Is there possibly a more thrilling book in all the Old Testament than Daniel? Within its
12 chapters you read of lions....of a king who became a werewolf....of brave young men
who defied the orders of the King on pain of cruel death....and of prophecies that have
come true with remarkable accuracy - and with more to come.

There are those - some even within evangelical churches - who downplay prophetic
scriptures. How foolish! Only the Bible dares to open the curtain of the future to show
those things which must come to pass. The Koran does not venture into coming events,
nor does the Book of Mormon. No alleged holy book takes its reader into “tomorrow”
as does the Word of God. Unfortunately there are those who take to pulpits and
podiums who turn God’s prophecies into farces, attempting to pick certain dates for
Christ’s rapture of the saints....announcing tragic events that seldom seem to occur....and
using God’s Word in efforts to enrich themselves with sales of books and tapes.

There they are - the two sides many consider prophecy: either ignore it or deplore it with
silly thoughts and crazy ideas. The true student of the Word is smack in the middle of
all this, reading the holy scriptures with a sense of awe and wonder.

Our Lord Jesus Himself referred to Daniel as “the prophet”: Matthew 24:15 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:) and the Scripture is
repeated in Mark 13:14 Sir Isaac Newton declared, “To reject Daniel is to reject the
Christian religion.”

We know a great deal more about Daniel than we do most of the Old Testament prophets.
We know from Scripture that Daniel was carried captive to Babylon in the third year of
Jehoiakim (606 B.C.) And was there until at least the first year of King Cyrus, the Persian
(536 B.C.). For 70 years this man of God ministered to kings who changed history.

For many of us, the key verse to Daniel is found in chapter 2, verse 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.
As a Sunday School boy, long ago, I was privileged to have teachers who although they had little in teaching aids such as we are blessed to have today they had a powerful knowledge of Scripture and the Anointing of the Holy Spirit to teach them to us kids. The above picture by Briton Rivieri of Daniel in the lions’ den was always my favorite. We will get to that fabulous story in chapter six.

OUTLINE OF DANIEL

Chapter One: the final fall of Jerusalem and Judah, Daniel’s captivity, and his decision, along with his three Hebrew friends not to defile themselves with “the king’s cuisine.”

Daniel 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. [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.

A study of I and II Kings indicates to the reader that Nebuchadnezzar carted off treasures
worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Along with the “loot,” he took multitudes of Jews
captive to Babylon (current-day Iraq), among them Daniel, and his friends, Hananiah,
Mishael and Azariah (whom the Babylonians renamed Shadrach, Meshack and
Abednego).

These four bright Jewish men were singled out by the king’s authorities to receive special
gracious treatment including “king’s good.”

Daniel 1:8 - 11-15

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.

Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel,
Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, [12] Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and
let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. [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. [14] So he consented to them
in this matter, and proved them ten days. [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.

At the end of the testing days, Daniel and his friends were healthier than those who ate
the king’s food and verse 17 declares: “....and Daniel had understanding in all visions
and dreams.”

Chapter Two - THE PROPHETIC VISION OF WORLD POWERS /
NEBUCHADNEZZAR

To full comprehend the enormity of this chapter, which involves the vision God gave
King Nebuchadnezzar, the vision interpreted by Daniel, we need to have some under-
standing of the magnitude of this king and his empire. It is safe to say that the
Babylonian Empire was really the first global empire for while the Egyptians were a
powerhouse in Old Testament days, their power was fairly well self-contained along the
mighty Nile. It was Nebuchadnezzar who united tribes and nations to form his empire
that destroyed all opposition.

So, 2500 years ago this great king had a vision that troubled him. Both his vision - and
the interpretation of it by Daniel (as given him by the Lord) are astounding. This
chapter shows us clearly the line-up of nations from Babylon to this present day.
Daniel 2:1-8  (New American Standard)

Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. [2] Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. [3] And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream."

[4] Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: "O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation." [5] The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be made a rubbish heap. [6] "But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation." [7] They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation." [8] The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm,

Well....these soothsayers were not any help at all and the king was ready to kill them when someone remembered Daniel - the Jewish captive. The king gave orders to bring him in. Daniel respectfully asked for a little time so he could pray and then came back with both the dream and the interpretation:

Daniel 2:31-45

"You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. [32] "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, [33] its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. [34] "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. [35] "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

[36] "This was the dream; now we shall tell its interpretation before the king. [37] "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; [38] and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. [39] "And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. [40] "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong
as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. [41] "And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. [42] "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. [43] "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. [44] "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. [45] "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy."

Through this vision, God told the king, Daniel and all of us what to look for during and after the Babylarians. The head of gold was the Babylonian Empire. The chest of silver was the coming Medo-Persian coalition. The trunk of brass represented the Greek era. The legs of iron were the Roman Empire. And the very fragile feet of clay represented the last form of gentile powers - it's right where we are now.

Does this statue last long after the feet of clay? No. Why? Because a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands (no question this is the virgin-born Son of the Living God) who came rolling across the plains of history and struck the feet of the statue, destroying it. This will happen when Jesus Christ comes and all world powers will bow at His feet.

Chapter 3: THE FIERY FURNACE AND THE THREE HEBREWS

In chapter 3 we have one of the best-known stories of all time.

Daniel 3:1-2

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. [2] Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Somewhere in ancient Babylon, the king set up a 90-ft high statue of gold (probably gold-
plated). Every so often Nebuchadnezzar would have fits of ego. This image was of himself, in all probability, and he demanded that people fall down and worship at its feet.

One commentator suggested there were three reasons for his act: 1) Nebuchadnezzar’s defiance of God, making himself a little god; 2) His terrible pride, which cost him so dearly several times in his reign and 3) an attempt to unify all the nations under his authority.

Daniel 3:4-7

Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, [5] that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. [6] "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." [7] Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

One of the most deadly weapons Satan has in his arsenal is COMPROMISE. It’s a big deal even today...cut a corner here...cut a corner there. And there are some who would dare to propose that a great church cannot exist without compromise. I don’t believe that for a minute. In our personal lives, in our church life, we must not compromise the Gospel. It is THE GOSPEL (Paul wrote) that is the POWER OF GOD .... not some pathetic makeshift religion designed to please the flesh.

Well....three of the Jews would not bow down: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Daniel 3:16-18

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

If you recall the story, you will remember that these men were pitched into the blazing furnace. It was so hot that the guards who threw them into the blaze died from the blast. But the three heroic men did not die:
Daniel 3:24-25

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he responded and said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "Certainly, O king." [25] He answered and said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"

This incident so shook up the king that for awhile he repented:

Daniel 3:28-30

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

Now....we must hasten to at least summarize the remainder of this glorious book:

Chapter 4: Do you believe in werewolves? Well, not really. But the king himself testified of his fall from dignity and grace to the level of an animal and total insanity. God warned Nebuchadnezzar not to fall away from Him....but the king’s ego again ruled supreme. And God acted:

Daniel 4:33

Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

"After Nebuchadnezzar had his dream of warning, a year passed. Nothing happened. The king became quite cocky. Why, God would not do anything to him! Didn’t God know who he was? He was Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon! It was said in the regal city that “the Golden One” had successfully defied Jehovah, the God of Daniel. He no longer feared the dream. It was forgotten and past. It had all been a big laugh. Nebuchadnezzar might have forgotten - but God hadn’t.
To the mills of God grind slowly
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting,
With exactness grinds He all.

DAN BETZER / REVIVALTIME SERMONS 1979 / PAGE 204

Men have attempted to explain this macabre transformation. *LYCANTHROPHY* is a term to describe a man who thinks of himself as an animal. It is used in connection with the story of alleged werewolves.

When the ordeal was over, the repentant king testified: Daniel 4:37 "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

Chapter 5: THE FALL OF BABYLON TO THE MEDES AND PERSIANS

Belshazzar was in charge of the great city. His father, Nabonidus, still lived though he was seldom in the capital city, leaving his son Belshazzar as “regent.” (This is why Belshazzar could not make Daniel “second in the kingdom” instead of third for he himself
was second; Nabonidus was still first. But on the night of the conquest, the true king
was elsewhere as he so often was.

It would do us well to read about Babylon from the ancient historian Herodotus:

*There stands the city....surrounded by a high wall....it is built in an exact square, set
toward the cardinal points of the earth. 15 miles this way is a wall, 15 miles that way,
15 miles that way and 15 miles back again. The wall is 350 feet high. It is 87 feet
broad at the top, so wide that six chariots can race around it abreast. It is pierced by
100 gates and the gates are made of two great leaves hammered out of burnished
bronze. When the sun goes down in the morning and sets in the evening, those gates
looked like liquid fire. Everything in Babylon was symmetrical... 25 avenues, 150 feet
wide, ran from east to west....and 25 other avenues ran from north to south. In the
center of the city there was an avenue which crossed over a great bridge above the
Euphrates River. On that side of the avenue was a regal palace....on this side yet
another regal palace. The Euphrates ran diagonally through the city. Between the
walls of the city and the river there were quays and wharfs for the commerce of the
world.*

*The palaces of Nebuchadnezzar were colossal. The ruins of one of his palaces
covered more than eleven acres. That is just one mansion. Into those palaces
Nebuchadnezzar had brought the treasures of the world. They were gilded and
silvered. The great banquet hall had in it the finest plastered walls (on which
Belshazzar would see the fingers of a man’s hand write his obituary).*

*Nebuchadnezzar was married by his father Nabopolassar to Amytis, the princess of
Media. She was a mountain girl, and the flat, alluvial plain of Babylon was boring to
her. So the king built a ‘mountain’ for her. Terraced and covered with trees, shrubs
and flowers, one could see from far away this HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON -
one of the ancient seven wonders of the world.*

*The temples of Babylon were also fabulous. Into these temples Nebuchadnezzar
brought the treasures of the whole earth and dedicated them to his gods. The utensils
of gold and silver from Solomon’s temple were there. The city was filled with temples.
Some were dedicated to stars while others were dedicated to gods such as Nebo and
Ishtar and to Belitis, the spouse of Marduk (also known as Merodach). The temple of
Merodach was composed of an outer temple, a central court and an inner court. In
the inner court was a shrine to a thousand gods and goddesses. Towering against the
sky was the great rising pyramiding ziggurat. On top of that vast pile was the shrine
to Merodach. They called him ‘lord’ or in their language, ‘bel’ (or in the Canaanite
language, ‘Baal.’ In that shrine was a golden statue of Bel called Bel Merodach. It*
was 49 feet tall. Around the image all the furniture was of solid gold. A talent is a weight indicating all the gold that a strong man can carry. There were 800 talents of gold in that one shrine.

The most significant impressive thing about the city of Babylon was its color. Nebuchadnezzar employed enameled tile of color. In the heart of the city, beginning at the Ishtar Gate, and running through the length of the city was a great procession street. It was a causeway, raised higher than the houses. On either side was built a tremendous wall with towers. The street was paved with stone, but Nebuchadnezzar lined the walls, as he did with the palaces and the temples, with enameled, colored tile. Those tiles depicted scenes, flora, fauna, kings, queens and the history of the golden city.

It was in this place (last page of notes: see picture of the Ishtar Gate in the Berlin, Germany, museum) that Belshazzar threw the drunken feast:

Daniel 5:1

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

During the part, the regent-king saw the fingers of a man’s hand writing something on the plaster of the wall. None of the king’s counselors could read the writing, but God revealed to Daniel who gave the divine message to the monarch:

Daniel 5:25-31

And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. [26] This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. [27] Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. [28] Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. [29] Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

[30] In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. [31] And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Chapter Six: DANIEL IN THE LIONS’ DEN

The Babylonian Empire was relatively short-lived and was followed by its conqueror, the Medo-Persian Empire. We must remember that an aging Daniel is still alive and very influential even in the new government.
Daniel 6:1-3

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; [2] And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. [3] Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

Oh, the jealousy this brought about!

Daniel 6:4

Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

They admitted among themselves that the only way to “get Daniel” was on spiritual grounds. So their plan:

Daniel 6:6-7

Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. [7] All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

Well....old Daniel kept his commitment to God and kept praying to him, opening his window toward Jerusalem. He got caught and turned in to King Darius

WHO WAS DARIUS? There are two historical possibilities: a) He was Darius Cyaxares II who ruled for only 2 years....or b) he was Gubaru, appointed governor over the city after Babylon fell to the Perisans.

Interesting observation here: Do you think Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar would have bowed to the shallow dictates of these no-talented accusers of Daniel? Not a chance. But the Medo-Persian would. So:

Remember Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in chapter 2? Head of gold....shoulders of silver....trunk of brass, etc. EACH SUCCEEDING GOVERNMENT WOULD BE INFERIOR TO THE LAST ONE.

So Darius fell for the “con” and Daniel was thrown into the den of lions to be devoured.
Darius could not sleep that night:

Daniel 6:18-28

Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were
instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. [19] Then the
king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. [20] And
when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king
spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou
servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? [21] Then said Daniel unto the
king, O king, live for ever. [22] My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions'
mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in
me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. [23] Then was the king exceeding
glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel
was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he
believed in his God.

[24] And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused
Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives;
and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they
came at the bottom of the den.

[25] Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all
the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. [26] I make a decree, That in every dominion
of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God,
and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his
dominion shall be even unto the end. [27] He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh
signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power
of the lions. [28] So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of
Cyrus the Persian.

And Daniels stock with God and men continued to rise. Without faith it is impossible to
please God (Heb. 11:6).

When we convene next week, we will begin to see the remarkable prophecies God gave
Daniel about the days we live in right now!