



J. A. Moorman

DANIEL

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**THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES
AND
THE TIMES OF JERUSALEM**

**Premillennial
Dispensational
King James Version**

A Commentary and Survey Series:

**Based on Sound and Influential
Bible Institute Material from a Past
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Dr. Jack Moorman

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DEDICATION

To the dear people of Bethel Baptist Church in Wimbledon, London, who love the *Blessed Hope*.



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DANIEL

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES *AND* THE TIMES OF JERUSALEM



The Temple Mount and Eastern/Golden Gate viewed from above the Mount of Olives

INTRODUCTION

DANIEL, THE PROPHET

Daniel, like Ezekiel was a Jewish captive in Babylon. He was of royal or princely descent (Dan 1:3). For his rank and personal qualities he was trained for palace service. In the polluted atmosphere of an oriental court he lived a life of singular holiness and usefulness. His long life extended from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Ezekiel (Ezek 14:20), Joshua, the high priest of the restoration, Ezra, and Zerubbabel.

Daniel's name means *God is Judge*. This accords with the subject of the book: judgement upon the Gentile world kingdoms, and particularly the judgement that will fall upon the earth in the days of Christ's Return. Note in connection with this the *Jehovah/Elohim* contractions in the four Major Prophets. The first two, Isaiah and Jeremiah, prophesied *in the Land*; while Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied *outside the Land* in Babylon during the captivity. It is providentially significant that *Jah* is compounded with **Isaiah** and **Jeremiah**; but *El* is compounded with **Ezekiel** and **Daniel**. In the Abrahamic Covenant, Jehovah pledged the Land to Israel (cp. Gen 13:14-16). Thus, *in the Land*, Isaiah and Jeremiah bear the specific Covenant Name; but *outside the Land*, Ezekiel and Daniel bear the more general Name.

Daniel was *greatly beloved*, and with this unique statement he is the Old Testament counterpart to the Apostle John, *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. This is Heaven's singular honour for the men through whom the books composing the two primary pillars of Bible Prophecy were written (Daniel and Revelation).

Daniel

- *I am come to shew thee; for thou art **greatly beloved** (Dan 9:23).*
- *O Daniel, a man **greatly beloved** (Dan 10:11).*
- *O man **greatly beloved** (Dan 10:19).*

The Apostle John

- one of his disciples, **whom Jesus loved** (Jhn 13:23).
- the other disciple, **whom Jesus loved** (Jhn 20:2).
- that disciple **whom Jesus loved** (Jhn 21:7).
- the disciple **whom Jesus loved** (Jhn 21:20).

Daniel was esteemed for his spiritual wisdom and prayer life. When the king of Tyre was upbraided for his arrogant claim of wisdom, he is rebuked with the scornful: *Thou art wiser than Daniel* (Ezek 28:3). And, with Jerusalem on the brink of destruction: *Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD* (Ezek 14:14).

THE TWOFOLD MESSAGE AND CHANGE OF LANGUAGE IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Daniel is the indispensable introduction to New Testament prophecy, the themes of which are: the apostasy of the Church, the manifestation of the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, the Return of Christ, the Resurrections and the Judgments, the Millennial Reign of Christ and the Eternal Ages. These, except the first, are Daniel's themes also.

But Daniel is distinctively the Book of the *Times of the Gentiles* (Lk 21:24). God had made Israel the centre of a system of nations, peoples and languages that arose in consequence of the judgment on Babel. God had committed the sceptre of the world to Israel's hand (Deut 32:8). In consequence of her persistent idolatry, He took that sceptre from Israel and placed it in the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. Daniel's vision sweeps the course of Gentile world-rule from Nebuchadnezzar's accession to the Anti-Christ's destruction and the setting up of Christ's Millennial Reign when Jerusalem will again be at the center of the world's nations (Isa 2:2).

Daniel is also the Book of the *Times of Jerusalem* relative to the great world empires and especially Gentile rule in the last days (9:24-27). There is a remarkable feature in Daniel which gives the **key** to its basic structure. After the Introduction in Chapter 1 where Daniel is brought into Nebuchadnezzar's palace, a surprising change takes place near the beginning of Chapter 2. From verse 4 onwards to the end of Chapter 7, the book rather than being written in Hebrew is written in *Aramaic*, a Gentile language. While there are several other brief usages of Aramaic in the Old Testament, what we have here in Daniel is completely unique. Therefore, here in Daniel when the focus is on Gentile world power, a Gentile language is used. When the focus shifts more to Israel (Dan 8 -12) the Book returns to the Hebrew language. This device by the Holy Spirit gives a startling and unique emphasis to the Book of Daniel.

THE TWO MAIN DIVISIONS OF DANIEL

I THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES 1- 7

- A. The Beginnings of the Times of the Gentiles 1
- B. The Overview of the Times of the Gentiles (*Aramaic Begins*) 2
- C. The Characteristics of the Times of the Gentiles 3-6
 1. A Time of Enforced False Religion: Nebuchadnezzar's Image 3
 2. A Time of Expansion and Instability: Nebuchadnezzar's Madness 4
 3. A Time of Sacrilege: Belshazzar's Feast 5

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D. The End of the Times of the Gentiles: Gentile Perspective 7

II THE TIMES THE GENTILES REGARDING JERUSALEM 8-12

A. The End of the Times of the Gentiles: Jewish Perspective (*Hebrew Resumes*) 8

B. The Seventy Weeks of Years upon Jerusalem and the Jewish People 9

C. The Desolations and Final Blessing of Jerusalem 10-12

1. Desolations and The Glory of Christ 10

2. Desolations: Future to Daniel 11:1-35

3. Desolations and Glory: Future to Us 11:36-12:13

DANIEL 2 AND 7: THE SPAN AND END OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

It is commonly taught that Chapter 7 presents the same world empires as given in Chapter 2 (Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome; and in both cases picture the entire span of the *Times of the Gentiles*). It is believed that the *beasts* of Chapter 7 present God's view of these empires, while the *metals* of the great statue in Chapter 2 are how they appear to man. There is a parallel between the fourth *metal* and the fourth *beast* (the Roman Empire), but in Chapter 7 the vision is of four dominant powers *near the end* of the Times of the Gentiles.

These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever (Dan 7:17,18).

When Daniel wrote these words, Greece had *already risen* as a strong and influential nation. Persia had *already risen* and was preparing to conquer Babylon. And, Babylon had not only *already risen*, but was under its last feeble king, Belshazzar, and in its final death throes as an empire. For this and other reasons, Daniel 7 cannot be a mere repetition of Chapter 2. It instead presents four dominant powers that will arise and exercise influence in the Mediterranean region during the last days. Note how this is shown in the above Outline.

DANIEL 3 TO 6: THE CHARACTER OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

It is common to present the events of Chapters 3-6 (Nebuchadnezzar's image and madness, Belshazzar's feast, the lion's den) in an entirely historical context. These events certainly are historical and give important lessons for facing trial in all ages. However, as they directly follow the *Metallic Colossus* picturing the entire span of the *Times of the Gentiles*, it is reasonable to see them as also *a prophecy of the characteristics* of the long Age from Nebuchadnezzar to the Return of Christ. For example, Nebuchadnezzar's madness is shown to illustrate the instability of the world's leaders throughout (i.e. *seven times*) the Times of the Gentiles.

Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men....seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will (4:16,17,25).

DANIEL 9: TWO ATTEMPTS TO DISLODGE THE *CORNERSTONE* OF CHRONOLOGY AND PROPHECY

One of Scripture's foundational prophecies is that of the *Seventy Weeks* in Daniel 9. It has been called *God's Clock for Israel*. It is also rightly viewed as the Bible's prophetic and chronological *cornerstone*. It foretells the time of the death of Christ after which it leaps forward to the last seven terrible years before the Millennial Reign, *the time of Jacob's Trouble* (Jer 30:7). Any attempt to alter the time this *clock* begins to tick, or to dislodge it from its place as a chronological cornerstone will result in the greatest confusion.

There are two fundamental and yet little known ways that the crucial prophecy of Daniel 9 has been mishandled. The standard Gentile chronology has added years and pushed the dates of Daniel back by nearly a century. The traditional Jewish chronology has removed years and brought Daniel and his prophecy of the Weeks forward by more than a century. The first was due to disbelief and ignorance of Daniel 9, and reliance instead upon the notoriously unreliable records of the Persian period. The second came about *precisely because the Jewish leaders knew only too well to Whom the Weeks of Daniel 9 pointed and needed to have the prophecy point to someone else!* I have compiled substantial documentation for this in *Bible Chronology: The Two Great Divides*.

ONE: A GENTILE CHRONOLOGER PUSHED DANIEL BACK IN TIME BY *ADDING* NEARLY A CENTURY TO THE PERSIAN PERIOD

Few are aware that the well-known dates given for the times in which Daniel lived have 93 years added from a secular source. For a start this is at variance with the fact that ***the Bible itself*** (without any addition or subtraction from secular sources) ***gives a complete chronology from Adam to the crucifixion of Christ***. For example, from among the Bible's many chronological statements, Luke 3 gives an unbroken genealogy from Adam to Christ; and the Seventy Week prophecy of Daniel 9 gives the years from the Cyrus Decree to rebuild Jerusalem (at the end of the captivities in Babylon) to the Crucifixion of Christ.

When one reads Daniel 9 in conjunction with the passages dealing with the Cyrus Decree, it is clear that the ***counting*** of the Seventy Week prophecy was to begin ***shortly after*** Daniel received the prophecy (Dan 9:1,2; 18-27). It is also clear that the Cyrus Decree not only allowed the Jews to return and rebuild the Temple, ***but also rebuild Jerusalem*** (Isa 44:28; 45:13). This latter point is denied because it completely refutes any idea of adding 93 further years from secular history before Jerusalem is rebuilt!

According to the prophecy, there will be 69 weeks of years (483 year) ***from the going forth of the command to restore and to build Jerusalem*** (9:25) until the Messiah is ***cut off*** (9:27). This ***command*** can only be the Cyrus Decree to which Scripture gives substantial emphasis (later Persian kings also gave permission, but this was not a new decree but based on the Cyrus Decree). With our Lord crucified in 33 AD it should be a simple matter to subtract 483 years and arrive at a date of about 450 BC for the Cyrus Decree and the beginning of the count of the ***weeks***. Daniel then would have received the prophecy a short time before 450 BC.

With such a direct and Biblical computation, why then do we have the intrusion of this 93 year addition? If at the beginning of Daniel 9 (at about the 70th year of Daniel's captivity) it is stated that there would be a ***total of seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem*** (9:2); WHY then ***at the end of Daniel's 70 years in Babylon will Jerusalem still not be built for another 93 years!*** The answer is ***depressingly simple!*** Some 600 or more years after Daniel, the esteemed astronomer, *astrologer*, mathematician and geographer Ptolemy (died c168 AD) compiled his *Canon of Kings*. This is considered the primary source for dating the reigns of

rulers in the ancient world. On the basis of what Ptolemy considered were the length of Persian, Greek and Roman king-reigns, he pushed back Persia's capture of Babylon by nearly a century earlier than what the Book of Daniel shows. The scholarly world (with a few exceptions) has chosen to follow Ptolemy rather than the Bible with the result that the "standard dates" commonly accepted and often printed in our Bibles have been inflated by these 93 years.

The decision to follow Ptolemy turns a blind eye to the well-known fact that while the length of Roman reigns is accurate; that of Greek reigns (mainly before Alexander) is much less so, and that of Persian reigns is so unreliable that what Ptolemy listed for Persian kings is not much more than an educated guess. History has been shown to give a reasonably accurate length of time from Alexander's defeat of Persia (331 BC) unto Christ; but with the Persian period before Alexander, there is not only great uncertainty as to the length of the reigns but also to the number of Persian kings.

TWO: A JEWISH CHRONOLOGER BROUGHT DANIEL FORWARD BY CUTTING MORE THAN A CENTURY FROM THE PERSIAN PERIOD

If it comes as a surprise that Ptolemy *expanded* the Persian period by 93 years (probably by simple error without ulterior motive), it will come as a shock that the traditional Jewish Chronology (*The Sedar Olam Rabbah*, 2nd Century AD) *cuts radically* the length of the Persian Empire, from Cyrus to Alexander, to only 53 years; and this *with a very special motive!*

In the decades after the Crucifixion, Jewish leaders were faced with the unbearable dilemma that their own Prophet Daniel so emphatically gave the exact time of the Crucifixion of Christ. Something therefore had to be done to show that the *Weeks* could point to someone else. The solution was to *compress* their national history so that Daniel's Weeks would shoot well beyond the Crucifixion of AD 33. The history of Persia from the fall of Babylon to its defeat by Alexander was the logical place to apply the editorial knife.

The compiler of the new chronology was the influential Akiva ben Joseph (known as Rabbi Akiva), a greatly loved, and leading contributor to the Talmud. His *The Sedar Olam Rabbah* ("The Great Order of the World") adapted Israel's national chronology in such a way that the *Weeks* of Daniel could point tolerably close to one of Israel's national heroes. That man was Bar Kokhba, who died fighting the Romans in 135 AD.

In the estimation of Rabbi Akiva, Simon Bar Kosiba was virtually the Messiah!

The Jewish sage Rabbi Akiva indulged the possibility that Simon Bar Kosiba (Bar Kokhba) could be the Jewish messiah, and gave him the surname "Bar Kokhba" meaning "Son of a Star" in the Aramaic language, from the Star Prophecy verse from Numbers 24:17: "There shall come a star out of Jacob". (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar_Kokhba_revolt)

Jewish editorial work regarding Daniel did not only extend to this *adapted* chronology of Israel's history, it extended to the Bible itself. The text and wording of Daniel were not affected. The Jewish scribes remained as diligent as ever in copying of the inspired words of Daniel. It did however affect its *place* in the Hebrew Bible.

DANIEL IS MOVED TO A "BACK ROOM" IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

In our Bible Daniel is found in its rightful place among the four Major Prophets. This however is not the case with the Hebrew Scriptures. The Hebrew *Tanakh* has a threefold division: the Law (*Torah*), the Prophets (*Nebhiim*) and the Writings (*Kethubhim*). Daniel is not found in the second division (the Prophets) but in the third division (the Writings). Therefore in the Hebrew Bible Daniel is not included among the Major Prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel,

or among the twelve so-called Minor Prophets – Hosea to Malachi. Different explanations are given for this, but we think Matthew Henry in his day *zeroed in* on true reason.

Some of the Jewish rabbins are loth to acknowledge him to be a prophet of the higher form, and therefore rank his book among the *Hagiographa* [Greek name for the Writings], not among the prophecies, and would not have their disciples pay much regard to it. One reason they pretend is because he did not live such a mean mortified life as Jeremiah and some other of the prophets did, but lived like a prince, and was a prime-minister of state; whereas we find him persecuted as other prophets were (ch. 6), and mortifying himself as other prophets did, when he *ate no pleasant bread* (10:3), and fainting sick when he was under the power of the Spirit of prophecy (8:27).

Another reason they pretend is because he wrote his book in a heathen country, and *there* had his visions, and not in the land of Israel; but, for the same reason, Ezekiel also must be expunged out of the roll of prophets. But the true reason is that he speaks so plainly of the time of the Messiah's coming that the Jews cannot avoid the conviction of it and therefore do not care to hear of it. But Josephus calls him one of the *greatest of the prophets*, nay, the angel Gabriel calls him a *man greatly beloved*.

Thankfully, as noted above, this did not affect the Words of the Book of Daniel. The Masoretic Text (from Hebrew *masoreth*, “tradition”) is the sound text of the *Tanakh* (Old Testament) upon which the King James Bible is based. The Jewish scribes copied faithfully and meticulously the inspired Words of the Old Testament. However prior to Rabbi Akiva's “solution” for the fact that Daniel 9 pointed to the time of Christ's Crucifixion, an interim measure was taken by moving Daniel from the second division (the Prophets) to the third “less conspicuous” division (the Writings). That this happened can be seen from the fact that Josephus, writing toward the end of the First Century indicates that Daniel belonged to the Prophets and not the Writings. From his statements on the Hebrew Canon (Contra Apion I, 38-39 [8]), Gleason Archer concludes:

There is no possibility that Josephus could have regarded Daniel as belonging to the *Writings*. Very clearly he included it among the *Prophets* (*The Expositors Bible Commentary*, pp. 7,8).

Shortly after, in AD 90, there is an account of Daniel being officially placed in the Writings of the Jewish Canon. And there it remains unto this day.

But what happened to the writing called the scroll of Daniel? From what we can ascertain, sometime between AD. 70-110. probably 90 AD. (perhaps the Sanhedrin itself) the Rabbis determined at the Council of Jamnia that the book of Daniel would be placed in and fixed in the third section of the TANAKH / or Kethuvim (Writings)... The formation of the Writings/Kethuvim was developed between 105 BC and 16 BC... It was the Patriarch Gamaliel II who presided over the Sanhedrin during the council of Jamnia in which a scroll of Daniel was officially placed in the Kethuvim Writings (Charles Eisenberg, *The Book of Daniel-A Well Kept Secret*, p.21).

The scribes of Israel may not have placed Daniel in the same company as the rest of the Prophets, but in Matthew 24:15 our Lord esteemed Daniel as one of the Prophets.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand).

Therefore in order to hide the truth that after 483 years *Messiah would be cut off* (Dan 9:25,26), and that this can only refer to the Messiah they placed on the Cross, the Jewish rabbis moved the Book of Daniel to a *back room* of their Bible, and *rewrote the years* of the history of their nation. Yet one day soon that same nation will *look upon him whom they have pierced* (Zech 12:10).

Note: The current Jewish Date for 2014/15 is **5775**. This is their Biblical computation from Adam. In fact a count of the years from the Bible (KJV or Tanakh) will come to a figure

of just above 6000 years; this with the Creation of Adam at about 4000 BC. The primary reason for the fewer years in Israel's date is the *Sedar Olam*.

We return now to the Current Chronology followed by nearly everyone.

EIGHT BAISIC FACTS THAT SHOW THE CURRENTLY USED PTOLEMAIC CHRONOLOGY IS RIDDLED WITH CONTRADICTIONS

1. There will be 69 Weeks or 483 years (Dan 9:23-26) from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Crucifixion of Christ. This means the decree was issued in about 450 BC. **The current chronology** puts the decree in 445 BC during the reign of a different king than Cyrus (from Ptolemy's king list). Adding 483 years to 445 BC places the Crucifixion well beyond the usual 30-33 AD date.
2. The: (1) Fall of Babylon to Persia, (2) Daniel receiving the 70 Week Prophecy, (3) The Cyrus Decree to rebuild Jerusalem (when the counting of the Weeks begins) – all took place in a short time (three years at most, probably a lot less). That *this is a short time* is clear from reading Daniel 9, and it is exactly what Daniel prayed for (9:19). **The current chronology** agrees that Daniel received the prophecy of the Weeks shortly after the fall of Babylon, but then says the decree and the count of the Weeks cannot begin for another 93 years. Why? They believe Ptolemy's Persian king list rather than the Bible!
3. The Jerusalem destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar is limited to a desolation of 70 years (Dan 9:2). This simple fact is completely ignored and contradicted by **current chronology** that says Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 and permission to rebuild the city did not come until 445.
4. The Cyrus Decree is the primary decree. The subsequent permissions given to Ezra and Nehemiah were based entirely upon what Cyrus commanded. This Decree is the only one to which the words of Daniel 9:25 could apply: *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

This was something Daniel could *know* then and there! Daniel is an old man now, he would not *know* it if the command did not come until long afterwards (he would be in Heaven!). Yet **current chronology** places *the going forth of this command* in the time of a much later king on Ptolemy's list; makes the date 445 BC and then pushes Daniel's reception of the prophecy back to 538 BC.

Scripture gives a great deal of prominence to the Cyrus Decree; yet **current chronology** ignores that it was a command to rebuild the city (Isa 44:28; 45:13) and concentrates instead on its command to rebuild the Temple.
5. The Biblical Chronology for these times is composed of *one cohesive unit*. The **current chronology** is made up of *two units* separated by a long gap. The gap is "filled in" by nothing more than Ptolemy's lengthy list of Persian kings. This presents a major problem: *a substantial number of Jewish leaders are found on both sides of the gap*. As a result we are introduced to some *very spritely 130-year-olds!*
6. Daniel 11:1-3 presents a very limited number of Persian Kings from the joint reign of Cyrus and Darius down to Alexander the Great. This passage clearly shows the extent to which Ptolemy's list has been expanded.

7. The *multiple* titles given to Persian Kings are a chief source of confusion.

Whereas an Egyptian or Roman king generally had a single title, i.e. *Pharaoh* or *Caesar*; there is evidence to show that the same Persian king (as a promotion) could bear additional titles. In the earlier part of his reign he might be called *Ahasuerus* (*Aha* = Mighty; *Suerus* = King). Later he could be called *Artaxerxes* (*Arta* = Great; *Xerxes* = King or Shah). It is especially important to recognize this when reading Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther and Esther. The regnal years of the Persian King to which Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah are linked is the prominent Darius Hystaspes who began his 36 year reign 8/9 years after the death of Cyrus. In these three books he is identified by his titles (Darius Hystaspes = *Ahasuerus*, *Artaxerxes*).

8. The 69 weeks to the Crucifixion are divided into two groups: **7 weeks** and **62 weeks** (49 years and 434 years). The Biblical Chronology shows them to be **a very busy time** and clearly linked to Persian kings. They cover the time from the Cyrus Decree down to the reforms and wall building undertaken by Nehemiah.

(Nehemiah 9:25) *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. (9:26) And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off...*

Nehemiah's work is **at the end** of these 49 years and draws to a conclusion the events of the Old Testament. The **current chronology** puts Nehemiah **at the beginning** the 49 years and **the rest is an empty gap!** There is nothing of significance during the years; nor is there anything to mark their end. What the Bible sets out as a key segment in chronology is left hanging.

CURRENT PTOLEMAIC CHRONOLOGY: LIVING ON BOTH SIDES OF A LONG GAP.

There are “many sprightly 130-year-olds”

It may come as a surprise that the famous scientist Issac Newton studied the prophecies and chronology of the Book of Daniel. As far back as 1728 he wrestled with the fact that the Ptolemaic reckoning faced a very big problem when its dates are compared with the lists of names in Nehemiah 10 and 12 (And that is only the start!). Others have seen the same thing. A brief outline of these **traditional dates** will show what the problem is.

- 605 1st Deportation to Babylon.
Daniel taken. *Time of Gentiles begins.*
- 597 2nd Deportation: Ezekiel taken with King Jehoiachin.
- 586 3rd Deportation: Jerusalem destroyed. ***Ezra's father Seraiah, slain*** (2 Kg 25:18; Ezra 7:1-5).
- 539 Persia (Darius the Mede, Dan 5:31) conquers Babylon.
- 538 Daniel is given 70 Week prophecy: 1st year of Darius (Dan 9:1).
- 536 Cyrus Decree (1st year of reign, Ezra 1:1):70 years after 1st Deportation.
 - Jews allowed to build Temple.
 - **Zerubbabel brings back first exiles.** *Many leaders among exiles “still active” 91 years later in time of Nehemiah.*
- 535 Temple begun, but work stopped.
- 520-15 Ministries of Haggai and Zechariah.

515 Temple completed. (Note: The times between the events down to this point are accurate, but because they are pushed back, the dates are inaccurate).

515-458 GAP: NOTHING BUT PTOLEMY'S KING LIST

458 **Ezra brings back second group of exiles.**

- Institutes reforms.
- ***Even if Ezra was not born until his father died (586), he is now at least 128!!***

445 Nehemiah weeps over report of fallen walls of Jerusalem **141 years after they were destroyed** (Neh 1)! He returns to rebuild wall of Jerusalem.

- **Count of the Weeks begin: 93 years after given to Daniel! Overrun Crucifixion!**

- 17 Priests/Levites return with Zerubbabel (Neh 12) and aid Nehemiah's reforms (Neh. 10). To be leaders in 536, they were **likely 130 years old in 445!**

- For further examples of **leaders that are too old** see *Bible Chronology: The Two Great Divides*.

BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY: FOUNDED ON THE CORNERSTONE.

There are Sixty-Nine Weeks (483 years) from the Cyrus Decree permitting Jerusalem to be rebuilt until the Crucifixion of Christ. The First Week (49 years) gives the events and dates for the closing period of Old Testament History.

520 1st Deportation to Babylon.

- 3rd year of Johoiakim's 11 year reign (Dan 1:1).
- Daniel taken.
- Beginning of *Times of the Gentiles* (cp. Lk 21:24).

511 2nd Deportation to Babylon.

- 11th year of Johoiakim's reign and 3rd months of Jehoiachin's reign (2 Kng 24:6-8).
- Ezekiel and Jehoiachin taken.

500 3rd Deportation to Babylon and Jerusalem destroyed.

- 11th year of Zedekiah's reign (2 Kng 25:1-10).
- Ezra's father Seraiah, is slain (2 Kng 25:18; Ezra 7:1-5).

484 Last dated prophecy in Ezekiel: 27th year of Jehoichin's captivity (Ezek 29:17).

474 Last dated event in the captivity: Jehoiachin released from prison.

- 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Jer 52:31), and 1st year of Evil-merodach, King of Babylon's reign (Jer 52:31).
- After Evil-merodach, Daniel gives the 1st year (7:1), 3rd year (8:1) and death (ch. 5) of Belshazzar the last king of Babylon. It does not give the years connecting them.

453 Persia (Darius the Mede, Dan 5:31) conquers Babylon.

452 **Daniel is given the 70 Week prophecy:** 1st year of Darius the Mede (Dan 9:1).

- Daniel has been in Babylon for nearly 70 years.
- Daniel (9:2) had been reading Jeremiah 25:11,12:

And this whole land shall be desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon **seventy years**. And it shall come to pass, **when seventy years are accomplished**, that I will punish the king of Babylon...

- Daniel had also been reading 2 Chronicles 36:19-23:

And they **burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem**, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. (36:20) And them that had escaped from the sword **carried he away to Babylon**; where they were servants to him and his sons **until the reign of the kingdom of Persia**: (36:21) **To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths**: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil **threescore and ten years**. (36:22) 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, (36:23) 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**.

450 Cyrus Decree (1st year of reign, Ezra 1:1):70 years after 1st Deportation.

- Count of the Weeks begin: 483 years to the Crucifixion of Christ.
- Seven Weeks begin: 49 Years to 402/1 and conclusion of Nehemiah's reforms.
- Jews allowed to rebuild Jerusalem and Temple.
- Zerubbabel brings back the first exiles.

434 1st year of Darius Hystapes King of Persia. The remainder of the First Week (33 years) is dated to Darius' reign.

- He is the *third king* of Daniel 11:1-3; following Cyrus and Cambyses.
- He is also known in Scripture as *Ahasuerus* and *Artaxerxes* (an additional honour).

432 2nd year of reign: After stoppage, work on Temple/ City resumes (Ezra 4:24).

- Ministry of Haggai during 2nd year of reign (Hag 1:1).
- Ministry of Zechariah during 2nd and 4th year of reign (Zech 1:1; 7:1).

431 3rd year of reign: Vashti in Book of Esther deposed (Est 1:1).

428 6th year of reign: Temple finished (Ezra 6:15). A little over 70 years since destruction.

427 7th year of reign: **Ezra brings back second group of exiles** (Ezra 7:7).

422 12th year of reign: Haman's plot foiled (Est 3:7).

414 20th year of reign: **Nehemiah's trip to rebuild walls of Jerusalem** (Neh 2:1).

402/1 32nd year of reign: Nehemiah's 2nd trip to Jerusalem (Neh 13:6).

- Further reforms concluded.
- Malachi's ministry occurs here or shortly after.
- Conclusion of 7 Weeks, 62 Weeks remaining to Crucifixion of Christ.

331 Persia falls to Alexander the Great.

COMMENTARY

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES 1- 7

A. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES 1

DANIEL 1. DANIEL AND HIS THREE COMPANIONS IN BABYLON

The First Deportation 1:1,2.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. (1:2) 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.

This first chapter gives us a much fuller account of Daniel than of any of the other Old Testament prophets from Isaiah to Malachi. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel with the others began almost immediately with their divine pronouncements, but with Daniel there is a much fuller account of his beginnings. Here, along with the Apostle John in setting up one of the two great pillars of Bible Prophecy is *a man greatly beloved* of Heaven (Dan 9:23; 10:11; 10:19; cp. Jhn 13:23; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20).

We read now of the first of the three invasions Nebuchadnezzar would launch against Jerusalem. These would extend over a period of 20 years with the last resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem. As the executioner of God's purposes against His disobedient people, Nebuchadnezzar began immediately, shortly before the 1st year of his *sole* which did not begin until the *fourth year of Jehoiakim* (Jer 25:1). This besieging of Jerusalem marks the beginning of Gentile dominion over Jerusalem, the *Times of the Gentiles*. It is a dominion that will extend unto the Second Coming of Christ (Lk 21:24). Little however did the king of Babylon realize that while this would mark the beginning of the 70 year Captivity for Judah, it was also *the 70 year countdown* to Babylon's own doom (Jer 25:11,12).

Nebuchadnezzar became master of Jerusalem. He *besieged Jerusalem*. About a century before the king of Assyria *besieged* Jerusalem (2 Kng 18:9), but he did not become its master, for then Judah had *a king who prayed* (Hezekiah) and God answered his prayer (Isa 37:36). Now there is no praying king on the throne. The last king who *prayed* was Josiah, and has been dead for about three or four years. The revival and reforms he so fervently worked for (2 Chron 34,35) died with him. The traditional date for this invasion is 605. The Biblical date as shown above is 520.

Nebuchadnezzar became the master of Jerusalem's King. Nebuchadnezzar came *in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah... and the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand*. This wicked and idolatrous king squandered state funds on a new palace (Jer 23:13-19). He is best known for cutting up Jeremiahs prophecies of this very judgement (Jer 36). But the judgement came nevertheless, and despite attempts at resistance, Jehoiakim is left as nothing more than a tributary to Nebuchadnezzar for about eight years. He then rebelled and that was his ruin (Jer 22:18,19).

Note: Jeremiah wrote about this shortly after in the 4th year of Jehoiakim (Jer 25:1). This was the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar's *sole* reign. See Daniel 2:1 for his 2nd year.

Nebuchadnezzar became the master of Jerusalem's Temple. *And the Lord gave...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 (1:2). Nebuchadnezzar did not then destroy the city but he did begin to deplete it. And here is *a judgement that began at the House of God* – a house which so soon after the death of Josiah had fallen into deep apostasy (1 Pet 4:17). Isaiah prophesied that because Hezekiah showed the Temple treasures to the king of Babylon's ambassadors (Isa. 39:6, 7), that the Babylonians would return to carry away the treasures. Many of the holy vessels are now taken as trophies of victory to the **house of his god**.

Here is the righteous judgement of God: Judah had brought the images of other gods into His Temple, and now He gives the vessels of the Temple to be carried into the treasuries of their gods. But note, It was only *part of them* that went now; some were left them to see if they would take the right course to prevent the carrying away of the remainder.

See Jer. 27:18.

The Attempt to Indoctrinate and Assimilate 1:3-7.

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; (1:4) Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. (1:5) And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. (1:6) Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: (1:7) Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

A general account of those to be indoctrinated. Though more was to be taken later, in his first incursion Nebuchadnezzar took the best: the best of the Temple treasures and the best of Judah's young men; especially those with a connection to royalty and nobility. These were the trophies of his success and after a thorough indoctrination (brainwashing) would serve him to the betterment of Babylon.

The tutor of this enterprise. **And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs** (1:3). This immediately causes a shock and gives an insight into how bad the environment was into which the best of Judah's young men have now been brought. Eunuchs oversaw the king's harems and Ashpenaz oversaw them. Does this mean that Daniel was made a eunuch? The naming of Ashpenaz and the following prophecy may imply that he was. However, Ezekiel 14:20 may imply that he was not. While this is considered an open question, in the 27 places in the Bible where the word *eunuch* is found, and unlike the *Ethiopian eunuch* (Acts 8:27), the term is never directly applied to Daniel.

- *Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (2 Kng 20:17,18).*

- *Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness (Ezek 14:20).*

The students of this enterprise: **certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace** (1:3,4).

Young men, **children**, were to be chosen. It was hoped that they would be pliable and compliant; they would forget Jehovah, forget Jerusalem, and forget their own people. They would be completely moulded and incorporated into Chaldean way of life. And so today young men and women and all of God's people are warned:

• *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom 12:1,2).*

• *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 Jhn 2:15-17).*

Gifted men were to be chosen. Not only were they to have lineage, royalty and nobility, but on the surface they must look the part. They must have a presence about them that was difficult to be found among the young men of Babylon. They must also have an uncommon genius. It was not to be a limited genius either. They must be **skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science**. As such they would be able to **stand** and not be intimidated in the court of Nebuchadnezzar. Not only to attend his royal person, but to preside over his affairs of state.

But *what a waste* is this if it is only done for self and Babylon and not done unto the glory of God. The apostle Paul had many natural attributes, but when recounting them said:

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil 3:7-9).

The goal of this enterprise: **whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans** (1:4). *Give instructions to a wise man and he will be yet wiser* (Prov 9:9). This does not likely mean the magical arts, divination and religion of the Babylonians. If it did, Daniel and his companions, as with the king's meat and wine, *would not defile themselves* with it (1:8). This would include agriculture, general science, mathematics and especially astronomy. From the days of the first Babylon and its tower *whose top may reach unto heaven* (Gen 11:4), the Babylonians were the great astronomers of the ancient world. They sent to Hezekiah *to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land* (2 Chron 32:21) when the sun returned ten degrees (Isa 38:8). This was the kind of learning that *the wise men from the east* had (Matt 2:1).

The maintenance of this enterprise. **And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king** (1:5). This was an instance of Nebuchadnezzar's generosity and kindness. If they did not as Mephibosheth *eat continually at the king's table* (2 Sam 9:13), they were offered the same food and drink that *continually* came to his table. They were given a liberal education and with it a liberal maintenance. But it was all godless and the latter had a special taint to it. This godlessness in the *university of Babylon* is now about to be pressed further.

Note: Babylon, like the world with the Christian, is using *the carrot and stick* approach. It has learned from past conquests that **three years** are usually needed to indoctrinate and assimilate. For some it takes longer, other shorter, *a few never!*

A particular account of Daniel and his companions. Nebuchadnezzar took the best from Judah and now we are introduced to *the best of the best*.

Note their Hebrew names given by their parents. There is something of Jehovah or Elohim in these names (1:6). **Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel** (*Elohim is my Judge*), **Hananiah** (*The grace of Jehovah*), **Mishael** (*He that is the strong Elohim*), and **Azariah** (*Jehovah is help*).

Note their Babylonian names given by their captors (1:7): *Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.*

Ashpenaz, the *prince of the eunuchs*, changed their names, partly to show his authority over them and their subjection to him, and partly in token of their being naturalized and made Chaldeans. But it went further! It was designed to make them forget *the God of their fathers* (Deut 26:7), and the *guide of their youth* (Jer 3:4). They gave them names connected with Chaldean idolatry. **Belteshazzar** signifies the *keeper of the hidden treasures of Bel*; **Shadrach**—*The inspiration of the sun*, which the Chaldeans worshipped; **Meshach**—*Of the goddess Shach*, under which name Venus was worshipped; **Abed-nego**, *The servant of the shining fire*, which they worshipped also. Thus, though Babylon would not force them from the faith of their fathers to the idols of their conquerors, yet by major steps, as here, or by giving them the comforts of Babylon, they did what they could to gradually draw them into the religion of Babylon.

The Steadfastness of Daniel 1:8-16.

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. (1:9) Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. (1:10) And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. (1:11) Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, (1:12) Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. (1:13) Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. (1:14) So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. (1:15) And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. (1:16) Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

The resolve of Daniel. **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.** (1:8).

They had changed Daniel's name, but they could not change his faith and principles. Whatever they wanted to call him, he still retained his convictions of *an Israelite indeed* (Jhn 1:47). Whatever studies they gave him in the syllabus of the *learning and tongue of the Chaldeans* (1:4), he would apply his mind diligently. BUT he was resolved that *he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat*, he would not meddle with it, nor *with the wine which he drank*, Daniel knew how to be *in the world but not of the world; in Babylon but not of Babylon*. The classroom did not pose too great of a problem but Nebuchadnezzar's dining hall did.

Meat from the royal table was doubtlessly slain and prepared according to pagan ritual and offered to a god (Exod 34:15; 1 Cor 10:21). Much like *halal* meat is today! The same

general principles apply to the wine. The best of God's people did not drink it at all (Lev 11:45,46; Num 6:2-4; Deut 29:6; Prov 23:31; 1 Cor 10:21). When the wine starts flowing a lot of things *come unhinged*. If the Bible does not completely forbid its use, it does *everywhere* warn against it. When God's people are in a *Babylon* they have need to take special care that they *partake not in her sins* (Rev 18:4).

The appeal of Daniel. It was an appeal God had already prepared for. ***Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs*** (1:8,9). Herein was an ongoing work. *He made them to be pitied of all those that carried them captives* (Ps. 106:46). It does not say that *all* who carried them away pitied, but *among the all* there will always be some to show pity and mercy. When a believer sets out to take a stand, he may be surprised where some help will come from.

The fear of the prince. ***And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king*** (1:10). Ashpenaz was responsible for Daniel and his companion's well-being, and he was very happy to pursue this (1:9); but it is also true that his own well-being depended upon it.

The proposal of a test. ***Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days*** (1:11-14). Daniel makes this proposal to the under-officer, the steward, *Melzar*. Nothing but *pulse* and *water* for *ten days*. The word *pulse* is derived from a word which means "to sow"; denoting things grown from seeds sown in the ground. Thus a wide variety of vegetables. If this was not as succulent and tasty as what the king was serving, it was every bit as healthy and likely more so. Pulse would include dates and nuts which provided the protein in this meatless diet. Further, this diet probably kept them away from the dining hall. *Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith* (Prov 15:17). By this we see that, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God* (Matt 4:4). If God gave these instructions to Daniel (which He did), then pulse and water shall be the most nourishing food and drink. It was *health to the navel and marrow to the bones* (Prov 3:8), while the pleasures of sin in the dining hall were *rottenness to the bones* (Hab 3:16).

The outcome of the trial. ***And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse*** (1:15,16). They put on weight and had a healthier look than all the rest. Their countenance also told of a clearer mind, spiritually and mentally. There was a lot of *excess* in the dining hall. Therefore to the believer: *Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand* (Phil 4:5).

Had Daniel not passed this *first dining hall test*, this would have been the last we hear of Daniel or his Book. This will not be the last test. For both him and his three companions others will follow, including a *fiery furnace* and a *lion's den*. Nor do the *ten days* of this trial indicate that the others will be of short duration. His entire tenure in Babylon will be a trial, and that for seventy and more years.

Here is the first lesson and illustration of the *Times of the Gentiles*; it will be a time of indoctrination and assimilation.

Four Shining Lights in Babylon 1:17-21.

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. (1:18) Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. (1:19) And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. (1:20) 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. (1:21) And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

Their great attainments in learning. *As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom (1:17).* They took their course work seriously, were very diligent, and studied hard. We may suppose their tutors, finding them of an uncommon capacity to learn, spent a lot of time with them. That being said, their wisdom was from above. It was God and God alone who gave them such an abundance of **knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom**. Note the three passages from James and one from Ecclesiastes:

- *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (Jms 1:5).*
- *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (Jms 1:17).*
- *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (Jms 3:17).*
- *For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail (Eccl 2:26).*

The double portion given to Daniel: *and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.* He was given a gift which went far beyond that which comes from diligent study. As our Lord said, he is *Daniel the prophet* (Matt 24:15). Through him *the Spirit of Christ which was in him did signify* (1 Pet 1:11). Like Joseph, Daniel could interpret divinely given dreams (Gen 41:12). Shortly he would deal with dreams given to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2,4). He will by this gift be like Moses:

If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream (Num 12:6).

Their great acceptance with the king. Nebuchadnezzar is a pagan king who had been used as a chastening rod against Israel. He is king of the world. He is also from a worldly standpoint one of the wisest men on earth. He is now about to be introduced to a far higher kind of knowledge.

Note their examination. *Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them (1:18,19).* After *three years* spent in class rooms of Babylon (indicating that they were at least in their later teens when they began), they are now presented to the king with the other graduates. Nebuchadnezzar himself examined and **communed with them**. He could do it, being a man not just of rank but also of learning. He will see for himself what the progress has been with these students.

Note their superiority: *and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 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* (1:19, 20). The examination was not narrow or restricted; it was *in all matters of wisdom and understanding*. They had learned their lessons well both in depth and breadth.

They excelled well above the other Hebrews. Perhaps these had been dismissive of the four men in their *dining hall decision*. Now it can be known that something deeper was at stake. They greatly excelled above all the other so-called sages in the land. In fact *ten times better*. Of them it could be said as the Psalmist wrote:

O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts (Psa 119:97-100).

Nebuchadnezzar was soon aware of something extraordinary in these young men; and he was soon aware that they possessed something far beyond what he had been used to getting from *the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm*. *What is the chaff to the wheat* (Jer 23:28)? What are the magicians' rods to Aaron's (Exod 7:12)? There was no comparison with anything he had seen before. This examination has shown that his own advisers are *weighed in the balance and found wanting* (Dan 5:27). And so it is also with the world's knowledge when compared with a spiritual knowledge of the Bible.

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:2,3).

Note their elevation: *therefore stood they before the king*. A spiritual knowledge of the Living and Written Word brings the believer into the presence of the King.

- *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men (Prov 22:29).*
- *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him (Jhn 14:23).*

Note Daniel's continuance. **And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus** (1:21). though not always in the same favour and reputation. He lived and prophesied for another 70 years until Cyrus of Persia, Babylon's conqueror took the throne. This is mentioned here to intimate that he lived to see the deliverance of his people out of their captivity and their return to their own land. This does not say that Daniel did not live longer, but, that he lived to see this important epoch (cp. 10:1).

In this and the five following chapters which illustrate the *Times of the Gentiles*, we see contrasted the Man of God and the Man of the World.

The Man of God is distinguished by: Purity (ch 1), Prophecy (chs 2,4,5), Bravery (chs 2,6) and Fidelity (chs 1,6).

The Man of the World is marked by: Foolishness (chs 2,4), Idolatry (chs 3,5,6), Vanity (ch 4) and Blasphemy (ch 5).

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES 1-7

B. THE OVERVIEW OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES (Aramaic Language Begins) 2

DANIEL 2. THE METALLIC COLOSSUS

It was said (1:17) that Daniel had *understanding in dreams*; and here we have an immediate and prominent instance of it. This soon made him famous in the court of Babylon, as Joseph by the same means came to be in the court of Egypt. But this dream extends further than the one Joseph interpreted for Pharaoh. That one was seven years of famine and seven years of plenty. And while this one will also encompass plenty and famine, its extent will be for at least two and a half millennia. It is the *Times of the Gentiles* (that time of Gentile dominion over Jerusalem; Lk 21:24) stretching from Nebuchadnezzar's day down to the Return of Christ. It is not seen in just one nation as Joseph saw for Egypt; but it unfolds in five great world empires, with the fifth being in the immediate time of Christ's Return.

The "Forgotten" Dream 2:1-13.

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. (2:2) Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. (2:3) And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. (2:4) Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. (2:5) The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. (2:6) But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. (2:7) They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. (2:8) The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. (2:9) 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. (2:10) 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. (2:11) And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. (2:12) For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. (2:13) And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

The date of the dream. *And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams* (2:1). A question has been raised about this date. If Daniel was carried to Babylon in Nebuchadnezzar's "1st year" which is assumed to be the *third year of Jehoiakim* (Dan 1:1,2), and if he and his companions were presented to the king in the 3rd year (1:5), how then could this dream take place in the 2nd year? The answer is that Daniel 1:1,2 does not say that Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem in his 1st year, for though he was *Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon* he was likely still co-regent with his father. According to Jeremiah 25:1 the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar did not begin until the *fourth year of Jehoiakim*. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar received this dream three years after he besieged Jerusalem but in only the

2nd year of his sole reign. Compare this further parallel with Joseph: *at the end of two full years Pharaoh dreamed* (Gen 41:1).

Note: In Jerusalem at this time, King Johoiakim in his 5th year (Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd year) burned Jeremiah's scroll. This act by the king marked an official rejection of Jehovah and His Word. Nevertheless the Word of God will continue to go forth, and this time through a Gentile monarch.

The anxiety of the dream: *Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him* (2:1). He *dreamed dreams*, that is, a dream consisting of many distinct parts and which completely filled his head. Solomon speaks of a *multitude of dreams* (Eccl. 5:7); and when *a dream cometh through the multitude of business* (Eccl 5:3). We read further that *the sleep of the labouring man is sweet* (Eccl 5:12), but because of this dream *his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him*. He had his guards nearby, but they could not keep out the trouble that had entered the king's head. The troubler of Israel was troubled, and that from God.

It is significant that not to Daniel but to the first representative of the *Times of the Gentiles* this dream was given. Nebuchadnezzar had reason to be troubled, for at the end of the dream is the destruction of all of which he is the head (2:44,45).

The call for help concerning the dream. *Then the king commanded to call the magicians* (*hartummin* = engravers, writers of magic spells), *and the astrologers* (*ashshapim* = they claimed occult knowledge through star positions), *and the sorcerers* (*mekashshepim* = general practitioners of occultism listed in Deut 18:9,10 and practiced by Judah's king, Manasseh, 2 Chron 33:4-6), *and the Chaldeans* (*kasdim* = a distinct caste of "superior" occult practitioners). For his solution Nebuchadnezzar is calling on the demonic! He had however listened to them *rattle on* many times in the past. This time it will be different; he calls on them *to shew the king his dreams* (2:2,3).

The first appeal for a description of the dream is made in Syriack. *Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation* (2:4). With this we are introduced to the Aramaic section of Daniel (2:4-7:28), a Gentile language, thus alerting to the fact that on a level not seen before in the Old Testament we are entering *The Times of the Gentiles*. It is highly appropriate that as this section of Daniel outlines the long era of Gentile domination over Israel down to the Return of Christ, and now inaugurated by Nebuchadnezzar, we should have this change from Hebrew to a Gentile language.

Here in this "first verse" of *The Times of the Gentiles* we have an insight into what kind of *times* they will be. There will be a great deal of *DEMONISM* (four classes of occult practitioners), *PRIDE* (*O king live forever*), *INEFFECTIVENESS* (*tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation*).

The plea is refused; they are threatened with death. *The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof* (2:5,6). Despite their good wishes and compliments the king insists that they must tell him the dream itself for *the thing is gone from me*.

Nebuchadnezzar says that he has forgotten. We should ask that if he had so completely forgotten and with no clue at all, then why is he in such a rage and passion over something that he knows absolutely nothing? These advisors had often come before the king; never before

had their lives been put into such a balance and so suddenly. Nebuchadnezzar must have both *the dream, and the interpretation* and it must be NOW!

The second appeal for a description is brief. *They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it (2:7).*

Certainly that is a reasonable request? For normal advisors; Yes! For advisors who claim supernatural powers; No! With these powers you claim, “if you can do one you should be able to do the other.” If your powers enable you to give *the interpretation* then the same powers should be able to *tell the dream*.

Their plea is refused; they are charged with duplicity. *The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. 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 (2:8,9).* Nebuchadnezzar accuses them of stalling for time - *gain the time*. They hoped he would “cool off and forgets the matter”; or *till the time be changed*: till the king no longer cares or affairs of state would make the dream, whatever it meant, irrelevant.

Again Nebuchadnezzar thunders out: *Tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.* The simple fact that these occultists did not even attempt a description of the dream, even in the face of certain death, strongly indicates that the king *had not forgotten the dream*. They recognized that he was putting them on trial for their *past performances*. This fact is further indicated by the king saying: *for ye have* (have in the past) *prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me*. They knew that if they now attempted an answer they would be shown as a sham and immediately put to death.

The third appeal becomes highly impassioned. Here, as in the first and likely the second, the elite Chaldeans make the appeal. *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. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh (2:10,11).* God in the background made these pagan occultists confess the utter falsity of their claims of supernatural revelation. He is now going to display in order in sharp focus and bright contrast His omnipotence to reveal through Daniel the knowledge of the future.

Superlatives are heaped into this appeal but it is all in vain: *not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter.... no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things....a rare thing.... there is none other.... except the gods*. And, except for expressing it in their pagan way, they are right! They are made to confess that it cannot be done. Nebuchadnezzar is applying a simple test; he is doing what the Bible tells believers of all ages to do. When confronted with those who claim divine revelation apart from the Bible *direct tests must be applied*. This is especially the case today (as in the charismatic movement) with those who claim to have the gift of tongues and prophecy.

- *When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously (Deut 18:22).*

- *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD (Jer 23:16).*

- *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isa 8:20).*
- *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 Jhn 4:1).*
- *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book (Rev 22:18).*

Their plea is refused; they are given the sentence of immediate death. In vain do they plead! ***For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain*** (2:12,13). The doom passed upon ***all the wise men of Babylon***, There is but ***one decree for them all*** (2:9), and now that ***decree has gone forth***. They all stand condemned, without exception or distinction. The decree extended even to ***Daniel and his fellows*** (though they knew nothing of the matter); the righteous must perish with the wicked. Daniel has now learned that the high place to which one is elevated can be a dangerous place. And that, even though the king was *highly pleased* with him and had found him *ten times better* than the wise men (1:19,20).

The Request and Prayer of Daniel 2:14-23.

Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: (2:15) He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. (2:16) Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

(2:17) Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: (2:18) That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. (2:19) Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. (2:20) Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: (2:21) And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: (2:22) He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. (2:23) I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

Given the praise Nebuchadnezzar had heaped upon Daniel and his companions (1:19,20), it may seem strange that he did not call him to interpret the dream. But as Daniel had separated himself from the king's dining hall; God in his providence kept Daniel separate from the king's counsellors. God's Words will not be pooled together with demonic mumblings.

We have seen already in Ezekiel (14:14-18; 28:3), that Daniel was highly thought of for both prudence and prayer. As a prince he had power with God and man; by prayer he had power with God, by prudence he had power with men. In these verses we have a remarkable example of both.

By prudence Daniel dealt with men. ***Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel*** (2:14,15).

With Arioch. When this captain of the king's forces swept through Babylon apprehending all the wise men, Daniel and his companions were also caught in the net. Like

the sword of war which *devoureth one as well as another* (2 Sam 11:25). Daniel, however, remained calm; he **answered with counsel and wisdom**. He did not rage or fret or plead, but simply asked. **Why is the decree so hasty?** *A soft answerer* (in this case a soft question) *turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger* (Prov 15:1). **Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel**. This reply allows Daniel to take the matter higher.

With Nebuchadnezzar. **Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation** (2:16). *Where the word of a king is there is power* (Eccl 8:4), and never more so than with Nebuchadnezzar. Yet it is also true that *the king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will* (Prov 21:1). Daniel asks for a stay of execution and an extension is granted.

By prayer Daniel conversed with God. Daniel though still young had long known how to pray, and now in this great crisis he does what he has always done. HE PRAYS.

He makes the matter known. Not to many, only his three companions. **Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions** (2:17). He *went to his house*, there to be alone with God but also to engage his three fellow believers to pray. Praying friends are valuable friends. We do not know if or how many outside of that house in Babylon were praying at this crisis hour. Homes where prayer is offered will become less and less as the Return of Christ draws near. *When the Son of man cometh will he find faith on the earth* (Lk 18:1).

Note: This is a *model prayer* (i.e. a prayer for all of us to follow, and often in a metrical form). Daniel 9:3-19 is also a model prayer. Compare also 6:9-11; 10:2-12.

He was specific in his prayer. **That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon** (2:18). Prayer is to look up to God as the *God of heaven*, a God above us, and who is Lord over us, to whom we owe our worship and adoration. Our Saviour has taught us to pray, *our Father which art in heaven* (Matt 6:9). And, whatever good we pray for, our dependence must be upon the *mercies of God*. Here the need was revelation and deliverance, but that can only come from the *mercies of God*.

They desired mercy **concerning this secret**. *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever* (Deut 29:29). The Book of Daniel deals with both *secret things* (now about to be revealed), and *sealed things* (though now revealed, not understood until the end of the age. Dan 12:9,10; Rev 22:10).

They desired mercy **that Daniel and his fellows should not perish**. Mercy was needed concerning their imminent peril. They were like Peter in prison, facing death in the morning and yet like him, after praying *they went to sleep! He giveth his beloved sleep* (Psa 127:2). Daniel is *greatly beloved* (9:23;10:11,19). Daniel goes to sleep while the rest of the wise men in Babylon have a very anxious night.

He receives the answer. **Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision** (2:19). Before the completion of the Scriptures we read that God would on occasion reveal truth in dreams and visions.

God speaketh ... in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction (Job 33:14-16).

The same vision that had been given to Nebuchadnezzar (who *inaugurated* the Times of the Gentiles) is now given to Daniel who will now *interpret* those long and unfolding times.

Daniel and his friends prayed. This was the *knock* that opened the door of heaven. Christ said *knock, and it shall be opened unto you* (Lk 11:9).

He gives God the glory. ***Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven*** (2:19). Before he tells the king, he worships the *God of heaven*. Immediately Daniel turned his prayers into praises. As he had prayed in full assurance that God would do it, so he gave thanks in full assurance that God has done it. His prayer is not recorded, but his thanksgiving is.

Praise is first given for who God is. ***Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his*** (2:20). There is a *forever* in God which is to be blessed and praised; it is unchangeably and eternally in Him. His *Name* is His Person and Personality. His *wisdom and might* are the expressions of His Person. With men *wisdom and might* are separated; but God is *able* to do what He *knows* to do.

Praise is given for what God does. ***And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him*** (2:21,22).

Five ongoing acts of God in the affairs of men are here listed.

- (1) ***He changeth the times and the seasons.*** He is the absolute Controller of the timing of Gentile dominion over Israel. He controls its rise as here in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. He will bring about its collapse in the days of Antichrist and the Return of Christ. That the term *times and the seasons* relates especially to Israel can be seen in Christ's reply to the Disciples. They would not *know the times and seasons* (experience their conclusion).

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power (Acts 1:6,7).

- (2) ***He removeth kings, and setteth up kings.*** Are those that were kings removed and deposed? Do they abdicate? Are they laid aside? It is God that *removes kings*. Are the *poor raised out of the dust*, to be *set among princes* (Psa 113:7,8)?

- *That the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men (Dan 4:17).*

- *Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him (Ezek 21:26,27).*

- *Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves [to be but] men. Selah (Psa 9:20).*

- (3) ***He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.*** This is Biblical knowledge. This is to those who desire the knowledge of the Lord.: *Then shall we know if we follow on to know the LORD* (Hos 6:3). *Unto you that hear shall more be given* (Mk 4:24). This is especially true of the knowledge of Bible Prophecy. *But none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand* (Dan 12:10).

- (4) ***He revealeth the deep and secret things.*** As He has always done in the Scriptures and particularly in the prophetic Scriptures; He *discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death* (Job 12:22). He will bring

into judgment every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Eccl 12:14).

(5) **He knoweth** *what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. He is Light; He is the Father of lights (1 Jhn 1:5; 1 Tim 6:16; Jms 1:17).*

Praise is given for what God has now done. ***I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter (2:23).*** All that which God does, He has now done for Daniel. As God did for the **fathers** (1 Kng 8:57), so now He does for him. What was hidden from the celebrated Chaldeans who made the interpreting of dreams their profession, is revealed to Daniel, a captive-Jew, a young man, much their junior. Here in worldly Babylon God will now put honour upon the *Spirit of prophecy* (Rev 19:10) just when he was putting contempt on the *spirit of divination* (Acts 16:16).

Note the respect Daniel gives to his companions in this thanksgiving: *and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.* Though the matter was revealed to Daniel yet it was also in answer to *their* prayers.

Daniel is Brought before Nebuchadnezzar 2:24-30.

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. (2:25) Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. (2:26) The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? (2:27) Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; (2:28) But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; (2:29) As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. (2:30) But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

Daniel's appeal to Arioch: ***Destroy not the wise men (2:24).*** Daniel brought this message with all speed. The sentence has now been superseded. Though under the Law of God they deserved to die and stood condemned for dealing in demonic arts. Yet now there is a reprieve. To Paul in the ship God gave the souls of all that sailed with him (Acts 27). To Daniel in Babylon God gave the preservation of all the wise men; yet as we will shortly see they will not return this kindness (3:8).

Note: Daniel says three things to Arioch the executioner: ***Destroy not... bring me before the king... I will show the interpretation.*** This same threefold appeal could be made by soul winners today. It is like Moses who *stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed* (Num 16:48).

Daniel is brought before Nebuchadnezzar: ***I have found a man (2:25).*** There will always be a man or woman to *stand in the gap* (Ezek 22:30). Sometimes it may be a bit belated as when Mordecai appealed to Esther: *Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this* (Est 4:14). But here there was no delay; it was ***done in haste.***

The question is put to Daniel: *Art thou able* (2:26). A *captive of Judah*! Such a young man! His surprise is much like that of King Saul with David before the battle with Goliath (1 Sam 17). And like Saul with David, Nebuchadnezzar seems to have forgotten his previous encounter with Daniel. Kings have a lot on their minds. The king's twofold question to Daniel is the same he had put to the wise men: *Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?*

Note: God makes *able* those whom the world often thinks and speaks less of. This was **Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar** – a Judean captive who was given a name change by his captors (cp. Acts 11:26; 1 Cor 1:27,28).

Daniel presents the God of Heaven to Nebuchadnezzar. As always Daniel gives and will give throughout this Book *all* of the glory to God: ***But there is a God in heaven*** (2:28).

The utter feebleness of Nebuchadnezzar's counsellors. Daniel first displays God's omniscient glory against the background of the foolish incompetence of Babylon's wise men. ***Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king*** (2:27). This is too much for them O King. Therefore let not the king put to death these for not doing what they cannot do. Look upon them as Job did to his "comforters". *Now you are nothing; miserable comforters are you all* (Job 16:2). Cast them off; listen never again to them, but do not put them to death.

The all-sufficiency of Daniel's God. ***But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets*** (2:28). Though they cannot find out the secret, let not the king despair of having it found out, for *there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets*. The insufficiency of man should drive us to our all-sufficient God. *There is a God in heaven* (and it is well for us there is) for there is certainly none on earth who can meet the deepest needs of our soul. For example people today practically worship at the "altar" of Steve Jobs and Apple Computer. But all of its aura, wealth and influence could not keep its co-founder alive. Steve Jobs was born in 1955 and died 2011. There is nothing out there except the God of Heaven and the Bible from Heaven. *For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven* (Psa 119:89).

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen (Rom 16:25-27).

Daniel declares the future implications of the dream: and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. ***Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass*** (2:28,29). This is a vision that both spans the ages of Gentile rule (*what shall come to pass*) and also declares the *latter days* when Gentile rule will come to an end and Christ will rule.

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever (Rev 11:15).

Daniel disclaims all personal merit in revealing the dream. ***But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart*** (2:30). God alone may have all the praise for what is now to be revealed.