

The Historical Aspects of Daniel (chs. 1-6)

I. THE TIMES AND EVENTS THROUGH THE REIGN OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR, (chs. 1-4)

- A. **Nebuchadnezzar moves upon God’s nation, (1:1-7)**
- B. **Daniel resolves not to defile himself, (8-13)**
- C. **God promotes Daniel and his 3 friends, (17-21)**

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D. Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a great image, (2:1-13)

- 1. ***Nebuchadnezzar conceals the dream, (1-9)***

 **INTERPRETATION:**

¹ **Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign** (excluding the first year of Nebuchadnezzar’s ascension to the throne, [it could have been shortly following the three year training period of the Jewish exiles, or just before the conclusion of it]), **Nebuchadnezzar had dreams**¹ (received a message from the Most High God while sleeping); **and his spirit was so troubled** (literally, “his spirit smote itself”), **that his sleep left him,** (finished, ended – he woke up and could not get back to sleep, [which may explain some of Nebuchadnezzar’s agitation]).

F APPLICATION:

(1:1) The king has a dream from God

God reveals Himself and His plans through the ungodly as well as the godly. The prophets were not the only ones to have dreams from God.

Again we see that God does things His way and His ways are often times not our ways, (Isa. 55:8-11; Mat 5:45-48). God uses what or who He wants, when He wants, for the reasons He wants. Anyway you slice it – its what God wants.

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 **COMMENTARY:**

¹ The plural “dreams” is used, whereas the following verses refer to Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in the singular, and Daniel’s later recall of the dream indicates singularity. Possibly Nebuchadnezzar dreamed the same dream more than once, or it may be a reference to the various aspects of the dream, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 50).

² **Then** (as a result of the troublesome dream), **the king gave the command to call the**

magicians (those skilled in the sacred writings of the gods, enchanters), **the astrologers** (those who read the stars), **the sorcerers** (those who practice witchcraft), **and the Chaldeans** (a particular class of priests, wise men), **to tell the king his dreams**, (not just interpret it but tell him what his dream was as well). **So they came and stood before the king.**

(2) The king seeks the wise men of Babylon

God can and does reveal Himself to the spiritually dead, but they do not understand the revelation, nor do they know what to do with it. There is a great deal of difference between receiving and understanding spiritual information. Yet seeking other spiritually dead persons for help in spiritual matters, is like the blind leading the blind. For the most part those Nebuchadnezzar sought for help were the liberal scholars of that era.

³ **And the king said to them** (his wise men), **“I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious** (tormented), **to know** (understand the meaning or the significance of), **the dream.”**

⁴ **Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic,** ² **“O king, live forever!** (a common formal greeting in addressing monarchs) **Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation,”** (you just tell us what your dream was about and we’ll gladly and readily give you the meaning or significance behind it).

⁵ **The king answered** (in response to their remark), and said to the Chaldeans, **“My decision** (order, command), **is firm** (sure, unchangeable):³ **if you do not make known the dream to me, and** (in addition), **its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces** (dismembered limb from limb, bit by bit), **and your houses shall be made** (turned into), **an ash** (rubbish, refuse), **heap** (brought to ruin [negative incentives]).⁴

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² This begins the portion of Daniel that is written in Aramaic which extends through chapter seven and deals predominately with the Jews in captivity, (the Gentile related portion).

³ The KJV says **“The thing is gone from me,”** which translates **“The decree is gone forth from me,”** which told the Chaldeans that it was irrevocable.

⁴ The king may or may not have remembered the dream, (it can be argued both ways). Neither view detracts from God’s intention for Nebuchadnezzar’s command though, and that is God presenting another opportunity to intervene and display His sovereignty.

⁶ **“However** (but), **if you tell the dream and its interpretation,** (if you will do just as I have commanded, you shall receive as a benefit), **from me**

gifts, rewards (which pertain to material benefits), **and great honor** (which refers to public recognition). **Therefore** (in respect to my decree and in light of the negative and positive incentives I've mentioned), **tell me** (now, without further delay), **the dream and its interpretation.**"

⁷ **They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation."**
(The incentives made no difference. The Chaldeans were in big trouble and insisted upon playing according to the preexisting and reasonable rules.)

(3-7) The king distrusts his own counselors

There comes a time when even the ungodly don't want their ears tickled, but want to know the truth. The ungodly have a problem though; they have developed, taught, accepted and practice a system based on personal preference, corruption and deception. In this system truth is as slippery as a watermelon seed and as scarce as a Tyrannosaurs Rex!

We can see as well, that there is little room for mercy and grace in the heart of the ungodly in times of desperation – they tend to be demanding, ruthless and unforgiving, (esp. when in authority or a place of control).

The crux of the problem is that mortal man has never been able to create something out of nothing, which is exactly what Nebuchadnezzar was demanding of the greatest wise men that Babylon could produce do. They could conquer the world and create one of the seven wonders of the world, but they could not reproduce a man's dream! They could only promise to devise an interpretation for it, but they had to be given the dream first.

Mortal men are humbled to a point of desperation and almost insanity at times in an instant. They are completely subject to, dependent upon and limited by worldly wisdom and ability, (James 3:13-18).

⁸ **The king answered** (again in response to their reply), **and said, "I know for certain** (for a fact), **that you would gain** (lit., *buy*), **time** (i.e., try to put off the fatal moment as long as possible before your inability would be found out, you fear exposure), **because you see that my decision is firm**, (you know I'm not going to change my order which means your doom. The only thing you can hope to do is postpone the sentencing as long as possible):

⁹ (The ultimatum), **"if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you**, (v. 5 – there will be no favor shown to any class of you, or to any individual among you)! **For you have agreed** (are prepared), **to speak lying and corrupt words before me** (lead me in circles, bring about a standstill or a stale mate), **till the time has changed**, (until I

reconsider or something more important comes up and puts this issue in the cobwebs of the archives). **Therefore tell me the**

NOTES:

dream, and I shall know (have confidence), **that you can give me its interpretation,**” (The king knows that if they can tell him the dream, he can believe the interpretation. [All of this is giving testimony to how distressing the dream actually was to Nebuchadnezzar. This dream was the nightmare of nightmares).

(8-9) The king exercises good human judgment

It is interesting to note that even the ungodly know that the human heart is desperately wicked. The king is demanding a sign so to speak of authenticity to verify an interpretation of his dream. Jesus performed many signs and wonders just for that reason, (to verify ^{#1} that He was who He said He was and ^{#2} that He can and will accomplish what He said He came to do). God the Father is instigating some authenticity of His own here, which will verify that He is the Most High God, Commander and Chief of all people and nations.

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2. Nebuchadnezzar’s wise men appeal, (10, 11)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

¹⁰ **The Chaldeans answered before the king** (pertaining to his statement with an impassioned appeal), **and said, “There is not a** (single), **man** (mortal), **upon the earth that can tell the king’s matter:** (the future belongs to the gods, not to men) ⁵ **therefore** (you must be reasonable, sensible about this decree), **there is no king, lord, nor ruler,** (anywhere or at anytime), **that** (ever), **asked such things of any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.**⁶

¹¹ **It is a rare** (weighty, heavy, unbelievable), **thing that the king requires** (has decreed), **and there is no other** (same as v. 10) **who can tell it to the king”** (we can’t do it because of a lack of expertise; it’s because there’s not a man alive who can do it),

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

⁵ God makes the heathen, out of their own mouth, condemn their impotent pretensions to supernatural knowledge, in order to bring out in brighter contrast His power to reveal secrets to His servants, though but “men upon the earth” (cf. v. 22, 23). (Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, *A Commentary*, Vol. II, p. 387).

⁶ It should be noted also that they were quite critical of Nebuchadnezzar in this statement, implying that he was wrong in making the demand. This was hardly a wise action, since his displeasure with them was already marked, (Wood, *Daniel*, p.54).

except the gods (supernatural beings), **whose dwelling** (resi-

dence), **is not with** (among), **flesh**, (us mortals).⁷

F **APPLICATION:**

(10-11) The king's counselors do not deny the charge but change the subject

- The most precious **matter** to the ungodly is their neck.
- The most precious **tool** of the ungodly is the ability to connive and deceive, (a trade learned from their father, [the father of lies] – Satan)
- The most precious **pastime** of the ungodly is to blame and cry “Unfair! Foul! My rights!”
- The least precious **reality** of the ungodly is that they are finite, frustratingly limited

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3. *Nebuchadnezzar condemns because of the dream, (12, 13)*

 **INTERPRETATION:**

¹² **For this reason** (for disobeying, criticizing and hypocrisy), **the king was angry and very** (exceedingly), **furious, and gave a command to destroy** (to execute v. 5), **all the wise men** (without exception), **of Babylon**.⁸

¹³ **So the decree went out, and they** (the executioners), **began** (the gruesome task of), **killing the wise men** (it may be that the first to feel the ax were those debating with Nebuchadnezzar); **and they sought Daniel and his companions** (to state the decree and then), **to kill them**, (they weren't all amassed and killed together in one place; it was as they were found and where they were found).

NOTES:

⁷ Only super-intelligence belonging to deity, could reveal this kind of information. Actually, this was a major confession on the part of these men-admitting that they could not do what they were supposed to do. Their business was to make contact with the divine realm and find out such information. This confession further paved the way for Daniel's entry, (Ibid.).

Praise the Lord that believers not only can communicate with their God and He with them, but He dwells **in us** as well! Believers are of all men, most to be envied!

⁸ Nebuchadnezzar probably thought what's the purpose for keeping them, they can't do what they led me to believe they could do all these years. Nothing they have ever given me was from the gods as they professed. The kingdom will be no better or the worse off without them. Nebuchadnezzar probably executed this command as well, as part of the wise men's judgment being found out to be hypocrites and liars feeding off of the king.

F **APPLICATION:**

(12-13) The king has a tantrum.
Not only is experiencing the dearth (or lack) of truth frustrating to the

lost, but – the seemingly inability to acquire it (even from their best possible resources), drives them to the brink of insanity.

“If you keep my word,” Jesus said, **“then . . . you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”** (Jn. 8:31a, 32)

Also, as Satan did not quibble over the many toddlers who died when he tried to use Herod to destroy the baby Jesus, neither did Satan quibble over the lives of all of the wise men of Babylon when he tried to use Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Daniel and his friends. The believer must remember to, **“Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places,”** (Eph. 6:11, 12).

God is our champion, who always intervenes and overrules human or spirit devises on behalf of His faithful children! **“If God be for us, who can be against us,”** (Rom. 8:31)?! Not one of God’s chosen ones will feel the icy blade of an ax unless it is to be by His decreative or permissive will. **God rules period!**

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4. *Nebuchadnezzar’s Creator reveals the dream, (14-24)*

1a To a select group, (14-17)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

¹⁴ **Then** (upon hearing this decree), **with counsel and wisdom** (wisely and in good taste or discretion), **Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard** (and apparently, “hatchet man”), **who had gone out** (been assigned the responsibility), **to kill the wise men of Babylon;**⁹

F **APPLICATION:**

(14) The king’s guard seeks Daniel to put him to death

- Daniel does not fall apart and go to pieces
- Daniel does not fly off the handle and lose control
- Daniel acts – rather than reacts

NOTES:

⁹ Daniel is now introduced into the story. His strength and quality as a person became evident immediately. He was suddenly confronted by men who had been sent to take the life of himself and friends for no crime at all, and he was able to respond in the remarkable manner indicated. He evidenced no panic, no despair, no frustration, but only spoke wise words in response. People live and act in the moment of crisis as they have prepared themselves through previous experiences. Daniel demonstrated his sterling character, developed through prior days of trusting God, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 56).

¹⁵ **he answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, “Why is the decree from the king so urgent,** (so *sharp* or *harsh* [in respect to the king making such a decree of such

ramifications in such a short amount of time])?” **Then Arioch made the decision known** (explained the matter), **to Daniel.**¹⁰

(15) The wisdom of the king’s decree is questioned

- The best thing to do in a serious situation is to waste no time in getting the facts so you can get to the root of the problem.

¹⁶ **So Daniel** (evidently with Arioch’s consent), **went in** (or someone was sent on Daniel’s behalf), **and asked the king to give him time** (which the king would not give the other wise men, [v. 8]),¹¹ **that he might tell the king the interpretation**, (all that he has asked for).

(16) The king is sought again for a delay in his action, and this time it is granted

- Daniel does not challenge the king’s common sense as the others did (2:8), he asked for time to comply to the king’s wishes.
- Daniel does not try to conform his extenuating circumstances to his human capabilities, in order that he himself might thus handle them. Daniel submits to the extenuating circumstances as is, he recognizes his human limitations, and thus in faith and dependence upon God, takes the predicament to God whose divine attributes demand that He can handle any problem.
- Daniel knows that if God is sovereign, he has either given this dream to Nebuchadnezzar or has allowed it. Thus, if it is this important from God’s perspective as well as Nebuchadnezzar’s, certainly God will reveal it. For God is not the author of confusion or disorder. There is a purpose to this and the only thing that is wrong is the king’s rashness.

¹⁷ **Then Daniel went to his house** (not to a public meeting with other wise men), **and made the decision** (or the matter), **known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions** (they were going to face this together),

(17-18) The King’s servant, Daniel, solicits support for the king’s desires. Daniel does not see himself as the superstar whom God works in and through alone. Daniel sees that he is one part of the entire body and looks for the team to tackle and win the battle together.

NOTES:

¹⁰Arioch now took time to inform them. For this he must be commended, for many rough men would have cared little whether their intended victims knew the reasons for their being killed or not, (Ibid., p. 57).

¹¹ The king granted “time” to Daniel, though he would not do so to the Chaldeans, because they betrayed their lying purpose by requiring him to tell the dream, which Daniel did not, (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *A Commentary*, p. 388).

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2a By a religious means,
(18-23)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

¹⁸ **that they might seek mercies** (compassion not merit), **from the God of heaven** (not the Babylonian gods or other foreign gods [contrast to v.11]), **concerning this secret** (this dream that is such a mystery), **so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.**

F APPLICATION:

Daniel recognizes that God owes them nothing and asks for mercy – what they do not deserve or have coming to them. They recognize God’s hand but realize that this may not be God’s timing or that they may not be the ones to carry out God’s plans.

For example you don’t see Daniel or his friends saying to God:

- “We are Your only godly testimony in this pagan land God, if we die Your voice is lost. You don’t want that do you, God?”
- “God we have purposed in our heart not to defile You, we assume that You will take care of us in return.”
- “Here is Your perfect opportunity to show the king what a twerp he is, You’re not going to pass up an opportunity like this are you?!”
- “God, you’re not going to let us die like the rest of these lying, conniving, good for nothing phonies are you? That would not be fair! Not after all that we have done for You!”

Daniel and his friends do not seek their rights or appeal to merit, but desired only to live in accordance with God’s will. They cried out for mercy knowing the principle that, **“some have not because they asked not.”** They did not feel that they were asking amiss and they were willing to face death if that was indeed God’s will for them. When they purposed in their heart – there was no room for reconsiderations.

¹⁹ **Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed** (praised, expressed his pleasure to), **the God of heaven**, (not the foreign gods).

²⁰ **Daniel answered** (gave a doxology), **and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His,** (to keep, give and do what He wants).

²¹ **And He** (the God of heaven), **changes** (controls, alters), **the times and the seasons**, (not the seasons of the year, but the events of history); **He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding**, (does all things according to His good pleasure, sovereignly governs all things).

NOTES:

²² **He reveals deep** (inaccessible or unsearchable [Psa. 92:6]) **and secret** (hidden [Jud. 3:19]), **things; He knows what is in the darkness**, (where the light does not shine), **and light** (knowl-edge), **dwells** (resides, abides), **with Him.**

went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy (kill all), **the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: “Do not destroy** (stop the execution of), **the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation.”**

F APPLICATION:

(24) **The meek and humble care about the lost and their plight**

- Daniel intercedes for the wicked and the guilty. He is not just looking out for # 1; he’s sensitive to the needs of others & tries to help.
- Daniel displays the same grace and mercy that was bestowed upon him in his plight.

The meek and the humble know that:

- ◆ **Everyone is equally depraved**, (and thus equally capable of committing any atrocity - “It’s only by the grace of God that it isn’t me.”)
- ◆ **Everyone is deserving only of God’s wrath**, (and thus no one is worthy of, or can merit [on their own], God’s kindness’ - “We’re all in the same boat.”)
- ◆ **Everyone is made in the image of God**, (and thus are of tremendous worth, value, importance, significance - “Regardless of their present state, they are representative of their Creator.”)
- ◆ **Everyone is a candidate for salvation**, (and thus are never to be written off while they have breath - “Praise God that everyone didn’t give up on me!”)

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5. **Daniel interprets the dream, (25-45)**

1a The emissary with the dream, (25)

 INTERPRETATION:

²⁵ **Then Arioch quickly** (with haste), **brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, “I** (Arioch),¹² **have found a**

NOTES:

 COMMENTARY:

¹² He wanted to associate himself more closely with Daniel in this second meeting than the first, being now more sure of the outcome. **I have found:** He also sought credit for himself this time, claiming to have found Daniel. He did have some credit coming, at least in that he had not dismissed Daniel’s request, either the first or second time as many would have done. But he had not found Daniel; rather, Daniel had pressed himself on him. Human nature is prone to seek all the credit possible, whether deserved or not, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 62).

man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation,” (give you all you desire).

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 **INTERPRETATION:**

- ²⁶ **The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?”**
- ²⁷ **Daniel answered¹³ in the presence of the king, and said, “The secret which the king has demanded, the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers** (different than 1:2 and 2:2 – here it means deciders or fate determiners), **cannot declare** (are helpless), **to the king.**
- ²⁸ **“But** (in opposition to and in contrast of), **there is a God in heaven** (not the gods of Babylon),¹⁴ **who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days** (lit., “*in the after days*,” implying the future and its conclusion). **Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:**
- ²⁹ **“As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this** (you were thinking about what the future held for you and your vast empire); **and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be** (so the God of heaven, the only one who knows about the matters you were thinking about, came and answered your questions in a dream).
- ³⁰ **“But as for me, (Daniel), this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living** (it is not because of my human ability or merit), **but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king** (it is because God chose to honor you Nebuchadnezzar as you lay thinking on your bed), **and that you may know the thoughts of your heart** (that you may know the destiny of your empire, the answers to your thoughts).

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

¹³ Daniel got his opportunity to tell the king the all important information. . . Note, however, that he did not begin with the information itself, but with making clear to the king to whom the credit for it was due. It was not to him, but to God in heaven. . . Such an attitude of humility pleases God. For Daniel to show it, was in direct contrast to what Arioch, in his paganism, had just displayed, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 63).

¹⁴ For Daniel to make the sharp distinction and accordingly imply definite superiority, for this God over those in which Nebuchadnezzar believed, took remarkable courage. But this was an opportunity to witness to the truth before even this great monarch, and Daniel dared to use it, (Ibid., p. 64).

F APPLICATION:

(25-35) The meek and humble speak the truth and nothing but the truth

- The godless (*Arioch for example*), are quick to piggyback and take advantage of the undertaking of others. **Personal gain**, as well as **looking good** is a matter

of covetousness and utmost expediency. It is an issue where the end justifies the means.

- The godly have ***nothing to fear*** by telling the truth, and ***seek no gain*** by stretching the truth. They are ***perfectly at peace*** to simply state the truth as they understand it, or as it has been communicated to them.
- The godly are more than willing to admit that there is nothing special in and of themselves. They know that they are ***humble servants*** simply doing the Master’s work. **It is the Master and the significance of His work that is extraordinary**, not the simple servant which has the ***privilege*** of being ***one of many*** sections of the conduit through which the Master’s work flows.

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3a The assertion to the dream, (31-35)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

31 **“You, O king, were watching** (in your dream); **and behold, a great** (gigantic), image! **This great image, whose splendor was excellent** (extraordinary), **stood** (towered), **before you; and its form was awesome**, (terrifying).

32 **“This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,**

33 **“its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.**

34 **“You watched while a stone was cut out without hands** (implying supernatural activity), **which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay** (its weakest point), **and broke them in pieces**, (beaten fine, reduced to powder [cp., Ex. 32:20; Deut. 9:21; 2 Ki. 23:15]).

35 **“Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed** (shattered), **together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors** (worthless, profitless, of no-account); **the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found**, (easily and entirely dissipated). **And the stone that struck the image** (from that point on), **became a great mountain** (became preeminent, supreme, absolute), **and** (its preeminence), **filled the whole earth**, (there was nothing like it before [the great image is dwarfed by the mountain], and the mountain will never cease to be [nothing follows it]).

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4a The interpretation of the dream, (36-45)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

36 **“This is the dream**, (your first charge). **Now we will tell the**

interpretation of it before the king, (your second charge).

37 “**You, O king, are a king of** (earthly), **kings. For the God of heaven** (the one and only true God, the Most High God, [in contrast to Babylon’s false gods]), **has given you** (has conferred upon you according to His choosing [v. 21]), **a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;**



Statue is destroyed by a great stone, which represents Jesus Christ



HEAD
GOLD
WORLD POWER
BABYLON
606-539

CHEST AND ARMS
SILVER

WORLD POWER
PERSIA
539-331

STOMACH AND THIGHS
BRASS

WORLD POWER
GREECE
331-323

LEGS AND FEET
IRON & CLAY

WORLD POWER
ROME
322 B.C.—A.D. 476
FUTURE

38 “**and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all** (you have dominion over them)—**you** (Nebuchadnezzar), **are this head of gold** (on this image).¹⁵

F APPLICATION:

(36-38) **The meek and humble recognize those in authority**

- Daniel describes Nebuchadnezzar as absolute sovereign ruler (humanly speaking), over his kingdom. He could do whatever he pleased; Darius could not; (e.g., Dan. 6:14, 15). But, it is interesting that Daniel states this after first describing God as absolute sovereign ruler over all kings and king-

doms. The meek and humble do not fear what man can do to them as much as what God requires of them. They do not fear them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. They rather fear Him, who has power to cast one into Hell.

NOTES:

COMMENTARY:

¹⁵ The head of gold represented both the Babylonian kingdom and its great king. Orientals regarded kings and their kingdoms as being synonymous with each other, (Showers, *The Most High God*, p. 17).

Compared with the other monarchs who are to succeed thee, thou art like gold compared with silver, and brass, and iron. . . . on account of the splendour of his capital, and the magnificence of his court. . . . the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency. . . . abundant in treasures. . . the praise of the whole earth. . . . The conquests of Nebuchadnezzar enabled him to bring to his capital above any other city on the earth, (Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*, pp. 155, 156).

- Daniel does not detract from the glory, prestige, or power of Nebuchadnezzar's rule. He doesn't slip in any negative innuendoes. Daniel is not too embarrassed, upset, jealous or pious to admit that God at times richly blesses the ungodly. The meek and humble accept their predetermined lot in life and grow where they are planted. They recognize that God is no respecter of persons. What separates one person from another is not race, gender, intellect or position, but obedience to his or her divinely relegated responsibility.

³⁹ “**But after you** (succeeding you and your kingdom), **shall arise** (the Most High God will instate), **another kingdom inferior to yours** (not quantitatively speaking [as the kingdom of Medo-Persia was larger geographically], but inferior qualitatively speaking);¹⁶ **then another, a third kingdom of bronze** (the Most High God will instate), **which shall rule over all the earth.**¹⁷

⁴⁰ “**And the fourth kingdom** (the Most High God will instate), **shall be as strong as iron** (which is stronger than gold, silver or bronze), **inasmuch as** (in the same way as), **iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything** (it strikes); **and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others** (all other empires that preceded it).¹⁸

NOTES:

¹⁶ Two arms coming together to form one breast pictured this kingdom perfectly. Two distinct peoples, the Medes and the Persians, were united together in 550 B.C. under the same king to form one great power.

Why was silver a fitting representation of the Medo Persian kingdom? . . . Medo-Persia became noted for basing its power on money which was collected through an extensive tax system (Ezra 4:13; Dan. 11:2).

. . . Medo-Persia would be inferior to Babylon. . . not in military strength, [or] inferior in size . . . [but] Being a partnership empire, it lacked the absolute unity that Babylon enjoyed, (Showers, *The Most High God*, p. 18).

¹⁷ This would be the kingdom of Greece under Alexander the Great and his successors. One belly subdivided into two thighs was an excellent way for God to portray the Grecian kingdom ahead of time. After Alexander had unified his kingdom, he died at a young age. His kingdom was divided among his four leading generals. However, only two of the divisions played an important role in history.

Why did God represent Greece with bronze? The Greeks developed this metal highly and used it extensively in their implements of war. Thus, their kingdom was characterized by bronze. . . Alexander's kingdom ruled considerably more of the earth than did Babylon and Medo-Persia, (Ibid., p. 18, 19).

¹⁸ This would be the Roman empire. God's portrayal of Rome with two legs was very apt, for the ancient Roman Empire ruled extensive areas of both the western and eastern divisions of the world. In fact, in 364 A. D. the Roman Empire was divided politically into two divisions – the Western Roman Empire with Rome as its capital and the Eastern Roman Empire with Constantinople as its capital.

Iron was an excellent designation of Rome . . . for its use of iron in its military weaponry . . . [and that it] would crush and shatter the ancient world, (Ibid., p. 19).

⁴¹ “**Whereas you saw the feet and toes** (no toes mentioned before the interpretation [v. 32]), **partly of potter's clay** (partly brittle), **and partly of iron** (partly strong), **the kingdom**

shall be divided (not of one part from another but rather of disunity from within); **yet** (in spite of its disunity), **the strength of the iron shall be in it** (be evident), **just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay**.¹⁹

⁴² “**And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile**.”²⁰

⁴³ “**As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men** (the strong and the weak, one culture with another culture, one country with another country, will be brought together); **but they will not adhere** (cleave, be organized into a single unified mind), **to one another just as iron does not mix with clay**.”

⁴⁴ “**And in the days of these kings** (the ten nation confederation [the ten toes]), **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom** (Christ’s millennial kingdom),²¹ **which shall never be destroyed** (it will never suffer internal decay nor external oppression); **and** (in contrast to all previous kingdoms), **the kingdom shall not be left to other people** (no other kingdom or kingdoms will ever succeed it); **it shall break in pieces** (crush), **and**

NOTES:

¹⁹ Some expositors hold that the symbolism in view carries reference to the East-West divisions of the Roman rule, but this cannot be, since, as noticed, the divisions are intermixed. The weakness of Rome which led to its fall and which did come to existence especially in its later period, was a deterioration of moral fiber among the people. Idleness, luxurious living, and dissipation of character found their way into, and intermixed with, the still firmly structured aspects of government, (Wood, *Daniel*, pp. 69, 70).

²⁰ As noted earlier, the iron legs represented the ancient Roman Empire as it devoured massive areas of the world through brute military strength. But when was the later foot and toe stage to exist? Inasmuch as the Roman Empire never consisted of a ten nation confederation in past history, one is forced to conclude that this final stage of Rome’s existence must take place in the future.

Sometime beyond the present there will be a revival of the Roman Empire. The empire that died in 476 A.D. will be brought to life again in the form of a ten nation confederation. Many are convinced that the Common Market of Europe will develop into this empire. It is a fact that political leaders of several European nations have met within recent years to discuss the formation of such a confederation - a confederation which will be united for military and economic strength, but will maintain the identities and distinctives of the member nations, (Showers, *The Most High God*, pp. 20, 21).

²¹ Christ will be God’s true world Ruler (Ps. 2:6-9), crowned to rule in perfect righteousness (Isa. 11:2-5), over a world enjoying blissful peace at last (Isa. 11:6-9). He will reign in contrast to Satan’s counterfeit, the Antichrist, who will have made his try in the earlier years of the restored Roman empire (Rev. 13:1-10; 17:8-14), but who will have been destroyed by the establishment of Christ’s reign (indicated at the close of this verse), (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 72).

consume (put to an end), **all these** (prior Gentile), **kingdoms, and** (in contrast), **it** (Christ’s), **shall stand** (endure), **forever**.²²

²² (1) This kingdom is established by God, rather than by men, as signified

⁴⁶ **Then** (as Daniel made his concluding comment), **King Nebuchadnezzar** (the king of all of Babylon), **fell on his face, prostrate** (expressing his deepest respect), **before Daniel** (a mere Jewish captive and in reverence of the God of Daniel),²⁴ **and commanded that they** (the Babylonians), **should present an offering** (gift or bloodless offering), **and incense to him** (Daniel and his God).

⁴⁷ **The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods,** (your God, Daniel, is indeed supreme over all other gods), **the Lord of kings** (your God, Daniel, also rules over all earthly kings, [including myself]), **and a revealer of secrets** (hidden things), **since** (proven beyond any reasonable doubt by the fact that), **you could reveal this secret.**”²⁵

⁴⁸ **Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many** (numerous), **great** (valuable), **gifts** (in keeping with his promise to any who could tell him his dream as well as its interpretation); **and he** (in addition gave him two positions of power and), **made him ruler** (governor), **over the whole province of Babylon,**²⁶ **and chief administrator** (supervisor or overseer), **over all the wise men of Babylon.**²⁷

NOTES:

COMMENTARY:

²⁴ This is a remarkable statement; indeed, so remarkable that liberal expositors deny its truth . . . That Nebuchadnezzar did bow before Daniel indicates his complete acceptance of all that Daniel had said; his great appreciation for an interpretation he could trust, showing further how much he had wanted it; and his willingness to humble himself before the God of Daniel, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 74).

²⁵ This was the matter that was so convincing to Nebuchadnezzar. Both dream and interpretation had been revealed by this God. It is evident that Daniel's stress on God as the One to receive all credit had made its point. The king was giving due praise to Daniel's God. He was the One who had revealed the secret to Daniel, (Ibid., p. 75).

²⁶ The Babylonian empire was divided into provinces, each with a head, called in 3:2 a “satrap” . . . Daniel apparently was made “satrap” over the province of Babylon proper, a position of high responsibility for one not yet having reached his twentieth year, (Ibid., p. 76).

²⁷ In these two roles especially the latter, Daniel's influence in Babylonian affairs was very significant. Wise men were consulted by many people, including leaders, and people normally followed whatever advice was given, because they believed it came from the deity. As chief of wise men Daniel's counsel would have been sought in the more important cases and by the more influential people. Having these positions prior to the captivity of his fellow Judeans, Daniel was situated so that he might work to their best welfare when they arrived, (Ibid.).

⁴⁹ **Also** (in addition to what the king bestowed), **Daniel petitioned the king** (made a personal request), **and he** (the king in response to Daniel request), **set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the af-**

fairs of the province of Babylon (as Daniel's assistants);²⁸ **but Daniel** (himself), **sat in the gate of the king**, (conducting the royal business of the king as his chief counselor and dignitary).

F APPLICATION:

(46-49) The meek and humble realize that honor comes after humility if it comes at all

- Daniel's focus (concerning the origination, reiteration and interpretation of the dream), was always upon God – thus, when Daniel concluded his communiqué, Nebuchadnezzar's focus was also upon God. Daniel led Nebuchadnezzar to God's doorstep and Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God's residence. Is that not what our words and actions ought to do as well?
- When one humbles himself, God makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. It is not only nations who give and receive most favored status, but it is individuals as well. What is given by God though, is not food, currency and technology – it is responsibility, authority and accountability. These generally only come or increase after training and after competence is shown on a habitual basis. Should we ask God for so much when we are willing to do or give so little?

NOTES:

²⁸ Daniel asked the king that his three friends be appointed to serve as his assistants. He no doubt wanted them to receive appointments both because he had confidence in their ability and trustworthiness and because he desired them to receive high positions as well as he. He was not about to forget those with whom he had been through so much. Sometimes people do forget friends when they are themselves elevated, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 76). One must also remember that although Daniel had the esteemed position of telling the king his dream and the giving of its interpretation, Daniel's three friends helped petition God for mercy and to reveal it to them. Daniel's part was just that, only a part. "He was not like the chief cupbearer in the court of Pharaoh, who forgot that Joseph had helped him in his time of need (Gen. 40:23). Infinitely more spectacular is Jesus Christ our Lord, who remembers us before the throne of God constantly (Heb. 7:25; 9:24) even though we were once His enemies (Rom. 5:10)," (Whitcomb, *Daniel*, pp. 51, 52).

DANIEL'S PORTRAITURE OF CHRIST Chapter Two

1. He was hurriedly condemned by the Gentile power.
2. He was condemned because of the faults and failures of others.

3. He interceded for the guilty and risked his life to save them from wrath.
4. He was a man of prayer.
5. He gave a trustworthy witness to his captors.
6. He served as the mouthpiece of God.
7. He gave God all of the praise and credit for his accomplishments.
8. He possessed the secrets of the future.
9. He arose to political prominence and judicial authority.
10. He shared his glory with his friends.
11. He glorified God.
12. His work caused the Gentiles to acknowledge the supremacy and superiority of God.
13. Before his ministry actually began, his life was in jeopardy with many others in the same class – a king tried to kill him with a mass execution. *---Dr. John L. Benson*

FACTS ABOUT THE COMING KINGDOMS FROM DANIEL 2

I. Facts about the Four Kingdoms

1. Four empires and no more will exist during the times of the Gentiles.
2. The kingdoms are world empires but not global empires.
3. The kingdoms have the potential to rule the whole earth, but none of the kingdoms succeeds in doing so.
4. Each kingdom is the subject of prophecy.
5. Each kingdom succeeds the other; they are successive rather than concurrent.
6. Each kingdom deteriorates in value but not in territory.
7. Each kingdom increases in strength.
8. Elements of each of the kingdoms continue to the very end of the times of the Gentiles.
9. The four kingdoms are Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—each defeating its predecessor and each one rising after the other.

II. Facts about the Fourth Kingdom

1. The fourth kingdom undergoes two divisions.
2. It is a strange mixture of elements which will not mix.
3. It exists at that time when God's kingdom supersedes it.
4. Each of the 10 divisions in this kingdom has a king.
5. These 10 kings will rule simultaneously.
6. These 10 kings will be ruling at the time when God sets up His kingdom.
7. The end of the fourth kingdom marks the end of all heathen kingdoms.

NOTES:

8. The kingdom of Messiah will destroy the fourth kingdom.
9. The fourth kingdom is the Roman empire both in its past and future form.

III. Facts about the Fifth Kingdom

1. The fifth kingdom will be as literal, political, social, economic, etc. as any of the kingdoms which precede it.
2. The fifth kingdom will be set up in history within geographical boundaries.
3. It will never experience subjugation or destruction.
4. It will be a kingdom which the God of heaven will establish on earth.
5. It is the kingdom of heaven.
6. It will begin only when it destroys the fourth kingdom.
7. It will destroy world kingdoms suddenly, supernaturally, and completely.
8. It will enjoy nothing but success in the conquering of wicked kingdoms.
9. This kingdom is the millennial kingdom.
10. No human agency, institution, influence, or anything natural can ever succeed in setting up this kingdom. Gospel preaching cannot succeed. ---*Dr. John L. Benson*

NOTES: