upon and shamed publicly. (Isaiah 50:6; Isaiah 53:7-8) Yet, He continues to set His face towards His destiny. (Isaiah 50:7) He will suffer as the sacrifice for the sin of the world. (Isaiah 53:3-5, 8, 10-12) As a man of sorrows He remained faithful to the will of the Father. (Isaiah 53:10) after His work was finished He was exalted and has the Most High place. (Isaiah 52:13)

All of the prophets of the Old Testament were looking for the coming of the anointed One. (Isaiah 11:1-2; Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 55:3; Hosea 3:4-5) They also knew that the nation of Israel would turn away from Him. (Zechariah 13:7) But they knew that in spite of this the purpose of God would be accomplished.

Verse 27

The First Half of Daniel's Seventh Week

The last week in Daniel's vision is known as the "Great Tabulation." It is the 70th seven of the 490 year period. The prophetic clock stopped at the "Cutting off" of the Messiah at the crucifixion of Jesus. Before the tribulation period begins the Church of Jesus Christ has been called out. As the Church is indwelt by the Holy Spirit the restraint of the lawless one has been removed. The clock starts again when the prince confirms a seven year agreement with the many allowing Temple worship once again for the Jewish nation. The word "confirm" in Hebrew means to have strength and power. Thus the agreement will be effected by the use of force. Military might is the only way the lawless one can enforce his rule. In the Book of Revelation chapters 6 through 9 speaks of the first 3.5 years of Daniel's 70th week.

In these chapters in Revelation we see the events of this time period. In Heaven Jesus is sitting upon His throne. It is He and only He that is worthy to open the seals which will affect the events transpiring on earth.

The first four of the seals describes a time of false peace which will be followed by war. During this time $\frac{1}{4}$ of the earth's population will be lost. During this time the world will suffer nuclear war and the effects of its aftermath. All those who come to a faith in Jesus Christ will lose their life for that faith. There will also be great geological and cosmic disturbances.

Also during the first half of the seven year tribulation the Jews who had rejected Jesus as the Messiah will suddenly realize that He is the true Messiah and begin to proclaim the Gospel message. (Revelation 7:1-8) Two prophets will stand in the streets of Jerusalem proclaiming God's judgement upon the earth. (Revelation 11:3-7)

War breaks out again and another 1/3rd of the world's population is lost. Water and food supplies are destroyed by cosmic asteroids and comets striking the earth. Great earthquakes will shake the foundation of the earth. These events correspond with the blowing of seven trumpets by seven angels in Heaven. All the while the two witnesses warn the world of these judgments from God. By this point in the Great Tribulation more than half the world's population has perished.

At the Midpoint of the Great Tribulation

The prince who has come breaks the agreement when he places an idol in the Temple and proclaims himself to be god. (2 Thessalonians 2:4) The two witnesses are killed. (Revelation 11:7-9)

At this time in Heaven, and unknown to the inhabitants of earth, Satan will be cast out from his position in heaven along with his fallen angels and are cast down to earth. (Revelation 12:7-9) Satan then indwells the prince who becomes the beast. (Revelation 13:4) This is the little horn in Daniel 7:8. His efforts are now to destroy the Jewish people and any who worship other than himself. He will enter into the Temple and set up an image of himself and demand that all the world worship him.

Jesus warned the people that when they see the abomination of the Temple to flee to the mountains. (Matthew 24:15-16) A select group of Jews flee and are preserved by God's providence from Satan's plans to destroy them for the next 3.5 years in the mountains.

Even so the rage of Satan grows stronger as he knows that his time is short. Satan will unite the world under one economic system. Only those who are under the control of this system can conduct business of buying and selling. Complete worship and support must be pledged to the beast before being admitted into the system.

The Last Half of the Tribulation Period

Satan is enraged further that the Jewish people have escaped to the mountains and assembles all the nations to march against them. All the surviving inhabitants of the first half of the tribulation must pledge allegiance to Satan but God in His mercy sends three angels to warn the world against receiving the mark of the beast and that they should worship the Creator alone. (Revelation 14:6-13)

Those who fail to worship the Anti-Christ and place their trust in the Christ are killed for their faith. But their spirits are seen in Heaven. (Revelation 15:2) From Heaven seven angels come with bowls containing the wrath of God poured out upon the earth.

It is then that God's wrath is poured out. Those who chose to worship Satan and pledge allegiance to the Anti-Christ, received the mark of the beast, are filled with painful sores. All living creatures of the sea and the rivers die. The sun scorches the earth and all

inhabitants. Those who are left are gathered together for battle against God in the battle know as Armageddon.

Chapter 10

Verse 1

Being that this is the third year of the rule of Cyrus it is noted that Daniel had not returned with the exiles of Judah and Jerusalem.

Again Daniel receives a vision from God by His word. God's Word is truth and Daniel emphasized this point by identifying himself by the name that he was known by in the kingdom, Belteshazzar. This would allow the readers of what Daniel had written to be received with the authority of a high ranking official in the kingdom.

God revealed to Daniel the vision of great warfare. The warfare that Daniel saw was a supernatural war that parallels with the warfare on earth. Daniel also states that he was able to understand this vision without the insight of angelic assistance.

Verse 2-3

We do not know why Daniel was mourning. Perhaps he had heard of the terrible times the exiles were having upon their return to the home land of Judah. Or he may have still been upset over the previous vision of Chapter 9 and was praying that God would show His great mercy upon the people. Whatever it was and serious as his prayer and fasting was it lasted for three whole weeks. Daniel avoided meeting with other people and his diet was of plain food along with water. With the emphasis on the foods that he avoided we know that he did not go completely without nourishment.

Verse 4-6

He we may have another glimpse into why Daniel was involved in prayer and fasting. The first month would have been Passover season and Daniel may have been upset because he was not able to observe the festival. Probably because the facilities were not available. The Passover would have been over on the 21st day and now it was the 24th day meaning that the Passover was finished.

Walking by the rivers seemed to be a past time with Daniel as we have seen previously in Chapter 8. Now we see him walking along the banks of the Tigris River. While walking Daniel lifted his eyes to see a man clothed in linen whose loins were girded with pure gold. This same man also appeared to Ezekiel. (Ezekiel 9:2-3) We also see him appear in the Gospel of Mark at the time of the resurrection. (Mark 16:5) This is a being of great authority an angel of high rank. Compare the description of this beginning with that of the Son of man in Revelation. ***“And in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.”*** (Revelation 1:13-15) The descriptions

are similar but not exact and therefore, this was a high ranking angel but not of the authority of Michael or Gabriel. His voice was that of great power, as a roar and crescendo and had great impact.

Verse 7

The men with Daniel may not have seen the vision but the fact that they ran in fear means that they saw something. The sight of which caused them to flee. Because of their unwillingness to stand with Daniel they missed the great vision that he received.

Verse 8

Daniel was left alone to stand in the presence of this mighty being. Certainly a heavenly being as he made Daniel to realize how corrupt he was. This the Prophet Isaiah experienced when in the presence of God and felt completely undone. (Isaiah 6:5) Daniel as well lost all strength in the presence of such holiness.

Verse 9

Daniel had fallen to the ground as the man began to speak with the sound of the roar of the spirits voice. Daniel went into the unnatural swoon of a deep sleep. Daniel was overwhelmed by the presence of the spirit.

Verse 10

Daniel was then taken by the spirit and lifted to his hands and knees but the power of the holiness of the spirit prevented him from being able to stand. Daniel was too weak to stand and was before the spirit on all fours as a beast. This was a position of complete humility.

Verse 11

The spirit exalted Daniel and told him to rise and at his command Daniel was able to rise although still trembling. In the exhortation of the angel Daniel was told that he was greatly beloved by God. This would be the highest honor that a man could receive from God.

Verses 12-13

In Daniel's three weeks of fasting and prayer he most likely spent time to consider the full meaning of the vision that he had already seen. This along with prayers for God's mercy upon the people. This was a time in which Daniel humbled himself before his Almighty God. Daniel was told that from the first day of his prayers he was heard. God never fails to hear the prayers of the righteous when they approach Him in humility.

We must note here that there is a period of time between the prayer and the answer to that prayer. It may be a short period or a long period but God will answer our prayers according to His time. We cannot think like God and our simple solutions are never as grand as His. We pray and live in our short vision but the God we pray to is eternal and His vision is eternal. The answers to our prayers will always be accordance to the plan and purpose of God.

God had sent the angel immediately to Daniel with His word but there had been a delay. The angel had been delayed by another angel who may have been watching over Persia

and thought the word sent to Daniel was not helpful to him. The angel sent from the Lord though delayed persevered and now had arrived to speak with Daniel.

Prayer is our most powerful and effective tool. We are not to misuse prayer as Jesus warned that its use is not for our personal gain but for the expansion of God's work. Jesus told us that we do not need to ask for our needs as God knows our needs even before we do. (Matthew 6:8) There are a lot of prayers offered that are selfish in intent and motive. Our command is to love God and our fellow man and our prayers are to be of praise towards God and that which benefit the community of man. Our prayers, if we are praying with the vision of the Kingdom of God, will have a larger vision. When Jesus prayed it was for the exaltation of His Father's name, the advancement of the Kingly rule, and fulfilling the will of the Father here on earth as it is in heaven. We all would do well to follow His example.

We also learn from this verse that there is much angelic activity in the world about us that we know little or nothing about. There are those who pray to angles and even worship them. But this is foolishness on their part. Angels are God's instruments and heed his voice only. We also see that the angels of the beast are at work against the heavenly angels of God. It is there purpose to oppose all that is contrary to God's plan and purposes. They are angels who follow Satan and are busy in encouraging man to live in a sinful manner. But there are angels of God who support the purposes of God and also support the children of God behind the scenes. We are told of in the book of Hebrews of the work of the ministering spirits. ***“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?”*** (Hebrews 1:14)

We must not read too far into this verse that every nation has an angel administering to it. As most nations and the world are evil. But, God does send his angels to minister to the righteous mission of His will. Satan will send his angels to minister to the defeat of all righteousness.

As we see here that Satan had sent an angel to ensure that Persia behaved as he wanted. Satan is the prince of this world and it was for this reason that he could offer Jesus the nations if He would bow down and worship him. (Matthew 4:9) This was not just an idle boast of Satan, as the nations of the world are evil. Satan exercises power and control over the nations through the use of his angels, as the minds and hearts of man are pointed in that direction. The gods and false idols they worship are tempted and guided by the minions of Satan. (1 Corinthians 10:20) The spiritual war rages in the heavenly places and have through all of time. (Ephesians 6:12)

These evil forces do not have total control over the nations of the world. God the Creator is the supreme deity as all was created by him. Even Satan himself has to obey God's Word. From this mighty angel that is speaking to Daniel we learn was helped by the Arch Angel Michael who sent this one on his way. He was delayed by an angel of Satan and Michael came to his aid. Therefore in the power of God Michael was able to set right

Satan's evil attempts to divert the purposes of God in Persia. There are some who believe that this angel that visited Daniel was the angel of the Lord but this cannot be so as he had limited power and needed the assistance of Michael. The Apostle Paul tells us that Satan's angels work to blind the eyes of men to the truth of God's Word. Because of this men cannot see the glory of God through His creation and result to worshipping idols made by the hand of man. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Verse 14

The purpose of this angel is to make Daniel understand the vision he had received. The vision concerned the later days of the fourth kingdom and continues to the end of time. Daniel is assured that this is not immediate but will happen in time to come. When the exiles returned to Israel their hopes were high that they had finally had found peace. This vision was a warning that this would not be a lasting peace for the Israelite nation.

We first see an implication of the latter days in the book of Genesis when Jacob warned his sons of the events to come. (Genesis 49:1) We are not told the length of the later days only that it will approach at a distant time.

Verse 15-17

Daniel immediately felt the impact of the angel's word. He was unable to speak and he bowed his head. The angel had the appearance of a man but he was not a man but a messenger of God. Throughout the visions of Daniel he has made it clear that he was dependent upon the help of the messenger. As the messages that he received took a toll on Daniel physically and mentally. Therefore Daniel needed the touch of the angel to give him strength to speak.

Verses 18-19

Again the angel touched Daniel and he was renewed. The angel reaffirmed that Daniel was beloved by God and told him not to be afraid. Again the angel told Daniel to be strong, a repeat from before for greater emphasis. He told Daniel that he would need to be very strong. As the angel spoke Daniel's strength returned to him. Daniel asked the angel to give him the message that God had sent him with.

Verses 20-21

The angel asks questions to get Daniel's thinking in order to receive the vision that is about to come. It is also necessary for Daniel to know that there are greater powers at work accomplishing the purposes of God. As well there are powerful forces to thwart the plans of God. Daniel is told that once the message has been delivered the angel will return to battle against the evil forces working in Persia. The angel must also after his work in Persia go to Greece and battle the evil forces there. These visions, the ones before and the one to follow will also involve great battles in the heavenly places.

The prince of Persia and the prince of Greece are minions of Satan and they work to ensure that these nations behave as the beast that they are. This mighty angel and the Arch Angel Michael are working to thwart the plans of Satan and his minions. Their efforts are to aid the returning exiles to aid in the rebuilding of the Temple and cause the enemies

of this project to stumble. They will also give aid to Nehemiah in defending the city of Jerusalem and rebuilding the walls. They will give aid to all the people of Israel both in the north and the south. And they will give aid in the fight against Antiochus.

Now Daniel understands that there is help for the people of Israel to guard against their enemies. There is help for the people of God to accomplish the purposes of God for them. Now Daniel knows that God is in control and he has sent his forces to protect His people. With this knowledge Daniel will be better able to understand how the people of God will be affected by this powerful spiritual activity.

Against the angel there is none who can make strong against him and Michael. It is supposed by this statement the he and Michael have legions of angels at their command. Michael is the great prince who stands for the protection of the true people of God. Not all Jews were true in the following of God but to those who were they were the responsibility of the Archangel Michael.

Chapter 11

Verse 2

Now the angel speaks more of the truth of the things that are to come. They are the words of truth because they are the Words of God who is ever present and knowing of all that is to happen according to His plan and purposes.

The four kings which would come from Persia were Cambyses, Smerdis, Darius Hystapsis and Xerxes. The fourth king, Xerxes, would be the richest of the four. Xerxes will also be the most powerful and would stand up against the opposition of Persia. This verse shows that the Persian Empire will grow to its maximum power and causing the invasion of Greece. That invasion was a measure that would enhance the Greek Empire. This is not only a lesson in Persian history or a foretelling of future events but a fulfilment of the purposes of God. This is a depiction of the steps that must come in order to bring about the fourth empire.

Xerxes had to be the fourth king as he was the only one strong enough to invade Greece. There were Persian kings that followed Xerxes but they were not irrelevant to the purpose of God.

In 480 BC. Xerxes invaded Greece with a very large army. He was unsuccessful and never recovered from this invasion. His land forces subdued Greece to the Isthmus of Corinth and laid the city of Athens to waste. Xerxes' navy was defeated by the Greek navy at the Battle of Salamis. Xerxes retreated leaving a general behind to see to the withdrawal. The following year the General, Mardonius was defeated by the Greeks and there combined forces at the battle of Plataea. All following attempts to defeat the Greeks was ineffective and Persian was unable to promote future attacks.

Verse 3

The vacancy of power was filled by Greece. A mightier king arose who was known as Alexander the Great. Alexander was given great and wide powers and authority and was able to exercise his will as he pleased.

Alexander conquered most of the known Ancient World rapidly. He overran the Persian Empire and moved even further east than their borders. But Alexander died at a young age while in Babylon in 323 BC. He had two sons named Hercules and Alexander who were murdered while they were at a young age as well. This led to the kingdom being divided up between his generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy who reigned over Palestine and Egypt.

Verse 4

With Alexander dead and his sons murdered the four generals divided his kingdom up. They formed a united world power but it was unsustainable. The two generals who would concern the Israelite nation were Ptolemies who would be the king of the south. The king of the north would be Seleucus. Both of these kings had their hearts set on Palestine.

Verse 5

The king of the south, Ptolemy, was one of Alexander's most powerful generals. He declared himself King of Egypt in 304 BC. He was very ambitious and grew his kingdom into Cyprus, Asia Minor, and Greece. His dynasty ruled from Egypt until 30 BC.

Seleucus, another powerful general of Alexander, was given authority over Babylon in 321 BC. But he was betrayed by another general named Antigonos and had to flee and sought help from Ptolemy in the south. With the help of Ptolemy Seleucus was able to regain control of Babylon. In this sense he was the prince of Ptolemy. From that time Seleucus' kingdom grew much larger than Ptolemy's to include all of Babylonia, Media and Syria. His rule began in 321 BC. His dynasty lasted until 64 BC.

Verse 6

Ptolemy died in 285 BC. His son took the throne. His minister of finance in Egypt owned much land in Palestine and land east of the Jordan River. These lands were considered land belonging to the crown and would have passed to the king of the north. Seleucus was assassinated in 281 BC. And his son Antiochus took the throne. In 262 BC. He died and his son took the throne and held power.

Ptolemy II of Egypt and Antiochus II of Syria were bitter enemies. They formed an alliance through the marriage of Ptolemy's II daughter to Antiochus II. When Ptolemy II died in 246 BC. And Antiochus II divorced his daughter and took back his first wife Laodice. This allowed him to marry his second wife's daughter Berenice. Laodice then punished him by poisoning him and taking the throne for herself making alliances with her supporters. Laodice also had Berenice and her infant son murdered along with those in her court who came from Egypt with her. Therefore Laodice could fear no repercussions. Then the son of Laodice Seleucus II gained the throne and began his rule in 246 BC.

Verse 7

All of this treachery did not set well with Berenice's brother Ptolemy III who marched from the south to go against the army of Seleucus II. He seized their fortress and placed them under his control.

Verse 8

The measure of his victory was that he took their gods and their temple furniture. The people of Egypt were jubilant at this victory. After a period of years left Seleucus II to stand alone and made a treaty with him.

Verse 9

Seleucus II broke the treaty and went to the kingdom of the south and attacked around 240 BC. He was unsuccessful and retreated back to the north.

Verse 10

Seleucus II had a son and named him Seleucus III who took the throne at his father's death in 227 BC. Not many years later he died in 223 BC. His brother Antiochus III took the throne and these were the kings of the north. Both Seleucus III and Antiochus III desired to restore the Syrian Empire and Seleucus III attacked Asia Minor. Later Antiochus III attacked Egypt at their fortress which was probably Gaza which gave him control of Palestine. Antiochus III did not attack Egypt itself just their outer control. But he did drive the Egyptians back to their border with Israel.

This military action placed Israel under the control of Syria which was crucial according to the prophecy of Daniel.

Verse 11

Ptolemy IV angry at what had happened to his northern border came out with a large army to recapture his lost lands. He came out with infantry, cavalry and elephants and attacked Antiochus III at the southern borders of Israel. He was victorious at the battle of Raphia in 217 BC.

Verse 12

Ptolemy IV was successful but he was not aggressive enough to take advantage of his victories. But the land of Palestine was under his control.

Verse 13

Having been driven back out of Palestine Antiochus III raised another large army. Hungry for victories he sought to conquer in different directions. He moved to the east and the north and found success. As a result his army became all the more powerful with much weaponry. He formed an alliance with Philipp of Macedon. He then returned his attention to the lands of Palestine.

Verse 14

Antiochus III was now a big league player on the world stage. He probably had intelligence from the dissidents of Egypt along with mercenaries. With this resource he had gained a

powerful force. When Antiochus III went in to Jerusalem he was welcomed by the people and allowed them to renew their old rights.

Verse 15

Ptolemy V succeeded his father Ptolemy IV and sent one of his best generals to oppose Antiochus III of the north but was defeated at the headwaters of the Jordan in the land of Dan and finally surrendered at Sidon. Even as Ptolemy IV had sent his best to fight they were not able to withstand the onslaught.

Verse 16

This battle between the northern and the southern kings was devastating to the Israelite people. But as Antiochus III secured his victory over the southern forces then showed favor towards the Israelite people. In this verse the “land of desire” was Israel.

Verse 17

Antiochus III offered his daughter to Ptolemy IV with the attempt that she would corrupt him. His daughter Cleopatra saw it to her advantage that Egypt would be her home and therefore aligned herself with her new husband Ptolemy IV and remained faithful.

Verse 18

Antiochus III then marched to the coastlands of Asia Minor and attracted the attention of Rome. Although he did not enter into the territory of Greece Lucius Scipio Asiaticus of Rome drove him back into Asia Minor and defeated him at Magnesia in 190 BC. He sued for peace and the terms were humiliating. He had to yield all the lands of Asia Minor except Cilicia and surrender his war elephants and navy. He also had to return the important refugees and send hostages to Rome, one of which was his son Epiphanes. He also had to pay a large tribute and for this was killed by angry citizens while robbing the temple of Elymais in 187 BC.

Verse 19

Prior to his death and because of his weakness in battle he had to deal with descent back in his own homeland. He had to recapture fortresses in his own lands and regain control of his own kingdom.

Verse 20

The elder son of Antiochus III Seleucus IV took the throne at his father’s death. Faced with the heavy tribute to Rome he taxed the people of Israel and his people so heavily that his prime minister had him poisoned. Seleucus IV did not die from angry mobs of protestors, as his father, nor did he die in battle, rather he was poisoned.

Verse 21

At the death of Seleucus IV the throne would have rightfully gone to one of his sons. One son Demetrius was sent to Rome as a hostage for the release of his other son Antiochus. Antiochus was a master of deceit and who had control of the forces of the king of Pergamum saw the opportunity to threaten these forces against the leaders of Syria. By this action he secured the throne with the approval of the Syrians.

Verse 22

All opposition to Antiochus IV was swept away as he marched with an overpowering army. The Israelite High Priest opposed him and is referenced as the “priest of the covenant.” The High Priest Onias II was in Antioch on affairs of the state when Seleucus was assassinated. Antiochus IV disposed of Onias II by selling his position to his brother but was outbid by Menelaus. Onias II was thrust aside but was still recognized by the faithful in Israel.

Verse 23

This was not the end of Antiochus IV treachery against Israel. He had a general of his slaughter many of the Israelites on the Sabbath after professing to have come in peace. Antiochus IV was always ready to win a friendship and then follow it with betrayal when it was beneficial to him.

Syria at this time was a small country but Antiochus IV was still able to expand his power base. The “small people” in this verse may mean the Hellenisers who were not large in numbers but this allowed him to be accepted there.

Verse 24

The fathers of Antiochus IV won their victories on the battlefield. But this was not his way. He would enter into the wealthiest and greatest parts of the land and distribute bribes and gifts to win favor of those who held the strongholds. Deceitfulness was the art of Antiochus IV and once a party was wooed he would extract his desires from them.

The compliancy of peaceful people was also another opportunity for Antiochus IV. When the people thought the least of a present danger it was the most dangerous time to have Antiochus IV around.

Verses 25-26

When Antiochus IV felt that he had all the winning cards he again marched a large army to the south to attack Egypt. He was able to fight all the way to the Nile Delta before the Egyptians knew of his advance. Antiochus IV had already from deceptive means had bribed many in Egypt that they did not oppose him. Thus he was able to advance far into their land before the Egyptians took notice of his presence. By these treacherous tactics Antiochus IV was able to defeat Ptolemy VI large army. In fact he was routed. Though Antiochus IV had the smaller army because of his deceitful ways he was able to gain the victory. There is a great correspondence to the tactics of our adversary, Satan, and what the world will see in the end times.

The defeat of the Egyptians caused them to depose their king Ptolemy VI and place his brother Ptolemy VII on the throne. This lack of loyalty to the crowned king caused a civil war in Egypt.

Verse 27

Antiochus IV and Ptolemy VII met to offer each assistance and Antiochus IV offered help against Ptolemy VII rival. Even though the rival was Antiochus IV himself. They both met

to offer help to each other although the intention of each was just the opposite. They were both dishonest and there was no truth between them. Whatever their plans were together they would fail as the time of Antiochus IV end was already appointed by God.

Verse 28

Antiochus IV venture into Egypt was mostly successful and he returned home with much plunder. News had reached Israel that Antiochus IV had been killed and Jason entered into the city and killed many of the Jews. However, the reaction in Jerusalem caused him to have to flee into exile.

Antiochus IV heard of these events and decided to teach Israel a lesson for their disobedience. Antiochus IV attacked Jerusalem and killed many of the people. Then with the help of Menelaus he went into the temple and looted it. Now he was a man marked by God.

Verses 29-30

Now we see the beginning of the end for Antiochus IV. He thought again to attack Egypt and moved as far as the city of Alexandria in 168 BC. From there he met the power of the forth empire which had destroyed his father, the Romans.

The “ships of Kittim” are from Cyprus in which the Roman fleet would have sailed from. The Romans would have been led by Gaeus Popilius Linus who had sailed to Egypt to prevent the activities of Antiochus IV. Egypt had possibly made a treaty with Rome and therefore they had come to their aid. When the Romans met Antiochus IV they demanded that he withdraw and with no other option he did.

Egypt had clearly made some kind of treaty with Rome. He met with Antiochus IV and demanded that he should withdraw and did so in a humiliating way. He had no doubts that Antiochus IV would do so. Antiochus IV returned home and vented his anger on the Israelite people.

Now Antiochus IV threatened by Rome and Egypt who at times looked towards their northern border he determined to unify his empire. He proposed to adopt the Hellenistic culture, including the worship of the Greek gods. He declared himself to be the manifestation of Zeus, he sought every means to build up his treasury, and plundering the temple as a means of accomplishment.

Dissent from the Jews, mostly about the Hellenistic culture and who should be the High Priest looked to Antiochus IV to answer these questions. Antiochus IV had appointed Menelaus as the High Priest who had promised to ensure that culture would change to Hellenistic. In Jerusalem a gymnasium was built for the purpose of Greek religion and many Israelites had participated in this activity. This shows that between the Israelites there was a divided loyalty, those who favored the Hellenistic culture and those who abided in the Mosaic Law.

The Hellenistic culture at first seemed to take hold but then faded. Antiochus IV then saw the people as obstinate troublemakers. Thus he determined to force his will upon the people and increase their tax as well.

Antiochus IV sent a general to Jerusalem who approached in a friendly manner and then took advantage of them on the Sabbath. He looted and burned the city and killed many Israelites. He did this in the name of supporting the Hellenistic culture. He built a fortress in Jerusalem to contain the stolen treasure from the Israelites. He enforced the king's rule that the Judaic religion was now forbidden to be practiced. Copies of the Scriptures were burned and outlawed the practice of circumcision and no longer could they observe the Sabbath. Plus they were to offer sacrifices to the god Zeus.

Verse 31

The General of Antiochus IV set guards at the Temple and built an altar unto Zeus. It was then that they sacrificed a pig at the altar which was the abomination of desolation. This was a horror to the Israelite people. Thus, this was the end of the regular Temple worship to the Lord. There were no more Sabbaths, the celebration of the feasts, and the morning and evening sacrifices. This all was now forbidden and anything that might be connected with it. Jesus used the same picture when He was describing the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14)

Verse 32

Jerusalem at this time was divided between the faithful and the unfaithful. Those who were not strong in their faith with the Lord God were shaken and fell away. They were tempted by the means of bribery and promise of political advancement. Those who remained faithful were destroyed by force.

The persecution of the Jewish people spread throughout the whole of the land. If they practiced the covenant law of circumcision it was punished by death. Their Scriptures were burnt and they were forced to make sacrifices to Zeus. It was a time that the Hebrew people had never before seen.

But the faithful went into hiding so that they would not have to give way to the evil that was now present in their land. Those who had been complacent in the past now realized the effect of this evil presence and now resisted also. They repented from the wicked way and their faith grew stronger in God. Where they had not resisted before they now thought only to resist.

They went out amongst the people and encouraged them to resist also. They taught from the Scriptures that they would be reminded of God's Word. Many found renewal in their old beliefs and their faith was strengthened towards the Lord. The old Israel was being revived as not before. But there was a price to pay for their new found faith. Throughout the land there were daily executions of the faithful. Many were buried alive, some were thrown into prison and others were placed into slavery. Those who would be caught teaching the people would be put to death.

Verses 34-35

Many will die in this time of severe persecution for their faith in God. It will be a time when a little help will come from God but not like the help that He had given to Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Many will come to them and try to turn them away from their faith and some will abandon God. But most will remain strong in their faith by the testing of the persecution that has been brought upon them. As a result they will be purified and made white. (Righteous) The faithful will endure as they have placed their hope in the Lord.

Verse 36

It will be that the king of this time will be unrestrained to do as he pleases. He will magnify himself above all the gods of the earth. Till now we have been referencing Antiochus who was a bogus king during the time of the time of the end of the indignation against Israel. Now the Scripture speaks of a true and great king that will rule during the end of the indignation against the people of God at the end of time. The great kings of the north and the south had been humbled and now there was a new great king to be humbled.

The king of the past had exalted himself above the false gods of this world. This new king goes further and exalts himself above the God of all gods. This king is challenging the authority of God the Most High. He is a god ***“Who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”*** (2 Thessalonians 2:4)

The indignation of Israel was removed from the remnant by the purification of the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. At the end of day the indignation of God will be removed through the persecution of His people. As the Israelite people faced their persecution in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes the Church of Jesus Christ will face persecution before the rapture and the seven year tribulation. We see this happening even now in this day.

Verse 37

This king of the end time will have no regard for any god or respect for any cult. He will magnify himself above all and the world shall worship him. He is the great Anti-God that we see in Revelation 17:11,13,17 and Revelation 19:19.

Verses 38-39

He will form his kingdom and rule with might and power. All men must look to him and they must offer unto him the most precious of things. He is a man of great greed and will amass great wealth for his own glory. He will be as a god that no man had known before as there has been none like him before him. Those who honor him will be given the reward of status. They will have positions of authority and lands of their own.

Verses 40-41

These verses may signify the violence and warfare of the forth empire, the apocalyptic empire. It is the empire that is under the influence of Satan himself. Everything and every person is under his control with the exception of God’s people.

Verse 42

All the countries of the Near East will be subject to him. This may be seen as the three horns that were rooted out by the little horn, Egypt, the Libyans and the Ethiopians will be under his steps.

The nations that mass together to destroy Israel that we see in the prophecy of Ezekiel show that Jordan and Arabia are not participants in that conflict. Here in the book of Daniel we see that is also true. But the remainder of the Near East, including Egypt and Libya do participate. In the book of Ezekiel the nations that come against the people of God come from the remote lands of the world. Neither is God's people living in walled cities or cities with great defenses. Their protection comes from God and therefore they are untouchable. This is a picture of a world under the control of Satan whose primary enemy is the people of God who he cannot attack and destroy. (Revelation 20:7-9)

Verse 44

The god of this king is fortresses and he will war until the end. Satan's kingdom is also divided and there are wars within his own lands as well with the people of God. He is able to hold to what is his but in the end he is not able to avoid his conflict with the people of God. He positions himself between the sea and the holy mountain of God.

This is the site where the last great event of the earth shall take place. (Joel 3:2, 12; Isaiah 2:3; Zechariah 14:2) This is the site where Satan will be in his final defeat. (Revelation 19:11-21)

Chapter 12

Verse 1

During the time we see spoken of in chapter 11 verses 40-45 the little horn is rampaging throughout the world. It is at that time the Archangel Michael who is charged with watching over God's people to protect them. Michael is one of the two angels named in the bible and his description is found in Jude 1:9. We also find Michael leading God's army in Revelation 12:7. It is Michael's responsibility to intervene against the evil angels and prevent them from the final misuse of God's people.

This is the time of the final assault and it will be the end of the world as we know it. There is no future for the world apart from that which will be of the resurrected and those who have been delivered to the everlasting Kingdom. (Ezekiel 37:25-28) This is the time in which Jesus spoke of in Mark 13:19. It was a reference to the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD but also the end time when the tribulation would be greater than ever before or ever since.

This time of trouble is different than that of the destruction of the Temple that Jesus spoke of in that it would not be a local conflict but global. It is also a final conflict between good and evil and speaks of invasions and warfare brought on by Satan. This is a conflict between the people of God and the evil forces of Satan and the scripture here primarily speaks of the effects upon God's people.

Those whose names are written in the Book of Life will be delivered. Those who have died in Christ their deliverance is by resurrection and for the living it is a full deliverance. At the end of this time of intense suffering will follow a time of intense blessing.

This is the time that the heavenly stone shall strike the statue causing it to collapse, Chapter 2:34-35 and the Son of man will come and receive His Kingdom and enter into His glory. (Chapter 7:14) This is also the time that the saints of the Most High will receive His Kingdom as well. Chapter 7:27 There are no details given for those who are the unbelievers. Neither is there mention of the millennial reign of Christ and from the Old Testament view this is the ultimate end.

Daniel would only be thinking of the forefathers and the remnant of the Jewish people who had proved faithful to the Lord God. He shows no concept of the spiritual Jews, the Church of Jesus Christ or the Jew who came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Either he was not aware or it was not part of his vision. (Galatians 6:16) The Christian is grafted into being sons of Abraham. (Galatians 3:7,29)

The Book of Life is the record of the righteous. (Malachi 3:16) This book can be in comparison with the Lamb's Book of Life. The record of those who are chosen and redeemed by God through Christ. From this book no name can be blotted out. (Revelation 21:27)

Verse 2

This is a clear teaching of the resurrection. For those who sleep in the dust will rise and this is the hope of the righteous. Daniel's use of the word may mean that the number of the resurrected will be without number. This gave the Israelite people great hope as death was not an end. This number include the multitudes from all nations. (Revelation 7:9)

Some of the resurrected would rise to their shame. Their bodies would be cast into the rubbish heap on the outside of the city Jerusalem were they would be burned and the maggots would ever feed upon them. This contrast is between the faithful and the unfaithful. Those who know and served the Almighty God and those who had rejected Him.

Jesus spoke of a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous. Both point to another world where the righteous would spend eternity with the Heavenly Father and the unrighteous would be excluded from this place, the Kingdom of God.

Sleep is the term of death that all men face. But it is not an end for any as all will face the judgement for their deeds done in the flesh.

Verse 3

We see here in what state the righteous will appear. The wise, the ones who have accepted God and lived according to His covenant will have a glory as bright as the sun. To those who have brought others to a faithfulness in the Lord God. Their faithfulness plays a great part in the work of turning many to a knowledge of God. Those who do not

share the truth of God hinder His work and are as the unfaithful. They had shown as stars giving light in a dark world and now they would shine as stars forever.

Verse 4

The meaning here is not that this book should be read before the end time but that the prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. Also the book can now be shut because the giving of the prophecy is now complete. The end itself will reveal the truth of these writings.

The through that many will run to and fro is that many a man seek to know the truth. He searches the world over but never rally finds it. The reason that they do not find the truth is because they do not turn to this book of the Holy Scriptures.

Verse 5-6

It is believed that these other two were attending angels of the one clothed in linen and were witnesses of the oath. To signify the importance of the angel in linen was that it's he who was above the waters. This may signify that this river which was the source of life for this area was under his dominion. The two attending angels asked a simple question, how long until these events would be fulfilled?

Verse 7

The angel clothed in linen was a mighty angel but not an almighty one. He had the authority to swear on the name of the Everlasting One and he answers with for a time, times and a half. This is not a perfect time as in the number seven but indicates that the time will come before the eternal purposes of God are complete. The angel himself had no copntrol over the time but it was in the will of God when this time should come to fulfillment.

Though the time is set that it will happen when the power of God's people are broken in pieces. Then the promises of Chapter 9:24 will be accomplished and then the resurrection will follow. The raising of both hands to God by the angel indicates that the time is in the hands of God only.

In Revelation 10:5-6 the indication is that the time is the finishing of the mystery of God. In Revelation it is revealed what was to happen to God's people. The breaking into pieces of the holy people is the attempt to destroy the people of God. It will be a time of persecution and suffering in an attempt to break their faithfulness to God. This persecution demonstrates the importance of God's people to Him. These people were of course in Daniel's day the faithful Jewish people but it continues on to this day the spiritual Jews of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Verse 8

This vision was terrifying to Daniel and he was concerned for the people of God. Thus he wanted to know the final result and what would happen to the people of God.

Verse 9-11

The vision is now sealed and Daniel cannot receive the information that he seeks from the angel. As we have read the vision is sealed until the end of time. There are two

purposes that are revealed to Daniel for these events that are to come about. One is that the righteous will be purified by the tribulations. (Isaiah 1:18) The other is that they will be refined by their suffering for the faith and their obedience to God's Word. (Romans 5:3-5)

Those who have rejected God's Word will continue on in their wicked ways and will lack understanding. But the wise will have understanding even as they go through this time of suffering. There is an end to the time of tribulation, the time of when the Sabbaths are taken away, the sacrifices and offering are no longer given, and the other regular rituals of Temple worship. From the time of the abomination of desolation of the Temple there will be only 1290 days until the end events.

Verse 12

In this verse we see a month and a half added to the 1290 days. Some commentators see this as a time for building up the fortifications to the holy city. If this is so then the faithful will have to persevere for a time longer than expected. But at the end of this time, the 1335 days will come the blessing from the Lord. Either way the days of suffering are numbered by God. The point being that if you come against the people of God you will go no further.

Verse 13

In this closing benediction from the angel Daniel is told he has completed his work. He may now leave with the satisfaction that he has served the Lord faithfully. He is to go on to the end of his time and then will be given rest. At the appointed time he will be resurrected to enjoy his destiny as a star that shines for ever and ever.