

Daniel

Daniel Taken to Babylon

1 Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar surrounded Jerusalem with his army. This happened during the third year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah.* **2**The Lord allowed Nebuchadnezzar to defeat Jehoiakim king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar took all of the dishes and other things from God's temple. Nebuchadnezzar carried those things to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar put those things in the temple of his idol gods.

3Then King Nebuchadnezzar gave Ashpenaz an order. (Ashpenaz was the most important leader of all the eunuchs* that served the king.) The king told Ashpenaz to bring some of the Jewish men into his house. Nebuchadnezzar wanted Jewish men from important families and from the family of the king of Israel. **4**King Nebuchadnezzar wanted only healthy young Jewish men. The king wanted young men that did not have any bruises or scars, or anything wrong with their bodies. The king wanted handsome, smart young men. The king wanted young men that were able to learn things quickly and easily. The king wanted young men that were able to serve in his house. The king told Ashpenaz to teach those young men from Israel the language and writings of the Chaldean people.*

third year ... Judah This is probably 605 B.C.

eunuchs Men whose testicles have been removed. Rulers often gave such men important positions.

Chaldean people An important family group in Babylon. The king of Babylon was from this family group. The Chaldeans were educated people—they studied science, history, languages, and astronomy. But they also believed they could do magic and look at the stars to learn what would happen in the future.

5King Nebuchadnezzar gave those young men a certain amount of food and wine every day. That was the same kind of food that the king ate. The king wanted those young men from Israel to be trained for three years. Then after three years, the young men would become servants of the king of Babylon. **6**Among those young men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. These young men were from the family group of Judah.

7Then Ashpenaz gave those young men from Judah Babylonian names. Daniel's new name was Belteshazzar. Hananiah's new name was Shadrach. Mishael's new name was Meshach. And Azariah's new name was Abednego.

8Daniel did not want to eat the king's rich food and wine. Daniel did not want to make himself unclean* with that food and wine. So he asked Ashpenaz for permission not to make himself unclean in this way.

9God made Ashpenaz want to be good and kind to Daniel. **10**But Ashpenaz said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my master, the king. The king ordered me to give you this food and drink. If you don't eat this food, then you will begin to look weak and sick. You will look worse than other young men your age. The king will see this, and he will become angry at me. He might cut off my head! And it would be your fault."

11Then Daniel talked to their guard. Ashpenaz had ordered the guard to watch Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. **12**Daniel said to the guard, "Please give us this test for ten days: Don't give us anything but vegetables to eat and water to drink.

unclean See Lev. 11-15 for the rules about clean and unclean things.

¹³Then after ten days, compare us with the other young men who eat the king's food. See for yourself who looks healthier. Then you judge for yourself how you want to treat us. We are your servants."

¹⁴So the guard agreed to test Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah for ten days. ¹⁵After ten days, Daniel and his friends looked healthier than all of the young men that ate the king's food. ¹⁶So the guard continued to take away the king's special food and wine and to give vegetables to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

¹⁷God gave Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah the wisdom and ability to learn many different kinds of writing and science. Daniel could also understand all kinds of visions* and dreams.

¹⁸The king wanted all the young men to be trained for three years. At the end of that time, Ashpenaz brought all of the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹The king talked to them. The king found that none of the young men were as good as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So those four young men became the king's servants. ²⁰Every time the king asked them about something important, they showed much wisdom and understanding. The king found they were ten times better than all the magic men and wise men in his kingdom. ²¹So Daniel continued to be the king's servant until the first year that Cyrus was king.*

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 During Nebuchadnezzar's second year as king, he had some dreams. Those dreams bothered him and he could not sleep. ²So the king called his wise men to come to him. Those men used magic tricks and they watched the stars. They did this to try to interpret dreams and to learn what will happen in the future. The king wanted those men to tell him what he had dreamed. So they came in and stood in front of the king.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.
first year that Cyrus was king This is probably 539–539 B.C.

³Then the king said to those men, "I had a dream that bothers me. I want to know what the dream means."

⁴Then the Chaldeans* answered the king. They spoke in the Aramaic language.* They said, "King, live forever! We are your servants. Please tell us your dream, then we will tell you what it means."

⁵Then King Nebuchadnezzar said to those men, "No! You must tell me the dream. And then you must tell me what it means. If you don't do these things, then I will give an order for you to be cut into pieces. And I will order your houses to be destroyed until they become piles of dust and ashes. ⁶But if you tell me my dream and explain the meaning, then I will give you gifts, rewards, and great honor. So tell me about my dream and tell me what it means."

⁷Again the wise men said to the king, "Please, sir, tell us about the dream, and we will tell you what the dream means."

⁸Then King Nebuchadnezzar answered, "I know that you are trying to get more time. You know that I meant what I said. ⁹You know that you will be punished if you don't tell me about my dream. So you have all agreed to lie to me. You are hoping for more time. You are hoping that I will forget what I want you to do. Now, tell me the dream. If you can tell me the dream, then I will know that you can tell me what it really means!"

¹⁰The Chaldeans* answered the king. They said, "There is not a man on earth that can do what the king is asking! No king has ever asked the wise men or the men that do magic or the Chaldeans to do something like this. Not even the greatest and most powerful king ever asked his wise men to do something like this. ¹¹The king is asking something that is too hard to do. Only the gods could tell the king his dream and what it means. But the gods don't live with people."

Chaldean(s) An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply "People from Babylonia."

Aramaic language This was the official language of the Babylonian Empire. People from many countries also used this language when they wrote official letters to people in other countries. The text of Daniel from here to Daniel 7:28 is written in Aramaic.

¹²When the king heard that, he became very angry. So he gave an order for all the wise men of Babylon to be killed. ¹³King Nebuchadnezzar's order was announced. All the wise men were to be killed. The king's men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

¹⁴Arioch was the commander of the king's guards. He was going to kill the wise men of Babylon. But Daniel talked to him. Daniel spoke to Arioch in a wise and polite way. ¹⁵Daniel said to Arioch, "Why did the king order such a severe punishment?"

Then Arioch explained the whole story about the king's dreams, and Daniel understood. ¹⁶When Daniel heard the story, he went to King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel asked the king to give him some more time. Then he would tell the king about the dream and what it meant.

¹⁷So Daniel went to his house. He explained the whole story to his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ¹⁸Daniel asked his friends to pray to the God of heaven. Daniel asked them to pray that God would be kind to them and help them understand this secret. Then Daniel and his friends would not be killed with the other wise men of Babylon.

¹⁹During the night, God explained the secret to Daniel in a vision.* Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. ²⁰Daniel said:

"Praise God's name for ever and ever!
Power and wisdom belong to him!
²¹ He changes the times and seasons.
And he changes the kings.
He gives power to kings,
and he takes their power away!
He gives wisdom to people
so they become wise,
He lets people learn things
and become wise.
²² He knows hidden secrets
that are hard to understand.
Light lives with him,
so he knows what is in the dark
and secret places!

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

²³ God of my ancestors,*
I thank you and praise you!
You gave me wisdom and power.
You told us the things we asked for!
You told us about the king's dream."

Daniel Tells What the Dream Means

²⁴Then Daniel went to Arioch. King Nebuchadnezzar had chosen Arioch to kill the wise men of Babylon. Daniel said to Arioch, "Don't kill the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king. I will tell him about his dream and what it means."

²⁵So very quickly, Arioch took Daniel to the king. Arioch said to the king, "I have found a man among the captives* from Judah. He can tell the king what his dream means."

²⁶The king asked Daniel (Belteshazzar) a question. He said to Daniel, "Are you able to tell me about my dream, and what it means?"

²⁷Daniel answered, "King Nebuchadnezzar, no wise man, no man that does magic tricks, and no Chaldean could tell the king the secret things he has asked about. ²⁸But there is a God in heaven who tells secret things. God gave King Nebuchadnezzar dreams to show him what will happen at a later time. This was your dream, and these are the things you saw while lying on your bed: ²⁹King, you were lying there on your bed. And you began thinking about things that will happen in the future. God can tell people about secret things—and he showed you what will happen in the future. ³⁰God also told this secret to me! Why? It is not because I have greater wisdom than other men. No, God told me about this secret so that you, king, may know what it means. In that way, you will understand what went through your mind.

³¹"King, in your dream you saw a large statue* in front of you. The statue was very large and it was shiny and very impressive. It would make a person's eyes wide from

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

captives People taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

statue An image, made to look like a person or an animal. Statues are made from stone, metal, or wood.

amazement. ³²The head of the statue was made from pure gold. The chest and the arms of the statue were made from silver. The belly and upper part of the legs of the statue were made from bronze. ³³The lower part of the legs of the statue were made from iron. The feet of the statue were made partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴While you were looking at the statue, you saw a rock. The rock was cut loose—but a person did not cut the rock. Then the rock went through the air and hit the statue on its feet of iron and clay. The rock smashed the feet of the statue. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and gold broke to pieces all at the same time. And all those pieces became like chaff* on a threshing floor* in the summertime. The wind blew those pieces away, and there was nothing left. No one could tell that a statue had ever been there. Then the rock that hit the statue became a very large mountain and filled up the whole earth.

³⁶“That was your dream. Now we will tell the king what it means. ³⁷King, you are the most important king. The God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. ³⁸God has given you control and you rule over people and over the wild animals and over the birds. Wherever they live, God has made you ruler over them all. King Nebuchadnezzar, you are that head of gold on the statue.*

³⁹“Another kingdom will come after you—[that is the silver part]. But that kingdom will not be as great as your kingdom. Next, a third kingdom will rule over the earth—that is the bronze part. ⁴⁰Then there will be a fourth kingdom. That kingdom will be strong like iron. Iron breaks and smashes things to pieces. In the same way, that fourth kingdom will smash and break all the other kingdoms.

⁴¹“You saw that the feet and toes of the statue* were partly clay and partly iron. That means the fourth kingdom will be a divided

kingdom. It will have some of the strength of iron in it because you saw the iron mixed with clay. ⁴²The toes of the statue were partly iron and partly clay. So the fourth kingdom will be partly strong like iron, and partly weak like clay. ⁴³You saw the iron mixed with clay. But iron and clay don’t mix completely together. In the same way, the people of the fourth kingdom will be a mixture. Those people will not be united as one people.

⁴⁴“During the time of the kings [of the fourth kingdom], the God of heaven will set up another kingdom. This kingdom will continue forever! It will never be destroyed! And it will be the kind of kingdom that can’t be passed on to another group of people. This kingdom will crush all those other kingdoms. It will bring those kingdoms to an end. But that kingdom itself will continue forever.

⁴⁵“King Nebuchadnezzar, you saw a rock cut from a mountain—but no person cut that rock! The rock broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold to pieces. In this way, God showed you what will happen in the future. The dream is true and you can trust this interpretation.”

⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar bowed down in front of Daniel. The king praised Daniel. The king gave an order that an offering and incense be given to honor Daniel. ⁴⁷Then the king said to Daniel, “I know for sure your God is the most important and powerful God. And he is the Lord of all the kings. He tells people about things they can’t know. I know this is true because you were able to tell these secret things to me.”

⁴⁸Then the king gave Daniel a very important job in his kingdom. And the king gave many expensive gifts to Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon. And he put Daniel in charge of all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹Daniel asked the king to make Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego important officials over the province of Babylon. And the king did as Daniel asked. And Daniel himself became one of the important people that stayed near the king.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let the wind blow the useless chaff away.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

statue An image, made to look like a person or an animal. Statues are made from stone, metal, or wood.

The Idol of Gold and the Hot Furnace

3 King Nebuchadnezzar had a gold idol made. That idol was 60 cubits* high and 6 cubits* wide. Then he set the idol up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. **2**Then the king called the satraps,* the prefects,* governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, rulers, and all the other officials in his kingdom to come together. The king wanted all those men to come to the dedication ceremony for the idol.

3So all those men came and stood in front of the idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. **4**Then the man that makes the announcements for the king spoke in a loud voice. He said, “All you people from many nations and language groups, *[listen to me]*. This is what you are commanded to do: **5**You must bow down as soon as you hear the sound of all the musical instruments. When you hear the horns, flutes, lyres,* sambucas,* harps, bagpipes,* and all of the other musical instruments, you must worship the gold idol. King Nebuchadnezzar has set this idol up. **6**If any person does not bow down and worship this gold idol, then that person will be quickly thrown into a very hot furnace.

7So, as soon as they heard the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres,* sambucas,* bagpipes,* and all of the other musical instruments, they bowed down and worshiped the gold idol. All the peoples, nations, and men of every kind of language there worshiped the gold idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8Then, some of the Chaldean* men came up to the king. Those men began speaking against the Jews. **9**They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “King, may you live forever! **10**King, you gave a

command. You said that everyone that hears the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres,* sambucas,* harps, bagpipes,* and all the other musical instruments must bow down and worship the gold idol. **11**And you also said that if any person does not bow down and worship the gold idol, then that person will be thrown into a very hot furnace. **12**There are some Jews that did not pay attention to your order, king. You made those Jews important officials in the province of Babylon. Their names are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They don’t worship your gods. And they didn’t bow down and worship the gold idol you set up.”

13Nebuchadnezzar became very angry. He called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So those men were brought to the king. **14**And Nebuchadnezzar said to those men, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you don’t worship my gods? And is it true that you didn’t bow down and worship the gold idol I have set up? **15**Now, when you hear the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres,* sambucas,* harps, bagpipes,* and all the other musical instruments, you must bow down and worship the gold idol. If you are ready to worship the idol I have made, that will be good. But if you don’t worship it, you will be thrown very quickly into the hot furnace. Then no god will be able to save you from my power!”

16Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, “Nebuchadnezzar, we don’t need to explain these things to you! **17**If you throw us into the hot furnace, then the God we serve can save us. And if he wants to, he can save us from your power. **18**But even if God does not save us, we want you to know, king, that we refuse to serve your gods. We won’t worship the gold idol you have set up.”

19Then Nebuchadnezzar was very angry! He looked very mean at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He gave an order for the oven to be heated seven times hotter than it usually was. **20**Then Nebuchadnezzar commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The king told the soldiers to throw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the hot furnace.

21So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were tied up and thrown into the hot furnace.

60 cubits 88’ 6 15/16” (27m) using the short cubit.

6 cubits 8’ 10 1/4” (2.7m) using the short cubit.

satraps Persian officials that were governors of a province.

prefects Important officials.

lyres A musical instrument like a harp. The name in Hebrew comes from some other language, possibly the Greek word “kitharis.”

sambuca(s) A musical instrument. It might be a seven stringed instrument like a harp. The name in Hebrew comes from some other language, possibly Greek.

bagpipes A musical instrument with a bag and several horns or pipes. The name in Hebrew comes from some other language, possibly the Greek word “symphony.”

Chaldean(s) An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply “People from Babylonia.”

They were wearing their robes, pants, hats, and other clothes. ²²The king was very angry when he gave the command, so they quickly made the furnace very hot! The fire was so hot that the flames killed the strong soldiers! They were killed when they went close to the fire and threw in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell into the fire. They were tied up very tightly.

²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar jumped to his feet. He was very surprised and he asked his advisers, “We tied only three men and we threw only three men into the fire! Is that right?”

His advisers said, “Yes, king.”

²⁵The king said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire. They are not tied up and they are not burned. The fourth man looks like an angel!*

²⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar went to the opening of the hot furnace. He shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, come out! Servants of the Most High God, come here!”

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire. ²⁷When they came out, the satraps*, prefects*, governors, and royal advisers crowded around them. They could see that the fire had not burned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their bodies were not burned at all. Their hair was not burned, their robes were not burned, and they didn’t even smell like they had been near fire.

²⁸Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their God has sent his angel and saved his servants from the fire! These three men trusted their God. They refused to obey my command and were willing to die instead of serving or worshiping any other god. ²⁹So, I now make this law: The people of any nation or of any language that says anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be cut to pieces. And that person’s house will be destroyed until it is a pile of dirt and ashes. No other god can save his people like this.”

³⁰Then the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego more important jobs in the province of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream about a Tree

4 King Nebuchadnezzar sent this letter to the many nations and people that speak other languages and live all around the world.

Greetings:

²I am very happy to tell you about the miracles and wonderful things that the Most High God did for me.

³ God has done amazing miracles!
God has done powerful miracles!
God’s kingdom continues forever;
God’s rule will continue for
all generations.

⁴I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at my palace.* I was happy and successful. ⁵I had a dream that made me afraid. I was lying on my bed, and I saw pictures and visions* in my mind. Those things made me very afraid. ⁶So I gave an order that all the wise men of Babylon be brought to me. Why? So they could tell me what my dream meant. ⁷When the men of magic, and the Chaldeans* came, I told them about the dream. But those men could not tell me what it meant. ⁸Finally, Daniel came to me. (I gave Daniel the name, Beltshazzar, to honor my god. The spirit of the holy gods is in him.) I told Daniel about my dream. ⁹I said,

Beltshazzar, you are the most important of all the men of magic. I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you. I know there is no secret that is too hard for you to understand. This was what I dreamed. Tell me what it means. ¹⁰These are the visions* I saw while I was lying in my bed: I looked, and there in front of me was a tree standing in the middle of the earth. The tree was very tall. ¹¹The tree grew large and strong.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Chaldean(s) An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply “People from Babylonia.”

angel Literally, “son of the god.”

satraps Persian officials that were governors of a province.

prefects Important officials.

The top of the tree touched the sky.* It could be seen from anywhere on earth.¹²The leaves of the tree were beautiful. It had much good fruit on it. And on the tree was plenty of food for everyone. The wild animals found shelter under the tree. And the birds lived in its branches. Every animal ate from the tree.

¹³I was looking at those things in the vision* while lying on my bed. And then I saw a holy angel coming down from heaven. ¹⁴He spoke very loud. He said, ‘Cut down the tree, and cut off its branches. Strip off its leaves. Scatter its fruit around. The animals that are under the tree will run away. The birds that were in its branches will fly away. ¹⁵But let the stump and roots stay in the ground. Put a band of iron and bronze around it. The stump and roots will stay in the field with the grass all around it. It will live among the wild animals and plants in the fields. It will become wet with dew.* ¹⁶He will not think like a man any longer. He will have the mind of an animal. Seven seasons (*years*) will pass while he is like this.’

¹⁷A holy angel announced this punishment. Why? So all the people on earth may know that God Most High rules over the kingdoms of men. God gives those kingdoms to anyone he wants to. And God chooses humble people to rule those kingdoms!

¹⁸That is what I, King Nebuchadnezzar, dreamed. Now, Belteshazzar (*Daniel*), tell me what it means. None of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret that dream for me. But Belteshazzar, you can interpret the dream because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.

¹⁹Then Daniel (also named Belteshazzar) became very quiet for about an hour. The

things he was thinking bothered him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar (*Daniel*), don’t let the dream or its meaning make you afraid.”

Then Belteshazzar (*Daniel*) answered the king, “My lord, I wish the dream were about your enemies. And I wish the meaning of the dream were about those against you. ^{20–21}You saw a tree in your dream. The tree grew large and strong. Its top touched the sky. It could be seen from all over the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, and it had plenty of fruit. The fruit gave plenty of food for everyone. It was a home for the wild animals, and its branches were nesting places for the birds. That is the tree you saw. ²²King, you are that tree! You have become great and powerful. You are like the tall tree that touched the sky—and your power reaches to the far parts of the earth.

²³“King, you saw a holy angel coming down from heaven. He said, ‘Cut the tree down and destroy it. Put a band of iron and bronze around the stump and leave the stump and its roots in the ground. Leave it in the grass in the field. It will become wet with dew.* He will live like a wild animal. Seven seasons (*years*) will pass while he is like this.’

²⁴“King, this is the meaning of the dream. God Most High has commanded these things to happen to my lord the king: ²⁵King Nebuchadnezzar, you will be forced to go away from people. You will live among the wild animals. You will eat grass like cattle. And you will become wet with dew.* Seven seasons (*years*) will pass, and then you will learn this lesson. You will learn God Most High rules over the kingdoms of men. And God Most High gives kingdoms to anyone he wants.

²⁶“The command to leave the stump of the tree and its roots in the ground means this: Your kingdom will be given back to you. This will happen when you learn that Most High (*God*) rules your kingdom. ²⁷So, king, please accept my advice. I advise you to stop sinning and do what is right. Stop doing bad things. And be kind to poor people. Then you might continue to be successful.”

²⁸All those things happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. ^{29–30}Twelve months after the dream, King Nebuchadnezzar was walking on

middle of the earth ... sky The Babylonian people thought the earth was flat and round like a plate or a wheel. And they thought the sky was like a glass bowl turned upside down on the earth.
vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.
dew Drops of water that collect on the ground during the night.

the roof* of his palace* in Babylon. While on the roof, the king said, “Look at Babylon! I built this great city. It is my palace! I built this great place by my power. I built this place to show how great I am!”

³¹The words were still in his mouth when a voice came from heaven. The voice said, “King Nebuchadnezzar, these things will happen to you: Your power as king has been taken away from you. ³²You will be forced to go away from people. You will live with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow. Seven seasons (*years*) will pass before you learn your lesson. Then you will learn that God Most High rules over the kingdoms of men. And that God Most High gives kingdoms to anyone he wants.”

³³Those things happened immediately. Nebuchadnezzar was forced to go away from people. He began eating grass like a cow. He became wet from dew.* His hair grew long like the feathers of an eagle. And his nails grew long like the claws of a bird.

³⁴Then at the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up toward heaven. And I was in my right mind again. Then I gave praise to God Most High. I gave honor and glory to him who lives forever.

God rules forever!

His kingdom continues for
all generations.

³⁵ People on earth are not truly important.

God does what he wants
with the powers of heaven
and the people on earth.

No one can stop his powerful hand!

No one can question the things he does!

³⁶So, at that time, God gave me my right mind again. And he gave back my great honor and power as king. My advisers and the royal people began to ask my advice again. I became the king again. And I became even greater and more powerful than before. ³⁷Now I,

Nebuchadnezzar, give praise, honor, and glory to the King of Heaven. Everything he does is right. He is always fair. And he is able to make proud people humble!

The Writing on the Wall

5 King Belshazzar gave a big party for 1,000 of his officials. The king was drinking wine with them. ²As Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he ordered his servants to bring the gold and silver cups. These were the cups that his grandfather* Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple* in Jerusalem. King Belshazzar wanted his royal people, his wives and his women slaves* to drink from those cups. ³So they brought the gold cups that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem. And the king and his officials, his wives, and his women slaves drank from them. ⁴As they were drinking they were giving praise to their idol gods. They gave praise to those gods—and those gods were only statues made from gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

⁵Then all of a sudden, a man’s hand appeared and began writing on the wall. The fingers scratched words into the plaster on the wall. The hand wrote on the wall there in the king’s house near the lampstand. The king was watching the hand as it wrote.

⁶King Belshazzar was very afraid. His face became white from fear and his knees were shaking and knocking together. He could not stand up because his legs were too weak. ⁷The king called for the men of magic and Chaldeans* to be brought to him. He said to these wise men, “I will give a reward to any man that can read this writing and explain to me what it means. I will give purple clothes* to that man. I will put a gold chain around his

grandfather Or, “father.” We are not sure if Belshazzar was really Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson. Here the word “father” might only mean, “the previous king.”

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

women slaves Or, “concubine,” “a slave woman like a wife to her master.”

Chaldean(s) An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply “People from Babylonia.”

purple clothes These clothes showed that a person was rich and powerful, like a king.

roof In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used like an extra room.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

dew Drops of water that collect on the ground during the night.

neck, and I will make him the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

⁸So all the king’s wise men came in. But they could not read the writing. They could not understand what it meant. ⁹King Belshazzar’s officials were confused. And the king became even more afraid and worried. His face was white from fear.

¹⁰Then the king’s mother came into the place where the party was. She had heard the voices of the king and his royal officials. She said, “King, may you live forever! Don’t be afraid! Don’t let your face be so white with fear! ¹¹There is a man in your kingdom that has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the days of your father this man showed that he could understand secrets. He showed that he was very smart and very wise. He showed that he was like the gods in these things. Your grandfather,* King Nebuchadnezzar, put this man in charge of all the wise men. He ruled over all the men of magic, and the Chaldeans.* ¹²The man I am talking about is named Daniel. The king gave him the name Belteshazzar. Belteshazzar (Daniel) is very smart and he knows many things. He could interpret dreams, explain secrets, and answer very hard problems. Call for Daniel. He will tell you what the writing on the wall means.”

¹³So they brought Daniel to the king. The king said to Daniel, “Is your name Daniel, one of the captives my father the king brought here from Judah? ¹⁴I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you. And I have heard that you understand secrets, and are very smart and very wise. ¹⁵The wise men and the men of magic were brought to me to read this writing on the wall. I wanted those men to explain to me what this writing means. But they could not explain this writing on the wall to me. ¹⁶I have heard about you. I have heard that you are able to explain what things mean, and that you can find the answer to very hard problems. If you can read this writing on the

wall and explain to me what it means, this is what I will do for you: I will give you purple clothes* and I will put a gold chain around your neck. Then you will become the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

¹⁷Then Daniel answered the king. Daniel said, “King Belshazzar, you can keep your gifts for yourself. Or you can give those rewards to someone else. But I will still read the writing on the wall for you. And I will explain to you what it means.

¹⁸“King, God Most High made your grandfather* Nebuchadnezzar a very great and powerful king. God made him very important. ¹⁹People from many nations and people that spoke many languages were very afraid of Nebuchadnezzar. Why? Because the God Most High made him a very important king. If Nebuchadnezzar wanted a person to die, then he killed that person. And if he wanted a person to live, then that person was allowed to live. If he wanted to make people important, then he made those people important. And if he wanted to make people not important, then he made them not important.

²⁰But Nebuchadnezzar became proud and stubborn. So his power was taken away from him. He was taken off his royal throne and stripped of his glory. ²¹Then Nebuchadnezzar was forced to go away from people. His mind became like the mind of an animal. He lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like a cow. He became wet with dew.* These things happened to him until he learned his lesson. Then he learned that God Most High rules over the kingdoms of men. And God Most High sets anyone he wants over kingdoms.

²²“But Belshazzar, you already knew these things! You are Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson.* But still you have not made yourself humble. ²³No, you did not become humble. Instead, you have turned against the Lord of heaven. You ordered the drinking cups from the

grandfather Or, “father.” We are not sure if Belshazzar was really Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson. Here the word “father” might only mean, “the man who was king before.”

Chaldean(s) An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply “People from Babylonia.”

purple clothes These clothes showed that a person was rich and powerful, like a king.

dew Drops of water that collect on the ground during the night.

grandson Or, “son.” This does not necessarily mean they were from the same family. It might only mean that Belshazzar was one of the kings of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar was king.

Lord's temple to be brought to you. Then you and your royal officials, your wives, and your women servants* drank wine from those cups. You gave praise to the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone. Those are not really gods, they can't see, or hear, or understand anything. But you did not give honor to the God who has the power over your life and everything you do. ²⁴So, because of that, God sent the hand that wrote on the wall. ²⁵These are the words that were written on the wall:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPARSIN.

²⁶“This is what these words mean:

MENE:*

God has counted the days
until your kingdom will end.

²⁷ TEKEL:*

You have been weighed on the scales,
and found not good enough.

²⁸ UPARSIN:*

Your kingdom is being taken from you
It will be divided among
the Medes and Persians.”

²⁹Then Belshazzar gave an order for Daniel to be dressed in purple clothes.* A gold chain was put around his neck, and he was announced to be the third highest ruler in the kingdom. ³⁰That very same night, Belshazzar, king of the Babylonian people, was killed. ³¹A man named Darius the Mede became the new king. Darius was about 62 years old.

Daniel and the Lions

6 Darius thought it would be a good idea to choose 120 satraps* to rule throughout all of his kingdom. ²And he chose three men to

woman servant Or, “concubine, “a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

MENE A weight, like the Hebrew word “mina.” This is like the word “to count.”

TEKEL A weight, like the Hebrew word “shekel.” This word is like the word meaning “to weigh.”

UPARSIN Literally, “peres.” A weight. This word is like the word meaning “to divide,” “to split.” It is also like the name of the country Persia.

purple clothes These clothes showed that a person was rich and powerful, like a king.

satraps Persian officials that were governors of a province.

rule over those 120 satraps. Daniel was one of these three supervisors. The king set up these men so that no one would cheat him and he would not lose anything in his kingdom. ³Daniel showed himself to be better than the other supervisors. Daniel did this by his good character and great abilities. The king was so impressed with Daniel that he planned to make Daniel ruler over the whole kingdom. ⁴But when the other supervisors and the satraps heard about this, they were very jealous. They tried to find reasons to accuse Daniel. So they watched the things Daniel did as he went about doing the business of the government. But they could not find anything wrong with Daniel. So they could not accuse him of doing anything wrong. Daniel was a man people could trust. He did not cheat the king and he worked very hard.

⁵Finally those men said, “We will never find any reason to accuse Daniel of doing something wrong. So we must find something to complain about that is connected to the law of his God.”

⁶So those two supervisors and the satraps* went as a group to the king. They said: “King Darius, live forever! ⁷The supervisors, prefects,* satraps*, advisers, and governors have all agreed on something. We think that the king should make this law. Everyone must obey this law. This is the law: If anyone prays to any god or man, except to you, king, for the next 30 days, then that person will be thrown into the lions' den (*cage*). ⁸Now, king, make the law and sign the paper it is written on. In this way, the law can't be changed. Why? Because the laws of the Medes and Persians can't be canceled or changed.” ⁹So King Darius made the law and signed it.

¹⁰Daniel always prayed to God three times every day. Three times every day, Daniel got down on his knees and prayed and praised God. When Daniel heard about the new law he went to his house. Daniel went up to his room on the roof of his house. Daniel went to the windows that opened toward Jerusalem.

prefects Important officials.

Then Daniel got down on his knees and prayed, like he always did.

¹¹Then those men went as a group and found Daniel. They saw him praying and asking God for help. ¹²So they went to the king. They talked to him about the law he had made. They said, “King Darius, you signed a law that says, for the next 30 days anyone that prays to any god or man except you, the king, would be thrown into the lions’ den (*cage*). You did sign that law, didn’t you?”

The king answered, “Yes, I signed that law. And the laws of the Medes and Persians can’t be canceled or changed.”

¹³Then those men said to the king, “That man named Daniel is not paying any attention to you. Daniel is one of the captives* from Judah. And Daniel is not paying attention to the law you signed. Daniel still prays to his God three times every day.”

¹⁴The king became very sad and upset when he heard this. He decided to save Daniel. He worked until sunset trying to think of a way to save Daniel. ¹⁵Then those men went as a group to the king. They said to him, “Remember, king, that the law of the Medes and Persians says that no law or command signed by the king can ever be canceled or changed.”

¹⁶So King Darius gave the order. They brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den (*cage*). The king said to Daniel, “I hope the God you worship saves you!” ¹⁷A big rock was brought and put over the opening of the lions’ den. Then the king used his ring and put his seal* on the rock. And he used the rings of his officials and put their seals on the rock also. This showed that no one could move that rock and bring Daniel out of the lion’s den (*cage*). ¹⁸Then King Darius went back to his house. He did not eat that night. He did not want anyone to come and entertain him. The king could not sleep all night.

captives People taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

seal(s) Small stones or rings with special shapes that could be used like a rubber stamp. When pressed into wet clay or hot wax, they left a special mark that was like a signature.

¹⁹The next morning, King Darius got up just as it was getting light. He ran to the lions’ den (*cage*). ²⁰The king was very worried. When the king went to the lions’ den, he called to Daniel. The king said, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God been able to save you from the lions? You always serve your God.”

²¹Daniel answered, “King, live forever! ²²My God sent his angel to save me. The angel closed the lions’ mouths. The lions have not hurt me because my God knows I am innocent. I never did anything wrong to you, king.”

²³King Darius was very happy. He told his servants to lift Daniel out of the lions’ den (*cage*). And when Daniel was lifted out of the den they did not find any injury on his body. Daniel was not hurt by the lions because he trusted in his God.

²⁴Then the king gave a command to bring the men that had accused Daniel to the lions’ den (*cage*). Those men and their wives and children were thrown into the lion’s den. The lions grabbed them before they hit the floor of the lions’ den. The lions ate their bodies and then chewed on their bones.

²⁵Then King Darius wrote this letter to all the people from other nations that spoke many different languages all around the world:

Greetings.

²⁶I am making a new law. This law is for people in every part of my kingdom. All of you people must fear and respect the God of Daniel.

Daniel’s God is the living God.

God lives forever!

His kingdom will never be destroyed.

His rule will never end.

²⁷ God helps and saves people.

God does amazing miracles
in heaven and on earth.

God saved Daniel from the lions.”

²⁸So Daniel was successful during the time that Darius was king and during the time that Cyrus the Persian was king.

Daniel's Dream about Four Animals

7 During the first year that Belshazzar was king of Babylon,* Daniel had a dream. Daniel saw these visions* while he was lying on his bed. Daniel wrote what he had dreamed about. ²Daniel said: “I saw my vision at night. In the vision, the wind was blowing from all four directions. Those winds made the sea rough. ³I saw four big animals and each one was different from the others. Those four animals came up out of the sea.

⁴“The first animal looked like a lion, and it had wings like an eagle. I watched this animal. Then its wings were torn off. It was lifted from the ground so that it stood up on two feet like a man. And it was given the heart (*mind*) of a man.

⁵“And then I saw a second animal there in front of me. This animal looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up and eat all the meat you want!’

⁶“After that, I looked, and there in front of me was another animal. This animal looked like a leopard.* And the leopard had four wings on its back. The wings looked like a bird’s wings. This animal had four heads. It was given authority to rule.

⁷“After that, in my vision* at night I looked, and there in front of me was a fourth animal. This animal looked very mean and terrible. It looked very strong. It had large iron teeth. This animal crushed and ate up its victims.* And this animal walked on whatever was left of its victims. This fourth animal was different from all the animals I saw before it. This animal had ten horns.

⁸“I was thinking about those horns, and then another horn grew up among those horns. This horn was a little horn. There were eyes on this little horn—the eyes looked like a person’s eyes. And there was a mouth on this

little horn. And the mouth was bragging. The little horn pulled out three of the other horns.

Judgment of the Fourth Animal

- ⁹ “As I was looking,
 thrones were put in their places.
 And the Ancient King*
 sat on his throne.
 His clothes were very white;
 They were white like snow.
 The hair on his head was white;
 it was white like wool.
 His throne was made from fire.
 And the wheels of his throne were
 made from flames.
- ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing
 in front of the Ancient King.*
 Millions of people were serving him.
 Hundreds of millions of people stood
 in front of him.
 [This was like] court was ready to begin,
 and the books were opened.

¹¹“I kept on looking because the little horn was bragging. I kept watching until finally the fourth animal was killed. Its body was destroyed and it was thrown into the burning fire. ¹²The authority and rule of the other animals had been taken from them. But they were permitted to live for a certain period of time.

¹³“In my vision at night I looked, and there in front of me was a person that looked like a human being.* He was coming on the clouds in the sky. He came to the Ancient King,* and they brought him before him.

¹⁴“The person that looked like a human being was given authority, glory, and complete ruling power. People from every nation and every language will worship him. His rule will last forever. His kingdom will continue forever. It will never be destroyed.

first year that Belshazzar was king of Babylon This is probably 553 B.C.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

leopard An animal like a tiger, but with black spots.

victims People that have suffered some kind of hurt or trouble. Often this means people that were hurt or lost something during a crime.

Ancient King Literally, “Ancient of Days.” This name for God shows that God has been the great king for a long, long time.

a person ... human being Or, “a person, a real human being.” Literally, “like a son of man.” This means he looked like a normal person, not an angel or an animal.

The Interpretation of the Dream about the Fourth Animal

¹⁵“I, Daniel, was confused and worried. The visions* that went through my mind bothered me. ¹⁶I came near one of those that was standing there. I asked him what all this meant. So he told me. He explained to me what these things meant. ¹⁷He said, ‘The four great animals are four kingdoms. Those four kingdoms will come from the earth. ¹⁸But God’s special people will receive the kingdom. And they will have the kingdom forever and ever.’

¹⁹“Then I wanted to know what the fourth animal was and what it meant. The fourth animal was different from all the other animals. It was very terrible. It had iron teeth and bronze claws. It was the animal that crushed and completely ate up its victims. And it walked on whatever was left of its victims. ²⁰And I wanted to know about the ten horns that were on the fourth animal’s head. And I wanted to know about the little horn that grew there. That little horn pulled out three of the other ten horns. That little horn looked meaner than the other horns. And that little horn continued bragging. ²¹As I was watching, this little horn began attacking and making war against God’s special people. And the horn was killing them. ²²The little horn kept killing God’s special people until the Ancient King* came and judged him. The Ancient King announced a judgment on the little horn. This judgment helped God’s special people. And they received the kingdom.

²³“And he explained this to me: ‘The fourth animal is a fourth kingdom that will come on the earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms. That fourth kingdom will destroy people all around the world. It will walk on and crush nations all around the world. ²⁴The ten horns are ten kings that will come from this fourth kingdom. After those ten kings are gone, another king will come. He will be different from the kings that ruled before him. He will defeat three of the other kings. ²⁵This

special king will say things against God Most High. And that king will hurt and kill God’s special people. That king will try to change the times and laws that have already been set. God’s special people will be in that king’s power for 3 1/2 years.*

²⁶“But the court will decide what should happen. And that king’s power will be taken away. His kingdom will end completely. ²⁷Then God’s special people will rule the kingdom. And they will rule over all the people from all the kingdoms of earth.* This kingdom will last forever. And people from all the other kingdoms will respect and serve them.’

²⁸“And that was the end of the dream. I, Daniel, was very afraid. My face became very white from fear. And I did not tell the other people about the things I saw and heard.”

Daniel’s Vision of a Ram and a Goat

8 During* the third year that Belshazzar was king,* I saw this vision.* This was after the other vision. ²In the vision, I saw that I was in the city of Susa.* Susa was the capital city in the province of Elam. I was standing by the Ulai River. ³I looked up, and I saw a ram* standing at the side of the Ulai River. The ram had two long horns. The horns were both long, but one horn was longer than the other horn. The long horn was farther back than the other horn. ⁴I watched the ram run into things with its horns. I watched the ram run to the west and to the north and to the south. No animal could stop the ram. And no one could save the other animals. That ram could do whatever it wanted to do. So the ram became very powerful.

⁵I thought about the ram.* While I was thinking, I saw a male goat come from the

3 1/2 years Literally, “time, times and half time.”

God’s special people ... all the kingdoms of earth Literally, “The rule and kingdom and greatness of the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the saints.”

During At this point, the book of Daniel is written in the Hebrew language again. Daniel 2:7–7:28 was written in Aramaic, the official language of the Babylonian Empire.

third year that Belshazzar was king This is probably 551 B.C.

Susa The capital city of Persia.

ram(s) A male sheep.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.
Ancient King Literally, “Ancient of Days.” This name for God shows that God has been the great king for a long, long time.

west. This goat had one large horn that was easy to see. This goat ran so fast that its feet hardly touched the ground.

⁶That goat came to the ram* with the two horns. This was the ram I had seen standing by the Ulai River. The goat was very angry. And it ran toward the ram. ⁷I watched the goat run toward the ram. The goat was very angry. It broke the ram's two horns. The ram could not stop the goat. The goat knocked the ram to the ground. Then the goat stepped all over the ram. There was no one to save the ram from the goat.

⁸So the goat became very powerful. But when he was strong, his big horn broke. Then four horns grew in place of the one big horn. Those four horns were easy to see. Those four horns pointed in four different directions.

⁹Then a little horn grew from one of those four horns. That little horn grew and became very big. It grew toward the southeast. It grew toward the Beautiful Land. ¹⁰That little horn became very big. It grew until it reached the sky. The little horn even threw some of the stars to the ground. And it stepped all over those stars. ¹¹That little horn became very strong. And then it turned against the Ruler of the Stars (*God*). The little horn stopped the daily sacrifices that were offered to the Ruler (*God*). The place where people worshiped the Ruler was pulled down. ¹²The little horn sinned and stopped the daily sacrifices. It threw goodness down to the ground. The little horn did these things and was very successful.

¹³Then I heard one of the holy ones* speaking. Then I heard another holy one answer the first one. The first holy one said, "This vision* shows what will happen to the daily sacrifice. It is about that terrible sin that destroys. It shows what will happen when people destroy the place where the Ruler is worshiped. It shows what will happen when those people step all over that place. It shows what will happen when the people step all over those stars. But how long will these things happen?"

ram(s) A male sheep.

holy one(s) Here this probably means an angel.

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

¹⁴The other holy one* said, "This will happen for 2,300 days. Then the holy place will be fixed."

The Vision Is Explained to Daniel

¹⁵I, Daniel, saw this vision.* And I tried to understand what it meant. While I was thinking about the vision, someone that looked like a man suddenly stood in front of me. ¹⁶Then I heard a man's voice. This voice came from above the Ulai River. The voice called out, "Gabriel, explain the vision to this man."

¹⁷So Gabriel, the angel that looked like a man, came to me. I was very afraid. I fell down to the ground. But Gabriel said to me, "Man,* understand that this vision is for the time of the end."

¹⁸While Gabriel was speaking, I fell to the ground and went to sleep. It was a very deep sleep. Then Gabriel touched me and lifted me to my feet. ¹⁹Gabriel said, "Now, I will explain the vision to you. I will tell you what will happen in the future. Your vision* was about the end times.

²⁰"You saw a ram with two horns. Those horns are the countries of Media and Persia. ²¹The goat is the king of Greece. The big horn between its eyes is the first king. ²²That horn broke. And four horns grew in its place. Those four horns are four kingdoms. Those four kingdoms will come from the nation of the first king. But those four nations will not be as strong as the first king.

²³"When the end is near for those kingdoms, there will be a very bold and cruel king. This king will be very tricky. This will happen when there have become many, many sinful people. ²⁴This king will be very powerful—but his power does not come from himself.* This king will cause terrible destruction. He will be successful in everything he does. He will destroy powerful people—even God's special people.

²⁵"This king will be very smart and tricky. He will use his wisdom and lies to be

Man Literally, "son of man." This was a Hebrew way of saying, "human being."

but his power ... himself Some ancient translations don't have this verse, so this may have been accidentally copied from verse 22.

successful. He will think that he is very important. He will destroy many people, when they least expect it. He will try to fight even the Prince of Princes (*God*). But that cruel king's power will be destroyed. And it will not be a human hand that destroys him.

²⁶“The vision about those times, and the things I said, are true. But seal* the vision. Those things won't happen for a long, long time.”

²⁷I, Daniel, became very weak. I was sick for several days after that vision. Then I got up and went back to work for the king. But I was very upset about the vision. I did not understand what the vision meant.

Daniel's Prayer

9 These things happened during the first year that Darius was king. Darius was the son of a man named Ahasuerus.* Darius belonged to the Median people. He became king over Babylon. ²During the first year that Darius was king, I, Daniel, was reading some books. In the books, I saw that the Lord told Jeremiah how many years would pass before Jerusalem would be built again. The Lord said 70 years would pass.

³Then I turned to God, my Master. I prayed to him and asked him for help. I did not eat any food, and I put on the clothes that showed I was sad. And I put dirt on my head. ⁴I prayed to the Lord my God. I told him about all of my sins. I said: “Lord, you are a great and awesome God. You keep your agreement of love and kindness with people that love you. You keep your agreement with the people who obey your commands.

⁵“But Lord, we have sinned! We have done wrong. We have done bad things. We turned against you. We turned away from your commands and fair decisions. ⁶We did not listen to the prophets. They were your servants. The prophets spoke for you. They spoke to our kings, our leaders, and our fathers. They spoke

to all of the people from Israel. [But we did not listen to those prophets!]

⁷“Lord, you are good, and goodness belongs to you! But shame belongs to us today. Shame belongs to the people from Judah and Jerusalem. Shame belongs to all the people of Israel—to the people that are near, and to the people that are far away. Lord, you scattered those people among many nations. And the people of Israel in all those nations should be ashamed. They should be ashamed of all the bad things they did against you, Lord.

⁸“Lord, we should all be ashamed. All of our kings and leaders should be ashamed. Our ancestors* should be ashamed. Why? Because we sinned against you, Lord.

⁹“But Lord, you are kind. You forgive people for the bad things they do. And we really turned against you. ¹⁰We have not obeyed the Lord our God. The Lord used his servants, the prophets, and gave us laws—but we have not obeyed his laws. ¹¹None of the people of Israel obeyed your teachings. They all have turned away. They did not obey you. There are curses* and promises written in the Law of Moses. (Moses was God's servant.) Those curses and promises tell about the punishment for not obeying the law—and all those things have happened to us. Those things happened to us because we sinned against the Lord.

¹²“God said those things would happen to us and our leaders—and he made them happen. He made terrible things happen to us. No other city suffered the way Jerusalem suffered. ¹³All of those terrible things happened to us. This happened just like it is written in the Law of Moses. But we still have not asked the Lord for help! We still have not stopped sinning. We still do not pay attention to your truth, Lord. ¹⁴The Lord kept the terrible things ready for us—and he made those things happen to us. The Lord did this because he is fair in everything he does. But we still have not listened to him.

seal(s) Small stones or rings with special shapes that could be used like a rubber stamp. When pressed into wet clay or hot wax, they left a special mark that was like a signature.

Ahasuerus Or, “Xerxes.”

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

curses Warnings about bad things that will happen to a person that does not obey God.

¹⁵“Lord, our God, you used your power and brought us out of Egypt. We are your people. You are famous because of that even today. Lord, we have sinned. We have done terrible things. ¹⁶Lord, stop being angry at Jerusalem. Jerusalem is on your holy mountain. You do the right things, so stop being angry at Jerusalem. People all around us insult us and make fun of your people. This happens because we and our ancestors* sinned against you.

¹⁷“Now, Lord, listen to my prayer. I am your servant. Listen to my prayer for help. Do good things for your holy place.* That building was destroyed. But Master, do these good things for your own good. ¹⁸My God, listen to me! Open your eyes and see all the terrible things that have happened to us! See what has happened to the city that is called by your name! I am not saying we are good people. That is not why I am asking these things. I am asking these things because I know you are kind. ¹⁹Lord, listen to me! Lord, forgive us! Lord, pay attention, and then do something! Don’t wait! Do something now! Do it for your own good! My God, do something now, for your city and your people that are called by your name.”

The Vision about the 70 Weeks

²⁰I was saying those things in my prayer to God. I was telling about my sins and the sins of the people of Israel. I was praying for God’s holy mountain. ²¹While I was praying, the man Gabriel came to me. Gabriel was the person I saw in the vision.* Gabriel came flying quickly to me. He came at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²²Gabriel helped me understand the things I wanted to know. Gabriel said, “Daniel, I have come to give you wisdom and to help you understand. ²³When you first started praying, the command was given. And I came to tell you. God loves you very much! You will understand this command, and you will understand the vision.

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Do good things for your holy place Literally, “Let your face shine on your holy place.”

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

²⁴“God has allowed 70 weeks* for your people and your holy city, Daniel. The 70 weeks* are ordered for these reasons: to stop doing bad things, to stop sinning, to make people pure, to bring the goodness that continues forever, to put a seal* on visions* and prophets, and to dedicate a very holy place.

²⁵“Learn these things, Daniel. Understand these things! From the time that the message went out to go back and build Jerusalem again until the time for the chosen king* to come will be seven weeks.* Then Jerusalem will be built again. There will again be places for people to meet together in Jerusalem. And there will be a ditch around the city to protect it. Jerusalem will be built for 62 weeks.* But there will be many troubles during that time. ²⁶After the 62 weeks,* the chosen person will be killed.* He will be gone.* Then the people of the future leader will destroy the city and the holy place. That end will come like a flood. War will continue until the end. God has ordered that place to be completely destroyed.

²⁷“Then the future ruler will make an agreement with many people. That agreement will continue for one week.* The offerings and sacrifices will stop for a half of a week.* And a destroyer will come. He will do terrible, destructive things!* But God has ordered that destroyer to be completely destroyed.”

Daniel’s Vision by the Tigris River

10 Cyrus was the king of Persia. During Cyrus’ third year as king, Daniel learned about these things. (Daniel’s other name is Belteshazzar.) These things are true, but very hard to understand. But Daniel understood these things. They were explained to him in a vision.*

week(s) Or, “units of seven.” The Hebrew word could mean “week,” or it could mean “period of seven years.”

seal(s) Small stones or rings with special shapes that could be used like a rubber stamp. When pressed into wet clay or hot wax, they left a special mark that was like a signature.

chosen king Literally, “anointed person.”

killed Literally, “cut off.”

He will be gone Or, “he will have nothing.”

He will do ... things Or, “He will come on the wings of terrible destruction.”

² Daniel says, “At that time, I, Daniel, was very sad for three weeks. ³ During those three weeks, I didn’t eat any fancy food. I didn’t eat any meat. I didn’t drink any wine. I didn’t put any oil on my head. I didn’t do any of these things for three weeks.

⁴ “On the 24th day of the first month of the year, I was standing beside the great Tigris River. ⁵ While I was standing there, I looked up. And I saw a man standing in front of me. He was wearing linen* clothes. He wore a belt made of pure gold* around his waist. ⁶ His body was like a smooth, shiny stone. His face was bright like lightning! His eyes were like flames of fire. His arms and feet were shiny like polished brass! His voice was loud like a crowd of people!

⁷ “I, Daniel, was the only person that saw the vision.* The men with me didn’t see the vision, but they were still afraid. They were so afraid that they ran away and hid. ⁸ So I was left alone. I was watching this vision—and it made me afraid. I lost my strength. My face turned white like a dead person’s face, and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard the man in the vision talking. As I listened to his voice, I fell into a deep sleep. My face was flat on the ground.

¹⁰ “Then a hand touched me. When that happened I got on my hands and knees. I was so afraid that I was shaking. ¹¹ The man in the vision* said to me, ‘Daniel, God loves you very much. Think very carefully about the words I will speak to you. Stand up, I have been sent to you.’ And when he said this, I stood up. I was still shaking because I was afraid. ¹² Then the man in the vision started talking again. He said, ‘Daniel, don’t be afraid. From the very first day you decided to have wisdom and to be humble in front of God. He has been listening to your prayers. I came to you because you have been praying. ¹³ But the prince (*angel*) of Persia has been fighting against me and bothering me for 21 days. Then Michael, one of the most important princes (*angels*), came to help me because I was stuck there with the king of

Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to you Daniel, to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future. The vision is about a time in the future.’

¹⁵ “While the man was talking to me, I bowed low with my face toward the ground. I could not speak. ¹⁶ Then the one that looked like a man touched my lips. I opened my mouth and started to speak. I said to the one standing in front of me, ‘Sir, I am upset and afraid because of what I saw in the vision.* I feel helpless. ¹⁷ Sir, I am Daniel your servant. How can I talk with you? My strength is gone and it is hard for me to breathe.’

¹⁸ “The one that looked like a man touched me again. When he touched me I felt better. ¹⁹ Then he said, ‘Daniel, don’t be afraid. God loves you very much. Peace be with you. Be strong now, be strong.’

“When he spoke to me, I became stronger. Then I said, ‘Sir, you have given me strength. Now you can speak.’

²⁰ “So then he said, ‘Daniel, do you know why I have come to you? Soon I must go back to fight against the prince (*angel*) of Persia. When I go, the prince (*angel*) of Greece will come. ²¹ But Daniel, before I go, I must first tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. No one stands with me against those evil angels except Michael. Michael is the prince (*angel*) ruling over your people.

11 During the first year that Darius the Mede was king,* I stood up to support Michael* in his fight against the prince (*angel*) of Persia.

² “Now then, Daniel, I tell you the truth: three more kings will rule in Persia. Then a fourth king will come. That fourth king will be much richer than all the other kings of Persia before him. That fourth king will use his riches to get power. And he will cause everyone to be against the kingdom of Greece. ³ Then a very strong and powerful king will come. He will rule with much power. He will do anything he wants. ⁴ After that king has come, his kingdom will be broken up. His kingdom will be divided out

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

pure gold Literally, “gold from Uphaz.”

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

first year that Darius ... king This is probably 521 B.C.

Michael See Dan. 10:13.

toward the four parts of the world. His kingdom will not be divided among his children or grandchildren. And his kingdom will not have the power that he had. Why? Because his kingdom will be pulled up and given to other people.

⁵“The southern king will become strong. But then one of his commanders will defeat the southern king. The commander will begin to rule. And he will be very powerful.

⁶“Then after a few years, the southern king and that commander will make an agreement. The daughter of the southern king will marry the northern king. She will do this to bring peace. But she and the southern king will not be strong enough. People will turn against her and against the person that brought her to that country. And those people will turn against her child and against the person that helped her.

⁷“But a person from her family will come to take the southern king’s place. He will attack the armies of the northern king. He will go into that king’s strong fort. He will fight and win. ⁸He will take their idol gods. He will take their metal idols and their expensive things made from silver and gold. He will take those things away to Egypt. Then he will not bother the northern king for a few years. ⁹The northern king will attack the southern kingdom. But he will lose, and then he will go back to his own country.

¹⁰“The northern king’s sons will prepare for war. They will get a large army together. That army will move through the land very quickly, like a powerful flood. That army will fight all the way to the strong fort of the southern king. ¹¹Then the southern king will become very angry. He will march out to fight against the northern king. The northern king will have a large army, but he will lose the war. ¹²The northern army will be defeated, and those soldiers will be carried away. The southern king will be very proud, and he will kill thousands of soldiers from the northern army. But he will not continue to be successful. ¹³The northern king will get another army. That army will be larger than the first army. After several years he will attack. That army will be very large and it will have many weapons. That army will be ready for war.

¹⁴“In those times, many people will be against the southern king. Some of your own people that love to fight will rebel against the southern king. They will not win, but they will make the vision* come true when they do this. ¹⁵Then the northern king will come and build ramps against the walls and capture a strong city. The southern army will not have the power to fight back. Even the best soldiers from the southern army will not be strong enough to stop the northern army.

¹⁶“The northern king will do whatever he wants. No one will be able to stop him. He will gain power and control in the Beautiful land. And he will have the power to destroy it. ¹⁷The northern king will decide to use all of his power to fight against the southern king. He will make an agreement with the southern king. The king of the north will let one of his daughters marry the southern king. The northern king will do that so he can defeat the southern king, but those plans will not succeed. His plans will not help him.

¹⁸“Then the northern king will turn his attention to the countries along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. He will defeat many of those cities, but then a commander will put an end to the pride and rebellion of that northern king. That commander will make that northern king ashamed.

¹⁹“After that happens, that northern king will go back to the strong forts of his own country. But he will be weak, and he will fall. He will be finished.

²⁰“A new ruler will come after that northern king. That ruler will send out a tax collector. That ruler will do this so he will have enough money to live in a very rich way. But, in a few years, that ruler will be destroyed. But he will not die in a battle.

²¹“That ruler will be followed by a very cruel and hated man. That man will not have the honor of being from a king’s family.* He will become a ruler by being tricky. He will attack the kingdom when the people feel safe. ²²He will defeat large and powerful armies. He

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.
That man ... king’s family Or, “That person will not have the good qualities a king should have.”

will even defeat the Leader with the Agreement. ²³Many nations will make agreements with that cruel and hated ruler. But he will lie and trick them. He will gain much power. But only a few people will support him.

²⁴“When the richest countries feel safe, that cruel and hated ruler will attack them. He will attack at just the right time and will be successful where his fathers were not successful. He will take things from the countries he defeated, and he will give those things to his followers. He will plan to defeat and destroy strong cities. He will be successful, but only for a short time.

²⁵“That very cruel and hated ruler will have a very large army. He will use that army to show his strength and courage and attack the southern king. The southern king will get a very large and powerful army and go to war. But the people that are against him will make secret plans. And the southern king will be defeated. ²⁶People that were supposed to be good friends of the southern king will try to destroy him. His army will be defeated. Many of his soldiers will be killed in battle. ²⁷Those two kings will have their hearts set on hurting each other. They will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but it will not do either one any good. Why? Because God has set a time for their end to come.

²⁸“The northern king will go back to his own country with much wealth. Then he will decide to do bad things against the holy agreement.* He will do the things he planned, and then he will go back to his own country.

²⁹“At the right time, the northern king will attack the southern king again. But this time he will not be successful like he was before. ³⁰Ships from Cyprus will come and fight against the northern king. He will see those ships coming and be afraid. Then he will turn back and take his anger out on the holy agreement. He will turn back and help the people that quit following the holy agreement. ³¹The northern king will send his army to do terrible things to the temple in Jerusalem. They will stop the people from offering the

daily sacrifice.* Then they will do something really terrible. They will set up that terrible thing that causes destruction.

³²“The northern king will use lies and smooth talking to trick the Jews that quit following the holy agreement. Those Jews will sin even worse. But the Jews that know God and obey him will be strong. They will fight back!

³³“Those wise teachers will help the other people understand what is happening. But even those wise people [will have to suffer persecution.] Some of those wise people will be killed with swords. Some of them will be burned, or taken prisoner. Some of them will have their homes and things taken away.

³⁴When those wise people are punished they will get a little help. But many people that join those wise people will be hypocrites.* ³⁵Some of the wise people will stumble [and make mistakes.] But the persecution must come. Why? So that they can be made stronger, purer, and without faults until the time of the end. Then, at the right time, that time of the end will come.”

The King Who Praises Himself

³⁶“The northern king will do whatever he wants. He will brag about himself. He will praise himself and think that he is even better than a god. He will say things that no one has ever heard of. He will say those things against the God of gods. He will be successful until all the bad things have happened. What God has planned to happen will happen.

³⁷“That northern king will not care about the gods his fathers worshiped. He will not care about the idol gods women worship. He will not care about any god. Instead, he will praise himself, and make himself more important than any god. ³⁸The northern king will not worship any god, but he will worship power. Power and strength will be his god. His fathers didn't love power like he does. He honors the god of power with gold and silver, expensive jewels, and gifts.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

holy agreement This probably means the Jewish people.

³⁹“That northern king will attack strong fortresses* with the help of this foreign god. He will give much honor to those foreign rulers that join him. He will put many people under those rulers. He will make those rulers pay him for the land they rule over.

⁴⁰“At the time of the end, the southern king will fight a battle against the northern king. The northern king will attack him. He will attack with chariots and soldiers on horses and many large ships. The northern king will rush through the land like a flood. ⁴¹The northern king will attack the Beautiful Land. Many countries will be defeated by the northern king. But Edom, Moab, and the leaders of Ammon will be saved from him. ⁴²The northern king will show his power in many countries. Egypt will also learn how powerful he is. ⁴³He will get treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt. The Libyan and Nubian people will obey him. ⁴⁴But that northern king will hear news from the east and the north that will make him afraid and angry. He will go to completely destroy many nations. ⁴⁵He will set up his king’s tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain.* But finally, that bad king will die. There will not be anyone to help him when his end comes.”

12“[The man in the vision said,] ‘Daniel, at that time, the great prince (*angel*) Michael will stand up. Michael is in charge of your people, the Jews. There will be a time of much trouble, the worst time since nations have been on earth. But Daniel, at that time, every one of your people whose name is found written in the book [of life] will be saved. ²Many of the people that are dead and buried* will wake up. Some of them will wake up to have life forever. But some will wake up to have shame and disgrace forever. ³The wise people will shine as bright as the sky. The wise people that taught others to live right will shine like stars forever and ever.*

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

holy mountain The mountain Jerusalem is built on.

are dead and buried Literally, “sleep in the dust.”

The wise people ... ever Or, “The wise and successful teachers will shine like the sun rays in the sky. Those who made others innocent will shine like the stars forever.” In Hebrew, this is like Isaiah 52:13 and Isaiah 53:11.

⁴“But you, Daniel, keep this message a secret. You must close the book. You must keep this secret until the time of the end. Many people will go here and there looking for true knowledge. And the true knowledge will increase.’

⁵“Then I, Daniel, looked and I saw two other people. One person was standing on my side of the river. And the other person was standing on the other side of the river. ⁶The man who was dressed in linen* was standing over the water in the river. One of the two people said to him, ‘How long will it be before these amazing things come true?’

⁷“The man dressed in linen* and standing over the water lifted his right and left hands toward heaven. And I heard him make a promise using the name of God who lives forever. He said, ‘It will be for three and one-half years.* The power of the holy people will be broken, and then all these things will finally come true.’

⁸“I heard the answer, but I really didn’t understand. So I asked, ‘Sir, what will happen after all these things come true?’

⁹“He answered, ‘Go on about your life Daniel. The message is hidden. It will be a secret until the time of the end. ¹⁰Many people will be made pure—they will make themselves clean.* But evil people will continue to be evil. And those wicked people will not understand these things. But the wise people will understand these things.

¹¹“The daily sacrifice will be stopped. There will be 1,290 days from that time until the time that the terrible thing that destroys is set up. ¹²The person that waits for, and comes to, the end of the 1,335 days will be very happy.

¹³“As for you Daniel, go and live your life till the end. You will get your rest. At the end, you will rise [from death] to get your share.”

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

three and one-half years Literally, “a time, times, and half a time.”

clean Or, “acceptable.” Pure or able to be used in worshiping God. See Lev. 11–15 for the Old Testament rules about clean and unclean things.

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Last Updated: September 21, 2006

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