

# Daniel

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### Introduction

Daniel is the author of "The Book of Daniel" and the main character involved in the book. The book is a record of events which took place in the Babylonian city during the later part of the Jewish captivity. Scholars believe that the Daniel mentioned in [Ezekiel 14:14,20](#) and [Ezekiel 28:3](#), where he is listed with Noah and Job as an example of a righteous person, is the same Daniel. When Jesus is responding to questions on the future in [Matthew 24:15](#), He referred to this book "*the prophesies of Daniel the prophet*"

### The date of writing.

The date of writing and the authorship have often caused many discussions over the years, it is usually accepted that it was written in Babylon during the Babylonian and Persian periods of the sixth century. Many scholars deny and reject the possibility of knowing and being able to prophesy the future and this causes them some problems with accepting and believing that Daniel is genuine. So far as can be proved every Jew and early Christian accepted the book as genuine and it was written in the Babylonian and Persian periods of the Jewish exile.

### The construction, structure of the Book of Daniel.

The Structure of the Book is in two main parts, each part is again divided into six parts, as chapters. Chapters 1 to 6 concern the history of Daniel. While chapters 7-12 contain the prophecies of Daniel. The main message however, is judgement and defeat of the Gentile world. At the time Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus were the chief representatives of the Gentile nations. There is another message in the book, the deliverance of God's holy, chosen people.

Ezekiel and Daniel were both written in the period of Exile, this is the time when many of the Jews had been carried off by Nebuchadnezzar following a serious turning away by the Jewish nation from the worship of the True God. Later, during the period of Cyrus, who had conquered Babylon, the restoration of the Jewish people back to their country occurred.

[2 Chronicles 36:22,23](#)

*"22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,  
23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up."*

[Ezekiel 1:1-4.](#)

*"1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.*

*2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,*

*3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.*

*4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire."*

Because the Temple in Jerusalem had been severely damaged by Nebuchadnezzar the small number of Jews left in Judea turned to worshipping in the synagogues, this resulted in many cultural and religious changes. In addition both the Aramaic and Hebrew languages were in common use, this could explain why the first six chapters of Daniel were originally written in Hebrew.

# Interpretation.

This book must be approached with humble and dependence on the leading of God.

## Outline

God is in control of the world.

Title and Content Location Chapters

Initial history introduction and situation. [Daniel 1:1 to 2:4.](#)

Relationship and future of the nations of the earth. [Daniel 2:4 to 7:28.](#)

1) Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the great image. [Daniel 2:1-49.](#)

2) Nebuchadnezzar's sets a trial [Daniel 3:1-30.](#)

Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a large tree. Humility results. [Daniel 4:1-37.](#)

Belshazzar's feast. Sin followed by punishment. [Daniel 5:1-31.](#)

Darius the Mede, a religious prosecution, faith and prayer. [Daniel 6:1-28.](#)

The four Beasts vision, [Daniel 7:1-28.](#)

The Jewish Nation in God's plan. [Daniel 8:1-12 to 12:13.](#)

The theme of this book is that God has absolute control over all the events on the world, consider, [Daniel 4:34,35](#)

*"34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:*

*35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"*

[Genesis 18:25](#)

*"25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? "*

[2 Kings 19:15.](#)

*"15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth."*

## God permits Nebuchadnezzar's victory.

[Daniel 1:1,2.](#)

*"1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.*

*2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god."*

The Jewish nation had chosen to turn away from worshipping the True God, turning to idols, yet still appearing to carry out the religious requirements according to the Law of God. Despite many warnings from God through His prophets,

[Isaiah 39:1-8](#)

[Micah 4:10](#)

[Habakkuk 1:1-17](#)

[Jeremiah 19:1-14](#)

This rejection and hypocritical action eventually resulted in punishment by God,

[Leviticus 26:1-46](#)

[Deuteronomy 27:1 to 30:20.](#)

The Jewish nation was overrun by Nebuchadnezzar's army who destroyed large areas of the walls of Jerusalem and much of the Temple, removing the various objects used in worship to Babylon. It was these holy vessels that Belshazzar used to praise his own gods at a pagan feast, and God judged him, [Daniel 5:1-30](#).

In addition most of the people were taken off to be slaves in Babylon.

This event seems to show that the pagan gods were more powerful than the True God but God looked upon His sinful people and would rather they lived in shame and captivity in a pagan land than disgrace His Name in the Holy Land, they were meant to be a "light to the world" but were the opposite.

Read [2 Chronicles 36:1-14](#).

At first sight God appears to have lost, but He later raised up the Medes and Persians who conquered Babylon. The Jews were later returned to the Holy Land and rebuilt the Temple, God was working on and through a pagan ruler.

## God brings Daniel and his friends into favour.

[Daniel 1:3-16](#).

It was the normal action by the Babylonian kings to look for the best people in any of their conquered nations, to train them up to serve and work in their government.

Daniel and his friends were probably taken from Israel in about 605 BC when they were probably teenagers. These young men were all part of the plan of God and His ministry on earth. They came from the tribe of Judah, [Daniel 1:3-7](#), and were considered "*gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand*". They were the best that the Jewish nation had to offer.

The Babylonian, whose name was Ashpenaz and in charge has the title "the master of his eunuchs," which some Bible students say that Daniel and company were made eunuchs, but this is against the Jewish law, it is doubtful if these devout Jewish teenagers would have therefore allowed the act of castration. In addition the title "eunuch" was also used by this time to indicate a senior court official.

The aim of the course would be to convert the Jews into the Babylonian way of life, this included their personal names being changed.

Daniel means "God is my Judge" but changed to *Belteshazzar* referring to the Babylonian god, "bel protects his life."

Hananiah means "The Lord of grace", while his Babylonian name of *Shadrach* has the meaning "command of Aku (the moon god)."

Mishael's Jewish name has the meaning "Who is like God", while his new name, *Meshach*, means "Who is as Aku is?"

Azariah has the meaning "The Lord is my help." but *Abednego* means "Servant of Nebo(Nego)."

The Babylonian's replace the names associated with the True God with the false gods of Babylon.

Having new names and having to learning a new language would not concern the young men but being instructed to use customs and behaviour contrary to the Law of Moses would create great problems for them. Daniel and his friends had to learn about the Babylonian history, science and religion.

However, [Daniel 1:20](#)

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

The Book of Daniel records that they were far better than any others. God gave them the ability to out shine their captors, but if the teachings contradicted the Law of God they objected strongly.

For example: The food supplied was given by the king and would have been the best available but it would have been offered to their Babylonian gods or contained animals not approved by God or killed in such away that the blood was not drained according to their Jewish Law,

[Leviticus 11:1ff](#); [Leviticus 17:10-16](#).

Daniel and his friends were totally dedicated to the Lord,

[Daniel 1:8](#)

*"8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."*

They felt that they could not break God's laws. Ashpenaz, the Babylonian in charge of their training, was under the control of God and had become friendly with the teenagers, so they approached him and suggested

a ten day trial of not taking the food supplied by the king and instead feed on vegetables and water only, this action would not put the Babylonians in any danger, the risk would be only on the teenagers. This was agreed and for ten days the friends avoided the kings food. At the end they were found to be far healthier looking than the other students. Consider the following, [Matthew 6:33](#)  
[Colossians 4:5](#)

*"5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."*

[1 Thessalonians 4:12](#)

*"12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. "*

[1 Peter 3:15](#).

*"15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"*

These young men saw the power of God at work because they were not willing to compromise their life and belief to fit into the world.

The training continued and on the final testing Daniel and friends were found to be far superior to the other students, *"and all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm."*

## **Daniel 2. - Dreams and the future.**

Nebuchadnezzar was in the second year of his reign, he was feeling the strain of his position, this was effecting any decisions he made. In addition he was having many sleepless nights and when he did sleep he was having dreams. These dreams, obviously being sent by God, were giving him great problems.

It appears that Nebuchadnezzar did not trust or had doubts concerning the abilities of his magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers. Nebuchadnezzar tells them that he is having dreams and wants to know the meaning, but he refused to tell these people what the dream was, they had to prove their ability by also using their "powers" to know what the dream contained.

It was a common understanding in these times that dreams and their interpretation was very important, they believed that dreams could be a prophesy of the future events. The kings counsellors were expected to be able to interpret dreams and explain what they meant. The king's magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers would listen to the person repeat their dream and then make up some explanation of the meaning. Daniel and his friends would have been expected to also have this ability, but there was a difference, Daniel had a special God given gift to understand dreams and visions. In the first part of the book of Daniel he explains other peoples dreams, but in the second part he receives God given visions and dreams of the future world. The Lord has given Nebuchadnezzar a very vivid dream, the words suggest that he had the same dream a number of times. God often used dreams to warn.

See examples in,

[Genesis 41:1-8](#)

[Matthew 2:12](#).

It is possible that God may still use dreams to communicate His will today, but it is not the normal way, in addition dreams can come from other sources, our minds can easily be infiltrated by demonic forces, be warned!!!

## **The "wise men" are disgraced.**

[Daniel 2:2-13](#).

*"Tell me my dream and interpret,"* was the kings command, but he went further,

*"you will be killed if you fail, then I will turn your homes into public toilets and rubbish dumps."*

Some Bible students feel that Nebuchadnezzar just forgot the dream, but that does not ring true as it was a vivid dream, possibly repeated over a number of nights. In addition this dream was from the Lord and He would make sure that Nebuchadnezzar would not forget the dream, in addition, Nebuchadnezzar must be able to remember the dream and so know that the interpretation was true.

The king was testing his counsellors, Nebuchadnezzar had already realized that the dream was very important, his future was involved, he wanted the truth,

[Daniel 2:9.](#)

*"9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof."*

Nebuchadnezzar does not realize that his action is according to the plans of God. Because it was Daniel who was about to exalt the True God when he gives the interpretation.

It is obvious that Daniel and friends knew nothing of this exchange between Nebuchadnezzar and his counsellors. The response by the counsellors in,

[Daniel 2:10](#)

*"10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean."*

This shows that astrology and other forms of human prophecy is rubbish, "out of their own mouths they condemn the practice."

**Verse : 14-23.** The soldiers set off to carry out the orders of Nebuchadnezzar to kill all the "failed wise men". Satan wants Daniel and friends to also take the punishment, but God is in control. Daniel asks Arioch, the captain of the king's guard "what's going on?" and then gets permission to approach Nebuchadnezzar, who gives him time to prove himself.

## **The prayer is answered.**

[Daniel 2:17-19.](#)

Following a time of prayer, God reveals to Daniel the dream and its meaning. Daniel's first action is to praise God for His response, verses 20-23, he includes his friends as they had joined in prayer with him. Daniel goes to Arioch, the captain of the guard, "do not kill the wise men I have the interpretation," Daniel is taken into Nebuchadnezzar by Arioch, the captain of the guard, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

Daniel responds to Nebuchadnezzar's question by first glorifying God, then tells Nebuchadnezzar that God knows of his concern for his kingdom.

The dream given by God to Nebuchadnezzar reveals the future order of the Gentile nations and kingdoms and how it will end with the appearance of the eternal kingdom of God. Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar "that the true God had chosen to reveal to him, Nebuchadnezzar, what the future is, God has revealed it to me for your sake, that you can understand your dream,"

## **The Nebuchadnezzar Dream.**

[Daniel 2:31-35.](#)

*"31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.*

*32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,*

*33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.*

*34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.*

*35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."*

Daniel first describes what Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream, then revealed the meaning.

Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream a large statue of a man, "its form was awesome". The statue was constructed of five different materials, starting at the head, gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay. Suddenly a stone appeared and smashed into the feet so that the statue collapsed and turned to dust, which was blown away by the wind. The stone then became a great mountain, so big it filled the earth.

Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel was telling the truth, only the God of heaven could have sent and revealed the dream to Daniel.

## The meaning of the dream revealed.

[Daniel 2:36-45.](#)

verses 37-38. The head of gold represented the Babylonian Empire, this was under the command of Nebuchadnezzar at the time. This Empire lasted from 636 BC to 539 BC.

verses 39. The breast and arms were made of silver, this empire was to follow the Babylon Empire, the Medo-Persian kingdom. Darius the Mede conquered Babylon, [Daniel 5:30-31.](#)

This kingdom was of poorer quality to the Babylonian empire and existed from 539 BC to 330 BC.

The belly and top of the legs, the thighs were made of bronze and represented the Grecian Empire created by Alexander the Great who died in 323 BC. This empire was from 330 BC to 63 BC. This was physically the largest empire during the ancient times.

The legs and feet were made of a mixture of iron and clay, this was the Roman Empire which ran from 63 BC to 475 AD.

The mixture of iron and clay showed that this empire would be strong in military acts and control, but it was made up of many different nations under the control of Rome, this would make the empire weak,

[Daniel 2:43.](#)

*"43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."*

The final action was the destruction of the image by the stone which became a mountain, this stone was the coming of Jesus Christ, who would judge the world and establish His eternal and universal kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar realized that Daniel was a divine messenger from the True God, then, as God had planned, he put Daniel and his friends into positions of great authority and power.

This dream and the interpretation reveals that God is in complete control of history, He knows the passed, present and future, Right now, He is planning and creating the future according to His will.

Though God controls the situations we cannot blame Him for any of the evil, the greed of Mankind, He gave each of us a free will to decide on our own actions each day, but He can overrule to carryout His divine plans. Nebuchadnezzar was given his place of authority by God, to carryout His plans / punishment for His people and defeat His enemies, but history tells us that God also took away that power by creating and then the use of another, inferior, kingdom,

[Daniel 2:39.](#)

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

This image also reminds us that the kingdoms of Mankind decline over time, from gold to clay. The image was very unstable, the legs would be strong but the feet of iron and clay would not be able to carry the weight of the gold and silver, each kingdom may appear strong but they can easily collapse.

The point about the final kingdom is that it will be made of iron which appears to be strong and long lasting but it is mixed with clay, which is weak and breaks up under the slightest pressure. Government today is full of agreements and promises made by one country to another, these are so easily broken or forgotten, just like the clay.

Today we can see and speak to anyone in the world, heal many illness yet still greed, drugs and money control the desires of men and women, easy to live but it is a difficult life.

The real problem is the attitude of Mankind to God, sin has separated us from God and each man's heart is in rebellion against God.

When the stone comes, which represents Jesus Christ. It was created *"without hands"* which means without "human power", compare [Colossians 2:11](#); [Hebrews 9:11](#).

This stone grows to cover the world and destroys the kingdoms of mankind and sets up His own.

According to this vision the Roman empire will, in some form, exist until the return of Christ, see [Daniel 2:44](#)

*"44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."*

### [Daniel 7:24-27](#)

*"24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.*

*25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

*26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*

*27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."*

### [Revelations 17:3; and 17:12-18.](#)

The kingdom of Christ will not be a gradual process, but a sudden event.

We are not told what Nebuchadnezzar thought as this young Jew revealed his dream and gave the explanation. It should have made him feel humble that God has used him to created this kingdom, a kingdom that was the most glorious of mankind's kingdoms now and into the future until God creates His own eternal kingdom on earth. Unfortunately the king forgot this lesson and thought it was him that made "Great Babylon,"

### [Daniel 4:30.](#)

*"30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"*

God therefore had to humble him, to become like an animal in behaviour.

## **God's servants are rewarded.**

### [Daniel 2:46-49.](#)

Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan unbeliever, but he realized that this Jew was someone special and his God was the true God. He prostrates, lies down in front of Daniel, this must have been very difficult for Daniel, a devout Jew, being worshipped, but in someways Nebuchadnezzar was also submitting himself to the God of the Hebrews as the greatest God.

Nebuchadnezzar promotes Daniel with great honour and position as ruler of Babylon area, Daniel also requested his friends were also involved and were also rewarded.

It would be interesting to know what the Babylonian magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers felt, at least Daniel had saved their lives and their families, [Daniel 2:24.](#)

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

## **Nebuchadnezzar's sets a trial**

### [Daniel 3:1-30.](#)

The immediate question we ask is why did God permit the three Jews to be tested? God wants each of us to grow in faith in Him, a faith which cannot stand a time of testing is not a true faith.

Consider [1 Peter 1:7](#); [1 Peter 4:12](#). Would your faith stand a time of testing?

We are not told how much time had passed since the dream or why Daniel was not involved in this test of faith, only Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are referred to.

Why Nebuchadnezzar felt the need to create this gold image we are not told, perhaps the golden head of the dream made him feel very important, this image was not just a head but a full figure. Daniel had already told Nebuchadnezzar that no mankind kingdom lasts for ever, perhaps pride and concern for the future loyalty of his people was the reason.

The image could not be solid gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide would require a fantastic amount of gold and would be very, very heavy. It was probably a hollow wooden figure covered in thin gold.

The plain of Dura is thought to be about six miles from the city of Babylon, "Dura" has the meaning of "a walled area." The image would be visible from a distance, it was Nebuchadnezzar's aim to unit the people by religion and fear, "fail to worship and suffer death in a furnace."

The king arranges that eight different types of officials from the provinces of his kingdom are to assemble to receive instruction on the worship of the image, note the word "worship" is used many times in this chapter. The instructions were a matter of life or death, "at the sound of the music you must fall down in worship of the image or suffer death." Most of the people would have been use to idol worship and so would find no problem with this instruction.

However, there were three Jews in positions of power that only worshipped the true God, [Exodus 20:3,5](#), and their failure to obey the king was brought quickly to his knowledge, these evil advisors, the Chaldeans, had been waiting for the opportunity to destroy these powerful foreigners.

**Verse 13-15**,: The king has a fit of anger, the three Jews are summoned, the king gives them a further chance to obey. He seems to have forgotten that the Jews only worshipped the True God, *"No god will save you."*

**Verse 16**: *"We do not need to defend our God or ourselves, our God can do that."* Was the response from the three men.

See [Isaiah 12:2](#).

**Verse 17** : Note that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not presume that God would save them, they knew that He could, but did not know what His Will was for them. It is a sad fact today that many people are prepared to negotiate with God, "save us from our problem and we will worship you." because true trust and faith have no conditions," He is my Lord, regardless of any effect or results."

## Trust in the Lord.

[Daniel 3:19-25](#).

The three Jews turned down their chance, so suffered the consequence. It is interesting how the attitude of the king has changed because he was not obeyed, because they had not taken up his helpful offer, now he was out to destroy them.

The Chaldeans were very happy as revenge approaches for loss of their position to these Jews.

The furnace would have been used for the smelting of ore, probably had a large hole in the top to allow fuel and the ore to be poured in. At the bottom there would be a small door opening to allow the metal to be removed. There were air bellows to pump in air to make the fire hotter.

Following the kings instruction, making the order to heat the fire more hotter, Nebuchadnezzar now had the three faithful Jews thrown into the structure, tied up and fully clothed, certain death for anyone, the heat was so great that it killed the men who threw the Jews into the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar thought that this action ends his problem!!

It did not matter how hot the fire, when Nebuchadnezzar looked he saw they were alive, they were now untied, but the fire was not doing any damage. Nebuchadnezzar then realized that there was a fourth person in the fire with them, *"one like the Son of God"*.

Nebuchadnezzar calls the three men to come out, *"servants of the Most High God."* The three Jews had refused to worship the image but now obeyed Nebuchadnezzar. The three stand before the king and their accusers, no sign of burning on their bodies, a miracle of what God could do.

Read and consider [Romans 12:1ff](#).

Nebuchadnezzar admits that they worshipped the True God and issued commands that anyone who speaks against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will be severely punished.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were give greater positions. This shows that God was still in full control of His people, they were in a foreign country but God has not deserted them, this event must have really encouraged the many Jews living in and around Babylon. God was still all powerful and in control.

[Revelation 2:10b](#)

*"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."*

Sometime in the future, a world leader will appear, *"the Beast"*, he will have an image of himself constructed and will force the world to worship him,

[Revelation 13:1ff](#).

## Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a large tree. Humility results.

[Daniel 4:1-37](#).

This chapter is unusual, it is an official autobiography of Nebuchadnezzar. He sent the document throughout

his kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar is openly admitting to his pride, his short period of mental illness and behaviour and then giving glory and praise to God for his recovery. It is interesting that Nebuchadnezzar knew the Jewish and Babylonian name of Daniel, verse 8.

It starts with another dream, we are not informed how many years has passed since the first dream or the furnace events, some Bible students think twenty or more years have passed.

Nebuchadnezzar had a period of peace, enemies have been subdued, several famous building projects have been completed, Nebuchadnezzar was full of pride for his achievements, but forgot God was still in control. Nebuchadnezzar first asked for the meaning from his Chaldean magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers, but they could not give a meaning. It appears that Daniel was not normally with the Chaldean magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers, though he was the one in charge. Then Daniel is called and he has the interpretation through his faith in God.

Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a very large tree, reaching to heaven, full of fruit and so was providing food and shelter for many animals and birds. Nebuchadnezzar hears an angel being given instructions to cut down the tree, remove the fruit and branches but leave the root and stump. The stump is to be held together with a band of iron and bronze.

[Daniel 4:15](#) is an interesting verse, it starts out referring to the stump of the tree being protected, then refers to "him", a person, the "tree" is actually describing a person. The "tree" which is vast and there to help many is suddenly transferred to be "man" then to a "beast of the field." This dream was showing that the sovereign God has full and absolute control of all people, from the king to the lowest person, the king can make and issue his laws and instruction, but it is the throne of God which rules, verses 15-17.

## **The interpretation, the king is in danger.**

[Daniel 4:19-26](#).

As Daniel listens to the dream he realized the significance and was very troubled. He could see what was about to happen to the king, and Nebuchadnezzar could see troubled thoughts on the face of Daniel.

Daniel tries to prepare the king by wishing the dream applied to his enemies and not to Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel seems to have a personal concern for the king, in the previous dream Daniel had told Nebuchadnezzar that the golden head represented him. Now he tells the king that he is the tree, with the help of God, Nebuchadnezzar had built a very large empire that affected many nations and people, the kingdom "reached to the end of the earth."

Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar was becoming full of pride, though he had experienced the authority and power of God, he was about to be given a serious discipline by God. The tree being cut down indicated that Nebuchadnezzar was about to be removed from the throne and disgraced, but, the fact that the roots and stump of the tree were to remain and be protected was a promise that he would return to power.

Daniel continued, "Nebuchadnezzar you will be driven from men and live like a beast in the field for seven years,"

[Daniel 5:21](#)

This tell us that he actually live with wild donkeys. Daniel, knowing Nebuchadnezzar has a temper, takes a risk by telling Nebuchadnezzar, "Oh king, turn from your desires and feelings."

Nebuchadnezzar and all people must learn that God is sovereign and will not permit mankind to take His place or claim His creation. We are His creation, only subjects and servants to Him, if we refuse to give Him the honour, be prepared for His discipline.

Read and consider [2 Peter 3:1ff](#) the position of a believer and non believer.

Note that the last world dictator will be referred to as "*the Beast*," [Revelations 11:7](#); [Revelations 13:1ff](#); [Revelations 14:9,11](#).

## **The King makes a decision.**

[Daniel 4:28ff](#).

God appears to give Nebuchadnezzar time to consider his position, twelve months pass and we find one day that the king is probably on a flat roof, looking at the city of Babylon, when he said to himself "*Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honour of my majesty?*" Pride has won!!!!

God has great patience, consider Noah and the flood, 120 years from the first warning, Jerusalem had 50 years after rejecting Jesus before the Romans came and destroyed the city and temple. How long will God wait for the world we live in?

God hates pride, [James 4:6](#)

[1 Peter 5:5](#)

The fall of Lucifer was due to pride, [Isaiah 14:12-15](#).

As Nebuchadnezzar meditates on his "work" a voice from heaven announces *"King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."*

God can speak or affect our life at any time He chooses, He has great patience with His people but when He acts, there is no delay. The Bible records many unexpected calls from Him,

see [Exodus 3:1ff](#)

[Judges 6:1ff](#)

[1 Samuel 17:1ff](#)

[Matthew 4:18-22](#)

[Luke 12:16-21](#).

God is in control and knows the right time,

See [Ecclesiastes 3:1ff](#).

While Nebuchadnezzar was speaking God acted, within the hour the Words of God were fulfilled. God could have totally destroyed Nebuchadnezzar but God still had a purpose for him and his people. When the set time had passed Nebuchadnezzar *"lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; "* He praised God and gave Him the honour and reverence due to Him, *"the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever."*

God, in His wisdom, gave us each freedom to chose which life we lead, for or against Him, each of us has a natural nature which rejects the presence of God in our life, sinners think that they are free but have not realized that the alternative is an even greater slavery to the power of Satan and the world. When Nebuchadnezzar submitted to the sovereign God he went from life as a beast to live like a man, it did not change him physically in any way but he was now open to the leading of God in his life.

Nebuchadnezzar had great pleasure in announcing to the world of his Empire what God had done in his life, the signs and wonders. As a result of his heart submitting to God, Nebuchadnezzar was restored in his mind by God and then back to his position of honour.

**Verse 37:** Nebuchadnezzar finished the official autobiography with praise and honour for God and a warning of the power of God.

## Numbered, Weighed and the result.

[Daniel 5:1-30](#).

Nebuchadnezzar has died, 562 BC and he has been succeeded by his son, Merodach, who was very evil. He reigned for only two years then his brother-in-law murdered him, taking over the throne for only four years when a weak ruler, Labashi-Marduk, took over for only two months. Finally Nabonidus became king and ruled for seventeen years. It is thought that Nabonidus was married to the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar and was the father of Belshazzar who ruled the city of Babylon.

The army of the Medes and Persia had come to attack the city, but the city was so well protected they could not get in. To this danger Belshazzar was totally indifferent, for the city was protected by a complex series of walls, many hundreds of feet tall, the gates were made of bronzes, so could not be burnt. The river Euphrates ran through the city so there was no shortage of water, and they had plenty of food. Belshazzar was full of pride on his position and achievements.

It was common practice for the kings of this time to show their power, wealth and splendor by holding great feasts and parties for many people, often these feasts focused upon the lusts of mankind and the world, read [1 John 2:15-17](#).

On the occasion recorded in [Daniel 5](#)

*"Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords."*

During this feast Belshazzar had the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem were brought into the feast.

Belshazzar seems to have forgotten the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold of the image would be replaced one day, Belshazzar was rejecting the ultimate sovereign plans of God.

The gold and silver vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem would have been consecrated, Nebuchadnezzar had decreed that all his people were to give respect to the God of the Jews, [Daniel 3:29](#) and he had given honour and praise to Him, [Daniel 4:34-37](#). Belshazzar had no respect for these vessels of worship. These were brought into the feast and used to drink as common cups, they were also used to praise the gods of the Babylonians, praising the things of the world as if gods, a total blasphemy. Then the hand of the True God moves.

## Judgement.

[Daniel 5:5-9](#).

Without warning a hand of a man appeared and started to write upon the plastered wall of the room. Belshazzar was absolutely petrified, the rest of the party watched in silence as the hand wrote four words in Aramaic on the wall.

### **MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.**

We are not told how the words were laid out, as a line or in a square to be read from top to bottom. God has turned the feast into a courtroom, the king was being judged and about to receive the result of the judgement. The king called for his wise men, "what is the meaning?" The king offers great reward to anyone who can explain the meaning, the offer of becoming the third ruler still did not result in an interpretation. Their lack of understanding makes the king even more scared.

God is still in control and the disturbance causes the queen mother to enter the hall, she tells Belshazzar of Daniel, a man from Judah, who had the power from God and had provided interpretations for Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel had been Nebuchadnezzar's greatest advisor, yet Belshazzar knew little about him, a sign of a poor king, only living for what they could get.

Daniel must now be an old man, probably in his eighties and he may have retired from active work in the royal palace. Belshazzar obviously does not know Daniel by sight, only by reputation.

Daniel ignores the king's speech of false praise, he had no use for the reward offered. Daniel has respect for Belshazzar's position but is not afraid to tell the truth, he knew all about the life of Belshazzar, he reminds him of the time that Nebuchadnezzar had great pride and what happened, Belshazzar had desecrated the holy vessels of God, guilty of blasphemy and idolatry. Anyone who knew Aramaic could have read the words, the basic meaning is: -

**MENE = Counted / numbered.**

**TEKEL = Weighed.**

**"U" of UPHARSIN means "and."**

**PHARSIN = Divided.**

Daniel provides their meaning:- The word "MENE" meant "numbered", and the fact that the word was repeated adds the meaning that God had established the end of the kingdom.

Compare [Genesis 41:32](#).

In addition the word "TEKEL" indicated that the king himself had been judged by God and found wanting, therefore the future of the king was numbered in days.

What could end such a great kingdom? The final word "PERES" had a double meaning, "divided" and "Persia", Babylon was about to be divided between the Medes and the Persians.

This was not the first time that God has sent a warning of coming punishment, Nebuchadnezzar was given a year to repent, [Daniel 4:28-33](#),

Nineveh was warned by Jonah, [Jonah 3:1ff](#). There is a difference with Belshazzar, there was no way of escape offered to him by God.

Daniel is declared the third ruler as promised, though he did not want it because he knew that the city would fall that night and he did not want such a position.

## The Conquest of Babylon.

The conquest was organized by Cyrus, the king of Persia, as chosen by God for the task, see [2 Chronicles 36:22-23](#).

Babylon had very high, strong walls, many guard towers and massive bronze gates so was thought safe from any enemy. But, the Babylonians had allowed the river Euphrates to flow from the north to the south through the city, even though there were security gates on the river, the enemy was able to enter the city by diverting the river round the city and then entered via the river bed during the night.

See [Jeremiah 50:1 to 51:1ff](#).

Babylon had been used by God to punish His people but they had mistreated the Jews, [Jeremiah 50:33-34](#), and damaged His temple, [Jeremiah 50:28](#); [Jeremiah 51:11](#).

The city of Babylon was founded by Nimrod, [Genesis 10:8-10](#), he rebelled against God and this name Babylon is often seen in the scripture as a great world city against God,

[Revelation 17 and 18](#)

The world system is described as "Babylon" the city that is under the power of the Satanic system, rejecting God and encouraging the people of the world to live a life of sin. Compare the Babylon in [Jeremiah 50 to 51](#) with the Babylon in [Revelation 18](#), there are many similarities.