

*God Is Still In
Control*

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DANIEL

Lesson 1—The Setting, The Times and The People

Key Verses

- 1:8—"Daniel set upon his heart that he would not defile himself."
- 4:17—"The Most High is Ruler over the realm of mankind." (Also 5:21)
- 7:13-14—"...to Him (Son of Man) was presented before Him and to Him was given a dominion, glory, and a kingdom... (sovereignty)"
- 10:17—"... so that there is no breath in me..."
- 12:13—"But as for you, go your way to the end... then you will enter into rest, and will rise again..."

Why The Subtitle—"God Is Still in Control!"

- 3:23-30—He rules over flames, kings, and golden images on the Plain of Dura. "There is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." (v.29b)
 - 6:19-23—He rules over irrevocable laws and injunctions, dens of lions, and pagan-minded commissioners.
 - 7:9-22—He rules over Satanic beasts, all enemies of the righteous, and every high court which dares raise its hand or voice against the Sovereign Lord Almighty.
1. The Almighty God exercises power and dominion over every power—domestic or foreign, God-fearing or pagan, earthly powers or underworld powers.
 2. The two grand sections of Daniel (historical—1:--6) and the prophetic (7:-12) demonstrate the in unmistakable measures that God exercises His power and will over all contemporary happenings and future events.
 3. Although the purpose of this "exile" under a ruthless and pagan regime was punitive and disciplinary just as God had been prophetically promising for centuries, it would also prove redemptive both for the Jews and for the ultimate kingdom purposes that He would accomplish.
 4. Given the fact that God was in total control of world circumstances then, in every age, the hand of God still accomplishes His purposes for His ultimate ends.

Three Study Resources Follow...

1. A Timeline of Israel and the World from the Zondervan Study Bible of the period.
2. A Map of the Neo-Babylonian Empire where these events took place.
3. Charts on the Chronology of Daniel and the Structure of the Book.

Daniel, The Man and The Author

1. He was taken to Babylon in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim (606-605). And Daniel lived there until his death around 536. He spent his life, from being a teenager until death under the entire Babylonian "captivity".

- a. The Deportations to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar
 - i. 605 B.C.—The first deportations of Jews... this is when Daniel was taken.
 - ii. 597 B.C.—Ezekiel, the prophet, king Jehoiachin and 10,000 Jews deported. (see 2 Ki.24:14) (Daniel was by this time a high official in Babylon)
 - iii. 586 B.C.—Most of remaining Jews taken, except the poorest in the land (2nd Ki 25:12), the 11th year of Zedekiah (Je. 39:2 & 40:1-6. Jerusalem is destroyed. (2nd Ki. 25:10)
 - iv. 582 B.C.—a final and more minor deportation takes place. (Je.52:30)
2. Daniel was renamed Belteshazaar—(1:7) Along with three of his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (known to us as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego). Because they demonstrated both the life-status and aptitude to be trained in Babylonian ways—literature and language, etc. They would be key leaders in managing the vast amount of people from Judah that would be brought to Babylon. These pagans could change their names but not their loyalties.
3. Eventually Daniel would be made over the province and other chief governors under two emperors of Babylon and one of three presidents under Darius the Mede.
4. While there has been a great controversy over the authenticity and timing and authorship of Daniel by the liberals, Ezekiel (a contemporary) and Jesus Himself validates the authorship of Daniel. (see Mt.24:15)
 - a. Most conservative scholarship dates the book near the end of Daniel’s life around 536 B.C.
5. Daniel and Ezekiel were contemporaries. Daniel was deported in 605 B.C. and Ezekiel not until 597 B.C., eight years later. It would be around 5 years later before Ezekiel would start preaching. He preached and prophesied among the exiles, while Daniel’s ministry was focused in the palace among the royalty of the land.

The Plan and Purpose of the Book

1. Since Daniel live out life during the entire 70 year captivity, he provides insights to the working and developments of some of the far-away kingdoms God used to administer the long-promised discipline to Judah for her sins, which resulted in the purging finally the idolatry from the Jews. This sin had plagued them from their days in Egypt and the Exodus.
2. This book first show that loyalty to God is possible in a pagan culture under different rulers and international regimes.
3. The prophet tells of terrible trials yet to happen in Judah, even though the most prominent citizens of the population, the people of any means at all, had or would be soon brought to Babylon. Terrible happenings would still occur “back home” in Judah. Even after a re-settlement, to come years down the road from Daniel’s time, the horrors will still continue. (See Da.11:31)
4. The book provides a prophetic timeline of God’s plan for both the re-settling of the Jews to the land after 70 years of captivity (See Je. 29:10-11), and the future arrival of the Messiah to establish His own unique and eternal kingdom.
5. The book was written in two languages: Hebrew (1:1—2:4a & 8:1—12:13) and Aramaic (2:4b—7:28) Aramaic was the international language of the region in the 6th century.

The Background Leading Up To The Captivity (From Paul Butler, p.10-11)

1. Hezekiah, (715-686) in the line of David was a good king who initiated a reform, but which was short lived. (2nd Chr. 29-31)
2. Manasseh, (607-642) his son, set up idolatrous images in the land, even in the temple. (2nd Chr. 33:7) Although he repented toward God in the end of his life, it was too little, too late.
3. Amon (642) became king and was so wicked, he was assassinated.
4. Josiah (640-609) comes to the throne (2nd Chr. 33:21-25) and while working at a restoration project in the temple, the book of the Law was found and began a major reform. But he met his untimely death at the battle of Megiddo. (2nd Chr. 35:20-37)
5. Jehoahaz (609) was the people's choice for king, but was dethroned by Pharaoh Necho.
6. He was replaced by Jehoiakim, (609-598) Jehoahaz's brother. (Habakkuk and Jeremiah prophesied during this time) This king is the one who burned Jeremiah's scroll.
7. At the battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.) Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon) defeated Pharaoh Neco and the 70 year captivity began. (Je. 25:1-12 & Dan. 9:1-2)
8. Jehoiachin (597) (Jehoiakim's son) became king and lasted only 3 months, before being carried off to Babylon.
9. Zedekiah, (597-586), a third son of Josiah was made king, but his rule was terminated in a horrible fashion by Nebuchadnezzar (2nd Ki. 25:4-7) The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed here.

Divided Kingdom

1 Ki 12-2Ki 17

KINGS OF ISRAEL

- 930-909 Jeroboam I
- 908-886 Baasha
- 885-874 Omri
- 874-853 Ahab
- 852-841 Joram
- 841-814 Jehu
- 793-753 Jeroboam II
- 752-742 Menahem
- 752-732 Pekah
- 732-722 Hoshea

722 FALL OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

586 Fall of Jerusalem

Prophets of Israel

900

800

700

600

500

400 B.C.

- 910-869 Asa
- 872-848 Jehoshaphat
- 853-841 Jehoram
- 841-835 Athaliah
- 835-796 Joash
- 792-740 Azariah (Uzziah)
- 750-735 Jotham
- 735-715 Ahaz
- 715-686 Hezekiah
- 697-642 Manasseh
- 640-609 Josiah
- 609-598 Jehoiakim
- 597-586 Zedekiah

KINGS OF JUDAH

930-913 Rehoboam

740-681 Isaiah

626-585 Jeremiah
605-585? Obadiah
Ezekiel 593-571

605-530 Daniel

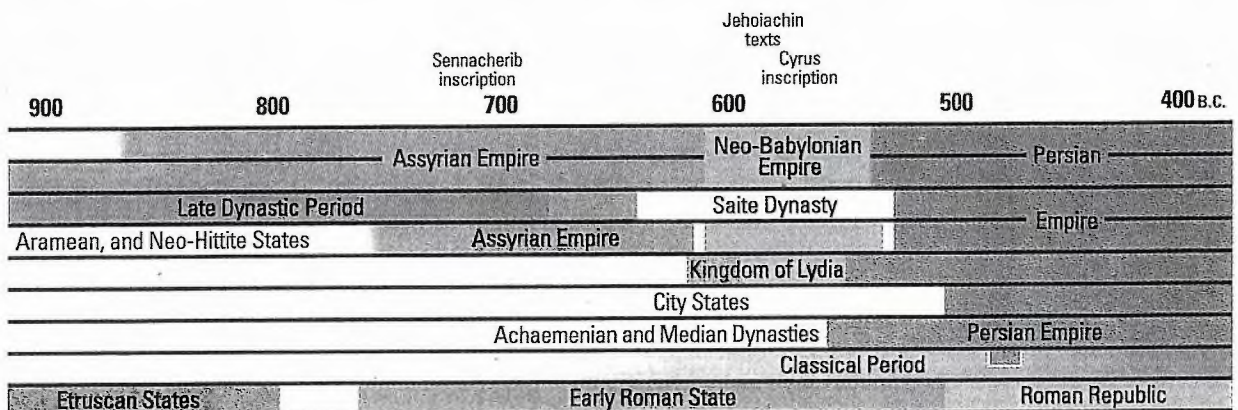
520-480 Zechariah

440-430 Malachi

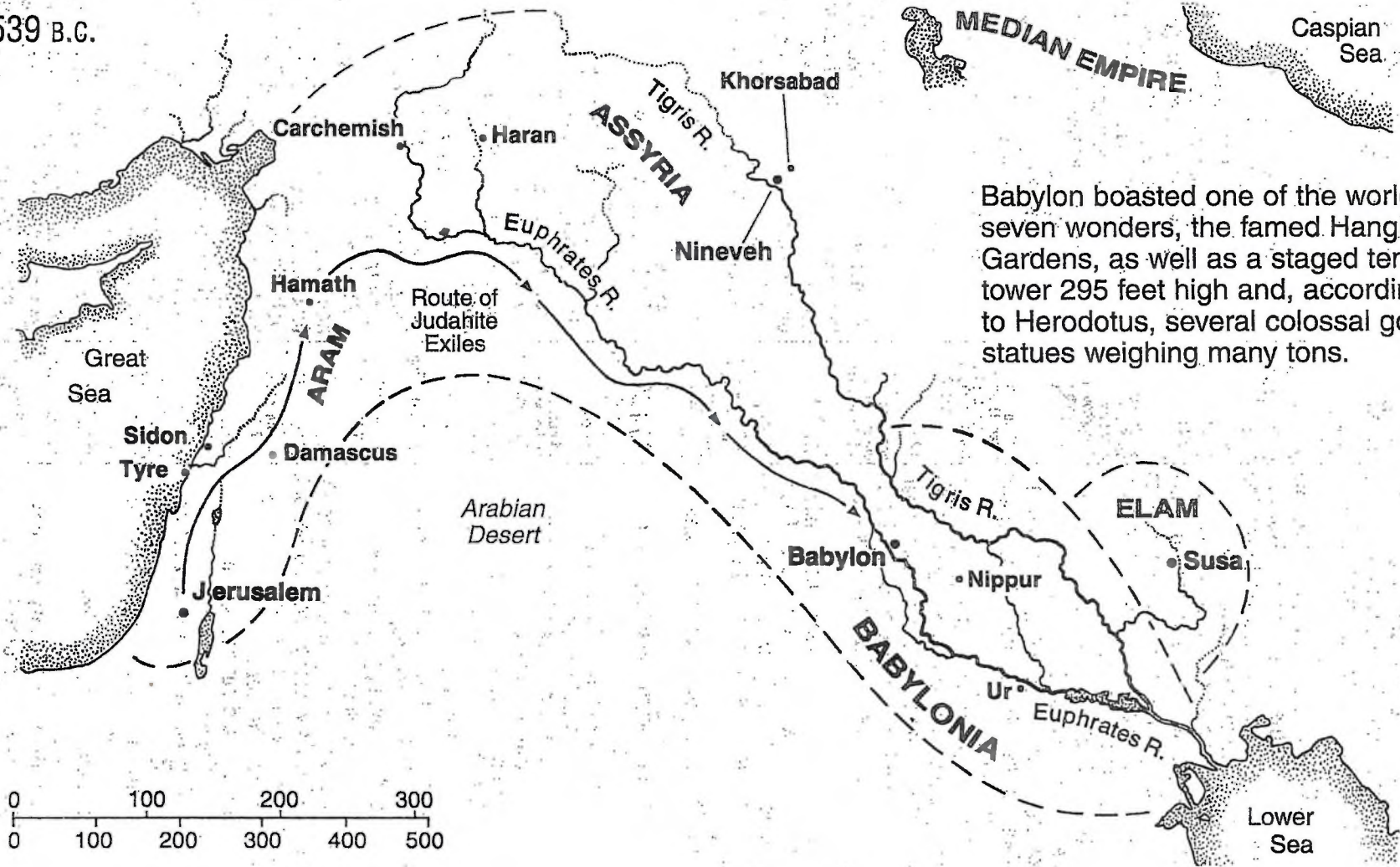
Prophets of Judah

Lines to timeline denote last year of reign or life

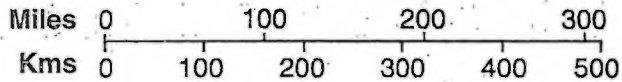
co-regencies and short reigns omitted



626-539 B.C.



Babylon boasted one of the world's seven wonders, the famed Hanging Gardens, as well as a staged temple-tower 295 feet high and, according to Herodotus, several colossal gold statues weighing many tons.



p.522

A. The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BC).

1. Chapter 1: Daniel raised to power (604 BC).
2. Chapter 2: The image dream (602 BC).
3. Chapter 3: The fiery furnace episode (600 BC?).
4. Chapter 4: The tree dream (570 BC?).

B. The Reign of Nabonidus/Belshazzar (556–539 BC).

1. Chapter 7: Vision of four beasts (c. 556 BC).
2. Chapter 8: Vision of the ram and goat (c. 554 BC).
3. Chapter 5: Handwriting on the wall (539 BC).

C. The Reign of Cyrus/Darius (539–530 BC).

1. Chapter 9: Vision of seventy heptads (538 BC).
2. Chapter 6: The lions' den (537 BC).
3. Chapters 10–12: The final vision (536 BC).

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL			
NARRATIVES ILLUSTRATING THE SOVEREIGN RULE OF GOD		PROPHECIES ILLUSTRATING THE SOVEREIGN RULE OF GOD	
Chapters 1–6		Chapters 7–12	
Daniel Interprets Dreams. Historical Incidents. Includes Daniel's Friends. God Speaks through History. Third Person.		An Angel Interprets Visions. Visions and Prayers. Daniel's Friends Absent. God Speaks through Prophecy. First Person.	
Heb. Intro. Ch 1	ARAMAIC (Concerns Gentile Nations) 2	8	HEBREW (Concerns God's People) 12

DANIEL

Lesson 2—The Dreams and Visions and Interpretations

"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son..." (Heb. 1:1-2a)

Key Verses

- 2:24-30... ***"Are you able...? As for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind."***
- 4:18... ***"But you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you."***

Daniel was a man with a rare measure of dedication to God. Captured as a teenager, forced to adapt to a new culture and still all the while, he remained committed to God and His eternal purpose. He is unusually gifted by God to be equipped to know the dreams of others and give a specific meaning to them and foretell their precise fulfillment. On other occasions, Daniel himself is the one having the dreams and God uses these dreams to foretell events of the future of the people after the years of the captivity and exile are over. This is a God-given gift for sure.

Some of the dreams and visions he dealt with are straight-forward, while others are highly symbolic, which happens to fit a style and genre of literature introduced to the world about this time. This kind of writing is called *apocalyptic* by literature scholars. James E. Smith says that even a *"casual reading of Daniel reveal that bizarre animal and numerological symbolism predominates portions of the book."*

It is also important for us to remember that many of the visions go hand in hand with miraculous events from God. Again Smith points out that there is a period of Daniel, especially the mid-forty year period when several miracles are wrought. This is the third forty-year period of the Old Testament when the times were earmarked by supernatural happenings. The first two were the times of Moses and the Exodus and the second was the age of Elijah/Elisha launching the era of the prophets. Now this third multi-decade period marks the purification produced by the Babylonian exile in preparation for the Hebrews to be repopulated in the land of Canaan.

The two portions of the book form a general outline and setting of the dreams and visions of Daniel's place in the interpretations of dreams and the explanation of dreams and visions for his day and the future period after him.

- Chapters 1-6—Six narratives of Daniel and his friends in this foreign land
- Chapters 7-12—Four reports of Daniel's dreams and 3 visions under Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus.

2:1-45—Nebuchadnezzar's Troubling Dream

- V.1-13—The king's dream was deeply troubling, but forgotten to him.
 - Nebuchadnezzar's expectation and assumption was that if men really had the gift of dealing with dreams and visions, they would be able to reveal both the dream and the meaning of it.
 - His wrath was being exhibited by calling for the execution of all Babylonian's wise men, including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.
- V.14-16—Daniel learns of the king's troubled situation from Arioch.
- V.17-23—Daniel and his three friends hold an emergency prayer meeting.
- V.24-30—The king learns of Daniel's source of understanding the mystery.
- V.31-45—The dream and the interpretation given—by the power of God to extol God's providence in the handling of world history situations and utter prophecy to foretell what is coming.
 - The large statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream—(See illustration attached)
- The focus of this vision for us on this side of all this history should be centered on the STONE which demolished all these kingdoms of men and lasts forever.

4:4-37—The Vision of the Great Tree

- V.4-18—The description of the dream—a great tree to be chopped down, but the stump to remain.
- V.19-27—The meaning of the dream—it is really about the pride and haughtiness of the king himself, and how God is going to humble him to a place that he recognizes the true God of glory.
- V.28-37—The fulfillment of the vision with the result being King Nebuchadnezzar being restored to a sound mind and his own confession and reverence for the True God Almighty.

5:1-30—The Interpretation of the Handwriting on the Wall for King Belshazzar.

- V.1-4—What brought about this judgment of God—an abuse of the holy things of God from Jerusalem's temple.
- V.5-9—The message written on the wall. MENE, MENE—TEKEL—UPHARSIN.
- V.10-28—The meaning of the message interpreted by Daniel
- V.29-30—The outcome of this whole scene meant the overthrow of the Babylonian kingdom into the hands of Darius, the Mede.

7:1-28—The Vision of the Four Beasts (This took place during the rule of Belshazzar who shared the throne for a while with his father Nabonidus) This dream was actually Daniel's

dream, which he wrote down.

- V.2-8—From the great sea (of humanity), there would rise four beasts—representing four great empires of ancient world history.
 - V. 4—Winged lion—equivalent to the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
 - V.5—Lopsided bear—equivalent to the Medo-Persian empire in the previous dream.
 - V.6—Four headed leopard—equivalent to the Greco-Macedonian empire of the previous dream.
 - V.7a—A wild creature (some say dragon-like) unlike any other—equivalent to the Roman kingdom
 - 7b—10 horns—there are four views of these
 - Historic Rome
 - Past Roman emperor kings
 - Continuing Roman view—successive kingdoms after the fall of Rome in 456 A.D.
 - Revived Rome view—ten constituent nations long after Rome's existence and fall.
 - V.8—The little horn
 - Imperial view—A Roman emperor who wages war against the people of God
 - Ecclesiastical view- The Roman Catholic papacy against the people of God
- V.9-14—A picture of the God-centered view (theo-centric) to show that all is subject to the sovereign rule of God.
 - History is moving toward a place where righteousness is ultimately victorious and prevails over the powers of evil.
 - The coronation scene—One like the son of man—may be referring to the ascension of Jesus back to heaven to appear before the Ancient of Days.
 - The Messiah's kingdom is universal and everlasting. (Unlike the kingdoms of men) This kingdom is not one nationality, but comprised of people from all nations. (v.14)
- V.15-27—The Vision Explained
 - The kingdom of the little horn is anti-God to the very core and is eventually conquered and utterly defeated under the rule and dominion of God's Rule and

God's kingdom. This may be pointing ultimately to the final victory of Jesus over the devil and all his beasts and henchmen of evil.

- NOTE ATTACHED CHART FROM SMITH—p.586.

8:1-27—The Vision of the Ram and the Goat

This focuses on the 2nd and 3rd world empire revealed in the 3rd year of Belshazzar, which was given two years after the vision of the four beasts of chapter 7.

The setting for Daniel receiving this vision placed him in Susa, the primary center of the Persian empire, in the province of Elam, beside the Ulai Canal.

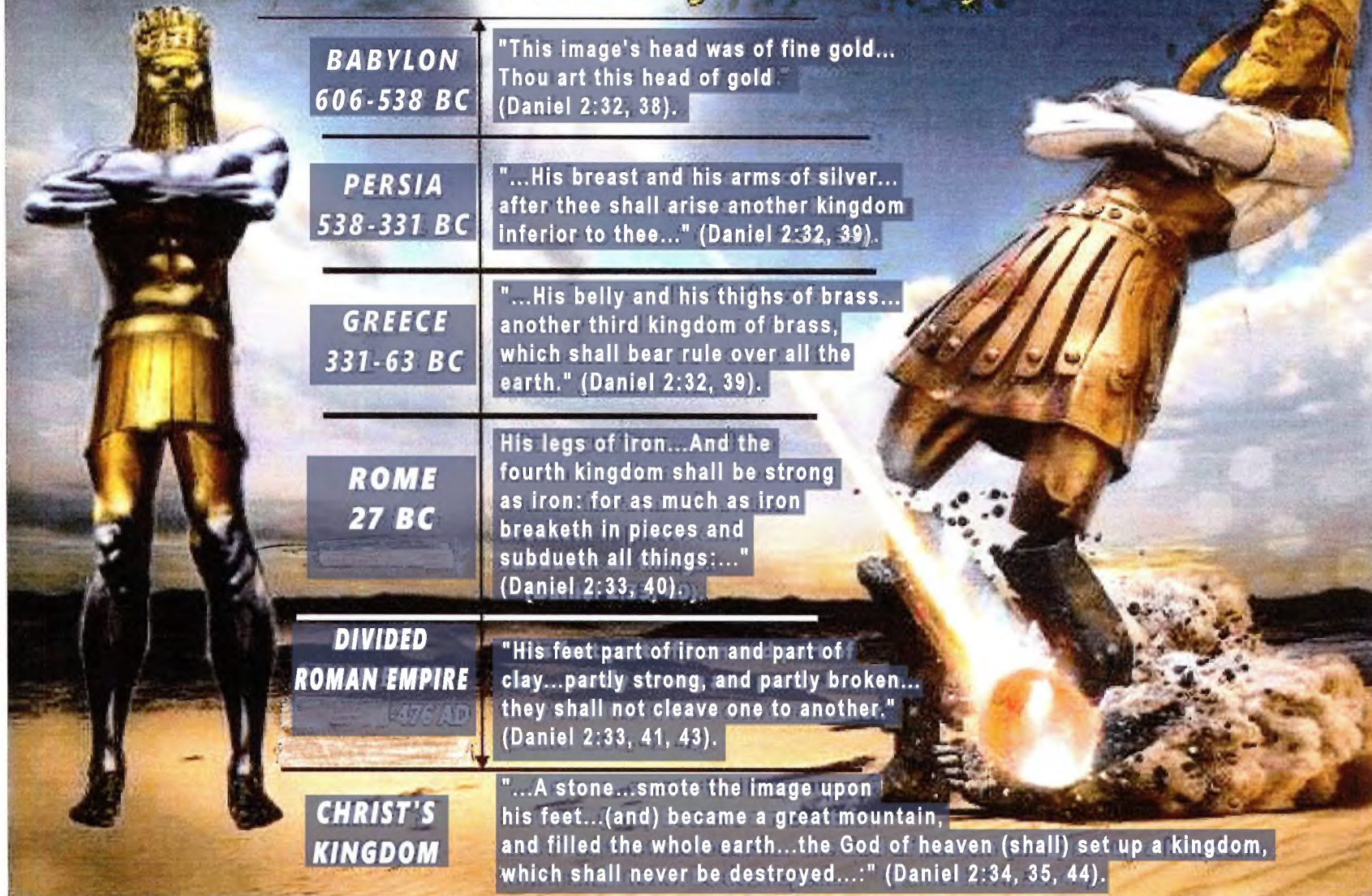
- V.1-8—The vision itself—showing the supremacy of Persia over Media, and ultimately Alexander the Great conquering and triumphing over all that region of the world.
- V.9-14—This little horn—that shows up after the age of Alexander, believed to be Antiochus Epiphanes (terrorized the Middle East from 174-164 B.C.) who is shown through 7 prophetic factors
 - The campaigns were multidirectional—south, east, even Canaan
 - The horn threatened the people of God
 - The horn would be brutal in its persecution
 - The horn would manifest intolerable arrogance
 - The horn would commit sacrilege in the temple
 - The horn used by God to punish the people for their transgressions, specifically the compromise with Hellenization of the 2nd century B.C.
 - The horn would be temporarily successful.
 - V.13-14—A conversation between two angels reveals that it would take 2300 evenings and mornings before the sanctuary would be restored to its proper sacred purposes.
 - Many believe that this is finally ended by the purging of the entire land and the rededication of the Jerusalem temple by Judas Maccabaeus in December 165 B.C. Antiochus died shortly thereafter.
 - This completed the assault on and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Jerusalem just a century and a half before Jesus comes to the world.

A final vision to Daniel was given in the 3rd year of Cyrus the king of Persia in 536 B.C. (chap. 10-11). (This will be examined in a later class.)

The thing to remember about dreams and visions in the Book of Daniel is that many of them were specific to the captors of the Hebrews themselves and dealt with God's control and rule over their lives. But they were not limited to that. Many had to do with the transitions of power from one kingdom to another and another. And then some of the visions actually deal with the happenings once Cyrus gives the orders for the Jews to return to their homeland and

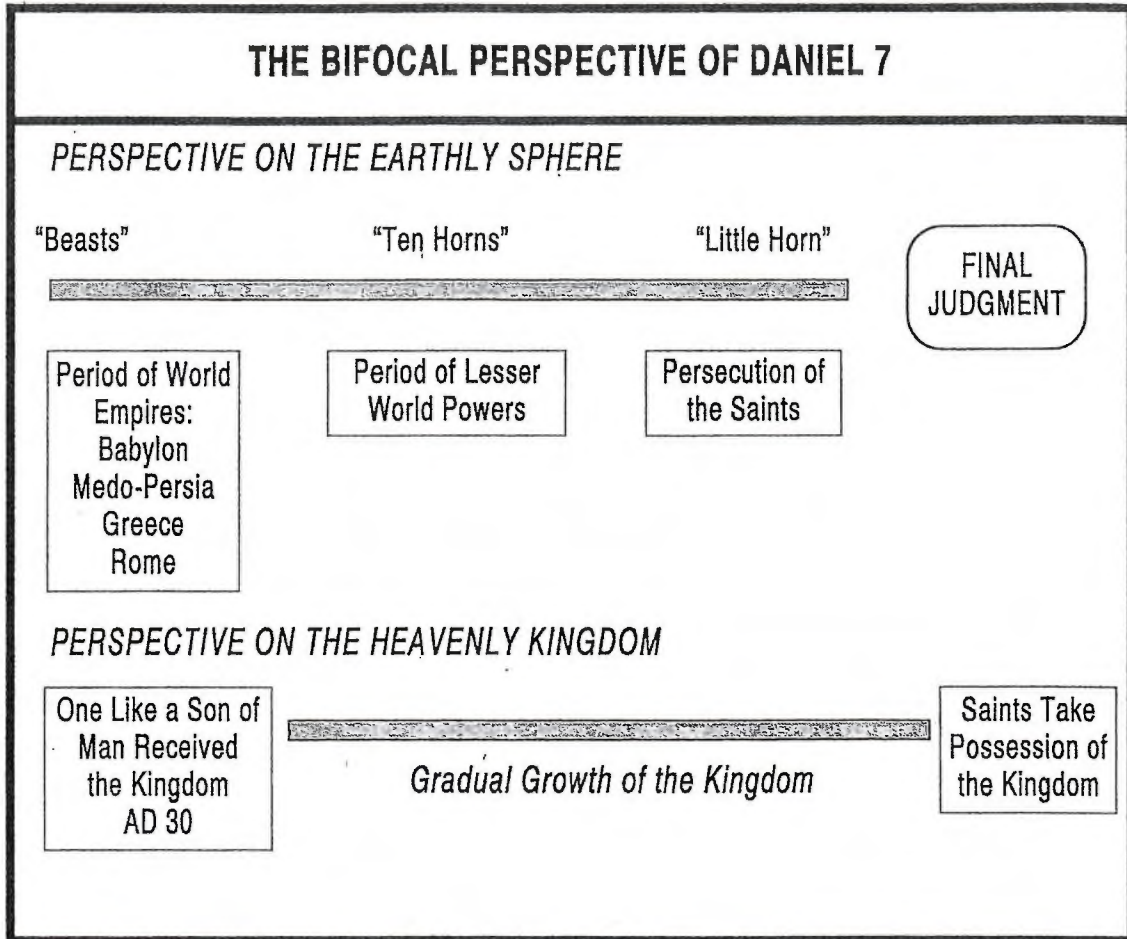
rebuild the city and their temple and the subsequent happenings in this post-exilic period of time. And finally some of the visions point to the eternal kingdom of the Messiah, which was initiated in the beginning of the Lord’s church and lasts from then into eternity, with many facets of it being displayed in history and beyond. No matter the time or era or king or nation in power, God is still in control.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of The Latter Days



BABYLON 606-538 BC	"This image's head was of fine gold... Thou art this head of gold." (Daniel 2:32, 38).
PERSIA 538-331 BC	"...His breast and his arms of silver... after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee..." (Daniel 2:32, 39).
GREECE 331-63 BC	"...His belly and his thighs of brass... another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth." (Daniel 2:32, 39).
ROME 27 BC	His legs of iron...And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: for as much as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things:..." (Daniel 2:33, 40).
DIVIDED ROMAN EMPIRE 476 AD	"His feet part of iron and part of clay...partly strong, and partly broken... they shall not cleave one to another." (Daniel 2:33, 41, 43).
CHRIST'S KINGDOM	"...A stone...smote the image upon his feet...(and) became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth...the God of heaven (shall) set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed..." (Daniel 2:34, 35, 44).

Chart No. 18



DR. JAMES E. SMITH
THE MAJOR PROPHETS
P. 586

DANIEL

Lesson 3—Fervent Prayers and Mighty Deliverances

“Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah about the matter, so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery...” (2:17-18)

Key Verses

- 9:3-4a... ***“So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed...”***

Daniel was a man with a rare measure of dedication to God. Additionally, Daniel was a man who had an extraordinary prayer life. And one feature of effective praying underscored in the book of Daniel is that extraordinary praying must be aligned with and anchored to Scripture. In 9:2-3, Daniel says, “In the first of his reign (Darius), I Daniel understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord give to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years... so I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with Him in prayer and petition, fasting and sackcloth and ashes.” The principle is quite clear... effective praying is going to be totally consistent with what the Word says.

Given that truth, every believer of every age and era must immerse himself in God’s Word if effectual prayers are to be offered. What God has to say regarding history, the kingdom, spirituality, the pursuit of holiness, gospel expectations become foundational to the specific prayers we pray and how we approach our holy God.

James writes in the New Testament, “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (5:16). Many people desire a stronger prayer life, but not as many are willing to invest the time, the discipline, the uninterrupted quiet and the time in the Word that is required to cultivate a fervent prayer life. Praying need not be hard, but it does require earnest effort. James cites Elijah as a man of earnest prayer. Daniel is in the same category.

Just think... how does a young man endure capture by enemies as a teenager, remain unspotted from the culture of paganism that he is forced to live in and continue a faithful ministry for God’s purposes for some 70 years? Here is how. As a young man, he cultivated a life of humble, transparent communication with his God. His life was exemplary in his personal devotion. When his colleague, across the river, living with the exiles (Ezekiel) spoke for God and addressed the perilous condition the Jewish people were in, he actually reported that God said that even “Noah, Daniel, and Job”, could not reverse the predicament of the people, even

though they were righteous men. That certainly places Daniel, his own contemporary with a couple spiritual giants of the past. Daniel is unmistakably a man of prayer. And the couple of prayers which are actually recorded reveals the heart that he had for God and the way that he poured himself out before the throne of God. So we consider first the prayers:

2:19-23—A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving

- This prayer is offered up in response to the threat of King Nebuchadnezzar who was enraged because none of the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers could tell him about his troubling dream and the meaning of it. (cf. v.12) At this point, though Daniel and his young friends had gained the attention and approval of the King, he lumped them all together with these “spiritists” of his own kingdom.
- Daniel goes to his house and urged Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to join him in pleading for the mercies of God. God responded to their prayers with a revealing vision in the night. And Daniel prays this prayer in response.
- This is a prayer of praise for the unmatched power and mercy of God. It answers the question of just WHO is in charge? Earthly kings? Underworld-empowered spiritists? Who really is above and in control of the kingdoms of this world and their rulers?
 - V.20—The NAME of God is to be praised ALWAYS! Wisdom and power belong to Him and Him alone.
 - V.21—HE is the sovereign ruler over creation and kingdoms and the enabling of His servants.
 - He changes times and seasons—obviously He set the seasons in place and they are fixed (cf. Gen 1:14). This is referring however to the seasons and times of the rise and fall of nations and world powers. God decides how long a culture prevails and remains powerful. Paul Butler writes, *“One dynasty influences world culture and wanes and disappears at the directing influence of God’s immutable moral laws governing the universe and another comes to the fore.”* (see Jer. 27:5)
 - He sets up kings and deposes them. No ruler is mightier or bigger than God and independent of God’s sovereign power.
 - He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. God is the enabling power to the Daniels of this world. If a person wants to know truth, one must turn to God humbly and openly.
 - V.22—The vastness of God’s knowledge. It is unlimited. He is omniscient—that is all-knowing.
 - “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” (1st Jn.1:5)
 - Our prayers should include this acknowledgement of God limitless knowledge of all things. And with that, we should confess our very limited view of the mysteries of this world and life.
 - V.23—Thanksgiving and praise for the answer they have requested in prayer.

- Daniel is conscious of God's faithfulness to godly people of the past... "the fathers". He is carrying on a legacy of trusting and depending on God.
- Daniel is careful to credit God with the answers and revelations to these deep hidden mysteries. (cf. 2:27-28, 45).

9:4-19—A Prayer of Confession and Petition

- This prayer comes years later in the first year of Darius. (9:1) It comes as a result of his diligent consideration of Jeremiah's preaching. (Remember, Jeremiah remained with the poorest of the land back in Judah, when the deportations took place. But the Bible reader needs to note that these inspired men were aware of each other's messages being revealed and preached for God. (cf. (9:2-3)
- His prayer was accompanied with fasting and expressions of humility (sackcloth and ashes). It was a prayer of confession.
 - V.4-6—Upon acknowledging the great and awesomeness of God, and particularly His faithfulness, he confesses the sinfulness of himself and the nation. Note the multiple uses of "WE"...
 - V.7-14—The righteousness of God and the shamefulness of the people.
 - Yet there is hope in the mercies and forgiveness of God.
 - The justice of God's actions are both Biblical and right. (v.11-12)
 - Daniel confesses on behalf of himself and the nation that it all happened because of a neglect of the truth. (v.13)
 - God is righteous in everything He does! (v.14)
 - V.15-16—A Plea for God to act as He has in the past... bring us out with Your mighty hand.
 - V.17-19—For HIS righteous name's sake. Daniel acknowledges that it is NOT because of the righteousness of the people, but because of MERCY!
 - Again a plea to listen and forgive, because of God's great name.
 - This prayer receives a response from God through the messenger Gabriel, with an explanation of the timeline that shall be followed.
- 10:13-14, 20-21—Daniel's praying even brought a response of Michael to explain that God will deal with fallen angels and wayward kingdoms opposing God.

The Mighty Deliverances

- **3:1-30—The Fiery Furnace**
 - Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah have already proven themselves as faithful subjects and dependable servants. This is the result of a scheme to entrap these faithful men for not participating in the dedication of Nebuchadnezzar's great 90' tall image. The "spiritists" of Babylon detested the Jews and

denounced them. They apparently resented that the king had placed them over the official affairs of the province.

- These three demonstrated the highest measure of faith in God—(v.16-18), even if tossed in the furnace. “The God we serve is able...” God will rescue us from your hand, either way.
- And in this case, God honored this faith and to teach the king who is KING, He spared them. Still this did not curb the king’s pride.

- **6:1-28—Daniel and The Den of Lions**

- This is during the reign of Darius, the Mede who took over the kingdom when Belshazzar rebelled against God in pride.
- The 120 satraps (rulers) resented Daniel’s place in the kingdom and planned their scheme to entrap him “with something to do with the laws of his God.” (v.5)
- Darius put the 30 day prayer ban to any other god in writing, which could not be repealed or exempted.
- Daniel maintained his usual routine of going to his upstairs room 3 times a day and getting down on his knees and praying. (v.10)
- And so the king was forced to follow through on his orders and Daniel was sealed in the den of hungry lions. But God delivered him. It was an exoneration of his innocence and integrity.

Paul Birch-Petersen wrote, “*Prayer is the evidence of our realization that it does not help to find yourself, when you actually need [to find] Another. Prayer is our confidence that HE is there and will make the final change.*”

A heart of prayer will always lead to worship and praise, which includes BOTH praise for the blessings of mercy and confession for the sins of our hearts.