Old Testament Survey Part 4 - The Prophets
Daniel Chapters 1-12

Author, Date and Setting

The book of Daniel is written by the **prophet Daniel**, who was one of the **Judean captives** taken into **exile** to **Babylon** by King Nebuchadnezzar in **605BC**. Daniel, who was apparently a member of the **royal family**, served thereafter in the **court** of the **King** of Babylon. After the **fall** of the **Babylonian Empire**, he served in the court of the **Medo-Persian** Empire that followed.

The **date** of **writing ranges** from the first year Nebuchadnezzar's reign in **605BC** to the third year of Cyrus' reign in **536BC**. This is a long 65 year span, the time that **Daniel** spent **living** in **exile** in Babylon. It appears that from the first year of Daniel's captivity he recorded the **events** of he and his **three friends** as they served in the **royal court**. One interesting fact is that Daniel makes some prophecies about the **future** of **nations** and **kingdoms** in the second century BC that are so accurate and specific, that many believe it had to be **written** afterward with a much **later date** by someone that lived **centuries after** Daniel. But because of the **nature** of **Biblical Prophecy** and **God's use** of **prophets** to **announce** the future **before** it happens, this is then **standard practice** of a prophet **called** by **God**. God of course uses this **prophetic foresight** to both **vindicate** His **sovereignty** over the **nations** and also to **encourage His people** that He is moving history according to **His own** good **purpose** and **plan**. These **purposes** and **plans work out** for the **good** of **God's people** who **love Him** and have been **called** according to is **purpose** (Rom 8:28). The **setting** then starts in the **royal court** of **Babylon**, just a **short time** after **Daniel** and **His friends** are taken **captive** into Babylon. The **first 6 chapters**, which are narrative in the **genre**, happen in and around the **King's Court** in Babylon.

Theme and Purpose

Daniel's **prophetic outlook** and **keen insight** will prove to be a great **encouragement** to **God's people** in **exile** as he will **affirm** that their **captivity** will **end**, and the **time will come** for them to **inherit God's Kingdom** and **favorable rule**. But this also stands as an encouragement for **God's people** of all **ages**, indeed even in the **21st Century** as we see **God's prophetic clock** winding down as He bring His **good plans** for His **Kingdom** and **humanity** to its **expected end**. This

of course is a **purpose** and **end** which God has **decreed** from all **eternity** and, an end that **Daniel** the **prophet** has brought much **clarity to**, even from the **6th Century BC**. In fact, so **relevant** is **Daniel's prophecy** to the **establishment** of God's Kingdom and its **fulfilment** in history, that it is even **referred** to in the **Olivet Discourse** by **Jesus** in **Matthew 24** and **Mark 13**, but also by **Paul** in **2nd Thessalonians** and **John** in the book of **Revelation**. These particular **prophecies** are mostly concerning the **far distant future** at the **Second Coming** of **Christ** and the **latter days** just preceding His glorious **Coming**. But Daniel also **speaks** with **pinpoint accuracy** concerning the **upheaval** of **nations** in the **2nd Century BC**, but also a prophecy concerning the **First Coming** of **Christ**, predicting the **very date** that the **Messiah** would be **killed**, and the **fact** that the **Messiah** would be **killed**. The short book of 12 chapters is filled with **astonishing predictions** which have earned **Daniel** a **spot** in the **Major Prophets** of the **Old Testament** Hebrew Scriptures.

Its **major themes** therefore **revolve** around **God's sovereignty** over **history** and **empires**, setting up and **removing kings** as He **pleases**. All of the kingdoms of this world will **come to an end** and will be **replaced** by the **Lord's Kingdom**, which will **never pass away**. Though trials and difficulties will continue for God's people up till the end, those who are **faithful** will be **raised to glory**, **honor**, and **everlasting life** in this final Kingdom. The ***ESV Study Bible*** comments; *"The book of Daniel is made up of two halves, each of which has its own genre. The first half (chs. 1–6) contains narratives from the lives of Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These court stories exemplify faithful living in exile and provide models of how God's people should live as strangers and exiles in a world that is not their home (Heb. 13:14). They show Daniel and his friends serving their pagan masters loyally, as Jeremiah 29:5–7 had commanded, yet without compromising their greater loyalty to God. The second half of the book (Daniel 7–12) contains apocalyptic visions, which are designed to reassure God's people that in spite of their present persecution and suffering, God is in control and will ultimately be victorious. The Lord is aware of the suffering of his people and will bring their trials to an end on the day when he establishes his kingdom. The final victory belongs to the Ancient of Days and his representative, the Son of Man (ch. 7). When they triumph, the powers and authorities of this world will be defeated and judged, while the saints will be vindicated and rewarded (7:26–27)."..... pointing out **key themes also**.... "1. It is possible to live a faithful life in exile,*

surrounded by pagan influences and propaganda, if one sets one's mind to serving the Lord wholeheartedly (ch. 1).
2. God can vindicate his faithful servants in front of pagan rulers by giving them unusual wisdom and insight into divine mysteries and by miraculously protecting them against the enmity of their pagan neighbors (chs. 2; 3; 6). Nevertheless, divine rescue from martyrdom cannot be assumed (3:16–18).
3. God humbles the proud and raises up the humble; even the hearts of the greatest kings are under his control (chs. 4; 5).
4. This world will be a place of torment and persecution for the saints until the end, getting worse and worse rather than better and better (chs. 2; 7). Yet the Lord will judge the kingdoms of this world and bring them to an end, replacing them with his own kingdom that will never end. This kingdom will be ruled by "one like a son of man" who comes "with the clouds," a figure who combines the distinctive traits of humanity and divinity (7:13).
5. God is sovereign over the course of history, even over those who rebel against him and seek to destroy his people (ch. 8).
6. The exile was not the end of Israel's history of rebellion and judgment. In the future, Israel would again transgress against the Lord, and Jerusalem would be handed over into the power of her enemies, who would trample her temple and do abominable things (chs. 8; 9; 12). Eventually, though, the anointed ruler would come to deliver her from her sins (9:24–27).
7. These earthly events are mirrors of a great cosmic conflict in the heavenly realms between angelic forces of good and evil (ch. 10). Prayer is a significant weapon in that conflict (9:23).
8. God rules over all of these conflicts and events, he limits their scope, and he has a precise timetable for the trials of the saints to be completed, when he will finally intervene to cleanse and deliver his people (ch. 12).
9. In the meantime, the saints must be patient and faithful amid a hostile world, looking to the Lord alone for deliverance (11:33–35)." **End quote**.

There is very much **encouragement** therefore for **God's people** of all **ages** to lay hold of and **strengthen their resolve** to **serve God faithfully** as **pilgrims** in a foreign land, until the **Kingdom of God comes** in its fulness, and our **suffering** and **persecutions** reach an eternal end. The **Kingdom** of **God will come** and replace all the **kingdoms** of this **fallen world**, and **God's Anointed Messiah** and **King** will bring a **Kingdom** of **Peace** and Divine blessing for His people to enjoy forever.

Outline

The book comes to us in **2 main sections**. The **first 6 chapters (1-6)**, which are **narrative** in the **genre** and tell some **historical information** about **Daniel** and his friends in **Babylon**. Of these **first 6 chapters**, chapter 1 is **written** in **Hebrew** and chapters 2-6 are **written** in **Aramaic**. The **last 6 chapters (7-12)** are written in Hebrew and contain **apocalyptic visions** which help to **reassure** God's people in **exile** that He is indeed **in control** of the **nations** and **history**, and that in the **end** He will bring their Messiah's **everlasting rule** to all the **nations**, and they will again live in **His blessing** and **special favor**.

Chapters 1-6 – Daniel and the Three Friends at the Babylonian Court (1:1–6:28)

Chapter 1:1-7 describe when and how **Daniel** and his **friends** were taken into **exile** and how **they lived** among the **Chaldeans**. Here is where we learn that Daniel was of **nobility** and also their **diet** and **names** among the Chaldeans.

> **Daniel 1:3-7** - 3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, **including some of the royal family and of the nobles, 4 youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.** 5 The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which **they were to enter the king's personal service**. 6 Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **7 Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.** NASU

They were given these **names** in order to assimilate the exiles into Babylonian culture by **obliterating** their **religious** and **cultural identity** and creating **dependence** upon the **royal court**. They were **taught** the **language** and **literature** of the Babylonians, and given food from the king's table. But Daniel did not want to **defile himself** by **violating** the **dietary laws** of God's Word.

> **Daniel 1:8** - 8 But **Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank**; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. NASU

Daniel asked that they would be **tested** to see that they could **sustain** on a diet of **vegetables**.

> **Daniel 1:15** – 15 At the end of t**en days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food.** 16 So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

The **Chaldeans** could **see** there was something **different** about these **Hebrews** and this would be an **important factor** in the **days ahead**.

> **Daniel 1:17** – 17 As for these four youths, **God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams**. 18 Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king talked with them, **and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service. 20 As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm. 21 And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.** NASU

So the **young Hebrews** are **blessed by God** and **obtain favor** in the Babylonian Court. Notice here also that **Daniel** continued in the **court** from **605BC** to **550BC** (the first year of **Cyrus**), a span of **55 years**.

Chapter 2:1-49 tells the story of **Daniel interpreting** a **dream** for **King Nebuchadnezzar**. The dream consisted of a **great statue** and was a **vision** from God to **show** the **coming history** of the **four main kingdoms** of the **earth**, from the **time** of **Babylonian rule**, to the **time** of the **Roman rule** in the **1st Century BC** and beyond. So **troubled** by the **dream**, Nebuchadnezzar **demands** that his **wise men** be able to **tell him the dream** and give its **interpretation**, this of course to **prove** that they were **qualified** to interpret it.

> **Daniel 2:4-6** - 4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: "O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation." **5 The king replied to the Chaldeans, "The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap.** 6 "But if you declare the dream and its

interpretation, **you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation**." NASU

You can get a **feel** here for what it must have **been like** to **serve** the **great proud** and **capricious King Nebuchadnezzar**. So the King is ready to kill all the wise men, including Daniel and his friends. But **Daniel** gets with his **friends to seek God** in **prayer** and ask for the **dream** and its **interpretation** so they would **not** be **killed**.

Daniel 2:19-23 - **19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision**. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; 20 Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. **21 "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding. 22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him.** 23 "To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power; **Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You,** For You have made known to us the king's matter."

See here Daniel's devout faith as he both **prayed** for the **dream** and **interpretation**, but also **praised** and **thanked** God when it came. Here also we learn of Daniel's **great humility**.

Daniel 2:26-30 - 26 The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?" 27 Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. **28 "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. 29 "As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. 30 "But 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. NASU

Daniel then **recounts** the **King's Dream** to him of this great **4 part statue**.

Daniel 2:31-35 - **31 "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome**.

32 "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. **34 "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth**. NASU

Daniel then proceeds to **give** the **interpretation** of the **dream** with **pinpoint accuracy**. He explains that the **statue** contains **prophetic insight** concerning the **coming history** of the **four main kingdoms** of the **earth**.

Babylon the First Kingdom

Daniel 2:36-38 - 36 "This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. **37 "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory**; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. **You are the head of gold**. NASU

Medo-Persia and Greece

Daniel 2:39 - 39 "After **you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth**. NASU

Rome

Daniel 2:40-43 - 40 "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. 41 "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, **it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 "As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle.** 43 "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. NASU

The Divine Kingdom

Daniel 2:36-49 44 "**In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.** 45 "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, **the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."** NASU

Later in **chapters 7-8** more **information** will be given **concerning** these **kingdoms**, but here the **main point** is there will be **4 kingdoms** that **arise** upon the earth. The **4th** will be the **largest** and **most oppressive** to all the others. But in the days of that kingdom, **"45 the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."** This of course is the **Divine Messianic Kingdom** of **God** that will **replace** all the other kingdoms of the **world** and will **last forever**. This is one of the **most profound** and all-encompassing **promises** in the **entire Old Testament**. The **implications** of this for **world history** are **staggering**, and it gives us a **big picture view** of **God's eternal purpose** for the **world** with much **clarity**. Further, consider that this is **exactly** what **happened** in history in the **years after** Daniel **died**. These **4 kingdoms** did arise over **10 Centuries** and some of their **characteristics** were just as **described** by Daniel.

- **Babylon** - Head of Gold – Nebuchadnezzar - **605BC-539BC**
- **Medo Persia** – Chest + arms of Silver – Darius, Cyrus – **539BC-331BC**
- **Greece** – Belly + Thighs of Bronze – Alexander the Great – **331BC-63BC**
- **Rome –** Legs of Iron – Caeser – **63BC-476AD**
- Feet of Iron + Clay – 10 Confederate World Power - Antichrist

One important feature to **notice** is that the **feet of iron and clay** are **yet** to happen in the **future** under the **global rule** of the **Anti-Christ**, (Daniel 7:19-25, Revelation 13, 17). Now concerning the **Divine Messianic Kingdom** of **God**, **"the stone"** that was **"45 cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold,"** this we know is the **Kingdom** of **Christ** who is the **"stone."** Christ's Kingdom has come in the **Person** of the **Lord Jesus**, but the **Kingdom** of **God** comes **in stages** and the **complete fulfilment** of this **prophecy** awaits the **Second Coming** of **Christ**, when He will **"44 crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."** This of course is because the **Kingdom** of **God** has an **"already but not yet"** characteristic, and will

come to **fulfilment** in **stages**. Christ has **already** come but **not yet** in His fulness. Christ reigns as **King now** in His **heavenly intercession**, but is about the business of **building His Church** on **earth** through the **work** of the **Spirit** and the **Word** through the **Church**. He has come as **Savior**, and the **door** of **mercy** is **swung wide open**, and He is saving people from **every tribe** and **nation** and **language** until **"the fulness of the Gentiles has come in,"** Rom 11:25. There awaits then, a fulfilment of the coming Kingdom of God in the future, that will **replace** all the other kingdoms of the **world** and will **last forever.** Daniel will give further prophetic insight into this later in chapters 7-12. This great **prophetic ability** and **insight** that **God gave** to Daniel also gave him and his **friends** much favor in the **court** of the **King** and **honor** amongst the **Chaldeans**.

> **Daniel 2:46-49** - **46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel**, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. 47 The king answered Daniel and said, **"Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery." 48 Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon**. 49 And Daniel made request of the king, and **he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king's court**. NASU

Chapter 3:1-30 tells the story of **Nebuchadnezzar** building a great golden **statue**, **90 feet tall** and **9 feet wide**. He demands that **all people** under his rule **worship** his **golden image**. All the people obey, but Daniel's friends refuse to worship the image out of loyalty to their God.

> **Daniel 3:16-17** - 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. **17 "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image** that you have set up." NASU

Nebuchadnezzar is **filled with rage** and **orders** the **furnace** to be heated **7 times hotter.** He has **Shadrach, Meshach** and **Abed-nego** tied up and thrown **into** the **fire**, which was so hot it **killed the men** who **threw** them in!

Daniel 3:24-30 - 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." **25 He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"** 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, **"Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire.** 27 The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that **the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them**. NASU

The king is **astonished** as the **angel** of the **Lord** shows up and **delivers them** from the **fiery furnace!** The **whole scene** of course has a **profound effect** on them **all**. The **king blesses** Daniel's friends and **praises** their **God**.

Daniel 3:28-30 - 28 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "**Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.** 29 "Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." **30 Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon**. NASU

Here we have one of the **themes** of **Daniel** on **display**. **Faithful living** is possible among the **heathen world**, even when that **world opposes** God's people with **threats** of **death**. God is **able to deliver** His people from such **threats**, but even if He doesn't, **He is worthy** to be **honored**, even if it **means death**. **Martyrdom** is always **an option** for **God's people,** for His **eternal blessing** is His **reward**. To **worship** and **honor Him** is always our **chief purpose** and **goal**, as we belong to Him and were **chosen by Him** for this **purpose**.

Chapter 4:1-37 recounts the **humbling** of **King Nebuchadnezzar**. He has a dream of a toppled tree, and he calls on his wise men to **interpret the dream** for him.

When **none** of them is **able**, he calls on **Daniel**. This dream concerns Nebuchadnezzar's own need to **acknowledge** that the **God of Israel** is the one who is **sovereign** over **His world**, and He will **humble** the **King** by **divine chastisement** until the king **acknowledges God's supremacy** and learns the lesson. Daniel explains that the **vision** of the **toppled tree** concerns the king and his fall under the **chastisement** of **God**. He tells him that God will **humble him** for **seven years**, sending him as a **beast** to the **field** to live like the **animals**. Daniel **calls** him to **repentance** and **good works**.

> **Daniel 4:25b-27 - until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes**. 26 'And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, **your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules**. 27 'Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: **break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.**' NASU

The **vision** is **fulfilled,** and **Nebuchadnezzar** is **humbled**.

> **Daniel 4:28-37** - 28 "All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. 29 "Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. **30 "The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'** 31 "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, **'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, 32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.**' 33 "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. **34 "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does**

according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' 36 "At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; **so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. 37 "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride**." NASU

Here again we have a **lesson** from **Daniel's prophecy**. **God humbles** the **proud** and **raises up** the **humble**; even the **hearts** of the **greatest kings** are under **His control**.

Chapter 5:1-31 is a **narrative** explaining the **fall** of **Babylon** to the **Medo-Persians in 539BC**. Daniel has been in **Babylon** for **66 years** now. The **story** happens on the backdrop of the **humbling** of **King Belshazzar**, the **grandson** of Nebuchadnezzar. He holds a **great feast**, and he calls for the **vessels** of **gold** and **silver** that had been **taken** from the **Temple** in **Jerusalem** to be used in the feast while they called on their **pagan gods**. This **provokes** the **God** of **Israel**.

Daniel 5:4-6 - 4 They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. **5 Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. 6 Then the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together**.

Belshazzar calls on his wise men to **interpret** the **writing** for him. When **none** of them is **able**, he calls on **Daniel** offering him expensive gifts if he can **interpret** the **writing.** Daniel tells him to **keep his gifts**, and **recounts** to him the **story** of the **humbling** of his grandfather **Nebuchadnezzar**. He also **reproves him** for his **pride** and **disregard** for the **God of Israel**.

Daniel 5:21b-24 - He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes. **22 "Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, 23 but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you**, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold,

of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. **But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified.** 24 "Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out. NASU

With great **courage**, Daniel tells the king the **writing** on the **wall**!

Daniel 5:25-28 - 25 "Now this is the inscription that was written out: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.' 26 "This is the interpretation of the message: 'MENE' — **God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it**. 27 " 'TEKEL' — **you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient**. 28 " 'PERES' — **your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians**." NASU

Furious with the **blasphemy** of **Belshazzar**, God brings his **kingdom** and **his life** to an **end**!

Daniel 5:29-31 - 29 Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom. **30 That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. 31 So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two**. NASU

As the **Medo-Persians** invade **Babylon** and **kill Belshazzar**, Daniel's **prophecy** concerning the **image** of **chapter 2** and its **nations** begins to be **fulfilled**. Also, here we learn again that **"4:25 the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes."** And yet another **lesson** in **pride** and **humility, "5:23 the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified."** God **humbles** the **proud** and **raises up** the **humble**; and the **lives** of the **greatest kings** and their **people** are in **His hand** under **His control**.

Chapter 6:1-28 is the **famous story** of Daniel in the **lion's den**. Very much like the story in chapter 3 of the **three Hebrew children** in the **fiery furnace**, here God will **deliver Daniel** and the king will give **glory to God**. When **Daniel** is **promoted** and the king wants to **appoint** him over the **entire kingdom**, the other **leaders** are **jealous** and **conspire** to ruin Daniel. Knowing that **Daniel prayed** every **day** to his God, the other **leaders** have the king **make a law** that no one is to **pray** to any God besides the **king** or be **cast into the lion's den**. When Daniel is **found praying** to his **God**, he was **brought** before the **king**. Even though the **king sought to protect Daniel**, he could not **reverse the law,** and Daniel was **thrown** into the **lion's den**.

Daniel 6:19-24 - 19 Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. **20 When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?" 21 Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! 22 "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime." 23 Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den.** So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. **24 The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den**; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. NASU

The **story ends** with yet **another king** giving **glory to God** and acknowledging the **supremacy** of the **God of Israel**, and realizing that **"4:25 the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes."**.

Daniel 6:25-28 - 25 Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land: "May your peace abound! **26 "I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. 27 "He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions**." 28 So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. NASU

This **sovereignty** of **God** over the **proud nations** and His **delivering** of His faithful and **humble people** has been on **bright display** in the **first 6 chapters** of Daniel. The **coming chapters** will show the importance of these lessons in **world history** as the **culmination** of **God's eternal plan** for the **nations** and **ages** comes into **Daniel's prophetic view**.

Chapters 7-12 The Visions of Daniel

Chapter 7 marks the **second half** of the book and these **chapters 7-12** are **Daniel's visions**. These **reassure** God's **people** that, in spite of **exile** and **persecution**, God

is still **ruling history** by His **meticulous Providence** and will see His purposes through, **deliver** His **people**, and bring about the **fulfilment** of His **promises**.

Chapter 7:1-28 is one of the most **profound prophecies** in all of the **Bible**. It is the vision of **four great beasts** and the **heavenly court**. In this vision, **4 beasts** represent the **four kingdoms** that arise from the **6th century BC** to the **1st century BC**. These are the **same 4 kingdoms** that were **represented** by the **great statue** in **chapter 2**. Here we are given **more detailed information** about these **4 kingdoms** and the **rise** and **fall** of their **kings**, including the **great destructive Kingdom** of the **Antichrist** in the **far distant future**, who **persecutes God's Saints**, and yet is overcome by the Messianic King who will establish his **Kingdom forever**. In verses **7:1-8** Daniel sees a **vision** of these **four beasts**.

- **Lion** with wings of an eagle
- **Bear** raised up on one side
- **Leopard** with four wings and four heads
- **Terrifying beast** with iron teeth (little horn uttering great boasts)

These **4 beasts** correspond to the **Kingdoms** of **chapter 2**.

- **Lion - Babylon** - Head of Gold – Nebuchadnezzar - **605BC-539BC**
- **Bear - Medo Persia** – Chest + arms of Silver – Darius, Cyrus – **539BC-331BC**
- **Leopard - Greece** – Belly/Thighs of Bronze – Alexander Great – **331BC-63BC**
- **Terrifying Beast - Rome –** Legs of Iron – Caeser – **63BC-476AD**
    - Feet of Iron + Clay – 10 Confederate World Power - Antichrist

In verses **7:9-10** Daniel see **God** upon His **throne**, pictured here as presiding over this age and these kingdoms.

> **Daniel 7:9-15 -** 9 "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, **And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. 10 "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.** NASU

Here **special note** is taken of the **"little horn"** of **verse 8** that came from the **Roman kingdom** and was **uttering great boasts**. Before the throne of God, this horn a was **slain** and **destroyed by fire**.

> **Daniel 7:11-12 -** 11 "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; **I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire**. 12 "As

for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. NASU

Upon the **destruction** of the **little horn**, the **Son of Man**, (the **Messianic King**), is given **everlasting world dominion**.

Daniel 7:13-14- 13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven **One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed**. NASU

This **Kingdom corresponds** to the **fifth Kingdom** of chapter **2**, **"2:45 the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."** This of course is the **Divine Messianic Kingdom** of **God** that will **replace** all the other kingdoms of the **world** and will **last forever, the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.** In **verses 7:15-27** Daniel is given the **interpretation** of the vision. He is told that these are the **kingdoms** that will arise on the **earth** of which we have **already spoken**. But here also a **tremendous promise** to **God's people**, here called **"18 the saints of the Highest One."** They will ultimately be **given possession** of these **kingdoms forever**. This of course is none other than the **reign of saints** that **Christ** has **promised** to **His people** to be realized at first in the **Millennial (Kingdom) Age**, and then enjoyed throughout **eternity**, as verses **22** and **27** make so clear. (1 Cor 6:2-3, 2 Tim 2:12, Rev 2:27, Rev 20:4-6).

Daniel 7:17-18 - 17 'These great beasts, which are four in number, are **four kings who will arise from the earth**. 18 'But **the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'** NASU

Daniel inquires further about the **Roman kingdom** and its **10 horns** and the **"little horn,"** which he says was **"waging war with the saints an overpowering them"** until God delivers them.

Daniel 7:21-22 - 21 "I kept looking, and **that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them** 22 until **the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom**. NASU

This of course is that **kingdom** of **iron**, with the **feet of iron and clay** in the **far distant future**. It is the **latter days kingdom** of the **Antichrist**, who will finally be destroyed by being thrown into the **lake of Fire** at the **Second Coming** of **Christ** (**Rev 19:20**). This becomes clearer as the **interpretation** is further **explained**.

> **Daniel 7:23-25** - 23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be **different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise**; and **[another will arise after them,]** and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. **25 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.**

Now the **language** of **warfare** with the **saints** by this **little horn** (verse **7:21**), and wearing **"down the saints of the Highest One,"** (**7:25**), and the saints being **"given into his hands for a time, times, and half a time,"** (42 Months), (**7:25**), concerns the **far distant future**. We know this because **these verses** are **quoted** by **John** in **Revelation 13:5-7** concerning the **latter days Antichrist** and his **terrible rise** to **power** and world **deception** (**13:3-4, 8**), and **persecution** of **God's saints** for **42 months** (**13:5**) just **prior** to the **Second Coming** of **Christ**.

> **Revelation 13:3-10** - 3 I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And **the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; 4 they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast;** and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him**?" 5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him**. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. **7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.** 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. **Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints**. NASU

Although **some** believe this was **fulfilled** in **70 AD**, during the **Roman invasion** of **Jerusalem** and **destruction** of the **Temple**, the **Apostle Paul** makes this very clear and **2nd Thessalonians 2:8**, that this **Man of Lawlessness** will be **destroyed** by Christ at His **Second Coming** also seen in **Revelation 19:20**. Although at the grand **fulfilment** of this **prophecy** at the **Second Coming,** we see God's people will be **persecuted** for a **short time**, yet as we said, this **prophecy** was given to **reassure** God's **people** that, in spite of **exile** and **persecution**, God is still **ruling history** by His **meticulous Providence** and will see **His purposes** through, **deliver** His **people**, and bring about the **fulfilment** of His **promises**. This of course is how this **prophecy ends**, with an **astounding promise** of the **ruin** of this **Antichrist** (little horn), and the **reign** of **God's Saints** from that **time** and **forevermore**.

> **Daniel 7:26-27** - 26 'But the court will sit for judgment, and **his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever**. 27 'Then **the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One**; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and **all the dominions will serve and obey Him**.' NASU

Pay **close attention** here that the **Saints** of the **Highest One** will **reign** forever, **"27 the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One."** If you are alarmed to read these things recognize you are in good company.

> **Daniel 7:28** - 28 "At this point the revelation ended. **As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale**, but I kept the matter to myself." NASU

In the words of the **hymn writer** we find comfort, **"this is my Father's world, and though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet!"**

Chapter 8:1-27 gives another **vision** of Daniel, the vision of the **Ram, the Goat, and the Little Horn**. This vision concerns the **kingdoms** of **Medo-Persia** and **Greece**, these are the **2nd** and **3rd** kingdoms to **arise** after **Babylon**. It was during the time of the **Kingdom** of **Greece** that a **great persecution** broke out against the **Jewish people** at the hands of the **Ptolemaic king Antiochus Epiphanes IV** in the **2nd Century BC**. Daniel sees a vision of a **swift goat** defeating a **mighty ram**, only to be **succeeded** by **four horns**. Out of the four arises **one** with **great power** who tramples the others.

> **Daniel 8:9-12** - 9 Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the

Beautiful Land. 10 It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. **11 It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. 12 And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper**. NASU

This small horn that came up appears to be **Antiochus Epiphanes IV**. The ***ESV Study Bible*** Comments; *"A little horn grows out of one of the four horns and expands his realm. Scholars are almost unanimous in recognizing this little horn as the eighth ruler of the Seleucid dynasty, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ruled 175–164 B.C.)... This horn grew great, even to the host of heaven, and some of the stars it threw down to the ground. This almost certainly refers to saints who were killed during Antiochus IV's reign. It began with the assassination of the high priest Onias III in 170 B.C. and continued to the death of Antiochus IV in 164. Within those few years, he executed thousands of Jews."* **End quote**. When the angel gives the **interpretation** of the **vision**, he identifies these **kingdoms**.

Daniel 8:20-27 - 20 "The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. **21 "The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king**. 22 "The broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place **represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation**, although not with his power. 23 "In the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run their course,

A king will arise, Insolent and skilled in intrigue. 24 "His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people. 25 "And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify himself in his heart, And he will destroy many while they are at ease. **He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broke without human agency.** NASU

These things were **fulfilled** rather **precisely** in **history**. The ***ESV Study Bible*** Comments; *"the two-horned ram represents the kings of Media and Persia, of whom Cyrus, king of Persia, became the dominant partner (c. 550 B.C.).*
The goat was the king of Greece (v. 21), Alexander the Great, who defeated the Persians and conquered most of the then-known world. When he died in 323 B.C., his empire was divided among his four generals, fulfilling the prophecy in v.

22: four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power (cf. v. 8)... "little horn" of v. 9 then corresponds to a king of bold face, who was completely wicked. This describes Antiochus IV Epiphanes (reigned 175–164 B.C.). He was king of the Seleucid Empire, one of the four kingdoms that emerged from Alexander the Great's former territory (stretching from Asia Minor through Persia). Antiochus IV was a tyrant who tried to unify his kingdom by forcing all of his subjects to adopt Greek cultural and religious practices. He banned circumcision, ended sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem (fulfilling v. 11, "the regular burnt offering was taken away"), and deliberately defiled the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar and placing an object sacred to Zeus in the Holy of Holies (fulfilling v. 13, "the giving over of the sanctuary . . . to be trampled underfoot"; and 1 Macc. 1:37–59; 2 Macc. 6:2–5). He burned copies of the Scriptures and slaughtered those who remained true to their faith in God." **end Quote**. There is much more that could be said here about this fulfilled prophecy.

Chapter 9:1-19 records **Daniel's prayer** concerning the fact that the **Exile** would be **ending soon**, a fact he **learned** from reading the **book of Jeremiah**.

> **Daniel 9:1-2** - 9 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans — **2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years**.

So **Daniel prays** to **God** an **excellent prayer confessing** his **sins** and the sins of **Israel**, and **seeking forgiveness** and **mercy** for the **exiles**. This **prayer** is a **model prayer** and there is **much to learn** about **prayer** if one is to **examine** it **closely**. Then in verses **9:21-27** the **angel Gabriel** is sent to give **Daniel** yet another **astounding prophecy** which is recorded in **verses 24-27** concerning the familiar **"70 weeks of Daniel."** Most scholars understand the **70 "sevens"** to be made up of **70 times seven years**, or **490 years,** as the **Hebrew** word translated **"week"** means a **period** of **seven** (generally). In this short **prophecy** is given a very **precise prediction** of the **arrival** of the **Messiah**, **Jesus Christ**, and His amazing **accomplishments** in His First Coming. The **prophecy** gives the **date** of a **certain decree** in history, (the **decree** by **Artaxerxes** in **444BC recorded** in **Ezra 7** and **Nehemiah 2:1,5**), and then a **period** of **time** until the **Messiah** shall **arrive** and be **killed**.

> **Daniel 9:24-27** - **24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to**