

The Book of DANIEL

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The book is named after its principal character, Daniel. The practice of naming OT books for their main hero is demonstrated by other books such as Joshua, Samuel, Esther, Job, etc. Such a title does not necessarily indicate authorship, although that may be included as well, as is the case with the book of Daniel.

2. Authorship. The traditional view of both Jews and Christians is that the book was written in the 6th century B.C., and that Daniel was its author. In favor of the correctness of this traditional view are the following points of evidence:

- a. The claims of the book. The prophet Daniel speaks in the first person in many passages (chs. 8:1–7, 13–19, 27; 9:2–22; 10:2–5; etc.). He states that he personally received the divine order to preserve the book (ch. 12:4). The fact that there are sections in which the author refers to himself in the third person (chs. 1:6–11, 17, 19, 21; 2:14–20; etc.) is not strange, for in works of antiquity such a usage is frequently observed (see on Ezra 7:28).
- b. The author well acquainted with history. Only a man of the 6th century (B.C.), well versed in Babylonian affairs, could have provided some of the historical facts found in the book. The knowledge of these facts was lost after the 6th century B.C., not being recorded in other ancient literature after that time (see p. 748). Relatively recent archeological finds have once more brought these facts to light.
- c. The testimony of Jesus Christ. Quoting a passage from the book, Jesus Christ mentions Daniel as author (Matt. 24:15). For every Christian believer this testimony should be convincing evidence.

The book falls into two clearly distinguishable parts, the first (chs. 1–6) mainly historical, and the second (chs. 7–12) mainly prophetic; yet the book is a literary unit. In support of such unity the following arguments can be listed:

1. The various parts of the book are mutually related, one to the other. The use of the Temple vessels at Belshazzar's feast can be understood in the light of the record of how they came to Babylon (ch. 5:3; cf. ch. 1:1, 2). Chapter 3:12 refers back to the political action of Nebuchadnezzar described first in ch. 2:49. In ch. 9:21 reference is made to an earlier vision (see ch. 8:15, 16).
2. The historical part contains a prophecy (ch. 2) closely related in theme to the prophecies found in chs. 7–12. Chapter 7 develops further the theme of ch. 2. Also the historical and prophetic elements are related. The historical section (chs. 1–6) narrates God's dealings with one nation, Babylon, and its role in the divine plan. This illustrates God's dealings with all nations (see Ed 175–177). Like Babylon, each successive world power portrayed in the prophetic portion had an opportunity to know the divine will and cooperate with it, and each was measured by its fulfillment of the divine purpose. Thus each nation's rise and fall in chs. 7–12 is to be understood in terms of the principles set forth in the historical portion as they related to Babylon. This unifies the book and illuminates the role played by each empire.

The literary unity of the book, demonstrated in the composition, general channel of thought, and expressions used in the two languages (see p. 748), is generally recognized. The arguments adduced for two authors for the book appear pointless.

In *Qumrân* Cave 1 (see pp. 86–88) were three fragments from the book of Daniel. They were published by D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, in *Discoveries in the Judaean*

Desert I: Qumran Cave I (Oxford, 1955), pp. 150–152. The fragments came either from two scrolls or from one scroll in which chs. 1 and 2 were written by one scribe and ch. 3 by another, containing parts of chs. 1:10–17; 2:2–6; 3:22–30. A comparison of this text with the Masoretic text shows 16 variants, none of which affects the meaning of the passage. Nine of these 16 variations are spelling variants, each affecting only one letter; two of these seem to be spelling errors; the other seven are variously spelled also in the Masoretic text. Four additions are found: one of the conjunction “and,” and one of the particle “that” before an “if”; two words have a vowel letter added. Once, a vowel letter occurring in the Masoretic text is not found in the fragments. Two verbal endings seem to be scribal errors. The list shows that the differences are so insignificant that they would not be noticeable in a translation. This is a strong proof that the Masoretic text of Daniel is now in substantially the same form as it was at least in the time of Christ.

It is of further interest that the fragment of ch. 2 covers the passage in which the transition occurs from Hebrew to Aramaic (see on ch. 2:4). At that point a space is left between the last Hebrew word and the first Aramaic word, thus making a distinct break between the language sections. It is also noteworthy that, in agreement with the Masoretic text, these fragments do not contain the apocryphal Song of the Three Children (see on ch. 3:23).

Qumrân Cave 4 has produced leather fragments from three Daniel MSS (not yet published in 1976) reported to be well preserved and representing sizable portions of the book. F. M. Cross, in *Biblical Archaeologist*, 19 (1956), 85, 86; Cross, in *Revue Biblique*, 63 (1956), 58.

From *Qumrân* Cave 6 come several papyrus fragments of Daniel, representing chs. 8:20, 21; 10:8–16; and 11:33–38 (containing nine minor spelling variants), published by M. Baillet in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert III: Les “Petites Grottes” de Qumrân* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 114–116.

3. Historical Setting. The book of Daniel contains (1) a record of certain historical incidents from the life of Daniel and his three friends, who were Jewish exiles in Babylonian government service, and (2) a record of a prophetic dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted by Daniel, together with records of visions the prophet himself had received. Although the book was written in Babylonia during the Exile and shortly thereafter, its purpose was not to provide either a history of the Jewish exile or a biography of Daniel. The book relates high-light experiences of the statesman-prophet and his associates and was compiled with specific objectives in mind.

First of all Daniel presents brief information concerning the reason for his being found in the public service of the Babylonian king (ch. 1). Having been taken to Babylon in the first captivity in 605 B.C., during the course of Nebuchadnezzar’s first Syrian campaign, Daniel and other princes of royal blood were chosen to be trained for government service. The initial 19 years of Daniel’s stay in Babylonia were the last years of Judah’s existence as a kingdom, albeit subject to Babylon. The futile anti-Babylonian policies of Judah’s last kings brought one catastrophe after another upon the Jewish nation.

King Jehoiakim, during whose reign Daniel had gone into captivity, remained loyal to Babylon for a few years. Eventually, however, he acceded to the policy of the pro-Egyptian party in Judah, and rebelled. As a result the country suffered military invasions,

its citizens lost their liberty and were taken into captivity, and the king lost his life. His son and successor, Jehoiachin, after a brief reign of only three months, saw the armies of Babylon return to mete out punishment for disloyalty. He, together with thousands of the upper-class citizens of Judah, went into captivity in 597 B.C. His successor, Zedekiah, apparently attempted to remain loyal to Babylon. However, being weak and vacillating, he could not long withstand the overtures of Egypt and the anti-Babylonian sentiment of his chief advisers. As a result Nebuchadnezzar, weary of the repeated revolts in Palestine, decided to put an end to the kingdom of Judah. For two and a half years the Babylonian armies ravaged Judah, took and destroyed the cities, including Jerusalem, with its Temple and its palaces, and led the majority of the inhabitants of Judah into captivity in 586 B.C.

Daniel was in Babylon during these eventful days. He must have seen the Babylonian armies depart for their several campaigns against his homeland, and witnessed their victorious returns and the arrival of captured Jews. Among the captives were the young king Jehoiachin with his family (2 Kings 24:10–16), and later the blinded king Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:7). During these years Daniel must also have been aware of the political agitation that was going on among the exiled Jews, which resulted in Nebuchadnezzar's burning to death some of the chief instigators. It was this agitation that caused Jeremiah to send a letter to his captured compatriots urging them to lead a quiet and peaceful life in Babylonia (Jer. 29).

During all these years Daniel and his three friends quietly and loyally performed their duties as royal officers and subjects of the realm. After their scholarly training they became members of the elite group called wise men, who served the king as advisers. It was then that Daniel had the unique opportunity of explaining to Nebuchadnezzar the dream of future empires (Dan. 2). As a result Daniel was appointed to a position of exceptionally high rank, which he seems to have held for many years. This office gave him the opportunity of acquainting the king with the power of the God of heaven and earth, whom Daniel and his friends served. How long Daniel retained this position is not known. He seems to have lost it before 570 B.C., since his name is not found in a contemporary "Court and State Almanac," written in cuneiform, which lists the chief officers of Nebuchadnezzar's government holding office at that time. No other court and state almanacs for the reign of Nebuchadnezzar are extant. In fact, Daniel is not mentioned in any contemporary non-Biblical source.

The absence of Daniel's name in this document is not strange, since we do not know how long Daniel remained in public office. Only four principal events during Nebuchadnezzar's reign are recorded in the book of Daniel, and Daniel played a role in three of them: (1) the education of the Jewish princes during the king's first three years of reign, including his accession year (ch. 1), (2) the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the king's second regnal year (ch. 2), (3) the dedication of the image in the plain of Dura, with the resulting experience of Daniel's friends in an unspecified year (ch. 3), and (4) Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, announcing that the king would suffer madness for a period of seven years, which probably occurred during the king's last years (ch. 4).

Nothing is known of Daniel's activities during the years of Nebuchadnezzar's incapacity. We likewise do not know what Daniel did after the king regained his faculties and throne, or whether his services were demanded during the reigns of the succeeding kings, Amel-Marduk (the Biblical Evil-Merodach), Nergal-shar-usur, Labashi-Marduk,

and Nabonidus. However, he was permitted to observe the mighty empire of Nebuchadnezzar become morally weak and corrupt under kings who were assassins of their predecessors. He also must have watched with more than ordinary interest the cometlike rise of King Cyrus in Persia to the east, since a man by that name had been mentioned in prophecy as Israel's liberator (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). In 553 B.C. (the year in which Cyrus probably became master over the Median Empire) it is also possible that Daniel saw Nabonidus appoint his son Belshazzar to rule over Babylonia, while Nabonidus himself set out to conquer Tema in Arabia. It was during the first three years of Belshazzar that great visions were given to Daniel (chs. 7; 8), and the man who so far had been known only as an interpreter of dreams and visions became one of the great prophets of all time.

The Babylonians demanded Daniel's services once more, during the night of Babylon's fall, in 539 B.C., to read and interpret the handwriting of doom on the wall of Belshazzar's festal hall. After the Persians became masters over Babylon and its empire, the new rulers made use of the talents and experience of the old statesman of a past generation. Daniel again became a chief counselor of the crown. It was presumably he who brought the prophecies of Isaiah to the notice of the king (see PK 557), which prophecies influenced the Persian ruler to issue the decree that ended exile for the Jews and restored to them a homeland and a Temple. During this later term of Daniel's public office there was an attempt on his life by his envious colleagues, but the Lord marvelously intervened and delivered His servant (ch. 6). Additional important visions were received during these last years of Daniel's life, first under Darius the Mede (ch. 9; see Additional Note on Chapter 6), and then under Cyrus (chs. 10–12).

In any study of the book of Daniel two points call for special examination:

a. The historicity of Daniel. Since the first major attacks on the historicity of Daniel were made by the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry (A.D. 233–c. 304), the book has been under the fire of critics, at first only sporadically, but during the past two centuries, constantly. As a result the majority of Christian scholars today consider the book of Daniel the product of an anonymous author who lived about the time of the Maccabean revolt, in the 2d century B.C.

These scholars set forth two main reasons for ascribing so late a date to the book of Daniel: (1) Since, as they assert, certain prophecies point to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–c. 163 B.C.), and since, according to their concept, most prophecies—at least those that have been demonstrated to have had an accurate fulfillment—were written after the events described had occurred, Daniel's prophecies, according to their claims, must be dated in the time following the reign of Antiochus IV; and (2) since, according to their contentions, the historical sections of Daniel record certain events that disagree with historical facts known from available sources, these disagreements can best be explained by assuming that the author was removed from the actual events so much in space and time that he possessed but a limited knowledge of what had actually happened in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C., 400 years earlier.

The first of the two arguments has no validity for one who believes that the inspired prophets of old actually made accurate predictions concerning the course of history. The second argument deserves more detailed attention because of the seriousness of the claim that Daniel contains historical inaccuracies, anachronisms, and misconceptions. For this reason a brief discussion of the historical trustworthiness of Daniel is here presented.

It is true that Daniel describes some events that even today cannot be verified by means of available ancient source material. One such event is the madness of Nebuchadnezzar, which is not mentioned in any extant ancient records. The absence of verification for a temporary incapacity of the greatest king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire is not a strange phenomenon in a time when royal records contain only praiseworthy narratives (see on Dan. 4:36). Also enigmatic is Darius the Mede, whose real place in history has not been established by reliable non-Biblical source material. Hints as to his identity are found in the writings of Greek authors and fragmentary information from cuneiform sources (see Additional Note on Chapter 6).

The other so-called historical difficulties that puzzled conservative commentators of Daniel a hundred years ago have been solved by the increase of historical knowledge provided by archeology. Some of the more important of these now-solved problems are here listed:

1. The supposed chronological discrepancy between Dan. 1:1 and Jer. 25:1. Jeremiah, who, scholars generally agree, is a trustworthy historical source, synchronizes the 4th year of Jehoiakim of Judah with the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. However, Daniel speaks of King Nebuchadnezzar's first conquest of Jerusalem as taking place in Jehoiakim's 3d year, apparently implying that Nebuchadnezzar's 1st year coincided with the 3d year of Jehoiakim. Before the discovery of contemporary records revealing various systems of reckoning the regnal years of ancient kings, commentators found it difficult to explain this seeming discrepancy. They tried to solve the difficulty either by supposing a coregency of Nebuchadnezzar with his father Nabopolassar (see Vol. III, p. 91), or by assuming that Jeremiah and Daniel dated events according to different systems of reckoning, Jeremiah using a Jewish and Daniel the Babylonian system. Both explanations are today out of date.

The whole difficulty has been solved by the discovery that Babylonian kings, like those of Judah at the time, counted their regnal years according to the "accession-year" method (see Vol. II, p. 138). The year in which a Babylonian king came to the throne was not reckoned as his official 1st year, but merely the year of his accession, and his 1st year, meaning his 1st full calendar year, did not begin until the next New Year's Day, when, in a religious ceremony, he took the hands of the Babylonian god Bel.

We also know from Josephus (citing Berosus) and a Babylonian chronicle that Nebuchadnezzar was on a military campaign in Palestine against Egypt when his father died and he succeeded to the throne (see p. 756; also Vol. II, pp. 95, 96, 161; Vol. III, p. 91). Hence Daniel and Jeremiah completely agree with each other. Jeremiah synchronized Nebuchadnezzar's 1st regnal year with Jehoiakim's 4th year, whereas Daniel was taken captive in Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, which he identifies with Jehoiakim's 3d year.

2. Nebuchadnezzar the great builder of Babylon. According to the Greek historians, Nebuchadnezzar played an insignificant role in the affairs of ancient history. He is never referred to as a great builder or as the creator of a new and greater Babylon. That this honor is usually ascribed to Queen Semiramis, who is given a prominent place in the history of Babylonia, is evident to every reader of classical Greek histories.

Yet the contemporary cuneiform records, unearthed by the archeologist during the last hundred years, have entirely changed the picture derived from classical writers, and have corroborated the account of the book of Daniel, which credits Nebuchadnezzar with

the building (rebuilding) of “this great Babylon” (ch. 4:30). Semiramis, called *Sammu-ramat* in cuneiform inscriptions, it has now been discovered, was a queen mother of Assyria, regent for her infant son Adad-nirari III, and not a queen over Babylonia as the classical sources claimed. The inscriptions have shown that she had nothing to do with any building activity in Babylon. On the other hand, numerous building inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar prove that he became, in a sense, the creator of a new Babylon by rebuilding the palaces, temples, and temple tower of the city, and by adding new buildings and fortifications (see Additional Note on Chapter 4).

Such information none but a writer of the Neo-Babylonian age could have, for it had been completely lost by the time of the Hellenistic era. The presence of such information in the book of Daniel greatly puzzles critical scholars who do not believe that Daniel was written in the 6th century, but rather in the 2d. A typical example of their dilemma is the following statement of R. H. Pfeiffer, of Harvard University: “We shall presumably never know how our author learned that the new Babylon was the creation of Nebuchadnezzar . . . , as the excavations have proved” (*Introduction to the Old Testament* [New York, 1941], pp. 758, 759).

3. Belshazzar, king of Babylon. On the amazing story of the discovery by modern orientologists of the identity of Belshazzar, see Additional Note on Chapter 5. The fact that the name of this king had not been found in any non-Biblical writings of antiquity, while Nabonidus always appeared as the last Babylonian king prior to the Persian conquest, was regularly used as one of the strongest arguments against the historicity of the book of Daniel. But discoveries since the mid-nineteenth century have refuted all critics of Daniel in this respect and vindicated the trustworthiness of the prophet’s historical narrative with regard to Belshazzar in a most impressive way.

b. The languages of the book. Like Ezra (see Vol. III, p. 320), Daniel was written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic. Some have accounted for the use of two languages in the case of Ezra by assuming that the author took over Aramaic documents with their accompanying historical descriptions, and incorporated them into his books, otherwise written in Hebrew, the national tongue of his people. Such an interpretation does not fit the book of Daniel, where the Aramaic section begins with ch. 2:4 and ends with the last verse of ch. 7.

Following is a partial list of the many explanations of this problem offered by scholars, together with some observations in parentheses that seem to speak against the reasonableness of these explanations:

1. That the author wrote the historical stories for the Aramaic-speaking people and the prophecies for the Hebrew-speaking scholars. (Yet the Aramaic in chs. 2 and 7, both great prophecies, speaks against the correctness of this view.)
2. That the two languages point to two sources. (This view cannot be correct, because the book bears a strong stamp of unity, as even many radical critics have acknowledged; see p. 743.)
3. That the book was written originally in one language, either Aramaic or Hebrew, and parts of it were later translated. (This view leaves unanswered the question as to why only sections were translated into the other language and not the whole book.)
4. That the author issued the book in two editions, one in Hebrew and another one in Aramaic, so that all classes of people could read it; that in the time of the Maccabean persecution parts of the book were lost, and those parts that were salvaged from both

editions were put together without any changes. (This view suffers from the fact that it cannot be proved to be correct, and that it deals with too many uncertainties.)

5. That the author began to write in Aramaic at the point where the Chaldeans addressed “the king in Syriack [literally, Aramaic]” (ch. 2:4), and continued in this language as long as he was writing at that time, but that when he resumed writing (with ch. 8:1) he used Hebrew.

The last view appears to lead in the right direction, for the various sections of the book seem to have been written at different times. As a trained government official Daniel spoke and wrote in several languages. He probably wrote some of the historical narratives and visions in Hebrew and others in Aramaic. On the basis of this assumption, ch. 1 was written in Hebrew, probably in the 1st year of Cyrus, and the narratives of chs. 3–6 in Aramaic at various times. The prophetic visions were recorded mostly in Hebrew (chs. 8–12), although the vision of ch. 7 was written in Aramaic. The account of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the future monarchies (ch. 2), on the other hand, was written in Hebrew up to the point where the Chaldeans’ speech was quoted (ch. 2:4), and then continued in Aramaic from this point to the end of the narrative.

When, at the end of his life, Daniel collected all his writings into one book, he may not have deemed it necessary to translate certain parts in order to unify the book linguistically, knowing that most of his readers were bilingual—a fact evident from other sources.

It may further be noted that the existence of two languages in Daniel cannot be used as an argument for a late date of the origin of the book. Those who date the origin of Daniel in the 2d century B.C. also have the problem of explaining why a Hebrew author of the Maccabean period wrote part of the book in Hebrew and part of it in Aramaic.

It is true that the orthographic (spelling) peculiarities of the Aramaic sections of Daniel are related most closely to those of the 4th–3d century Aramaic of Western Asia. This would seem to be due to a modernization of the language, a characteristic noticeable also in most of the Hebrew books of the Bible. Orthography cannot reveal the date of writing any more than the latest revision of the English Bible can be taken as proof that the Bible was originally written or translated in the 20th century A.D. The orthographic peculiarities can at most indicate at what time the latest revisions in spelling took place.

Among the Dead Sea scrolls (see Vol. I, pp. 31–34) there are several fragments of Daniel dating from the 2d century B.C. At least two of these preserve that section of ch. 2 where the change is made from Hebrew to Aramaic, and show clearly the bilingual character of the book at that time (see p. 744).

4. Theme. The book of Daniel might appropriately be called a handbook on history and prophecy. Predictive prophecy is a preview of history; history is predictive prophecy passing in review. The element of prediction enables God’s people to see the things of time in the light of eternity, alerts them for effective action at appropriate times, facilitates personal preparation for the final crisis, and provides a firm basis for faith upon fulfillment of the prediction.

The four major lines of prophecy in the book of Daniel set forth in brief outline, against the background of world history, the experiences of God’s people from the days of Daniel down to the close of time. “The curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful, One, silently, patiently working out the

counsels of His own will” (PK 500). Each of the four lines of prophecy reaches a climax when “the God of heaven” sets “up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” (ch. 2:44), when the “Son of man” receives “everlasting dominion” (ch. 7:13, 14), when opposition to the “Prince of princes” is “broken without hand” (ch. 8:25), and when God’s people are delivered forever from their oppressors (ch. 12:1). The prophecies of Daniel thus provide a divinely constructed bridge from the precipice of time to the boundless shores of eternity, a bridge over which those who, like Daniel, purpose in their hearts to love and serve God, may pass by faith from the uncertainty and distress of the present life to the peace and security of life everlasting.

The historical section of the book of Daniel reveals, in most striking manner, the true philosophy of history (see Ed 173–184). This section stands as a preface to the prophetic section. By providing a detailed account of God’s dealings with one nation, Babylon, the book enables us to understand the meaning of the rise and fall of other nations outlined in the prophetic portion of the book. Without a clear understanding of the philosophy of history as revealed in the narrative of the role of Babylon in the divine plan, the role of the other nations that succeeded Babylon on the screen of prophetic vision cannot be fully understood or appreciated. For a summary of the divine philosophy of history as set forth by inspiration, see on ch. 4:17.

In the historical section of the book we find Daniel, God’s man of the hour, brought face to face with Nebuchadnezzar, the genius of the Gentile world, that the king might have opportunity to know Daniel’s God, the Arbiter of history, and to cooperate with Him. Nebuchadnezzar not only was monarch of the greatest nation of the time but was also eminently wise, and had an innate sense of justice and right. He was, in fact, the leading personality of the Gentile world, “the mighty one of the heathen” (Eze. 31:11), raised to power for a specific role in the divine plan. Of him God said, “Now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, *my servant*” (Jer. 27:6). As the Jews went captive to Babylon it was desirable that they be held under a hand that was firm without being cruel (according to the standards of that day). Daniel’s mission at the court of Nebuchadnezzar was to secure the submission of the king’s will to the will of God in order that the divine purpose might be realized. In one of the dramatic moments of history God brought together these two great personalities. See p. 569.

The first four chapters of Daniel narrate the means by which God secured the allegiance of Nebuchadnezzar. First of all, God needed a man who would be a fit representative of the principles and policies of heaven at the court of Babylon, so He chose Daniel to be His personal ambassador to Nebuchadnezzar. The means God employed to bring Daniel, a captive, to the favorable attention of Nebuchadnezzar, and the means by which Nebuchadnezzar came to have confidence, first in Daniel and then in Daniel’s God, illustrate the manner in which God uses men today to accomplish His will on earth. God could use Daniel because Daniel was a man of principle, a man of sterling character, a man whose chief business in life was to live for God.

Daniel “purposed in his heart” (ch. 1:8) to live in harmony with all the revealed will of God. First, God brought him “into favour and tender love” with the officials of Babylon (v. 9). This prepared the way for the second step, the demonstration of the physical superiority of Daniel and his companions (vs. 12–15). Then followed a demonstration of intellectual superiority. “God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom” (v. 17), with the result that they were considered “ten times better”

than their closest competitors (v. 20). Thus in personality, physique, and intellect Daniel proved to be markedly superior to his fellow men, and thereby won the confidence and respect of Nebuchadnezzar.

These events prepared Nebuchadnezzar to meet Daniel's God. A series of dramatic experiences—the dream of ch. 2, the striking deliverance from the fiery furnace (ch. 3), and the dream of ch. 4—demonstrated to the king's satisfaction the knowledge, power, and authority of Daniel's God. The inferiority of human knowledge, exhibited in the experience of ch. 2, led Nebuchadnezzar to admit to Daniel, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets" (ch. 2:47). He freely acknowledged that the wisdom of God was superior, not only to human wisdom, but even to the supposed wisdom of his own gods. The incident of the golden image and the fiery furnace led Nebuchadnezzar to admit that the God of heaven "delivered his servants" (ch. 3:28). His conclusion was that no one in all his realm, should "speak any thing amiss against the God" of the Hebrews, in view of the fact that "no other God" can "deliver after this sort" (v. 29). Nebuchadnezzar now recognized that the God of heaven was not only wise but powerful, that He was not only omniscient but omnipotent. The third experience—the seven years during which his own vaunted wisdom and power were temporarily removed—taught the king not only that "the most High" is wise and powerful but that He exercises that wisdom and power to rule in human affairs (ch. 4:32). He has wisdom, power, and authority. It is significant that the first act Nebuchadnezzar performed after his reason returned to him was to "praise and extol and honour the King of heaven" and to acknowledge that "those that walk in pride" as he had done for so many years, God "is able to abase" (v. 37).

But the lessons Nebuchadnezzar personally learned over a period of many years largely failed to benefit those who succeeded him upon the throne of Babylon. The last ruler of Babylon, Belshazzar, openly defied the God of heaven (ch. 5:23) in spite of the fact that he was acquainted with the experience of Nebuchadnezzar (v. 22). Instead of working in harmony with the divine plan, "Babylon became a proud and cruel oppressor" (Ed 176), and in the rejection of the principles of heaven wrought its own ruin (Ed 177). The nation was weighed and found wanting (ch. 5:25–28), and world dominion passed to the Persians.

In delivering Daniel from the lions' den, God demonstrated His power and authority before the rulers of the Persian Empire (see ch. 6:20–23; PK 557) as He had previously before those of Babylon. An edict of Darius the Mede acknowledged "the living God" and admitted that He is "stedfast for ever" (v. 26). Even "the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not" (v. 8), was obliged to yield before the decrees of "the most High," who "ruleth in the kingdom of men" (ch. 4:32). Cyrus was favorably impressed by the miraculous evidence of divine power exhibited in the deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den (PK 557). The prophecies outlining his role in the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple (Isa. 44:26 to 45:13) also made a deep impression upon him. "His heart was profoundly moved, and he determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission" (PK 557).

Thus the book of Daniel gives a demonstration of the principles according to which God's wisdom, power, and authority operate through the history of nations for the eventual accomplishment of the divine purpose. "God exalted Babylon that it might fulfil" His "purpose" (Ed 175). It had its period of test; it "failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another" (Ed 177; see on ch. 4:17).

All four visions of the book of Daniel are concerned with the struggle between the forces of good and evil on this earth from the time of Daniel to the establishment of the eternal kingdom of Christ. Inasmuch as Satan uses the powers of earth in his effort to thwart God's plan and to destroy God's people, these visions introduce those powers through which he has been most active.

The first vision (ch. 2) deals primarily with political changes. Its primary objective was to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar his role as ruler of Babylon, to make known to him "what should come to pass hereafter" (v. 29).

As if to supplement the first vision, the second (ch. 7) emphasizes the experiences of God's people during the sovereignty of the powers mentioned in the first vision, and forecasts the ultimate victory of the saints and God's judgment upon their enemies (see vs. 14, 18, 26, 27).

The third vision (chs. 8; 9), supplementing the second, emphasizes Satan's attempts to do away with the religion and people of Christ.

The fourth vision (chs. 10–12) summarizes the preceding visions and covers the ground with more detail than any of the others. It amplifies the subject of the second vision and that of the third vision. The focus of its emphasis is on "what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days" (ch. 10:14), and "the time appointed was long" (v. 1). The narrative outline of history covered in ch. 11:2–39 leads up to "the latter days" (ch. 10:14) and the events of "the time of the end" (ch. 11:40).

The prophecies of Daniel are closely related to those of the book of Revelation. In large measure Revelation covers the same ground but gives particular emphasis to the role of the Christian church as God's chosen people. Thus details that may be obscure in the book of Daniel are often clarified by comparison with the book of Revelation. That part of his "prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal 'to the time of the end'" (GC 356), when, through a diligent study of the book, "knowledge" of its import would be "increased" (ch. 12:4). Though "that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days" was sealed (ch. 12:4; AA 585), John was specifically instructed to "seal not the sayings of the prophecy" of his book, "for the time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10). Thus, for a clearer interpretation of any portions of the book of Daniel that tend to be obscure, we should search carefully the book of Revelation for light to dispel the darkness.

5. Outline.

1. Historical Section, 1:1 to 6:28.
 - A. The education of Daniel and his companions, 1:1–21.
 1. The first transportation of captives from Judah to Babylon, 1:1, 2.
 2. Daniel and his friends selected to be trained for royal service, 1:3–7.
 3. Daniel procures permission to live according to his law, 1:8–16.
 4. Successful education and acceptance into the royal service, 1:17–21.
 - B. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image, 2:1–49.
 1. Nebuchadnezzar disturbed by a dream, 2:1–11.
 2. Execution of wise men commanded and countermanded, 2:12–16.
 3. Daniel receives knowledge and expresses gratitude, 2:17–23.
 4. Daniel communicates the dream to the king, 2:24–35.
 5. Daniel interprets the dream, 2:36–45.
 6. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges God's greatness, 2:46–49.

- C. Deliverance of Daniel's friends from the fiery furnace, 3:1–30.
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar erects an image and demands its worship, 3:1–7.
 - 2. The three faithful Hebrews refuse to worship, 3:8–18.
 - 3. The deliverance from the furnace by divine intervention, 3:19–25.
 - 4. Nebuchadnezzar's confession and decree; the Hebrews promoted, 3:26–30.
- D. Nebuchadnezzar's second dream, humiliation, and restoration, 4:1–37.
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar's confession of God's knowledge and power, 4:1–9.
 - 2. Description of the dream, 4:10–18.
 - 3. Daniel's interpretation of the dream, 4:19–27.
 - 4. Nebuchadnezzar's fall and restoration, 4:28–36.
 - 5. Nebuchadnezzar praises the God of heaven, 4:37.
- E. Belshazzar's banquet and the loss of the monarchy, 5:1–31.
 - 1. Belshazzar's desecration of Temple vessels, 5:1–4.
 - 2. The mysterious handwriting on the wall, 5:5–12.
 - 3. Daniel's interpretation, 5:13–28.
 - 4. Daniel receives honor, Babylon falls, 5:29–31.
- F. Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den, 6:1–28.
 - 1. Daniel's elevation and the jealousy of his colleagues, 6:1–5.
 - 2. Darius' decree restricting prayers, 6:6–9.
 - 3. Daniel's transgression of the decree and his condemnation, 6:10–17.
 - 4. Daniel's deliverance and the punishment of the accusers, 6:18–24.
 - 5. Public recognition of the greatness of Daniel's God, 6:25–28.
- II. Prophetic Section, 7:1 to 12:13.
 - A. Daniel's second prophetic message, 7:1–28.
 - 1. The four beasts and little horn, 7:1–8.
 - 2. Judgment and eternal reign of the Son of man, 7:9–14.
 - 3. Interpretation of the vision by an angel, 7:15–27.
 - 4. Impression on Daniel, 7:28.
 - B. Daniel's third prophetic message, 8:1 to 9:27.
 - 1. The ram, he-goat, and horns, 8:1–8.
 - 2. The little horn and its wickedness, 8:9–12.
 - 3. The time prophecy concerning the cleansing of the sanctuary, 8:13, 14.
 - 4. Gabriel interprets the first portion of the vision, 8:15–26.
 - 5. Daniel's sickness as the result of the vision, 8:27.
 - 6. Daniel prays for restoration and confesses his people's sin, 9:1–19.
 - 7. Gabriel interprets the remaining portion of the vision, 9:20–27.
 - C. Daniel's fourth prophetic message, 10:1 to 12:13.
 - 1. Daniel's fast, 10:1–3.
 - 2. The appearance of "a certain man" and the effect on Daniel, 10:4–10.
 - 3. The "man's" preliminary talk with Daniel, 10:11 to 11:1.
 - 4. A vision concerning future historical events, 11:2 to 12:3.
 - 5. The duration of the "wonders"; personal promises to Daniel, 12:4–13.

CHAPTER 1

1 *Jehoiakim's captivity.* 3 *Ashpenaz taketh Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.* 8 *They refusing the king's portion do prosper with pulse and water.* 17 *Their excellency in wisdom.*

1. The third year. On the basis of Biblical synchronisms that correlate the reigns of several kings of Judah with that of Nebuchadnezzar, whose Babylonian regnal years have been astronomically established, Jehoiakim's 3d regnal year lasted, by the Jewish calendar, from the autumn of 606 to the autumn of 605 B.C. (see Vol. II, p. 160; Vol. III, p. 91). Hence the events recorded in this and the following verse must have taken place sometime during the Jewish civil year that began in the fall of 606 and ended in the fall of 605 B.C. Before the ancient systems of regnal reckonings were understood, this verse presented commentators with a seemingly insuperable problem because of the apparent contradiction with Jer. 25:1. As a result of modern archeological discoveries all historical and chronological difficulties on this point have vanished, and the evidence provides a completely harmonious pattern (see p. 747). The integrity of the Sacred Record has once more been vindicated (see p. 746).

Jehoiakim was the second son of Josiah. When Josiah lost his life at Megiddo the people made Jehoahaz, fourth son of Josiah (see on 1 Chron. 3:15), king in his father's stead. After Jehoahaz had reigned for a period of three months Necho of Egypt, during that summer's Mesopotamian campaign, deposed him and placed Jehoiakim on the throne (2 Kings 23:29–34). The new ruler of Judah, whose name was changed by the Egyptian king from Eliakim, "My God raises up," to Jehoiakim, "Jehovah raises up," was forced to pay a heavy tribute to Egypt (2 Kings 23:34, 35), but seems to have been content to be loyal to his Egyptian overlord.

Nebuchadnezzar. Heb. *Nebukadne'ššar*, the common Hebrew transliteration of the Babylonian *Nabû-kudurri-ušur*, meaning "May [the god] *Nabû* protect the son," or "May *Nabû* protect my borderstone." The form *Nebukadne'ššar* (Nebuchadnezzar) occurs more frequently in the Hebrew Bible than the more correct spelling *Nebukadre'ššar* (Nebuchadrezzar) (see Jer. 21:2; Eze. 26:7; etc.). The Greek sources show the same interchange of *n* and *r*. The LXX spells the name *Nabouchodonosor*; but it is spelled *Nabokodrosoros* in Strabo's works and as a variant in Josephus.

Nebuchadnezzar's presence in Palestine in the early summer of 605 B.C., as Dan. 1:1 indicates, is confirmed by two Babylonian accounts: (1) a narrative by the historian Berosus, whose lost work has been quoted on this event by Josephus in his *Against Apion* (1.19); and (2) a portion of a hitherto unknown Babylonian chronicle (D. J. Wiseman, editor, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings*, 1956), which covers the entire reign of Nabopolassar and the first eleven years of his son Nebuchadnezzar.

Berosus, as Josephus quotes him, relates that Nebuchadnezzar was ordered by his father Nabopolassar to quench a rebellion in Egypt, Phoenicia, and Coele-Syria. Having completed his mission but still being in the west, he received word of his father's death. Leaving the captives—among whom Jews are mentioned—in the hands of his generals, he hurried back to Babylon by the short desert route as quickly as possible. This haste was doubtless due to a desire to prevent any usurper from taking the throne. Berosus says that Nebuchadnezzar left Jewish captives with his generals when he hurriedly returned to Babylon. Daniel and his friends must have been among these captives. The statement of Dan. 1:1, 2 and that of Berosus were the only known ancient records that spoke of this campaign of Nebuchadnezzar until the discovery of this chronicle, a year-by-year account yielding for the first time exact dates for the accession and death of Nabopolassar, the

accession of Nebuchadnezzar, and the capture of a king of Judah, obviously Jehoiachin, eight years later (it also places the death of Josiah in 609 and the battle of Carchemish in 605).

Previously the accession of Nebuchadnezzar had been dated approximately to August, 605, by the date lines of clay-tablet business documents from Babylonia (see Vol. III, pp. 86, 87), since the last from Nabopolassar's year 21 bore a date corresponding to August 8, and the first from the new reign (not counting one assigned formerly to July–August but now to October) was written in September.

But the chronicle gives the very day. It tells how, in his father's 21st year, Nebuchadnezzar decisively defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish and subdued Hattiland (Syria-Palestine); then, on hearing of his father's death on Ab 8 (approximately August 15) he hurried to Babylon and ascended the throne on Elul 1 (approximately September 7). Later in his accession year and again in his year 1 (which began in spring, 604) he returned to the west and received tribute from the subject kings.

This explains how Daniel could be taken captive in the 3d year of Jehoiakim, the year preceding the 1st of Nebuchadnezzar (see p. 747).

King of Babylon. When Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem in Jehoiakim's 3d year, a few weeks or, at the most, a few months before his father's death, he was not yet king. But Daniel, recording these events, probably in the 1st year of Cyrus (v. 21), some 70 years after the events described had taken place, calls Nebuchadnezzar "king of Babylon." When Daniel arrived at Babylon as a young captive, Nebuchadnezzar was already king. From then on he saw Nebuchadnezzar reigning for 43 years. Hence, it seems quite natural that Daniel would call him "king." It is also possible, but hardly likely, that Daniel was taken during the short interval between Nabopolassar's death and Nebuchadnezzar's return to Babylon.

2. Part of the vessels. Nebuchadnezzar doubtless took the most valuable and finest Temple vessels for use in the service of his god Marduk. He naturally left no more than were absolutely necessary to carry on the daily ritual in the Temple at Jerusalem. There were three occasions on which the Chaldeans carried away sacred vessels to Babylon: (1) in the campaign recorded in this passage, (2) when Jerusalem was taken at the close of Jehoiachin's reign in 597 B.C. (2 Kings 24:13), and (3) at the end of the reign of Zedekiah, when, in 586 B.C. after a long siege, Jerusalem was taken and destroyed (2 Kings 25:8–15). The spoiling of Jerusalem's treasures by the Babylonian forces was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy pronounced almost a century earlier (Isa. 39:6). On the fate of the ark see on Jer. 37:10.

Land of Shinar. Earlier commentators identified this term with *mât Sumêri*, "the land of Sumer," or southern Babylonia, but this interpretation has now been generally discarded. In most of the OT references Shinar is simply a term for Babylonia. The origin of the word "Shinar" is still obscure (see on Gen. 10:10). However, in Gen. 14:1, 9, Shinar seems to be the name of an area in northern Mesopotamia called *Sanhar* in cuneiform texts. As in Gen. 11:2, Isa. 11:11, and Zech. 5:11, the Shinar mentioned in Daniel is definitely Babylonia.

His god. The chief god of the Babylonians was Marduk, who, since the time of the First Dynasty, more than a thousand years earlier, had popularly been called *Bêl*, "lord." His main temple, called *Esagila*, in the court of which stood the great temple tower,

Etemenanki, was in the heart of Babylon (see Additional Note on Chapter 4; see also map p. 796).

Treasure house. Babylonian cuneiform documents frequently mention the treasures of *Esagila*, the great temple of Marduk. Which of the many auxiliary buildings belonging to that temple complex might have housed these treasures is not known. However, a treasure house of a secular nature has been excavated within the palace compound. Excavators have called this building the Palace Museum because they found there many sculptures and inscriptions collected from conquered cities. As in a modern museum, objects from different parts of the empire were also exhibited. Though the building was open to the public, admission was prohibited to “evil people,” according to a contemporary inscription. It is not impossible that many treasures from Jerusalem, especially such as came from the royal treasury, were housed in this Palace Museum and were viewed by many visitors.

3. Ashpenaz. A name appearing in the cuneiform texts from Nippur of the 5th century in the slightly different form *Ashpazanda*, but in Aramaic incantation texts, also from Nippur, in the form *Aspenaz*. Though the meaning is still obscure the name has been thought to indicate Persian origin. It is possible that this high officer was a Persian. Many foreigners won rank and honor in the service of the Chaldeans.

Master of his eunuchs. The Hebrew title *rab-saris*, “chief eunuch,” appears also in an Aramaic text written in 682 B.C. In Babylonian inscriptions we find as its equivalent the title *rab sha rēshi*, literally, “the chief of the one on the head [of the king].” The title was applied to the royal confidant.

It has frequently been debated whether the term *saris* was used to designate only officers who were eunuchs in the literal, physical sense of the word, that is, castrated, or whether *saris* was used in a general way for any type of royal officer. A clear-cut answer to this question cannot be given. However, Assyrian pictorial representations of court life indicate clearly, by showing a distinction of facial features, such as the absence or presence of beards, that the king was surrounded by officers who were literal eunuchs as well as by those who were not. They indicate furthermore that the literal eunuchs seem to have been in the majority. Some of the greatest men in Assyrian history belonged to this class, as, for example, *Daiân-Ashshur*, the grand vizier of Shalmaneser III, along with many military commanders and other high officers. Isaiah prophesied that some of Hezekiah’s descendants would become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (Isa. 39:7). Some commentators have held that Daniel and his three companions were included in this prophecy.

Israel. After the destruction of Samaria in 723/722 B.C., when the ten northern tribes ceased to exist as a separate nation, the kingdom of Judah remained the sole representative of the descendants of Jacob or Israel. Hence, the name Israel is frequently employed during the Exile and in the postexilic period to designate the representatives of the southern kingdom (see Eze. 14:1; 17:2; etc.; Ezra 3:1, 11; etc.).

King’s seed. When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem in 605 B.C. he took hostages from the royal house of Judah as well as from the first families of that unhappy country. It was an old custom of conquerors to carry away princely hostages to guarantee the

loyalty of the conquered foe. Such a practice is reported in the annals of Thutmose III of Egypt, who, after defeating an alliance of Syrian and Palestinian rulers at the battle of Megiddo in the 15th century B.C., allowed the defeated kings to retain their thrones, but carried to Egypt one prince from each of his defeated enemies. In Egypt they were educated in the Egyptian way of life, and when one of the satellite kings of Palestine or Syria died, one of the deceased's sons, educated in Egypt and friendly to the Pharaoh, was put on the vacant throne.

Princes. Heb. *partemim*, a loan word from Old Persian *fratama*, “nobles,” basically meaning “foremost.” *Partemim* occurs elsewhere in the Bible only in Esther (chs. 1:3; 6:9). The presence of this and other Persian loan words in Daniel can easily be accounted for on the reasonable assumption that the first chapter of Daniel was written in the 1st year of Cyrus, when Persian influence had become strong (see Dan. 1:21).

4. Children. Heb. *yeladim*, here designating a word covering a much wider range of age than the English word “children.” Here it designates “youth,” “young men.” The young counselors who had been brought up with King Rehoboam are called *yeladim* (1 Kings 12:8). The word is translated “young men” (KJV) because it is obvious that they were not children in the English sense of the word. The same term is applied to Benjamin at about the age of 30, shortly before he went down to Egypt, and when he was the father of 10 sons (Gen. 44:20; cf. ch. 46:21). Hence it is not strange to see the word for “children” applied to youth, of whom one at least, Daniel, had reached the age of 18 years (4T 570). It is worth noticing in this connection that Xenophon, speaking of a later time, says that no young men could enter the service of the Persian kings before they had attained their 17th year (*Cyropaedia* i. 2).

No blemish. Physical soundness and a handsome form were considered indispensable to officers of high rank among the ancient Orientals, and are considered highly desirable qualities in the modern East.

Chaldeans. This term (Akkadian, *Kaldu*) designates the members of an Aramaean tribe whose early settlement was in Lower Mesopotamia and who had taken over the rulership of Babylonia when Nabopolassar founded the Neo-Babylonian dynasty. The term applies also to a class of scholars at the Babylonian court who were the foremost astronomers of their day. These scholars were equally proficient in other exact sciences, such as mathematics, although they included magic and astrology in their activities. Commentators have been divided in their interpretation of the phrase “learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.” The older view, found among the church Fathers, sees in the phrase a study of Aramaic language and literature, while many modern commentators are inclined to interpret it as meaning the combined scientific and linguistic knowledge of the Chaldeans. All known scientific writings of that time were inscribed on clay tablets in cuneiform script in the Babylonian language. It must therefore be concluded that “the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans” included a thorough training in the classical language and script of the country—that is, in the Babylonian language and in cuneiform writing—in addition to colloquial Aramaic. Since proficiency in the cuneiform script, with its hundreds of characters, was not easy to acquire, a good educational background, a natural ability to learn easily, and the gift of picking up a new language readily would

be deemed desirable prerequisites for acceptance into the royal school for future courtiers (see PK 480).

5. Appointed. Being members of the royal school for courtiers, the youth were given rations from the royal household. The custom is attested in the later Persian period, for which time we have more contemporary records than for the Neo-Babylonian period.

Provision of ... meat. Heb. *pathbag*, a loan word from the Old Persian *patibaga*, “portion,” or “delicacies.” For the use of such loan words see on v. 3. *Pathbag* occurs 6 times in Daniel (chs. 1:5, 8, 13, 15, 16; 11:26).

Three years. That is, by inclusive reckoning (see Vol. II, pp. 136, 137), from the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar, when Daniel was taken captive (see on v. 1), to the 2d year of the king’s reign (see on v. 18).

6. Among these. This expression shows that other young men were selected for training in addition to the four mentioned by name. These four are doubtless mentioned because of the uniqueness of their experience. Their unwavering loyalty to God earned for them great rewards in worldly honor and spiritual blessing (see chs. 2:49; 3:30; 6:2; 10:11).

Daniel. Meaning, “God is my judge.” In the OT the name appears first as that of one of David’s sons (1 Chron. 3:1), and then as the name of a priest in the 5th century (Ezra 8:2; Neh. 10:6). However, the name was already known in Ugarit (Ras Shamrah) in the middle of the second millennium B.C. as that of a legendary, righteous king, whom some scholars have erroneously identified with the Daniel mentioned by Ezekiel (see Eze. 14:14; 28:3). That the name Daniel was very common among Semitic people is evident from the fact that it is found among the Babylonians, the South Arabic Sabeans, as well as among the Nabataeans—the successors of the Edomites—and among the Palmyrenes of northern Arabia.

Hananiah. Meaning, “Yahweh is gracious.” Hananiah was a common Hebrew name borne by at least 14 different individuals mentioned in the OT. The name is also found in the Akkadian transliteration, *Hananiyama*, as that of a Jew living in Nippur in the 5th century. On another cuneiform document from Nippur the name is scratched in clay in Aramaic characters. It is also found in later Jewish inscriptions, and in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine.

Misael. Meaning probably, “who belongs to God?” The name was borne by several Biblical characters before and after the Exile (see Ex. 6:22; Neh. 8:4).

Azariah. Meaning, “Yahweh helps.” The name appears frequently in the Bible. Outside of the Bible it is found incised on jar handles excavated in Palestine, and is found also in cuneiform sources in the form *Azriau*.

7. Gave names. The new names given to the Hebrew youth signified their adoption into the Babylonian court, a custom that has several parallels in Biblical history. Joseph received an Egyptian name when entering court life in Egypt (Gen. 41:45), and Hadassah’s name was changed to Esther (Esther 2:7), probably when she became queen. This custom is also attested among the Babylonians from ancient sources. The Assyrian king Tiglathpileser III adopted the name Pulu (Biblical Pul) when he became king of Babylon (see on 1 Chron. 5:26; see Vol. II, pp. 156, 157), and Shalmaneser V seems to have borne the name Ululai in the same office.

Belteshazzar. The Hebrew and Aramaic transliteration, representing the later, Masoretic pronunciation of a Babylonian name. Though scholars have proposed various identifications with Babylonian forms, none is entirely satisfactory. In view of Nebuchadnezzar's remark made many years later, that Daniel's Babylonian name had been given "according to the name of my god" (ch. 4:8), it appears evident that the first syllable, "Bel," refers to Bel, the popular name of Babylon's chief god, Marduk. For this reason the identification with either *Balât-sharri-uşur*, "protect the life of the king," or *Balâtsu-uşur*, "protect his life," must be rejected, although both interpretations have found strong support among Assyriologists as the closest equivalent to the Hebrew form. R. D. Wilson's suggestion, of identifying Belteshazzar with *Bêl-liṭ-shar-uşur*, "Bel, protect the hostage of the king," can hardly be correct, inasmuch as it is highly unlikely that the Babylonians would have given such a name to a captive, as we would judge from the thousands of Babylonian names found in cuneiform documents. The best identification seems still to be that given by Delitzsch, namely, that of seeing in this name an abbreviation of *Bêl-balâtsu-uşur*, "Bel protect his [the king's] life."

Shadrach. The name is inexplicable in Babylonian. Some scholars have conjectured that the name is a corruption of *Marduk*, whereas others have tried to explain it with the help of Sumerian words. Jensen suggested it was the name of the Elamite god *Shutruk*, but it is difficult to explain why an Elamite name should have been given by the Babylonians.

Meshach. A satisfactory explanation as to the origin of this name has not yet been found. Like Shadrach (see above), Meshach is not a Babylonian name.

Abed-nego. It is generally agreed that this name stands for *'Ebed-Nebo*, "servant of [the god] Nabu," a name that is attested by an Aramaic papyrus found in Egypt.

8. Not defile himself. There were several reasons why a pious Jew would avoid eating of the royal food: (1) the Babylonians, like other pagan nations, ate unclean meats (see CD 30); (2) the beasts had not been properly killed according to Levitical law (Lev. 17:14, 15); (3) a portion of the animals eaten was first offered as a sacrifice to pagan gods (see Acts 15:29); (4) the use of luxurious and unhealthful food and drink was contrary to strict principles of temperance; (5) for Daniel and his friends there was the added desire to avoid a flesh-food diet (see EGW, Supplementary Material on Dan. 1:8). The Hebrew youth determined to do nothing that would interfere with physical, mental, and spiritual development.

9. Into favour. Compare the experience of Joseph (Gen. 39:4, 21), of Ezra (Ezra 7:28), and of Nehemiah (Neh. 2:8). It was doubtless the gentleness, courtesy, and fidelity displayed by these men that won for them the favor of their superiors (see PP 217; CD 31). At the same time they attributed their success to the blessing of God. God works with those who cooperate with Him. See p. 750.

10. Endanger my head. The sentence reads literally, "Ye make my head punishable with the king." The expression does not imply capital penalty, but, as James A. Montgomery has shown, simply means that the chief eunuch would be held responsible if those who had been committed to him deteriorated physically.

11. Melzar. Heb. *mešzar*, which, according to recently recovered Babylonian cuneiform records, was obviously derived from the Akkadian *maššaru*, which means “guardian,” or “warden.” The presence of “the” in the Hebrew is further indication that a proper name was not intended. Hence, the name of the lower official who acted as immediate tutor of the Hebrew apprentices is not known. Although Ashpenaz had been friendly and sympathetic to Daniel’s request, he nevertheless hesitated to help the young captive. Hence, Daniel went to the official who was the immediate tutor and placed before him a specific request.

12. Ten days. This seems a short period of time in which to produce any appreciable change in appearance and physical vigor. But habits of strict temperance had already provided Daniel and his companions with fundamentally sound constitutions (see PK 482) that responded to the benefits of a proper diet. Their recuperation from the rigors of the long march from Judea was, without doubt, more pronounced than that of other captives who had not already formed abstemious habits. Now, in the case of Daniel and his three companions, divine power was united with human effort, and the result was truly remarkable (cf. PP 214). The blessing of God attended the noble resolution of the youths not to defile themselves with the king’s dainties. They knew that indulgence in stimulating foods and drinks would prevent them from securing the highest physical and mental development. The Melzar felt certain that “an abstemious diet would render these youth pale and sickly in appearance . . . , while the luxurious food from the king’s table would make them ruddy and beautiful, and would impart superior physical activity” (CD 31), and he was surprised when the results were quite the opposite.

God honored these young men because of their unswerving purpose to do what was right. The approbation of God was dearer to them than the favor of the most powerful earthly potentate, dearer even than life itself (see CD 31). Nor had the firm resolution been born under the pressure of immediate circumstances. From childhood these young men had been trained in strict habits of temperance. They knew of the degenerating effects of a stimulating diet, and had long ago determined not to enfeeble their physical and mental powers by indulgence in appetite. The end of the period found them superior in physical appearance, physical activity, and mental vigor.

Daniel did not refuse the viands of the king in order to be singular. Many might reason that under the circumstances there was plausible excuse for departing from strict adherence to principle and that consequently Daniel was narrow, bigoted, and too particular. Daniel sought to live at peace with all and to cooperate to the fullest extent possible with his superiors as long as such cooperation did not require him to sacrifice principle. When fealty to Jehovah was involved, he was willing to sacrifice worldly honor, wealth, position, yea, even life itself.

Pulse. Heb. *zero‘im*, “food derived from plants,” such as cereals and vegetables. According to Jewish tradition, berries and dates were also comprehended in the term. Since dates are a part of the staple food of Mesopotamia, they seem likely to have been included here. See on v. 8.

17. These four children. See on v. 4.

Knowledge and skill. The instruction that Daniel and his three friends received was for them also a test of faith. The wisdom of the Chaldeans was allied with idolatry and pagan practices, and mixed sorcery with science, and learning with superstition. From

these things the Hebrew learners kept themselves aloof. How they avoided conflicts we are not told, but despite the corrupting influences they held fast to the faith of their fathers, as later tests of loyalty clearly show. The four young men learned the skills and sciences of the Chaldeans without adopting the heathen elements mingled with them.

Among the reasons why these Hebrews preserved their faith unsullied may be noted the following: (1) Their firm resolution to remain true to God. They had more than a desire or a hope for goodness. They *willed* to do right and to shun evil. Victory is possible only by the right exercise of the will (see SC 48). (2) Their dependence on the power of God. Though they valued human capabilities and recognized the necessity of human effort, they knew that these things of themselves would not guarantee success. They recognized that in addition to this there must be humble dependence and full reliance on God's power (see CD 154). (3) Their refusal to blunt their spiritual and moral natures by indulgence in appetite. They realized that a single departure from principle would have weakened their sense of right and wrong, which in turn would probably have led to other wrong acts, and in the end to complete apostasy (see CD 155). (4) Their consistent prayer life. Daniel and his youthful companions realized that prayer was a necessity, especially because of the atmosphere of evil that constantly surrounded them (see SL 20).

Visions and dreams. While Daniel's three friends were, like him, endowed with exceptional mental qualities, and equaled him in loyalty to their God, he was chosen as God's special messenger. Some modern scholars who deny that there is a genuine gift of prophecy have advanced the notion that this verse indicates that Daniel had a special gift for learning the Chaldean way of interpreting dreams and visions, and that in school contests on this subject he excelled his fellow students. Daniel did not belong to this type of dream interpreters. His prophetic gift was not the product of a successful training in the school of the royal soothsayers, sorcerers, and magicians. He was called of God to do a special work, and became the recipient of some of the most important prophecies of all time (see chs. 7–12).

18. At the end of the days. Some expositors have thought that when the king required his wise men to interpret his dream in his 2d year (ch. 2:1), Daniel was not called to the meeting because his schooling was not yet completed, and that he and his friends were condemned to share the fate of the wise men because they belonged to the profession, although they were not yet full-fledged members of it. This view cannot be regarded as correct. The young apprentices were to be trained three years in order to "stand before the king" (ch. 1:5); and it was "at the end of the days" specified that they were brought before the king for examination. Then "stood they before the king" (see on v. 19). This statement indicates that the three-year training period ended before the king examined them and "found" that Daniel and his three friends were better than all the other candidates. This could hardly have taken place after one of them, Daniel, had already received high honors and had been promoted to the rule of the province and supervision over all the wise men, and after the other three had been given high office (ch. 2:46–49). The logical sequence, as well as the narrative order, requires that Daniel's three-year course end before Nebuchadnezzar's dream in his 2d year.

All this leads to the conclusion that this was not a period of 36 months; that these three years must be counted inclusively; they represent (1) Nebuchadnezzar's accession year (see on v. 2), in which the Hebrew captives arrived in Babylon and entered their

training; (2) Nebuchadnezzar's year 1, which was the calendar year beginning at the next New Year's Day after his accession; and (3) Nebuchadnezzar's year 2, in which Daniel graduated and stood "before the king," and the year in which he interpreted the dream (see ch. 2:1; also PK 491).

By applying the commonly used ancient method of inclusive reckoning, which is attested in numerous cases as the usual way of counting time (see Vol. II, pp. 136, 137), there is no need to assert, as modern commentators have done, that ch. 1 stands chronologically in contradiction to ch. 2, or to take recourse in the fanciful or forced explanations that are found in many commentaries. For example, Jerome declared that the 2d year of ch. 2:1 refers to the 2d year after the conquest of Egypt; and the Jewish scholar Ibn Ezra thought that it was the 2d year after the destruction of Jerusalem. Later some conjectured that Nebuchadnezzar reigned with his father two years (see Vol. III, p. 91).

19. Communed with them. When, at the end of the training period, the chief eunuch presented his graduates to the king, an examination conducted personally by Nebuchadnezzar proved the four young Hebrews to be superior to all the others. "In physical strength and beauty, in mental vigor and literary attainment, they stood unrivaled" (PK 485). The manner of examination is not indicated. From a later description of Daniel's abilities given by Belshazzar's mother, who was probably a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, we learn that Daniel was known to her as a man able to "explain riddles, and solve problems" (ch. 5:12, RSV). The questions asked may have required the explanation of riddles, which has always been a favored sport in the court life of Oriental countries. The examination also may have included the solving of mathematical and astronomical problems, in which the Babylonians were masters, as their documents reveal, or a demonstration of ability to read and write the difficult cuneiform script.

The superior wisdom of Daniel and his youthful companions was not the result of chance or destiny, or even of a miracle, as that word is usually understood. The young men applied themselves diligently and conscientiously to their studies, and God blessed their endeavors. True success in any undertaking is assured when divine and human effort are combined. Human effort alone avails nothing; likewise divine power does not render human cooperation unnecessary (see PK 486, 487; cf. PP 214).

Among them all. This may refer to the other Israelite youths (v. 3) brought to Babylon along with Daniel and his friends, but doubtless also to the young noble captives from other lands who had received the same training as the Hebrews.

Stood they before the king. Compare v. 5 with ch. 2:2. That is, they entered the royal service. For similar usage of the words "stand before," see Gen. 41:46; 1 Sam. 16:21, 22; 2 Chron. 9:7; 10:6, 8; (cf. Num. 16:9; 27:21; Deut. 10:8; 2 Chron. 29:11).

20. Wisdom and understanding. Literally, "wisdom of understanding." Along with most other translations the KJV follows the ancient versions, which have an "and" between the words "wisdom" and "understanding." Certain commentators have explained the Hebrew construction to be the result of a desire on the part of the author to express the highest form of understanding or science, or to convey to his readers the thought that wisdom determined, or regulated, by understanding is meant; hence there was no magical knowledge or supernatural science. This would suggest that Daniel and his friends excelled the men of their profession in matters of exact science, such as astronomy and

mathematics, and in matters of linguistic studies. They had mastered cuneiform writing, the Babylonian and Aramaic languages, and the Aramaic square script.

Magicians. Heb. *chartummim*, a word occurring only in the Pentateuch (Gen. 41:8, 24; Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18) and in Daniel (here and in ch. 2:2). It is borrowed from the Egyptian *cheri-dem*, in which *cheri* means “chief,” or “outstanding man,” and *dem*, “to mention a name in magic.” Hence a *cheri-dem* is a “chief of magic,” or “chief magician.” According to our present knowledge this word was not used in Babylonia, and is nowhere found in cuneiform sources. Obviously Daniel had become acquainted with the term from his reading of the Pentateuch, and need not necessarily have been conversant with Egyptian technical terms. Daniel was well acquainted with the books of Moses and was a keen student of the sacred writings of his people (see ch. 9:2). The use of this Hebrew loan word from the Egyptian is an illustration of how his style and choice of words were influenced by the vocabulary of the portion of the Bible then available.

Astrologers. Heb. *'ashshaphim*, a loan word from the Akkadian *ashipu*, “exorciser.”

Divination, magic, exorcism, and astrology were widespread among the ancient peoples, but in some countries, like Babylonia, they were practiced by the men of science. Future events were divined by looking for signs in the entrails of sacrificed animals or in the flight of birds. Divination was especially practiced by inspecting the livers of sacrificed animals (hepatoscopy), and comparing them with inscribed “model” livers of clay. These models, like a modern manual of palmistry, contained detailed explanations of all form differences and directions for interpretation. Numerous clay liver models have come to light in the excavations of Mesopotamian sites. Ancient diviners had many methods. Sometimes they sought advice by pouring oil on water and interpreting the form of the spreading oil (lecanomancy), or by shaking arrows in the quiver and looking for the direction in which the first one falls (belomancy). See Eze. 21:21.

The diviner also interpreted dreams, worked out incantation formulas by which evil spirits or sicknesses allegedly could be banished, and asked advice from the supposed spirits of the dead (necromancy). Every Oriental potentate had many diviners and magicians in his service. They were at hand on every occasion, and followed their king on military campaigns, hunting expeditions, and state visits. Their counsel was sought for various decisions, such as the route to be followed, or the date for an attack on the enemy. The life of the king was largely regulated and ruled by these men.

It is a mistake to assume that the wise men of Babylon were only diviners and magicians. Though skilled in these arts, they were also scholars in the true sense. As in the Middle Ages alchemy was practiced by men of true scholarly education and astrology was frequently practiced by otherwise scientifically working astronomers, so the exorcisers and diviners of ancient times engaged also in strictly scientific studies. Their astronomical knowledge had attained to a surprisingly high degree of development, although the peak of Babylonian astronomy came after the Persian conquest. Astronomers were able to predict both lunar and solar eclipses by computation. Their mathematical skill was highly developed. They employed formulas whose discovery is erroneously but generally attributed to Greek mathematicians. Furthermore, they were good architects, builders, and acceptable physicians, who had found by empirical means the cure for many ailments. It must have been in these branches of knowledge and skill

that Daniel and his three friends exceeded the Babylonian magicians, astrologers, and scholars.

21. Unto the first year. Some commentators have held that there is an apparent contradiction between this verse and the statement of ch. 10:1 that Daniel received a vision in the 3d year of Cyrus. But the text does not necessarily imply that Daniel's life did not extend beyond the 1st year of Cyrus. Daniel may have referred to that date because of some special event that took place during that year. Some have suggested the event to be the decree of the first year of King Cyrus that marked the end of the Babylonian exile (2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3). That decree brought the fulfillment of an important prophecy that Daniel had carefully studied, namely, the prophecy of Jeremiah that the Exile would last 70 years (Jer. 29:10; Dan. 9:2). Daniel lived throughout the Exile from the first captivity, in 605 B.C. to the time when the decree was given by Cyrus, probably as late as the summer of 537 B.C. (see Vol. III, pp. 96, 97). Daniel may have desired to inform his readers that though he had been carried away in the first captivity, he was still alive at the time the Exile ended about 70 years later. Also, the conclusion seems warranted that ch. 1 and perhaps also some of the other chapters were not written until the 1st year of Cyrus. Such a date explains the use of loan words from the Persian. Daniel again occupied an official position, under the Persian rule, shortly after the fall of Babylon (Dan. 6:1, 2), and from his contact with Persian officials doubtless added to his vocabulary some of the Persian words he used in the composition of his book.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-21Ed 54, 55; FE 77-81; PK 479-490

1, 2 PK 422

1-4PK 428

2 Ed 54; PK 479

3, 4 PK 480

3-5SL 18

3-6MH 148; PP 592

4 FE 77; PK 484

4, 5 Te 271

5 CD 29; PK 481; 4T 570

6 PK 480

7 PK 481

8 CD 28, 30, 154; CE 43; CG 166; CH 50, 65; CT 478, 496; Ed 54; FE 78, 86, 227; ML 75, 120, 147, 254; MM 276; SL 19; Te 35, 101, 151, 189, 237, 271; 4T 515, 570; 5T 448; 9T 157, 165

8-12CH 64; PK 483

9 PK 546

10 SL 21

12 CD 31; FE 79

12-20SL 22

15-17PK 484

15-20CH 65; FE 80

17 CD 31, 154; CH 50, 65; COL 357; CT 456; FE 87, 225, 247, 339, 358; MM 89

17-20FE 193

18–20CH 65

19 CD 32; Te 271

19, 20 Ed 55; ML 147; MYP 241; PK 485

20 CH 50; FE 247, 358, 374; MM 276; Te 191; 6T 220

CHAPTER 2

1 *Nebuchadnezzar, forgetting his dream, requireth it of the Chaldeans, by promises and threatenings.* 10 *They acknowledging their inability are judged to die.* 14 *Daniel obtaining some respite findeth the dream.* 19 *He blesseth God.* 24 *He staying the decree is brought to the king.* 31 *The dream.* 36 *The interpretation.* 46 *Daniel's advancement.*

1. Second year. On the identification of the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and for an explanation of how the three years of Daniel's training (ch. 1:5, 18) were completed before the end of the king's 2d year see on ch. 1:18.

Dreamed dreams. Possibly the plural is intended to describe the series of incidents in the dream. The singular occurs in vs. 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. The records of ancient Mesopotamia tell of many royal dreams. In one of these Gudea saw a man with a kingly crown upon his head whose stature reached from earth to heaven. The ancients regarded dreams with awe, treated them as revelations from their deities, and sought to discover their true interpretation.

The Lord in His providence gave Nebuchadnezzar this dream. God had a message for the king of the Babylonian realm. There were representatives in the palaces of Nebuchadnezzar through whom God could communicate a knowledge of Himself. God is no respecter of men or of nations. His object is to save as many as are willing, of whatever tribe or nation. He was as anxious to save the ancient Babylonians as He was to save Israel.

The dream was intended to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar that the course of history was ordained by the Most High and subject to His will. Nebuchadnezzar was shown his place of responsibility in the great plan of Heaven, in order that he might have the opportunity of cooperating effectively with the divine program.

The lessons of history given to Nebuchadnezzar were designed for the instruction of nations and men till the close of time. Other scepters than those of Babylon have held sway over the nations of men. To every ancient nation God assigned a special place in His great plan. When rulers and people failed in their opportunity, their glory was laid in the dust. Nations today should heed the lessons of past history. Above the fluctuating scene of international diplomacy the great God of heaven sits enthroned "silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will" (PK 500). Eventually stability and permanence will come when God Himself, at the end of time, sets up His kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. (v. 44). See on ch. 4:17.

God approached King Nebuchadnezzar through a dream because, evidently, that was the most effective means by which to impress his mind with the importance of the message thus imparted, win his confidence, and secure his cooperation. Like all ancient peoples, Nebuchadnezzar believed in dreams as one of the means by which the gods revealed their will to men. Divine wisdom always meets men where they are. In communicating a knowledge of His will to men today God may use means that are less spectacular, yet as certainly ordained for the accomplishment of His beneficent purposes. He ever adapts His modes of working with men to the capacity of each individual and to the environment of the age in which each lives. See further on ch. 4:10.

Was troubled. Or, “was disturbed.” The Hebrew verb thus translated occurs also in Gen. 41:8 and Ps. 77:4. The dream experience had greatly impressed King Nebuchadnezzar.

2. Magicians. Heb. *chartummim*, an Egyptian loan word (see on ch. 1:20).

Astrologers. Heb. *'ashshaphim*, an Akkadian loan word (see on ch. 1:20).

Sorcerers. Heb. *mekashshephim*, from a root meaning “to use enchantments.” The Babylonians called them by the cognate word *kashshapu*. The *mekashshephim* professed to be able to produce magic spells (see on Ex. 7:11). The Mosaic law pronounced the death penalty upon those who practiced this black magic (Lev. 20:27; cf. 1 Sam. 28:9).

Chaldeans. Heb. *Kašdim* (see on ch. 1:4).

3. To know the dream. Though the king had been deeply impressed by the dream, when he awoke he found it impossible to recall the particulars (see PK 491). Some have suggested that Nebuchadnezzar had not forgotten his dream and that he was putting to the test the reputed skill of the supposedly wise men. But the king appears too concerned about gaining a knowledge of the dream and its interpretation to use the occasion to test his would-be interpreters.

4. Syriack. Heb. *'aramith*, “Aramaic.” The royal family and the ruling class of the empire were Aramaic-speaking Chaldeans originating from southern Mesopotamia. It is therefore not surprising to find that the king’s courtiers spoke to him in Aramaic and not in Babylonian, the tongue of the native population of Babylon. The Aramaeans were an important branch of the Semitic peoples, and their language included many dialects.

From this verse on to the end of ch. 7 the record is in Aramaic and not in Hebrew, as is the remainder of the book. On the possible reasons for this see p. 749.

O king, live for ever. The Babylonian formula found in contemporary inscriptions reads somewhat like this: “May Nabu and Marduk give long days and everlasting years to the king my lord.” Compare 1 Sam. 10:24; 1 Kings 1:31; Neh. 2:3; Dan. 3:9; 5:10; 6:21.

5. The thing is gone from me. Some scholars translate this expression so as to give it the meaning “the thing is certain with me,” or “the word is promulgated by me.” The RSV reads, “the word from me is sure.” These alternative translations are based on the assumption that the Aramaic word *'azda'* is an adjective rather than a verb, as the translators of the KJV considered it. The translation of the KJV is supported by the LXX and by Rashi, who translates *'azda'* “has gone.” Whatever meaning is adopted there is no question about Nebuchadnezzar’s being unable to recall the particulars of the dream (see on v. 3). The dream was purposely taken from the king, that the wise men should not place upon it a false interpretation (see FE 412).

Cut in pieces. Literally, “dismembered.” They were to be cut limb from limb (see 2 Macc. 1:16; Josephus *Antiquities* xv. 8. 4). Such cruelty as is here depicted was common in the ancient world. The Assyrians and Babylonians were notorious for the severity and barbarity of their treatment of offenders. Ashurbanipal reports that he cut in pieces rebel rulers.

Dunghill. Aramaic *newali*, which, from a similarity with an Akkadian root, some interpret as meaning “ruins.” Others retain the definition “dunghill,” or “refuse heap,” and interpret the clause as meaning that the houses would be turned into “public privies”

(see 2 Kings 10:27). The LXX supports neither interpretation, but reads, “your houses shall be spoiled.”

8. Gain the time. Literally, “buy the time.” The wise men were temporizing, and their repeated request aroused the suspicion of the king that they were seeking to gain and advantage by delay. It is doubtful whether at this point he was already seriously questioning their ability to give him the requested information. The whole fabric of his faith was built around a belief that the gods communicated with men through the various channels represented by these men. Their hesitancy to comply immediately with his request may at first have aroused his suspicion that they had conspired together to take advantage of him. If the dream contained a communication concerning action to be taken at an auspicious moment, delay would result in tragic loss. Certain communications through divinations demanded that action be undertaken at a precise moment, such as a particular conjunction of the planets. The expressions, “gain the time,” and “till the time be changed” (v. 9), may have reference to such a supposed opportune moment.

9. One decree for you. Literally, “your law is one.” The word for “decree” may also be rendered “sentence,” or “penalty.”

Time be changed. Either until the king should forget the whole affair or till they could invent some form of reply. “Time” here may also refer to the auspicious moment for carrying out the alleged communication of a god (see on v. 8).

10. Not a man. The Chaldeans were compelled to acknowledge their inability to reveal the dream. They told the king that he was asking for something that was beyond human power to reveal, and that no king had ever made such an unreasonable request of any of his subjects.

King, lord, nor ruler. Literally, “king, great and powerful.” “Great king” (see 2 Kings 18:28) is an old Babylonian title. Such an expression as “Great King, Mighty King, King of Assyria [or, of Babylon]” is common in the inscriptions.

11. Rare. Better, “difficult.”

Gods. Some see a hint here of two classes of gods. They suggest that these wise men claimed to be in communication with certain gods, such subordinate deities as were supposed to maintain contact with men, but that the higher gods were unapproachable. In any case the Chaldeans were revealing the limitations of their art.

Others suggest that the plural *'elahin*, “gods,” even as the Hebrew plural *'elohim* (see Vol. I, pp. 170, 171), could be used of a single deity, and that, in common with other polytheists, the Chaldeans recognized some supreme deity. In any case the wise men were frank to admit that they recognized a higher intelligence, some master mind or minds, that had knowledge beyond that possessed by human beings. This confession of failure provided a remarkable opportunity for Daniel to reveal something of the power of the God whom he served and worshiped.

12. Commanded to destroy. The severity of the sentence was not out of keeping with the customs of the times. It was, however, a bold step on the part of the king, because the men whose death he had ordered were the learned classes of society.

Babylon. Possibly only the city and not the whole realm of Babylonia.

13. They sought Daniel. Daniel and his friends would not have been “sought” had they not already become members of the profession of “wise men.” Thus the view that they were still in training seems unfounded (see on ch. 1:18). The fact that they had but recently graduated is sufficient to explain why they had not been called to interpret the

dream. The monarch would have summoned only the highest ranking leaders, representative of all the knowledge of their craft. Neither the king nor the leading wise men would have thought of calling on Daniel and his three friends any more than the top specialists of the land, baffled by a royal ailment, would consult fledgling doctors just out of medical school. Nor is it necessary to suppose that Daniel's training included courses in exorcism and soothsaying, as modern critics suggest (see on ch. 1:20).

14. Wisdom. Aramaic *te'em*, which may also be translated "taste," or "discretion." Daniel showed great tact in approaching his superior.

15. Hasty. The LXX has *pikros*, which means "bitter," or "harsh." Some scholars also assign this meaning to the Aramaic, whereas others insist that the original has the basic idea of urgency.

16. Give him time. One of the things that infuriated the king was that the wise men were seeking to postpone their answer (see on v. 8). Obviously the king was still troubled over the dream, and may have been happy over the new prospect of finding a solution to the mystery that was harassing his spirit. Since Daniel had not been consulted previously, the king may have thought it only fair to give him an opportunity. In his previous contact with this young Judean captive, Nebuchadnezzar had evidently been favorably impressed with Daniel's sincerity and ability. Daniel's previous faithfulness in lesser things now opened the door to greater things.

Interpretation. Daniel's request differed from that of the Chaldeans. The wise men demanded that the king relate to them the dream. Daniel simply requested time, and assured the king that the interpretation would be provided.

18. Desire mercies. Daniel and his companions could approach God with strong faith and implicit confidence because, to the best of their knowledge and ability, they were living up to His revealed will (see 1 John 3:22). They had the consciousness that they were in the place where God wanted them to be, and were doing the work that Heaven designed. If in their earlier experience they had compromised principle and had yielded to the temptations that constantly surrounded them in the royal court, they could not have expected such marked divine intervention in this crisis. Contrast their experience with that of the prophet of Judah who forfeited divine protection by his rash disobedience (1 Kings 13:11–32; see on 1 Kings 13:24).

19. Night vision. Aramaic *chazu*, akin to the Heb. *chazon* (see on 1 Sam. 3:1).

Daniel blessed. Upon receiving the divine revelation, Daniel's first thought was to return due praise to the Revealer of secrets, a worthy example of what all should do who receive signal blessings from the Lord.

On the meaning of the expression "blessed the God" see on Ps. 63:4.

20. Name of God. The expression is frequently used to denote the being, power, and essential activity of God. "Name" is often used in the Bible synonymously with "character."

Wisdom. Those who lack wisdom may receive it from its true source in response to the prayer of faith (James 1:5). The boasted claim of the Babylonians that their deities possessed wisdom and insight had been demonstrated to be false. Heathen deities continually disappoint their devotees.

21. And he. The pronoun is emphatic in the Aramaic. The effect may be shown in the English by the translation, "It is he that changeth," etc.

Times and the seasons. The two words are almost synonymous. The latter may refer to a more specific point of time; the former seems to stress more the idea of a period of time.

Removeth kings. Here is portrayed the true philosophy of human history. Kings and rulers are ultimately under the direction and control of an almighty Potentate (see Ed 173; see on v. 1 and on ch. 4:17).

Unto the wise. The Lord delights to bestow wisdom upon those who will use it wisely. He did this for Daniel, and He will do it today for every one who trusts fully in Him.

22. He revealeth. God reveals Himself in nature (Ps. 19), in personal experience, through the prophetic gift and other gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12), and His written Word.

Deep. Things beyond human comprehension until revealed.

Darkness. That which man is unable to see is not hidden from the eye of God (see Ps. 139:12; 1 John 1:5).

23. Thank thee. The pronoun is emphatic in the Aramaic. The word order in the original is as follows: “To thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks.”

What we desired. Although the dream has been revealed to Daniel, he does not take all the credit to himself, but includes his companions who prayed with him.

24. Destroy not the wise men. Daniel’s first concern was to plead for the wise men of Babylon, that the sentence of death upon them might be canceled. They had done nothing to earn their reprieve, but they were saved because of the presence of a righteous man in their midst. It has often been thus. The righteous are “the salt of the earth.” They have a preserving quality. Because of Paul’s presence in the ship the sailors and all aboard were saved (Acts 27:24). The wicked know not how much they owe to the righteous. Yet how often the wicked ridicule and persecute the very ones whom they should thank for the preservation of their lives.

25. In haste. Possibly because of his great joy that the secret had been discovered. He might now be spared the gory task of executing all the wise men, an assignment for which obviously he had no heart.

I have found. Arioch appears to take undeserved credit to himself, for his statement seems to imply that through strenuous efforts on his part he had discovered someone who could interpret the dream. However, Arioch may not have known of Daniel’s interview with the king (v. 16). In this case his statement would be the natural way of announcing the discovery.

26. Belteshazzar. For the meaning of this name and the reason why it was given to Daniel see on ch. 1:7. In Nebuchadnezzar’s presence Daniel naturally assumed his Babylonian name.

27. Cannot the wise men. Daniel had no desire to exalt himself above the wise men. He aimed, rather, to impress upon the king the futility of trusting his wise men for counsel and help. He hoped to turn the king’s eyes to the great God in heaven, the God whom Daniel worshiped, the God of the Hebrews, whose people had been conquered by the king.

The astrologers, the magicians. See on ch. 1:20.

Soothsayers. Aramaic *gazerin*, from a root meaning “to cut,” “to determine.” Hence the generally accepted meaning is “the deciders,” or “the determiners [of destiny].” From

the position of the stars, by various arts of computation and divining, these soothsayers thought they could determine the future (see on ch. 1:20).

28. Latter days. See on Isa. 2:2. The message of the dream was for the instruction of Nebuchadnezzar as well as of the rulers and people to the end of time (see on v. 1). The outline of prophecy carries us from Nebuchadnezzar's day (see on v. 29) down to the end of the world and the second coming of Christ (see on vs. 44, 45). Nebuchadnezzar had been looking forward with anxious forebodings to the future (see SL 34). God revealed to him the future, not to satisfy his curiosity, but to awaken in his mind a sense of personal responsibility toward the program of heaven.

29. Hereafter. In this dream are depicted future developments beginning with the time of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar and extending to the end of the world.

30. Their sakes. "Their" is a supplied word. The clause reads literally, "but on account of the thing that they may make known to the king the interpretation." "They" appears to be used impersonally. The LXX probably gives the simplest meaning of the passage, "Moreover, this mystery has not been revealed to me by reason of wisdom which is in me beyond all living, but for the sake of making known the interpretation to the king, that thou mightest know the thoughts of thine heart."

31. Image. Aramaic *ṣelem*, "a statue," corresponding to the Heb. *ṣelem*, which also may be translated "statue." In every instance except one (Ps. 39:6, where it is translated "vain shew") the KJV translates *ṣelem*, "image," though statue would be an appropriate translation in a number of instances, such as 2 Kings 11:18; 2 Chron. 23:17; Amos 5:26.

Whose brightness was excellent. Or, as in the LXX, "whose appearance was extraordinary."

Terrible. Or, "dreadful." The word occurs again in Dan. 7:7, 19.

32. Fine gold. That is, "pure gold."

Brass. Rather, "bronze," or "copper" (see on 2 Sam. 8:8; 1 Kings 7:47).

33. Legs. The word thus translated seems here to refer to the lower part of the legs. The word translated "thighs" (v. 32) refers to the upper part of the hips. Precisely where on the leg the transition from brass to iron occurred is not clear from these words.

Clay. Aramaic *chasaph*. From an examination of the cognate languages *chasaph* seems to designate an earthen vessel or a potsherd rather than the clay itself from which these objects are formed. The word for "clay," Aramaic *ṭin*, occurs in vs. 41, 43, in connection with *chasaph*, and is there translated "miry." It seems better, therefore, in v. 33 to translate *chasaph* "molded clay," or "earthenware," rather than simply "clay."

34. Cut out. Or, "quarried," or "broken out."

Without hands. That is, unaided by human agencies.

35. Chaff. For a description of threshing as carried out in ancient Oriental lands, see on Ruth 3:2; Matt. 3:12. Inasmuch as Inspiration has attached no particular significance to the "chaff" and the "wind" that blows it away (see on Matt. 13:3), it is best to consider them simply details added to complete the picture. For a description of the threshing floor as a common illustration, see on Ps. 1:4; (cf. Matt. 13:3; see Vol. III, p. 1111).

36. We will tell. The plural may indicate that Daniel classed his companions with himself. They had joined him in earnest prayer that the interpretation might be revealed, and Daniel may have wished to acknowledge their part in the matter (vs. 17, 18).

37. King of kings. This same title is found in the inscription of the Persian king Ariaramnes, a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar.

God of heaven hath given. In his inscriptions Nebuchadnezzar attributes his regal success to his god Marduk, but Daniel, in a kindly manner, corrects this mistaken idea. He affirms that it is the God of heaven who has bestowed such power upon him.

A kingdom. The territory that Nebuchadnezzar ruled had had a long and checkered history and had been under the varied leadership of different peoples and kingdoms. According to Genesis, the city of Babylon was part of the kingdom founded by Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:8–10). A number of city-states existed in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates at a very early period. Later, some states were grouped together into several Sumerian kingdoms. Following the first period of Sumer's domination came the kingdom of Akkad, with its great Semitic kings Sargon and Naram-Sin. However, these Semites were again replaced by various nations, such as the Gutti, Elamites, and Sumerians. They in turn had to give way to the Semites who founded the Old Babylonian Empire, which flourished in the time of the later patriarchs. This Amorite Empire, of which Hammurabi was the most important king, came to include all of Mesopotamia and expanded into Syria, like the Akkadian Empire of Sargon. Later, Mesopotamia was taken over by Hurrians and Kassites, and Babylonia became less important than the powerful Hittite and Egyptian empires. Then in northern Mesopotamia arose another world power, the Assyrian Empire, which again united Mesopotamia and Western Asia to the Mediterranean. After a period of Assyrian domination Babylon became independent again under Chaldean rule, and took over once more the leadership of the world. Nabopolassar (626–605 B.C.) was the founder of what is termed the Chaldean, or Neo-Babylonian, Empire, which had its golden age in the days of King Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 B.C.), and lasted until Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians in 539 (see Vol. II, pp. 92–94; Vol. III, pp. 45–50).

38. Beasts of the field. See Jer. 27:6; Jer. 28:14cf. Gen. 1:26. A fitting representation of Babylon's dominion in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. The manner in which ancient kings included the animal world in their sphere of domination is illustrated by a statement by Shalmaneser III: "Ninurta and Palil, who love my priesthood, have given me all the beasts of the field."

The following passage from the so-called East India House inscription is typical of archeological evidence which substantiates Daniel's description of Nebuchadnezzar's conquests:

"In his [Marduk's] exalted service I have traversed distant countries, remote mountains from the Upper Sea [Mediterranean] to the Lower Sea [Persian Gulf], steep paths, blockaded roads, where the step is impeded, [where] no foothold is possible, [also] uncharted routes, [and] desert paths. The disobedient I subjugated; I captured the enemies, established justice in the land; exalted the people; the bad and evil I removed far from the people."

Thou art this head. Nebuchadnezzar was the Neo-Babylonian Empire personified. The military conquests and the architectural splendor of Babylon were, in large measure, due to his prowess.

Gold. An abundance of gold was used in embellishing Babylon. Herodotus describes in lavish terms how gold sparkled in the sacred temples of the city. The image of the god, the throne on which he sat, and the table and the altar were made of gold (Herodotus i.

181, 183; iii. 1–7). The prophet Jeremiah compares Babylon to a golden cup (Jer. 51:7). Pliny describes the robes of priests as interlaced with gold.

Nebuchadnezzar was outstanding among the kings of antiquity. He left to his successors a great and prosperous kingdom, as may be gleaned from the following inscription:

“[From] the Upper Sea [to] the Lower Sea (one line destroyed) ... which Marduk, my lord, has entrusted to me, I have made ... the city of Babylon to the foremost among all the countries and every human habitation; its name I have [made, or elevated] to the [most worthy of] praise among the sacred cities. ... The sanctuaries of my lords Nebo and Marduk (as a) wise (ruler) ... always. ...

“At the time, the Lebanon (*La-ab-na-a-nu*), the [Cedar] Mountain, the luxurious forest of Marduk, the smell of which is sweet, the hi[gh] cedars of which, [its] pro[duct], another god [*has not desired*, which] no other king has *fe[lled]* ... my *nâbû* Marduk [had desired] as a fitting adornment for the palace of the ruler of heaven and earth, (this Lebanon) over which a foreign enemy was ruling and robbing (it of) its riches—its people were scattered, had fled to a far (away region). (Trusting) in the power of my lords Nebo and Marduk, I organized [my army] for a[n expedition] to the Lebanon. I made that country happy by eradicating its enemy everywhere (*lit.*: below and above). All its scattered inhabitants I led back to their settlements (*lit.*: collected and reinstalled). What no former king had done (I achieved): I cut through steep mountains, I split rocks, opened passages and (thus) I constructed a straight road for the (transport of the) cedars. I made the Arahtu flo[at] (down) and carry to Marduk, my king, mighty cedars, high and strong, of precious beauty and of excellent dark quality, the abundant yield of the Lebanon, as (if they be) reed stalks (carried by) the river. Within Babylon [*I stored*] mulberry wood. I made the inhabitants of the Lebanon live in safety together and let nobody disturb them. In order that nobody might do any harm [to them] I ere[cted there] a stela (showing) me (as) everlasting king”

(*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 307).

39. Another kingdom inferior. As silver is inferior to gold, the Medo-Persian Empire was inferior to the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Some commentators have explained the term “inferior” as meaning “lower down in the image,” or “below.” The expression correctly means “downward,” “earthward,” but in this verse Daniel is speaking, not of the relative position of metals, but of nations. As we contrast the two kingdoms, we find that though the latter covered more territory, it certainly was inferior in luxury and magnificence. The Median and Persian conquerors adopted the culture of the complex Babylonian civilization, for their own was far less developed.

This second kingdom of Daniel’s prophecy is sometimes called the Medo-Persian Empire, because it began as a combination of Media and Persia. It included the older Median Empire and the newer acquisitions of the Persian conqueror Cyrus. The second kingdom cannot be the Median Empire alone, as some contend, with Persia as the third. The Median Empire was contemporary with the Neo-Babylonian, not its successor. Media fell to Cyrus the Persian before Babylon did. The fact that after Belshazzar’s death Darius the Mede “was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans” (ch. 9:1) does not mean that there was a separate Median Empire after the Babylonian and before the Persians took over (see Vol. III, pp. 48–56, 94–96). Darius the Mede ruled in Babylon by permission of the real conqueror, Cyrus (see Additional Note Chapter 6), as Daniel obviously knew. The book of Daniel repeatedly refers to the nation that conquered Babylon, and that Darius represented, as that of “the Medes and Persians” (see on chs. 5:28; 6:8, 28), and it pictures that dual empire elsewhere as a single beast (see on ch. 8:3, 4).

The origin of the Medes and Persians is not clear, but it is believed that around 2000 B.C. a number of Aryan tribes, led by the Madai (Medes) began to migrate from what is

now southern Russia into what later became northern Persia, where they first appear in history in the 9th century (see on >Gen. 10:2; see Vol. III, pp. 50, 51). Among these Aryans were also the Persians, who settled in the Zagros Mountains bordering on Elam late in the 9th century B.C. Probably by 675 their ruler established himself as king of the city of Anshan. There he and his descendants ruled in comparative obscurity. At the beginning of the 6th century they were vassals of the Median king, ruling a relatively insignificant border state in the large Median Empire, which stretched from eastern Asia Minor around the north and east of the Babylonian Empire (see *The Rival Empires in Jeremiah's Time*; see Vol. III, pp. 50, 51).

In 553 or 550 B.C. Cyrus, who had become king of Persia as a vassal of the Median Empire, defeated Astyages of Media. Thus the formerly subordinate Persians became the dominant power in what had been the Median Empire. Since the Persians were the ruling power from the time of Cyrus on, it is now generally referred to as the Persian Empire. But the older prestige of Media was reflected in the phrase "Medes and Persians" applied to the conquerors of Babylon in Daniel's day and even later (Esther 1:19; etc.). The honorary position of Darius the Mede after the conquest of Babylon demonstrates Cyrus' deference to the Medes even after he himself wielded the actual power (see Vol. III, pp. 51–53, 95, 96).

Years before, under prophetic guidance, the prophet Isaiah had described the work of Cyrus (Isa. 45:1). This conqueror of Media soon defeated the neighboring tribes and ruled from Ararat in the north to southeastern Babylonia and the Persian Gulf in the south. To round out his empire, he defeated the rich Croesus of Lydia in 547 B.C. and took Babylon by strategy in 539 B.C. (see Vol. III, pp. 51–55). Cyrus recognized that the Lord had given him all these kingdoms (2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:2). For parallel prophecies concerning this empire, see on chs. 7:5; 8:3–7; 11:2.

Third kingdom. The successor of the Medo-Persian Empire was the "Greek" (more properly Macedonian or Hellenistic) Empire of Alexander and his successors (see ch. 8:20, 21).

The Hebrew word for Greece is *Yawan* (Javan), which is the name of one of the sons of Japheth. Javan is mentioned in the genealogy immediately after Madai, the progenitor of the Medes (see on Gen. 10:2). About the time the Israelites were settling in Canaan, those Indo-European tribes later called Greeks were migrating in successive waves into the Aegean region (mainland Greece, the islands, and the western coasts of Asia Minor), conquering or driving out the earlier Mediterranean inhabitants. These displacements were connected with the movement of the Peoples of the Sea (including the Philistines) into the eastern Mediterranean coastlands (see Vol. II, pp. 27, 33, 34). Ionian Greeks were found in Egypt in the time of Psamtik I (663–610 B.C.) and in Babylonia during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 B.C.), as attested by written records.

Greece was divided into small city-states with a common language but little concerted action. When we think of ancient Greece we think chiefly of the golden age of Greek civilization, under the leadership of Athens, in the 5th century B.C. This flowering of Greek culture followed the period of the greatest united effort of the divided city-states—the successful defense of Greece against Persia about the time of Queen Esther. On the Persian wars, see on ch. 11:2; see also Vol. III, pp. 59–62.

The "Grecia" of ch. 8:21 does not refer to the divided city-states of classical Greece, but rather to the later Macedonian kingdom that conquered Persia. The Macedonians, a

kindred nation north of Greece proper, conquered the Greek cities and incorporated them for the first time into a strong, united state. Alexander the Great, inheriting his father's newly expanded Greco-Macedonian kingdom, set out to extend Macedonian dominion and Greek culture eastward, and conquered the Persian Empire. The prophecy represents the kingdom of Greece as following Persia, because Greece never became united into a kingdom until the formation of the Macedonian Empire, which replaced Persia as the leading world power of that time (for parallel prophecies see on chs. 7:6; 8:5–8, 21, 22; 11:2–4).

The last reigning king of the Persian Empire was Darius III (Codomannus), who was defeated by Alexander at the battles of Granicus (334 B.C.), Issus (333 B.C.), and Arbela, or Gaugamela (331 B.C.). For comments on the period of Alexander and the Hellenistic monarchies see on ch. 7:6; see also historical article on the intertestament period in Vol. V.

Brass. That is, bronze (see on 2 Sam. 8:8). The Greek soldiers were noted for their brazen armor. Their helmets, shields, and battle-axes were made of brass. Herodotus tells us that Psamtik I of Egypt saw in invading Greek pirates the fulfillment of an oracle that foretold “men of bronze coming from the sea” (Herodotus i. 152, 154).

Rule over all the earth. History records that the rule of Alexander extended over Macedonia, Greece, and the Persian Empire, including Egypt and extending eastward to India. It was the most extensive empire of the ancient world up to that time. Its dominion was “over all the earth” in the sense that no power on earth was equal to it, not that it covered the whole world, or even the known world of that time. A “world power” may be defined as the one that stands above all the rest, invincible, not necessarily actually governing the whole known world. Superlative statements were commonly used by ancient rulers. Cyrus called himself “king of the world, ... king of the four rims [quarters of the world].” Xerxes styled himself “the great king, the king of kings, ... the king of this big and far [reaching] earth.”

40. Fourth kingdom. This is not the later, divided stage of Alexander's empire, but the next empire, which conquered the Macedonian world. Daniel elsewhere represents the Hellenistic monarchies, the divisions of Alexander's empire, by the Grecian goat's four horns (ch. 8:22), not by a separate beast (compare the four heads of the leopard; see on ch. 7:6).

It is obvious that the kingdom that succeeded the divided remnants of the Macedonian Empire of Alexander was what Gibbon has aptly called the “iron monarchy” of Rome, though it was not a monarchy at the time it first became the leading world power. Early Rome was settled, long before the traditional date of 753 B.C., by Latin tribes who had come into Italy in successive waves about the time other related Indo-European tribes had settled in Greece. From about the 8th to the 5th century the Latin city-state was ruled by neighboring Etruscan kings. Roman civilization was strongly influenced by the Etruscans, who came to Italy in the 10th century, and especially by the Greeks, who arrived two centuries later.

About 500 B.C. the Roman state became a republic, and remained a republic for nearly 500 years. By 265 B.C. all Italy was under Roman control. By 200 B.C. Rome had emerged victorious from the life-and-death struggle with her powerful North African rival Carthage (originally a Phoenician colony). Henceforth Rome was mistress of the western Mediterranean, and more powerful than any of the states in the east, although she

had not yet come to grips with them. From then on Rome first dominated and then absorbed, in turn, the three surviving kingdoms of Alexander's successors (see on ch. 7:6), and thus became the next great world power after Alexander's. This fourth empire was the longest lived and most extensive of the four, stretching in the 2d Christian century from Britain to the Euphrates. For a parallel prophecy see on ch. 7:7.

Breaketh in pieces. All that we have been able to reconstruct of Roman history confirms this description. Rome won her territory by the force or the fear of her armed might. At first she intervened in international affairs in a struggle for her life against her rival, Carthage, and was drawn into war after war. Then, crushing one opponent after another, she finally became the aggressive, irresistible conqueror of the Mediterranean world and Western Europe. At the beginning of the Christian Era and a little later, the iron might of the Roman legions stood back of the Pax Romana—the Roman peace. Rome was the largest and strongest empire the world had hitherto known.

41. Toes. Though mentioning the toes, Daniel does not specifically call attention to their number. He does mention that the kingdom was to be divided (see 1T 361). Many commentators have held that the toes, of which there were presumably 10, correspond to the 10 horns of the fourth beast of ch. 7 (see on ch. 7:7).

Miry clay. See on v. 33. Rome had lost its iron tenacity and strength, and its successors were manifestly weak, like the admixture of clay with the iron.

42. Partly strong. These barbarian kingdoms differed greatly in military prowess, as Gibbon states when he refers to “the powerful monarchies of the Franks and the Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Sueves and Burgundians.”

Broken. Literally, “fragile,” “brittle.”

43. With the seed of men. Many commentators refer this to royal intermarriages, though the intent of the statement may be wider. The word for man is *'enash*, “mankind.” “Seed” means descendants. Hence there may also be a general indication of a shifting back and forth of populations, but with nationalism continuing strong. The original LXX version has several variations from the Masoretic text, vs. 42, 43 reading: “And the toes of the feet a certain part of iron and a certain part of earthenware, a certain part of the kingdom shall be strong and a certain part shall be broken. And as you saw the iron mixed with earthenware, there shall be mixings among nations [or, among generations] of men, but they shall not agree [literally, “be like-minded”], nor be friendly with one another even as it is impossible to mix iron with clay.” Theodotion's translation of Daniel, which practically displaced the original Greek translation, known as the LXX, is more like the Masoretic text, but even it shows variations: “And the toes of the feet a certain part of iron and a certain part of clay, a certain part of the kingdom shall be strong and from it [a part] shall be broken. Because you saw the iron mixed with earthenware, there shall be mixings in the seed of men and they shall not cleave this one with this one according as iron is not mixed with earthenware.”

It is difficult to evaluate the authority of the LXX in any given statement; hence it is impossible for us to know to what extent the above readings may have preserved Daniel's original words. Interestingly, the recently discovered Chester Beatty Papyri, in the Daniel section dating from the beginning of the 3d century A.D., contain the original LXX version rather than the translation of Theodotion.

Shall not cleave. Daniel's prophecy has stood and will stand the test of time. Some world powers have been weak, others strong. Nationalism has continued strong. Attempts

to unite into one great empire the various nations that grew out of the fourth empire have ended in failure. Temporarily certain sections have been united, but the union has not proved peaceful or permanent.

There have also been many political alliances among the nations. Farseeing statesmen have tried in various ways to bring about a federation of nations that would operate successfully, but all such attempts have proved disappointing.

The prophecy does not specifically declare that there could not be a temporary union of various elements, through force of arms or political domination. It does declare, however, that the constituent nations, should such a union be attempted or effected, would not become organically fused, and that they would remain mutually suspicious and unfriendly. A federation created on such a foundation is doomed to crumble. The temporary success of some dictator or nation must, therefore, not be labeled a failure of Daniel's prophecy. In the end Satan will actually be able to achieve a temporary union of all nations (Rev. 17:12–18; cf. Rev. 16:14; GC 624), but the federation will be brief, and in a short time the elements composing this union will turn on one another (GC 656; EW 290).

44. Set up a kingdom. Many commentators have attempted to make this detail of the prophecy a prediction of the first advent of Christ and the subsequent conquest of the world by the gospel. But this “kingdom” was not to exist contemporaneously with any of those four kingdoms; it was to succeed the iron-and-clay phase, which had not yet come when Christ was here on earth. The kingdom of God was still future at the time, as He clearly stated to His disciples at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:29). It is to be set up when Christ comes at the last day to judge the living and the dead (2 Tim. 4:1; cf. Matt. 25:31–34).

45. Stone. Aramaic *'eben*, identical with the Heb. *'eben*, “a single stone,” used of slabs, sling stones, hewn stones, stone vessels, precious stones. The word “rock,” frequently used of God (Deut. 32:4, 18; 1 Sam. 2:2; etc.), is from the Heb. *šur* rather than *'eben*. It cannot be established that there is any necessary connection between Daniel's symbol for the kingdom of God and the figure of a rock or stone used elsewhere. The interpretation offered by Daniel is of itself sufficient to identify the symbol.

Without hands. This kingdom has a superhuman origin. It is to be founded, not by the ingenious hands of man, but by the mighty hand of God.

46. Fell upon his face. A mark of respect and reverence. Such expressions of respect are frequently noted in the OT (Gen. 17:3; 2 Sam. 9:6; 14:4).

Worshipped. Aramaic *segad*, a word that normally seems to imply actual worship. The king was already upon his face; so it may mean more than “bow down”. *Segad* is used throughout ch. 3 to describe the worship of the golden image demanded by the king but refused by the Hebrews. The Hebrew words for “oblation” and “sweet odours,” combined with the word for “offer,” also strongly imply worship. Whether Daniel permitted these acts without remonstrance we are not told. The record says only that Nebuchadnezzar commanded that an oblation and sweet odors should be offered to Daniel, but does not say that the actions were carried out. Daniel may have tactfully called attention to what he had already positively affirmed, that the revelation came from

the God of heaven and that he had not received it because of any superiority in wisdom (see on v. 30).

In the light of Peter's refusal of the worship of Cornelius (Acts 10:25, 26), of Paul and Barnabas' rejection of the adoration of the men of Lystra (Acts 14:11–18), and of the angel's reproof of John when he fell at his feet to worship him (Rev. 19:10), many think it unlikely that Daniel would have permitted the king to worship him. Others reason that, inasmuch as God accepts sincerity of motive when men follow the best light they have, Daniel may have been directed not to interfere in the matter at this time. Many commentators follow the suggestion of Jerome that Nebuchadnezzar was not worshipping Daniel, but through Daniel was adoring Daniel's God. They also call attention to Josephus' record of how Alexander the Great bowed before the Jewish high priest, and when Parmenio, the king's general, inquired concerning the meaning of this act, Alexander replied, "I did not adore him but that God who hath honored him with his high priesthood" (*Antiquities* xi. 8. 5). However, a strict reading of the second commandment of the Decalogue brings all such acts under most serious question.

As yet Nebuchadnezzar knew but little of the true God, and even less of how to worship Him. Thus far his acquaintance with God was limited to what he had seen of the divine character reflected in the life of Daniel and to what Daniel had told him of God. It is entirely possible that Nebuchadnezzar, seeing in Daniel the living representative of "the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh" (v. 11), intended the acts of worship he accorded Daniel to be in honor of Daniel's God. With his limited knowledge of the true God, Nebuchadnezzar was doubtless doing the best he knew at the time to express his thankfulness and to honor the One whose wisdom and power had been so impressively demonstrated.

An oblation. The Hebrew word corresponding to the Aramaic word here used generally denotes a bloodless offering (see on ch. 9:21).

Sweet odours. That is, incense.

47. Your God is a God of gods. Better, "your God is God of gods." The expression is in the superlative degree. Nebuchadnezzar, who called his patron god Marduk "lord of gods," here acknowledges that Daniel's God is infinitely superior to any of the so-called gods of the Babylonians.

Lord of kings. Nebuchadnezzar evidently knew that this was a title applied to Marduk in the Babylonian creation story; he himself annually received his kingship anew from Marduk in the New Year festival. Further, he was named for Nabu, the son of Marduk, the scribe who wrote the Tablets of Fate.

Nebuchadnezzar was himself a man of superior intelligence and wisdom, as his provision for the professional training of court officials (ch. 1:3, 4) and his ability to evaluate their "wisdom and understanding" (vs. 18–20) make clear. Imperfect as was Nebuchadnezzar's concept of the true God, he now had irrefutable proof that Daniel's God was infinitely wiser than either the wise men or the gods of Babylon. Later experiences were to convince King Nebuchadnezzar with respect to additional attributes of the God of heaven (see on chs. 3:28, 29; 4:34, 37; see also p. 751).

48. Chief of the governors. Better, "chief prefect." Daniel did not interpret the dream with a view to obtaining any reward from the king. His one aim was to exalt God before the king and all the people of Babylon.

49. Daniel requested. Daniel did not become intoxicated by the great honors that had been conferred upon him. He remembered his comrades. They had shared in the prayer (v. 18); they shared also in the reward.

Gate. The place where Oriental kings sat as judges and where chief councils convened (see on Gen. 19:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–49FE 410–413; PK 491–502; 7T 151

1, 2 FE 410

1–4PK 491

1–5SL 34

4–12FE 410

5–11PK 492

12 SL 34

12–18PK 493

13–19FE 374

16–18FE 411

16–19SL 35

19–26PK 494

20–22FE 374

20–28FE 374

21 Ed 175

22 MH 433; 8T 282

24–30AA 13; 6T 227

27, 28 SL 36

27–36PK 497

28 FE 411

37 PK 514

31–49T 161

37–43PK 498, 548

38 Ed 175; PK 504

42, 43 1T 361

44 DA 34; 1T 360

44, 45 PK 503

44–49PK 499

46–49FE 412

47 Ed 56; PK 503, 513; SL 36; 6T 220

CHAPTER 3

1 *Nebuchadnezzar dedicateth a golden image in Dura.* 8 *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are accused for not worshipping the image.* 13 *They, being threatened, make a good confession.* 19 *God delivereth them out of the furnace.* 26 *Nebuchadnezzar seeing the miracle blesseth God.*

1. Nebuchadnezzar. No date is given for the events of this chapter. The name of the king is the only indication as to when these events occurred. The LXX and Theodotion's Greek translation date the events in Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year. Some scholars regard this as an interpolation. They reason that the translators believed that the colossal statue was erected to mark the final capture of Jerusalem. However, that city was not destroyed

in Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year, but rather in his 19th (2 Kings 25:8–10). The date 580 B.C., long given in the margin of the KJV, is derived from Ussher's chronology (see Vol. I, pp. 179, 195) and has no adequate historical basis. Some commentators have even placed the narrative in the period following Nebuchadnezzar's madness described in ch. 4, but this position is untenable, as will be shown.

This much is certain, the events narrated in this chapter occurred later than those of the 2d chapter, because ch. 3:12, 30 refers to ch. 2:49. Further, a comparison of Nebuchadnezzar's addresses of praise in ch. 3:28, 29 and ch. 4:34–37 indicates that the king's madness was a later event. Secular history is of no help in dating this event, since extra-Biblical records of that time nowhere mention the incident. However, a court almanac written in the year 570/569 B.C. excludes that year from consideration as a possible date and makes it highly improbable that the event had taken place recently. This almanac gives a list of all the highest state officials in office during that year. Neither Daniel nor his three friends are mentioned. Since the event described in Dan. 3 resulted in a promotion of the three Hebrews, and since it is unlikely that they were removed from office soon after their promotion—at least all three of them—a considerable time may have elapsed between the experience narrated in ch. 3 and the date of the court almanac.

The influence of the dream of ch. 2 on the events of ch. 3 (see PK 504, 505) strongly suggests that the events of ch. 3 cannot be dated in the latter part of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Some have suggested the date 594/593, for the following reasons: This date coincides with the 4th year of Zedekiah, who in that year made a journey to Babylon (Jer. 51:59). It is possible that the journey was undertaken in reply to the summons of Nebuchadnezzar that all his governors and vassal "rulers of the provinces" (Dan. 3:2) appear in Babylon to give homage to the image the king had erected. Zedekiah, a weak and vacillating character, would hardly be expected to have religious scruples such as made it impossible for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to obey the king's command. However, the dating of this event in the time of Zedekiah is no more than a possibility. See further SL 27.

Why Daniel is not mentioned in the narrative is a question that cannot be answered. Whether he was ill or absent on an important mission cannot be known. Some have conjectured that because of embarrassment at having rejected the message of the dream, the king arranged to have Daniel away on important business for the crown. However, of one thing we may be certain: had the test come to him, Daniel would have stood as loyal as his three companions.

Image of gold. The image of ch. 2 represented Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom by a golden head (v. 38). Not satisfied with this symbol, the king devised an image made of gold from the head to the feet, by which he desired to symbolize the perpetual and universal glory of his empire, and a kingdom that would not be followed by one of inferior quality.

Threescore cubits. The figures giving the measurements of the image witness to the use of the sexagesimal system (a system founded on the number 60) in Babylonia, a use attested also by cuneiform sources. The sexagesimal system of reckoning was an invention of the Babylonians. The system has certain advantages over the decimal system. For example, 60 is divisible evenly by 12 factors, whereas 100 is divisible evenly by only 9 factors. The system is still in use for certain measurements, such as of seconds, minutes, hours. It was therefore natural for the Babylonians to construct this image

according to measurements of the sexagesimal system. The mentioning of this detail gives a true Babylonian color to the narrative.

Critics have pointed to the proportions of the image, 60 x 6 cu., about 87 1/2 by 83/4 ft. (26.7 by 2.7 m.), as evidence of the legendary character of the story, because the proportions of the human figure are less than 5 to 1. However, we do not know the appearance of the image. It is quite possible that the human portion itself was less than half of the total height and stood on a pedestal 30 or more cu. high, so that the whole structure, pedestal and image, was 60 cu. high. The modern Statue of Liberty has a total height of 305 ft., but more than half of this is the pedestal; the human figure is only 111 ft. from heel to top of head. J. A. Montgomery observes that the Aramaic word *šelem*, here translated “image,” is used in a 7th century B.C. Aramaic inscription from Nerab, near Aleppo, to describe a stele that is but partly sculptured. Only the top is decorated with the relief of the bust of a human body. Hence *šelem*, “image,” is not limited to a description of a human figure or other likeness but may include a pedestal as well.

Parallels to this enormous image are easily found in history. Pausanias describes the Amyclean Apollo, a slender column provided with head, arms, and feet, in the human form. The so-called Colossi of Memnon at ancient Thebes in Upper Egypt, in reality representations of King Amenhotep III, were built of stone. The ruins still stand, one being 65 ft. (19.8 m.) high. The best ancient parallel is perhaps the Colossus at Rhodes representing the god Helios. It was built from the war material left behind when Demetrius Poliorcetes raised his unsuccessful siege of the island in 305–04 B.C. The Colossus was 12 years in building. It was built of metal sheets covering a supporting framework, and reached a height of 70 cu., 10 cu. higher than Nebuchadnezzar’s image. About 225 B.C. an earthquake demolished the Colossus. It then lay in ruins for nearly 900 years, until the Saracens sold it for scrap metal. The Jew who purchased it broke it up and probably turned the metal back into war weapons.

Plain of Dura. The name of this plain survives in the name of a tributary of the Euphrates called *Nahr Dūra*, which enters the Euphrates 5 mi. (8 km.) below Hilla. Some neighboring hills also bear the name Dura. According to a tradition current among the inhabitants of Iraq today, the events described in ch. 3 took place at Kirkuk, which is now the center of the Iraqi oil fields. The tradition may have originated because burning gases formerly escaped from fissures in the ground at several places in the area, also because great amounts of combustible material like oil and asphalt were found there. The tradition, of course, must be rejected. The incident occurred near Babylon. Dura lay “in the province of Babylon.”

2. Princes. The Aramaic *’achashdarpan*, “prince,” or “satrap,” was formerly considered as being of Persian origin. This view has now been abandoned, for cuneiform sources show that under the form *satarpanu* the word was used as early as the time of Sargon II (722–705 B.C.). A Hurrian origin has now been suggested. The Persians evidently took over this official title from the west. Hence the use of this title in the time of Nebuchadnezzar is by no means out of place. See further on Esther 3:12.

In Persian times this title designated officials at the head of satrapies, the largest divisions of the empire.

Governors. The Aramaic word *segan* is correctly translated “governors,” but also means “perfects.” It comes from the Akkadian *shaknu*, which has the same meaning. These officials administered provinces, the sections into which the satrapies were divided.

Captains. Aramic *pechah*, a synonym of *signin* (see the preceding comment under “governors”).

Judges. The Aramaic word *'adargazar*, “judge,” has so far been found only in the middle-Persian from *andarzaghar*, meaning “counselor.” That it has not been attested in earlier texts does not prove that it was not in existence before the Persian period, because practically every discovery of a new inscription reveals words previously not known to have existed so early.

Treasurers. The origin of the Aramaic word *gedabar* has not as yet been determined.

Counsellors. The Aramaic *dethabar* literally means “lawbearer,” hence, “judge.” The word is found in cuneiform sources in the cognate form *databari*.

Sheriffs. Aramaic *tiphay*, “sheriff,” or “police officer.” The word is found in the same form and with the same meaning in Aramaic papyri from Elephantine (on these papyri see Vol. III, pp. 79–83).

Rulers. The Aramaic *shilton*, “ruler,” from which the title sultan is derived. The term designates all the lower officials of any importance.

3. Then the princes. The repetition of all the titles, so characteristic of Semitic rhetoric, like the subsequent fourfold listing of the orchestral instruments (vs. 5, 7, 10, 15), is not found in the original LXX translation, possibly because such repetitions were objectionable to the classical taste. However, the later Greek translation of Theodotion preserves the repetition.

4. Herald. Aramic *karoz*, generally considered to be of Greek origin (cf. the Gr. *kerux*). Years ago critics offered this as one of the proofs for the late origin of the book of Daniel. H. H. Schaefer, however, has shown that the word is of Iranian origin (*Iranische Beiträge* I [Halle, 1930], p. 56).

5. Cornet. For a general discussion of Hebrew musical instruments see Vol. III, pp. 29–42. Here, however, a Babylonian orchestra is described, in which several instruments vary from those in use among the ancient Hebrews.

Flute. Aramaic *mashroqi*, which designates the flute or pipe, as does the same word in Syriac and Mandaean.

Harp. Aramic *qithros*, “harp.” *Qithros* is generally considered to have come from the Greek *kitharis*, or *kithara*, “zither.” Thus far there is no known evidence from the inscriptions for an Akkadian or Iranian derivation. However, it would not be strange to find certain Greek loan words in a book written in Babylonia. We know from cuneiform texts of Nebuchadnezzar’s time that Ionians and Lydians were among the many foreigners employed on royal building projects. These carpenters and artisans may have

introduced into Babylonia certain musical instruments formerly unknown there. It would be only natural that, with their acceptance by the Babylonians, the Greek names for these instruments would be taken over. In this way the existence of Greek names for certain musical instruments can easily be explained.

Sackbut. A mistransliteration of the Aramaic *sabbeka'* (in vs. 7, 10, 15 *šabbeka'*), probably through a similarity of sounds. The English word denotes an early form of slide trombone. The *sabbeka'* was a triangular instrument with four strings and a bright tone.

Although the name appears in Greek as *sambukē* and in Latin as *sambuca*, it is not of Western origin, as Lidzbarski has shown. The Greeks and Romans took over the name, along with the musical instruments, from the Phoenicians, a fact also attested by Strabo, who says (*Geography* x. 3. 17) that the word is of “barbarian” origin.

Psaltery. Aramaic *pesanterin*, which the LXX renders *psalterion*. The English “psaltery” is derived from the Greek through the Latin. The *psalterion* was a stringed instrument of triangular shape, with the sounding board above the strings.

Dulcimer. Aramaic *sumponeyah*. The word appears in Greek (*sumphonia*) as a musical term and as the name of a musical instrument, a bagpipe. The first reference to this instrument in literature outside of Daniel is found in Polybius (xxvi. 10; xxxi. 4), who describes the *sumphonia* as an instrument playing a role in anecdotes connected with King Antiochus IV. However, the instrument is depicted on a Hittite relief of Eyuk, a town about 20 mi. north of Boghazköy in central Anatolia, as early as the middle of the second millennium B.C. The relief seems to indicate that, as in later times, the bagpipe was made of the skin of a dog.

Worship the golden image. So far the narrative has said nothing concerning the fact that worship of the image would be demanded. The invitation sent to all leading officials in Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom to gather in the plain of Dura, as far as the record goes, spoke only of the dedication of the image (v. 2), although people accustomed to the idolatrous practices of the time may have had no doubt as to the reason for the erection of the image. The payment of homage to the image would give proof of subjection to the power of the king, but at the same time show a recognition that the gods of Babylonia—the gods of the empire—were supreme over all local gods.

6. Whoso falleth not down. The king and his counselors, apparently expecting instances of refusal, threatened with the most cruel punishment any who refused to obey the command. Exclusive of the Jews, whose religious convictions prohibited their bowing down before any image (Ex. 20:5), ancient peoples did not object to worshiping idols. Hence the refusal to bow down before Nebuchadnezzar’s image would be regarded as proof of hostility toward Nebuchadnezzar and his government. Whether the king had anticipated the difficult position into which he forced his loyal Jewish servants, we do not know. It may be that he sent Daniel on a journey, to spare him the embarrassment (see on v. 1). From his contacts with Daniel the king must have known that a faithful Jew would refuse to worship the image, and that such a refusal could not be interpreted as a sign of disloyalty.

Fiery furnace. Although there are not many ancient examples of this kind of death penalty on record, a few are attested. One comes from the 2d millennium B.C., in which servants are threatened with this punishment. It is noteworthy that the same word that

Daniel used for furnace (*'attun*) is also found in the Babylonian cuneiform text (*utûnum*). The second example comes from Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law Nergal-sharusur. In one of his royal inscriptions he claims to have "burned to death adversaries and disobedient ones." Compare Jer. 29:22.

The fiery furnace was probably a brickkiln. Since all buildings were constructed of bricks, many of them of burned bricks, kilns were numerous in the vicinity of ancient Babylon. Excavations show that ancient brickkilns were similar to modern ones, which are found in that area in great numbers. These kilns are ordinarily cone-shaped structures built of bricks. The unbaked bricks to be fired line the inner walls. An opening on one side of the wall permits fuel to be thrown into the interior. Fuel consists of a mixture of crude oil and chaff. A tremendous heat is thus produced, and through the opening the observer can see the fired bricks heated to a white glow.

8. Certain Chaldeans. Obviously members of the caste of magician-scientists and astrologer-astronomers, rather than members of the Chaldean nation as contrasted with citizens of the Jewish nation (see on ch. 1:4). Racial and nationalistic antagonisms were not involved so much as professional envy and jealousy. The accusers were members of the same caste to which the three loyal Jews belonged.

Accused. Aramaic *'akalu qarṣehon*, a colorful expression, prosaically rendered by the English "accused." A literal translation would be "they ate the pieces of," or "they gnawed at," hence, figuratively, "they calumniated," "they slandered," or "they accused." The Aramaic expression, with a similar meaning, is found also in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and other Semitic languages.

9. O king, live for ever. See on ch. 2:4.

12. Thou hast set. A clear reference to the promotion recorded at the close of the preceding chapter (ch. 2:49). The mention of the exalted official rank of these Jews was designed to emphasize the dangerous feature connected with the disobedience of such men, also to direct attention to the seriousness of their ingratitude toward their royal benefactor. On the other hand, the fact that the Chaldeans gave prominence to the official position to which these Jews had been raised by the king suggests that their denunciation arose from jealousy. Their words also contained hidden insinuations against the king, and virtually blamed him for a lack of political foresight by appointing to high administrative offices foreign prisoners of war from whom naturally no loyalty toward the Babylonian king and his gods could be expected. This, they implied, the king should have foreseen.

14. Do not yet serve? Nebuchadnezzar's opening question was based on the first part of the accusation of the Chaldeans. It must have been generally known that these Jewish officials did not worship the Babylonian idols. But because the king himself had recognized the God they served as "a God of gods, and a Lord of kings" (ch. 2:47), there had previously been no valid reason to accuse these men of subversive acts. Now, however, a direct command had been neglected, even despised, and the bold refusal to comply with the royal order to worship the image was probably interpreted as though the king's tolerance toward these deviators was leading to defiance and rebellion. This would account for Nebuchadnezzar's rage and fury.

15. Who is that God? This need not be considered direct blasphemy against the God of the Jews. Nevertheless it was a challenge addressed to Jehovah in a presumptuous spirit and with a haughty sense of superior power. Some have compared these words with those spoken by the Assyrian king Sennacherib, "Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest,

deceive thee” (Isa. 37:10). But Nebuchadnezzar’s case was somewhat different. Sennacherib elevated his gods above Jehovah, the God of the Jews, but Nebuchadnezzar declared only that deliverance out of the fiery furnace was a work that no god could accomplish. In this acknowledgment he did no more than indirectly liken the God of the Jews to his own gods, with whose impotence in such matters he was sufficiently acquainted.

16. Careful. From the Aramaic *chashach*, “to be in need of.” The response of the defendants may be translated, “We have no need to answer you in this matter” (RSV). Some have interpreted this reply as highly arrogant, and have pointed to martyrs reacting similarly toward their persecutors. Yet J. A. Montgomery has shown that the term “to answer” is to be interpreted in a legal sense. Analogies from cognate and other languages show that the sense is to “make defense,” or “apology.” Since the defendants did not deny the truth of the indictment, they saw no need to make a defense. Their case rested in the hands of their God (see v. 17), and they made their answer in complete submission to His will, whatever might be the outcome of their trial. That they were not sure of coming through this experience alive can be seen from their further statement (v. 18). Had they been sure of deliverance, their reply could be interpreted as revealing spiritual arrogance. As the case stood, their attitude showed their firm conviction that their course of action was the only feasible one, which needed no defense, or even further explanation.

17. If it be so. The introductory particle translated “if” has been the subject of much debate among commentators. Both ancient and modern versions reflect some uncertainty as to its correct meaning. Two interpretations predominate: (1) that of the KJV, RV, ASV, RSV, and others, which reflect the meaning, “If it be so, our God . . . is able to deliver us, . . . but if not,” etc.; and (2) that of modern commentators who interpret the passage, “If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery burning furnace and from thy hand, O king, he will save (us); but if not,” etc. The latter translation is inconsistent with the faith of the three Jewish defendants elsewhere revealed. The first translation seems the more fair reflection of the firm faith of these worthies in God’s omnipotence and unsearchable wisdom. God could save them if it was best for them and for the glory of His name and cause. The “if” should not be taken as an indication of doubt in God’s power to save, but as an indication of uncertainty as to whether it was God’s will to save.

The LXX has no introductory particle “if” and has the whole statement (vs. 16–18) a positive declaration: “O king, we have no need to answer thee concerning this command. For God in the heavens is our one Lord, whom we fear, and who is able to deliver us out of the furnace of fire; and out of your hands, O king, he will deliver us; and then it shall be manifest to thee that we will serve neither thy idol, nor worship thy golden image.” However, scholars generally prefer the Masoretic reading (see on v. 16).

19. One seven times more. Aramaic *chadshib’ah*, literally meaning, “one seven,” with the meaning “seven times,” is a rather strange construction, but the same form is used also in an Aramaic letter of the 5th century B.C., from Elephantine. Some grammarians have thought that it is an abbreviation of a usual Aramaic idiom, while others, like Montgomery, think that “it may come from reminiscence of recitation of multiplication tables.” The increased heat in the furnace was probably produced by an extraordinary supply of chaff and crude oil. The oil would be obtained from the many open oil wells of Mesopotamia, which, from ancient times, have lavishly furnished this

product, and with which modern brickkilns in the area are fired (see on v. 6). The purpose of this extraordinary command was probably not to increase the punishment. An increase of heat in the furnace would not have increased the torture of the victims. The king intended to forestall any possible intervention (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on this verse).

20. *The most mighty men.* Better, “some strong men,” or “certain mighty men” (RSV). The choice of military men of outstanding strength was probably to forestall the possibility of intervention on the part of the gods.

21. *Coats.* The Aramaic words describing the “coats” and the “hosen” (Old English for “trousers”) are not yet fully understood. Lexicographers agree that the renderings offered in the KJV are approximately correct.

Hats. Aramaic *karbelah*, a word of Akkadian origin, as shown by the cuneiform texts, where it appears as *karballatu*, “cap.” In the Naqsh-i-Rustam inscription of Darius I the term designates the helmet, but in late Babylonian texts it stands for “hats.” The mention of the separate articles of clothing, consisting of easily inflammable material, was doubtless with reference to the miracle that followed (see v. 27).

23. *Burning fiery furnace.* Following v. 23, manuscripts of the oldest translations of Daniel, the LXX and Theodotion, contain a long Apocryphal addition of 68 verses, called “The Song of the Three Holy Children.” The song consists of three parts: (1) Prayer of Azarias (Abednego), composed of both confession and supplication (vs. 24–45); (2) a prose interlude, describing the heating of the fire and the descent of the angel of the Lord to cool the flames (vs. 46–50); (3) the benediction of the three (vs. 51–91). Although recognized by Jerome as spurious, this Apocryphal addition found its way into Roman Catholic Bibles as canonical. Scholars debate whether the song is of Christian or Jewish origin. A number of them believe the work was produced approximately 100 B.C. See p. 744.

24. *Rose up in haste.* The king had evidently gone to the place of execution, undoubtedly to make sure that his command would be properly carried out. He was probably seated so that he could observe the victims as they were thrown into the fire.

25. *Like the Son of God.* Commentators have variously interpreted the exclamation of the astonished Nebuchadnezzar concerning the fourth individual in the fiery furnace. Jewish scholars have always identified him simply as an angel. This view is reflected in the LXX, which translates the phrase “like an angel of God.” Early Christian interpreters (Hippolytus, Chrysostom, and others), on the other hand, saw in this fourth personage the second person of the Godhead. The rendering of the KJV reflects this interpretation. The majority of conservative Christians hold to this view, although modern critical commentators have now generally discarded it, as is seen by the translations of the RV, ASV, RSV, and other modern versions, “like a son of the gods.”

The problem is one of Aramaic grammar and interpretation. The Aramaic *'elahin*, “gods,” is the plural of *'elah*, “god.” In some cases where *'elahin* is used, reference is made to pagan gods (chs. 2:11, 47; 5:4, 23). However, there are two passages besides the one under discussion where *'elahin* can be interpreted to refer to the true God of Daniel (ch. 5:11, 14; see RSV footnote). Hence the translation “God” for *'elahin* is justifiable if it can be established that Nebuchadnezzar was employing the term as a proper name.

Grammatically, both translations, “like the son of God,” and, “like a son of the gods,” are correct.

The context reveals that Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the superiority of the most high God of Israel (see chs. 3:26, 28, 29; 4:2). In these statements the king was not referring to gods in general but to *the* God in particular. For this reason conservative interpreters prefer the translation of the KJV and can linguistically defend their preference (see PK 509; *Problems in Bible Translation*, pp. 170–173).

26. Most high God. Nebuchadnezzar’s acknowledgment that the God of the three Hebrews was the “most high God” does not necessarily imply that the king had abandoned his polytheistic concepts. To him the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego was not the only true God, but simply the most high God, the chief of all gods, in the same way as the Greeks called their Zeus *ho hupsistos theos*, “the highest god.” The term is also attested in this sense in Phoenicia, and later in the inscriptions of Palmyra.

27. The princes. Concerning the officials mentioned here see on v. 2.

Coats. See on v. 21.

28. Blessed be the God. The miraculous deliverance of the three men made a deep impression on the king and altered his earlier and erroneous opinion (v. 15) about the God of the Hebrews. Nebuchadnezzar now spoke in praise of the might of this God, announcing publicly that this God had saved His worshipers, and decreeing that anyone who dishonored this God would be punished by death (v. 29). His acknowledgment revealed progression in his concept of God (see ch. 2:47; p. 751).

29. I make a decree. In this unusual way many peoples who would otherwise never have heard of the God of the Hebrews would be introduced to Him. Nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar exceeded his rights when he sought by force to compel men to honor the God of the Hebrews (PK 511).

Cut in pieces. On the penalties here threatened see on ch. 2:5.

30. Promoted. The verb form thus translated means primarily “to cause to prosper,” and in a wider sense “to promote.” How this promotion was effected is not stated. The three worthies may have received money, or more influence and power in the administration of the province, or more elevated titles. By faithfulness in the face of death the three Hebrew worthies had demonstrated qualities of character that made it evident that they could be trusted with even greater responsibilities than they had previously borne.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–30PK 503–513

1 PK 505

1–6SL 36

4, 5 PK 506

4–7ML 68

7 PK 506

9, 12–15PK 507

12–18SL 37

16–185T 43

16–20LS 329

16–22PK 508

17–22ML 68
23 Ed 254; 5T 453
24, 25 ML 256; SL 38; 3T 47; 4T 212
24–26PK 509
25 ML 68, 317
25–27AA 570; LS 330
26–29SL 39
27–29PK 510; 5T 453

CHAPTER 4

1 *Nebuchadnezzar confesseth God's kingdom, 4 maketh relation of his dreams, which the magicians could not interpret.* 8 *Daniel heareth the dream.* 19 *He interpreteth it.* 28 *The story of the event.*

1. *Unto all people.* The narrative of events in ch. 4 is recorded in the form of a royal proclamation. Because they cannot find parallels to such publicly announced conversions, modern scholars declare such an edict historically absurd. But arguments from silence are never conclusive. On the other hand, royal conversion to a new religion or god is attested elsewhere. For example, King Amenhotep IV of Egypt forsook the polytheistic religion of his ancestors and of the nation and made strong efforts to introduce a new monotheistic religion into the realm. He built a new capital, changed his own name, closed the old temples, denounced the old gods, erected new temples to his god, and did everything in his power to promote the new religion

Furthermore, little is known of Nebuchadnezzar's history from sources outside of the Bible. Hence it is impossible to verify all the events of the king's reign from contemporary source material. In fact, there are no contemporary non-Biblical sources for Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem, or even for his long campaign against Tyre, though the historicity of these events is not disputed. It is therefore not strange to find no reference in Babylonian records to the king's mental illness. Such records naturally omit items dealing with the misfortunes of a national hero. The change in this chapter from the first to the third person and back again to the first person (see vs. 2–27; cf. vs. 28–33; 34–37) has been explained by assuming either that Daniel wrote the edict upon the king's command or that as Nebuchadnezzar's chief counselor Daniel added certain portions to the edict written by the king himself. The edict reflected the king's feelings when his full mental powers had been restored. "The once proud monarch had become a humble child of God" (PK 521; cf. EGW, Supplementary Material, on Dan. 4:37).

Peace be multiplied. The introduction to the proclamation contains an expression of good wishes. The edicts later promulgated by Persian kings were similar in form (see Ezra 4:17; 7:12). A typical formula in the Aramaic Elephantine letters of the 5th century b.c. is "The health of—may the God of Heaven seek."

3. *His kingdom.* The doxology of the second part of v. 3 occurs again with variations in v. 34; cf. ch. 7:14, 18.

4. *At rest.* This phrase indicates that the king was now in undisturbed possession of his kingdom. Therefore the events of this chapter belong to the last half of his reign of 42 years. The king was "flourishing" in his palace in Babylon (see the Additional Note at the end of this chapter), and like the foolish rich man in the parable, whose fields had produced abundantly (Luke 12:16–21), forgot his responsibility to the One to whom he owed his greatness.

5. *Afraid*. The abrupt manner in which the event is here introduced aptly illustrates the unexpected suddenness of the occurrence itself (see ch. 2:1).

6. *Decree*. Compare the phraseology in ch. 3:29. As in the case of the dream of ch. 2, the wise men were summoned. In this instance, however, the king had not forgotten the contents of the dream. The demand of the king for an interpretation of it was therefore vastly different from that described in ch. 2:5.

7. *Magicians*. Of the four groups of wise men listed in this verse, two, the magicians and the astrologers, were introduced in ch. 1:20 (see comments there), the third class, the Chaldeans, in ch. 2:2 (see on ch. 1:4), and the fourth class, the soothsayers, in ch. 2:27 (see comments there).

Did not make known. Some have suggested that because these wise men of Babylon were experts in the interpretation of dreams and signs of a supernatural character, they possibly offered some kind of interpretation. In fact the dream was so explicit the king himself sensed that it contained some evil message for him (see PK 516). It was this that alarmed him. However, ancient courtiers customarily flattered their sovereigns and avoided directly telling them anything disagreeable. Hence, even if they understood parts of the dream and had some inkling as to its import, they would not have found the courage to voice their conclusions. If they did offer some sort of explanation, it proved wholly unsatisfactory to the king. They certainly could not give an accurate and detailed interpretation as Daniel later did (see PK 517, 518). Instead of “they did not make known” the RSV reads, “they could not make known.” Some regard the KJV as the better rendering. Nevertheless it is true that “none of the wise men could interpret” the dream (PK 516).

8. *Belteshazzar*. The narrative introduces Daniel, first by his Jewish name, by which he was known to his countrymen, then by his Babylonian name, given to him in honor of Nebuchadnezzar’s chief god (see on ch. 1:7).

Why Daniel had been kept in the background so long, although he was considered “master of the magicians” (v. 9), is not explained. Some have suggested that Nebuchadnezzar aimed first to find out what the Chaldeans in general had to say about this extremely disconcerting dream, before hearing the full truth, which he suspected was unfavorable (compare the case of King Ahab, 1 Kings 22:8). Only after the other wise men of the caste of occult scientists proved unable to satisfy the king did he call for the man who had, on a previous occasion, demonstrated his superior skill and wisdom with respect to the interpretation of dreams (ch. 2; cf. ch. 1:17, 20).

Of the holy gods. Or, “of the holy God” (see RSV margin). The Aramaic for “gods” is *’elahin*, a term used frequently of false gods (see Jer. 10:11; Dan. 2:11, 47; 3:12; 5:4), but which may apply also to the true God (see on Dan. 3:25; cf. Dan 5:11, 14). The expression reveals what it was that had inspired the king with confidence in Daniel’s superior power and understanding. It also reveals that Nebuchadnezzar possessed a conception of the nature of that Deity to whom Daniel owed such power and wisdom. Daniel and his companions had borne witness without hesitation concerning the God they worshiped. The expression, repeated in vs. 9 and 18 of Dan. 4, shows clearly that Nebuchadnezzar had by no means forgotten what he had learned on a previous occasion respecting the eminent prophetic gift of this Jew, and of his intercourse with the only true God.

Instead of “in whom is the spirit of the holy gods,” the Theodotion version reads, “who has in him the holy spirit of God.” The original LXX version entirely omits vs. 5b to 10b.

9. Master of the magicians. This term used by the king is probably synonymous with that used in ch. 2:48, “chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.” The word “master” in ch. 4:9 and “chief” in ch. 2:48 are translations of the same Aramaic word, *rab*.

Tell me the visions. The king seems to demand that Daniel tell the dream as well as its interpretation, at the same time proceeding at once to narrate the dream (v. 10). The LXX does not have this verse in the extant MSS. It has the narrative of vs. 1–9 in a greatly abbreviated form. Theodotion’s Greek version reads, “Listen to the vision of the dream which I have seen, and tell me its interpretation.” The Syriac translates this passage by a paraphrase, “In the visions of my dream I was seeing a vision of my head, and do thou its interpretation tell.” Some modern expositors (Marti, Torrey, etc.) accept the version of Theodotion as the best solution, while others, like Montgomery, think that the Aramaic word *chzwy* (originally unpointed), translated “the visions of” (KJV), was originally *chzy*, “lo,” as demonstrated by the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine. The text would then read, as in the RSV, “Here is the dream which I saw; tell me its interpretation.”

10. Behold a tree. Divine wisdom frequently employs parables and similitudes as vehicles for the transmission of truth. This method is impressive. The imagery tends to enable the recipient to retain the message and its import in his memory longer than if the message had been communicated in any other way. Compare the imagery of Eze. 31:3–14.

The ancients were accustomed to seeing a meaning in every extraordinary dream. Perhaps this is why God employed the agency of a dream on this occasion.

13. A watcher. Aramaic *‘ir*, derived from the verb *‘ur*, “to watch,” and corresponds to the Heb. *‘er*, which does not signify “keeping watch,” but rather “being watchful,” or “one who is awake” as the marginal annotation to the word in the Codex Alexandrinus explains it. The LXX translates the word by *aggelos*, “angel,” but Theodotion, instead of translating it, simply transliterates it *ir*. The Jewish translators Aquila and Symmachus render it *egrēgoros*, “the watchful one,” a term found in the book of Enoch and other Apocryphal Jewish writings to designate the higher angels, good or bad, who watch and slumber not. As a designation for angels the term “watcher” would be peculiar to this passage in the OT. It has been suggested that angels may have been known to the Chaldeans under this term, though no evidence for this has yet been found. That the watcher is a heavenly messenger is indicated by the further attribute “an holy one,” and the phrase “came down from heaven.” This much is evident: The watcher was recognized as bearing the credentials of the God of heaven (see PK 518).

15. Leave the stump. Compare Job 14:8; Isa. 11:1. The ultimate sprouting of this root-stump (see Job 14:7–9) typified, as appears from a comparison of vs. 26 and 36, the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar from his sickness, and not the continued supremacy of his

dynasty, as some commentators have explained it. The whole passage obviously designates an individual and not a nation.

With a band. Many commentators see in this statement a reference to metal bands fastened on a root-stump, probably in order to prevent it from cracking or splitting, although such a practice cannot be demonstrated from ancient sources. The LXX makes no mention of these bands. According to that version v. 15 reads, “And thus he said, Leave one of its roots in the earth, in order that with the beasts of the earth, in the mountains of grass he might feed like an ox.” Theodotion supports the Masoretic text. Since the interpretation of the dream does not call attention to the bands, the interpretation of the figure is left to conjecture. Somewhere in vs. 15, 16 there is a transition from the “stump” to what the stump represented. Some make the transition as early as in the phrase under consideration and see in the bands either physical chains such as would be necessary to bind the king in his maniacal condition (Jerome) or figurative bands, representing the restrictions that would be placed upon the monarch as a result of his illness. However, it appears more natural to apply the bands to the stump itself and to consider them as indicating the care that would be exercised in preserving it.

16. His heart. The transition from the figure of the tree to the actual object symbolized by the tree has now clearly been made (see on v. 15). The term “heart” here seems to indicate nature. The king would take on the nature of a beast.

Seven times. The majority of ancient and modern interpreters explain the Aramaic *‘iddan*, “time,” here (also in vs. 23, 25, 32; chs. 7:25; 12:7) to mean “year.” The original LXX reads “seven years.” Among the earlier expositors supporting this view are Josephus (*Antiquities* x. 10. 6), Jerome, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Jephth. Most modern expositors also agree with this view.

17. Watchers. See on v. 13. The plural presupposes the existence of a heavenly council or assembly (see Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6).

That the living. This sentence reveals the divine purpose in the execution of the order. God’s dealings with Babylon and its king were to be an illustration to other nations and their kings of the results of accepting or rejecting the divine plan with respect to nations.

The most High ruleth. In the affairs of nations God is ever “silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will” (Ed 173). At times, as with the call of Abraham, He ordains a series of events designed to demonstrate the wisdom of His ways. Again, as in the antediluvian world, He permits evil to run its course and provide an example of the folly of opposition to right principles. But eventually, as in the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt, He intervenes lest the forces of evil overcome His agencies for the salvation of the world. Whether God ordains, permits, or intervenes, “the complicated play of human events is under divine control” and an “overruling purpose has manifestly been at work throughout the ages” (PK 536, 535; see Ed 174; Rom. 13:1).

“To every nation . . . God has assigned a place in His great plan” and has given an opportunity to “fulfil the purpose of ‘the Watcher and the Holy One’” (Ed 178, 177). In the divine economy the function of government is to protect and upbuild the nation, to provide its people with the opportunity of achieving the Creator’s purpose for them, and to permit other nations to do the same (Ed 175)—in order that all men “should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him” (Acts 17:27).

A nation is strong in proportion to the fidelity with which it fulfills God's purpose for it; its success depends upon its use of the power entrusted to it; its compliance with the divine principles is always the measure of its prosperity; and its destiny is determined by the choices its leaders and people make with respect to these principles (Ed 175, 174, 177, 178; PP 536). God imparts wisdom and power that will keep strong the nations that remain faithful to Him, but abandons those that ascribe their glory to human achievement and act independently of Him (PK 501).

Men "who refuse to submit to the government of God are wholly unfitted to govern themselves" (GC 584). When, instead of being a protector of men, a nation becomes a proud and cruel oppressor, its fall is inevitable (Ed 176). As the nations one after another have rejected God's principles their glory has faded, their power departed, and their place been occupied by others (Ed 177). "All are by their own choice deciding their destiny," and in rejecting God's principles accomplishing their own ruin (Ed 178, 177). "The complicated lay of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of earth" and overrules "all for the accomplishment of His purposes" (Ed 178). See on ch. 10:13.

Basest. Aramaic *shephal*, "low," "lowly," "humble." The verb is translated "humbled" in ch. 5:22 and "abase" in ch. 4:37.

18. Declare the interpretation. See on v. 7.

The holy gods. See on v. 8.

19. Astonied. Aramaic *shemam*, which, in the form here found, means "to be appalled," "to be perplexed," or "to be embarrassed." The last meaning may be more appropriate here inasmuch as Daniel, understanding immediately the dream and its consequences, must have been extremely embarrassed over the responsibility of disclosing its fearful import to the king (see ch. 2:5).

Hour. Aramaic *sha'ah*. It is impossible to define precisely the period of time indicated by *sha'ah*. It may be a brief moment, or perhaps a longer period of time.

Compare the uses of *sha'ah* in chs. 3:6, 15; 4:33; 5:5. Sufficient time must have elapsed for Daniel to have revealed to his royal patron that "his thoughts troubled him [or, alarmed him]." Daniel was obviously searching for suitable words and expressions by which to acquaint the king with the terrible news concerning his future fate.

The king spake. That Nebuchadnezzar now speaks in the third person does not justify the conclusion of critics that either another spoke of him, and that thus the document is not genuine, or that this verse includes a historical notice introduced as an interpolation into the document. Similar changes from the first to the third person and vice versa are found in other books, Biblical (see Ezra 7:13–15; Esther 8:7, 8) and non-Biblical, ancient and modern (see on Ezra 7:28).

The king clearly saw the consternation on Daniel's face. From the nature of the dream he could hardly have expected to hear anything pleasant. Nevertheless he encouraged his trusted courtier to give him the full truth without fear of incurring royal disfavor.

That hate thee. Although Daniel had been made a captive by the king and had been deported from his homeland to serve strangers, the oppressors of his people, he harbored no ill feelings toward Nebuchadnezzar. In fact, his words testify that he felt the highest personal loyalty toward the king, probably in contrast with many of the Jews of his time.

On the other hand, Daniel's words must not be interpreted as necessarily expressing malice toward the king's enemies. The answer exhibited simply a courteous reply in true Oriental fashion.

22. *It is thou.* Without holding the king in suspense for any length of time, Daniel plainly and clearly announced to him—though he no doubt already surmised it—that the tree represented the king himself.

Unto heaven. To some, the terms by which the prophet described Nebuchadnezzar's greatness may seem exaggerated, but we must bear in mind that Daniel used Oriental court language and idioms, to which both he and the king were accustomed. These terms are remarkably similar to the boastful language of Nebuchadnezzar, exhibited in various of the king's inscriptions discovered by archeologists. They also resemble the words employed by Nebuchadnezzar's Assyrian predecessors and other Oriental monarchs.

25. *With the beasts.* Although the words of the heavenly messenger clearly implied doom of some kind, to ascertain the nature of the judgment was beyond the skill of the magicians. The reason for the king's expulsion from society is not stated, though probably understood by the king. That the judgment was insanity can be concluded not only from the general remarks of this verse describing his future status but also from the statement that his "understanding returned" (v. 34). The contention of critics that the king was expelled by discontented elements in the government, or as the result of a revolution, is unfounded.

26. *Shall be sure.* Many have wondered why the insane king was not killed, or why his subjects and ministers of state did not place someone else on the vacant throne during the time Nebuchadnezzar was incapacitated. The following explanation has been offered: Superstitious ancients thought that all mental disturbances were caused by evil spirits who took control of their victim; that if someone should kill the insane man, the spirit would take hold of the murderer or instigator of the crime; and that if his property should be confiscated or his office filled, a grievous revenge would be inflicted upon those responsible for the injustice. For this reason insane persons were removed from the society of men, but otherwise not molested (see 1 Sam. 21:12 to 1 Sam. 22:1).

27. *Break off thy sins.* Here a divine principle is communicated to the proud monarch. God's judgments against men may be averted by repentance and conversion (see Isa. 38:1, 2, 5; Jer. 18:7–10; Jonah 3:1–10). For this reason God announced the impending judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar but gave him a full year in which to repent, and thus avert the threatened calamity (see Dan. 4:29). However, the king did not change his way of life, and accordingly brought upon himself the execution of the judgment. By contrast, the Ninevites, given 40 days of respite, took advantage of the opportunity, and they and their city were spared (Jonah 3:4–10). "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). God forewarns peoples and nations of their impending doom. He sends a message to the world today, warning of its rapidly approaching end. Few may heed such warnings, but because adequate warning has been given them men will be without excuse in the day of calamity.

Shewing mercy. The king was admonished to practice righteousness toward all his subjects and to exercise mercy toward the oppressed, the miserable, and the poor (see Micah 6:8). These virtues are frequently listed together (see Ps. 72:3, 4; Isa. 11:4).

29. *In the palace.* Literally, "upon the palace." It is not known from which palace Nebuchadnezzar viewed the city. It was possibly either from the roof of the famous

hanging gardens, whose thick and strong foundation walls have been excavated, or from the new Summer Palace in the northern sections of the new city quarters, now the ruined mound known as *Babil*. For a description of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon see the Additional Note at the end of this chapter.

30. *That I have built.* Students of ancient Babylonian history are reminded of these proud words when reading the claims the king makes in his inscriptions, which have been preserved amid the dust and debris of Babylon's ruins. On one of these inscriptions the proud king proclaims, "Then built I the palace, the seat of my royalty, the bond of the race of men, the dwelling of exultation and rejoicing" (E. Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vol. 3, part 2, p. 39). In another text he says, "In Babylon, the city which I prefer, which I love, was the palace, the amazement of the people, the bond of the land, the brilliant palace, the abode of majesty on the ground of Babylon" (*Ibid.*, p. 25). That Nebuchadnezzar had valid reasons to be proud of his marvelous creation, the excavations of R. Koldewey have shown, although they have not in every detail corroborated the exaggerated claims of classical writers about the size of ancient Babylon (see Additional Note at the end of this chapter).

Nebuchadnezzar's claim to have "built" Babylon must not be interpreted as referring to the founding of the city, which actually took place shortly after the Flood (Gen. 11:1–9; cf. ch. 10:10). The reference is to the great work of rebuilding which his father, Nabopolassar, began, and which Nebuchadnezzar completed. Nebuchadnezzar's building activities were so extensive as to eclipse all previous accomplishments. It has been said that little could be seen that had not been erected in his time. This was true of the palaces, temples, walls, and even of the residential sections. The size of the city had been more than doubled by the addition of new areas to old Babylon, as suburbs on both sides of the river Euphrates.

31. *There fell a voice.* Compare Isa. 9:8, where "lighted" is literally, "fell." The proud utterance is immediately followed by the king's humiliation. It is not stated whether this voice was heard by the king alone or whether his entourage also heard the heavenly words.

33. *Fulfilled.* Many commentators have identified Nebuchadnezzar's malady as a form of insanity in which men think themselves animals and imitate the beasts' manner of life.

An ancient example of such mental maladies has been attested. An unpublished cuneiform tablet in the British Museum mentions a man who ate grass like a cow (F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl, *Opera Minora* [1953], p. 527). It is not necessary to identify Nebuchadnezzar's malady precisely or to equate it with anything known to medical science today. The experience may have been unique. The narrative is brief, and a precise diagnosis on such meager information is invalid.

Eagles' feather. The word "feathers" is supplied. Hair, when unkempt and long exposed to the influences of rough weather and to the rays of the sun, becomes hard and unruly.

34. *End of the days.* That is, the end of the "seven times," or seven years, predicted for the continuation of Nebuchadnezzar's madness (see on v. 16).

Lifted up mine eyes. It is significant to notice that the return of reason is said to have come to the king with his recognition of the true God. When the humbled king prayerfully looked up to heaven he was elevated from the condition of a brute beast to

that of a being bearing the image of God. The one who for years had helplessly lain on the ground in his debasement was once more lifted up to the dignity of manhood which God has granted His creatures formed after His likeness. The essential feature of the miracle that occurred in Nebuchadnezzar's case is still repeated—even if in a less spectacular manner—in the conversion of every sinner.

I blessed the most High. It speaks well for the once proud king, that after his dreadful experience his first desire was to thank God, to praise Him as the everliving One, and to recognize the eternity of His rulership.

35. *As nothing.* Compare Isa. 40:17. The second half of this verse has a close parallel in Isa. 43:13. Some have suggested the possibility that in his association with Daniel the king had become acquainted with the words of Isaiah, and that they came suddenly back to his mind. The confession was a marvelous one, coming, as it did, from the mouth of the once proud monarch. It is the testimony of a penitent convert, a statement from the heart of a man who had learned by experience to know and to revere God.

36. *Returned unto me.* With the restoration of his understanding Nebuchadnezzar also regained his royal dignity and his throne. In order to show the close connection between the return of reason and his restoration to sovereignty, this verse restates (see v. 34) the first element of his restoration. The second follows immediately, in the simple manner of Semitic narrative. An English narrator would have said, "When my understanding returned, then also my royal state and glory returned."

Sought unto me. The word "sought" does not necessarily indicate that during the period of his insanity the king was allowed to wander about in the fields and desert without supervision, but it denotes the seeking of a person with a view to his official position. When it became known that the king's reason had returned, the regents of state brought him back with all due respect in order that they might restore the government to him again. During his insanity these men had carried on the affairs of government.

37. *Praise and extol.* This is Nebuchadnezzar's conclusion to his proclamation, in which, as a converted sinner, he recognized the righteousness of God. His confession that God is "King of heaven" expressed his reverence toward his newfound God. The healed monarch of Babylon had learned well his lesson (see PK 521; EGW, Supplementary Material, on this verse). On the progressive character of Nebuchadnezzar's understanding of God see chs. 2:47; 3:28 p. 751.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 4

Under the direction of Robert Koldewey, who worked for the German Orient Society, important excavations were carried out at Babylon between the years 1899 and 1917. These have uncovered some of the most important sections of the large ruined site of ancient Babylon, although wide areas were not touched in these excavations. Babylon had been an important city of Mesopotamia from the dawn of history (Gen. 11). Hammurabi had made it the capital of his dynasty. As the seat of the famous god Marduk, it remained a religious center even during periods when it did not enjoy political supremacy, as, for example, during the time when Assyria was the leading world power. When Nabopolassar regained for Babylonia its independence, the city once more became the metropolis of the world. But it was especially under Nebuchadnezzar, the great builder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, that Babylon became "the glory of kingdoms" and "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency" Isa. 13:19).

It was Nebuchadnezzar's city that Koldewey uncovered during the 18 years of the German excavations; practically no remains of the earlier stages of the city were found. For this a double reason has been assigned: (1) The change of the river bed of the Euphrates raised the water table, so that the levels of the earlier cities now lie below the water level, and (2) the destruction of Babylon by the Assyrian king Sennacherib in 689 B.C. was so thorough that little of the old city was left to be discovered and by later generations. Hence, all visible ruins today date from the Neo-Babylonian empire of later times. Even these show unusual desolation and confusion, for two reasons: (1) Large portions of the city were destroyed by King Xerxes of Persia after two short-lived revolts against his rule. (2) The ruins of Babylon were used by Seleucus to build Seleucia about 300 B.C. Most of the buildings in the neighboring villages and in the city of Hilla, as well as the great river dam at Hindiya, were built of bricks from Babylon.

In spite of these handicaps the excavators succeeded in clearing up much of the layout of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. In this work they were aided by ancient cuneiform documents found during the excavations. These documents contain detailed descriptions of the city, its principal buildings, walls, and city quarters, so that more is known concerning the city plan of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon than of many medieval cities of Europe. Hence we are singularly well informed about the city in whose streets Daniel walked and concerning which Nebuchadnezzar uttered the proud words recorded in Dan. 4:30.

The Size of Ancient Babylon.—Before the spade of the excavator revealed the true size of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon and the Babylon of earlier times, scholars relied on the description of Herodotus. This historian claims to have visited to Mesopotamia in the middle of the 5th century B.C., and therefore his statements have frequently been considered those of an eyewitness. He states (i. 178, 179) that the ground plan of Babylon had the shape of a large square, approximately 14 mi. (22.4 km.) on a side. These measurements would give to the city walls a total length of 55 mi. (88 km.) and to the city itself an area of almost 189 sq. mi. (490 sq. km.). He also claims that its walls were about 85 ft. (26 m.) thick and 340 ft. (104 m.) high.

Before modern excavations revealed the size of ancient Babylon, attempts were made to bring Herodotus' statement into harmony with its visible ruins. The French Assyriologist Jules Oppert, for example, tried to explain Herodotus' statement by extending the area of the city of Babylon far enough to include either *Birs Nimrud*, 12 mi. (19.2 km.) southwest of the ruins of Babylon, or *Tell el-Oheimir*, 8 mi. (12.8 km.) east. This explanation is entirely unsatisfactory. Already in Oppert's day it was known that *Birs Nimrud* is the site of ancient Borsippa, and *Tell el-Oheimir* that of Kish, both famous independent cities with separate protecting walls. Since no wall has ever been found encompassing both Babylon and either Borsippa or Kish, and since such a wall is not mentioned in any of the contemporary documents describing the ancient city, Oppert's figure for Herodotus' statement concerning the length of the walls of Babylon cannot be accepted.

Excavations reveal that before Nebuchadnezzar's time the city was almost square, with walls about one mile long on each side—the Inner City on the map on p. 796. The palaces and administration buildings lay in the northwestern section of the city, and south

of them stood the main temple complex called *Esagila*, dedicated to Babylon's main god, Marduk. The river Euphrates flowed along Babylon's western wall.

When Babylon served as the capital of a far-flung empire in the time of Nabopolassar and of Nebuchadnezzar, it was in need of enlargement. A new section was built on the western bank of the Euphrates. Its extent is known, but little excavation has been carried out in that area. What is known about its temples and streets has been gathered from the cuneiform documents describing this quarter. The new section was connected with the old city by a bridge. This bridge rested on eight piers, as excavations at the site have revealed.

Nebuchadnezzar also built a new palace far to the north of the old city, the so-called Summer Palace. A great outer wall was constructed to enclose this palace. The new wall greatly increased the area of the city. There is no evidence of a wall along the river from the Summer Palace to the old palace area. It has therefore been concluded that the river itself was considered a sufficiently strong protection.

The walls, which for the greater part can still be clearly seen as long, high mounds, measure about 13 mi. This measurement is that of the total length of the walls of both the inner and outer cities. The circumference of Nebuchadnezzar's city, including the river front from the Summer Palace to the old palace area, was about 10 mi.

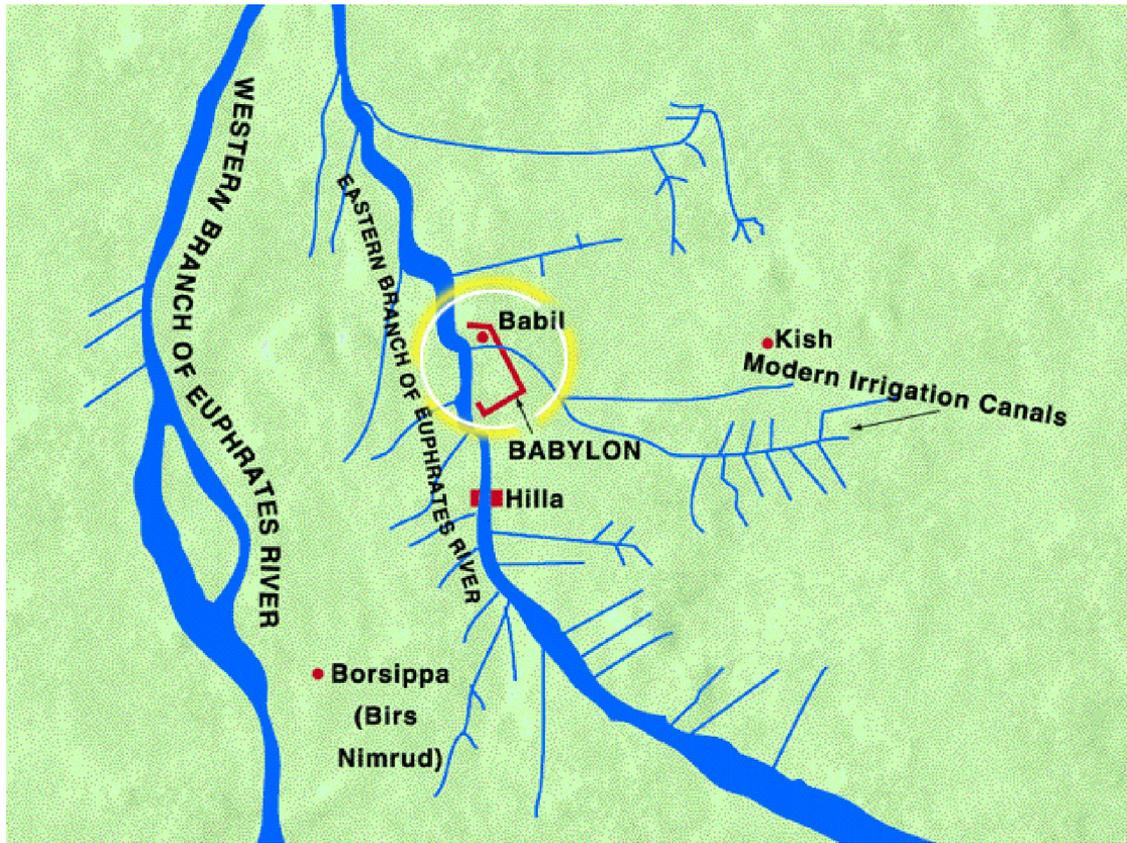
Modern excavations show that Herodotus' description needs modification on the dimensions of the walls. The fortifications surrounding the Inner City consisted of double walls—the inner 211/2 and the outer 121/4 ft. thick (6.5 and 3.7 m., respectively), 231/2 ft. (7.2 m.) apart, with a moat outside it. The outer wall was also double, with a rubble fill between and a road on top, according to Herodotus. The widths were: inner, 231/2 ft.; space for fill, 363/4 ft.; outer, 251/2 ft.; plus a sort of buttress wall at its base, 103/4 ft. (respectively 7.1, 11.2, 7.8, and 3.3 m.). This outer fortification's total width was thus 961/2 ft., or 29.39 m. Of its many towers, 15 have been excavated.

The excavations tell nothing of the height of the walls, since only stumps remain, nowhere higher than 391/2 ft. (12 m.) at the Ishtar Gate. It seems inconceivable that even a double wall with a base width of 95 ft., or 29 m., would have been 340 ft. (103.7 m.) high. No ancient or modern city wall of this sort is known. Hence Herodotus' statement in regard to the height of Babylon's city wall must also be discarded.

Euphrates River Valley

1

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Da 3:2). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



The Euphrates is shown in its present bed, having changed its course near Babylon and Borsippa. Lines extending from the river are modern irrigation canals, doubtless similar to ancient canals.

What are the reasons for these inaccuracies? The following explanation has been offered: When Herodotus visited Babylon the city lay largely in ruins, having been destroyed by Xerxes after two serious revolts against his rule. Temples, palaces, and all fortifications were thoroughly demolished. At the time of his visit Herodotus had to depend on oral information regarding the former state of affairs, the appearance of the buildings, and the size of the city and walls. Since he did not speak the Babylonian language, but was dependent on a Greek-speaking guide, he may, owing to translation difficulties, have received certain inaccurate information. Some of his erroneous statements may have been due to a faulty memory.

F. M. Th. [de Liagre] Böhl recently advanced another explanation. He suggests that Herodotus may have meant the whole fortress of Babylon, including all areas that lay within terrain that could be inundated in times of danger. Böhl reminds his readers of the fact that it is extremely difficult for a layman to distinguish between the dikes of dry canals and the remnants of the old city walls. The only difference is the lack of potsherds in the dikes. Potsherds are found in profusion near former walls of the city. It must therefore be considered possible that Herodotus took some of the many canal dikes for the remains of city walls (see *Ex Oriente Lux*, No. 10, 1945–48, p. 498, n. 28).

Although ancient Babylon did not have the fantastic size attributed to it by Herodotus, the city was nevertheless of formidable size at a time when cities were very small according to modern standards. Its circumference of about 11 mi. (17.6 km.) was

comparable with the 7 1/2 mi. (12.5 km.) circumference of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria's empire; with the walls of imperial Rome, 6 mi. (9.6 km.) in circumference; and with the 4 mi. (6.5 km.) of the walls of Athens at the time of that city's height in the 5th century B.C. This comparison with other famous cities of antiquity shows that Babylon was, with the possible exception of Egyptian Thebes, then in ruins, the largest and greatest of all ancient capitals, though it was much smaller than classical writers later pictured it. It is understandable why Nebuchadnezzar felt he had a right to boast of having built "this great Babylon ... by the might of my power" (Dan. 4:30).

A City of Temples and Palaces.—Because Babylon contained the sanctuary of the god Marduk, considered to be the lord of heaven and earth, the chief of all the gods, the ancient Babylonians considered their city the "navel" of the world. Hence, Babylon was a religious center without rival on earth. A cuneiform tablet of Nebuchadnezzar's time lists 53 temples dedicated to important gods, 955 small sanctuaries, and 384 street altars—all of them within the city confines. In comparison, Asshur, one of the chief cities of Assyria, with its 34 temples and chapels, made a comparatively poor impression. One can well understand why the Babylonians were proud of their city, saying, "Babylon is the origin and center of all lands." Their pride is reflected in Nebuchadnezzar's famous words quoted in the comment on ch. 4:30, and also in an ancient song of praise (as given by E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, Part I [Leipzig, 1915], No. 8):

"O Babylon, whosoever beholds thee is filled with rejoicing,
Whosoever dwells in Babylon increases his life,
Whosoever speaks evil of Babylon is like one who kills his own mother.
Babylon is like a sweet date palm, whose fruit is lovely to behold."

The center of Babylon's glory was the famous temple tower *Etemenanki*, "the foundation stone of heaven and earth," 299 ft. (91 m.) square at the base and probably 300 ft. (91.4 m.) high. This edifice was surpassed in height in ancient times only by the two great pyramids at Giza in Egypt. The tower may have been built at the site where the Tower of Babel once stood. The brick structure consisted of seven stages, of which the smallest and uppermost was a shrine dedicated to Marduk, the chief god of Babylon. See further on Gen. 11:9.

A great temple complex, called *Esagila*, literally, "He who raises the head," surrounded the tower *Etemenanki*. Its courts and buildings were the scenes of many religious ceremonies performed in honor of Marduk. Great and colorful processions terminated at this place. With the exception of the great Amen temple at Karnak, *Esagila* was the largest and most famous of all temples of the ancient Orient. At the time Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne it had already enjoyed a long and glorious history, and the new king entirely rebuilt and beautified extensive sections of the temple complex, including the tower *Etemenanki*.

In both number and size the palaces of Babylon revealed extraordinary luxury. During his long reign of 43 years Nebuchadnezzar built three large castles or palaces. One of them lay within the Inner City, the others outside it. One was what is known as the Summer Palace, in the northernmost part of the new eastern quarter. The mound that now covers its remains is the highest of those comprising the ruins of old Babylon, and is

the only place that still bears the ancient name *Babil*. However, the thorough destruction of this palace in ancient times and the subsequent looting of the bricks of the structure have not left much for the archeologist to discover. Thus we know little regarding this palace.

Another large palace, which excavators now call the Central Palace, lay immediately outside the northern wall of the Inner City. This, too, was built by Nebuchadnezzar. Modern archeologists found this large building also in a hopelessly desolate condition, with the exception of one part of the palace, the Museum of Antiquities. Here valuable objects of the glorious past of Babylonian's history, such as old statues, inscriptions, and trophies of war, had been collected and exhibited "for men to behold," as Nebuchadnezzar expressed it in one of his inscriptions.

The Southern Palace lay in the northwestern corner of the Inner City and contained, among other structures, the famous hanging gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. A large vaulted building was surmounted with a roof garden irrigated by a system of pipes through which water was pumped up. According to Diodorus, Nebuchadnezzar built this marvelous edifice for his Median wife in order to give to her, in the midst of level and treeless Babylonia, a substitute for the wooded hills of her native land, which she missed. In the vaults underneath the roof gardens provisions of grain, oil, fruit, and spices were stored for the needs of the court and court dependents. Excavators found administrative documents in these rooms, some of which mention King Jehoiachin of Judah as the recipient of royal rations.

Adjoining the hanging gardens was an extensive complex of buildings, halls, and rooms that had replaced the smaller palace of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar. This Southern Palace was more or less the official residence of the king, the place for all ceremonies of state. In the center was a large throne room, 56 by 171 ft. (17 by 52 m.), and possibly 60 ft. (18 m.) high. This immense hall was probably the place where Belshazzar banqueted during the last night of his life, because no other hall in the palace was large enough to accommodate a thousand guests (see Dan. 5:1).

One of that city's colorful structures was the famous Ishtar Gate which adjoined the Southern Palace and formed one of the northern entrances to the Inner City. This was the most beautiful of all Babylonian gates, for through it passed the Procession Street, leading from the various royal palaces to the temple *Esagila*. Fortunately, this gate was less completely destroyed than any other structure in Babylon and is now the most impressive of all extant ruins of the city. It still rises to a height of about 39 ft. (12 m.).

The interior structures of the city walls and gates, the palaces and temples, were of unbaked bricks. The outer coats consisted of baked and, in some instances, of glazed bricks. The outer bricks of the city walls were yellow in color, those of the gates sky blue, those of the palaces rose, and those of the temples white. The Ishtar Gate was a double structure, because of double walls. It was 165 ft. (50 m.) long and consisted of four tower-like structures of varying thickness and height. The walls were of bricks whose glazed surfaces formed raised figures of animals. There were at least 575 of these. There were bulls in yellow, with decorative rows of blue hair, and green hoofs and horns. These alternated with mythological beasts in yellow, called *sirrush*, which had serpents' heads and tails, scaled bodies, and eagles' and cats' feet (for an illustration see facing p. 864 and *SDA Bible Dictionary*, fig. 137).

The approach to the Ishtar Gate (see illustration facing p. 864) was lined on both sides of the street with defensive walls. On these walls were glazed-brick lions in relief, either white with yellow manes or yellow with red manes (now turned green) on a blue background.

Such was this colorful and mighty city that King Nebuchadnezzar had built—the marvel of all nations. His pride in it is reflected in inscriptions he left to posterity. One of them, now in the Berlin Museum, reads as follows:

“I have made Babylon, the holy city, the glory of the great gods, more prominent than before, and have promoted its rebuilding. I have caused the sanctuaries of gods and goddesses to lighten up like the day. No king among all kings has ever created, no earlier king has ever built, what I have magnificently built for Marduk. I have furthered to the utmost the equipment of *Esagila*, and the renovation of Babylon more than had ever been done before. All my valuable works, the beautification of the sanctuaries of the great gods, which I undertook more than my royal ancestors, I wrote in a document and put it down for coming generations. All my deeds, which I have written in this document, shall those read who know [how to read] and remember the glory of the great gods. May the way of my life be long, may I rejoice in offspring; may my offspring rule over the black-headed people into all eternity, and may the mentioning of my name be proclaimed for good at all future times.”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–37PK 514–521; 8T 126
7 PK 516
9 PK 517
10, 11 PK 515
11, 12 Ed 175
12–17PK 516
13 Ed 177
14 8T 127
17 DA 129; PK 500
18–22PK 517
23–27PK 518
27 Ed 174; PK 502
30 Ed 175; 8T 127
30–32PK 519
31 Ed 176; PK 533
33–35PK 520
34 Ev 88; PK 514
35 8T 180
36, 37 PK 521

CHAPTER 5

1 *Belshazzar's impious feast.* 5 *A handwriting, unknown to the magicians, troubleth the king.* 10 *At the commendation of the queen Daniel is brought.* 17 *He, reproving the king of pride and idolatry,* 25 *readeth and interpreteth the writing.* 30 *The monarchy is translated to the Medes.*

1. Belshazzar. The Babylonian name *Bêl-shar-ušur* means “Bel, protect the king!” Belshazzar was the first-born son of Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. See Additional Note at the end of this chapter.

The king. When Nabonidus was in Lebanon recuperating from an illness, just before setting out on a campaign against Tema in western Arabia, he summoned his eldest son (Belshazzar), and “entrusted the kingship to him” (see Additional Note at end of this chapter). This was in “the third year.” If this was the third regnal year, it was in the winter of 553/552. Some scholars think it was in the third year after the completion of a temple at Haran; if so, Belshazzar’s appointment as coregent occurred two or three years later, but some time before Nabonidus’ seventh regnal year, in which Nabonidus was in Tema. From that time on Belshazzar controlled the affairs of Babylonia as his father’s coruler, while Nabonidus resided in Tema for many years. According to the “Verse Account of Nabonidus,” Belshazzar held the “kingship.” Daniel therefore made no mistake when he called Belshazzar “king,” though critics formerly declared that Daniel here erred.

A great feast. From vs. 28 and 30 it can be concluded that the feast took place during the night that Babylon fell to Cyrus’ forces. Xenophon preserved the tradition that at the time of Babylon’s fall “a certain festival had come round in Babylon, during which all Babylon was accustomed to drink and revel all night long” (*Cyropaedia* vii. 5. 15). It is inexplicable that Belshazzar should have made a feast immediately after the fall of Sippar, and only a few days after the lost battle at Opis (see Vol. III, p. 49). Apparently, he felt recklessly secure in his capital, protected by strong walls and a system of canals which could, in case of danger, put the surrounding country under water and so make it difficult for an invader to reach the city (see PK 523).

It is a well-known fact that it was common for ancient monarchs to give feasts for their courtiers. A stele discovered recently at Nimrud, the ancient Calah, makes mention of the fact that King Ashurnasirpal II made a great festival at the opening of a new palace. He is stated to have fed, wine, and housed 69,574 people for 10 days. The Greek historian Ctesias states that the Persian kings fed 15,000 people every day, and that Alexander the Great had 10,000 guests take part in his wedding feast. A similar feast is also described in Esther 1:3–12.

Before the thousand. That a certain emphasis is placed on the fact that Belshazzar drank before his guests, seems to indicate that the same court custom existed at Babylon as at the Persian court, where the king usually ate in a separate hall, and only on exceptional occasions, with his guests. The feast of Belshazzar seems to have been such an occasion. For a description of the hall in which the feast probably took place, see p. 798.

2. Tasted the wine. Some understand these words to imply that Belshazzar was drunk when he gave the order to bring in the sacred vessels from Jerusalem. Others explain the phrase to mean that this command was given after the meal, at the moment the wine began to circulate. They point to classical Greek statements which declare that the Persians had the custom of drinking wine after the meal. However, it was uncommon for an Oriental to desecrate holy objects of other religions; hence it would appear unnatural that Belshazzar would have given the order as long as he was in command of his reason (see PK 523).

Vessels. The Temple vessels had been carried away from Jerusalem on three occasions: (1) a portion of them at the time Nebuchadnezzar took captives from Jerusalem in 605 (Dan. 1:1, 2); (2) most of the remaining vessels of precious metal when King Jehoiachin went into captivity in 597 (2 Kings 24:12, 13); and (3) the rest of the metal objects, mostly of bronze, when the Temple was destroyed in 586 (2 Kings 25:13–17).

His father. It seems that Belshazzar was a grandson of the great king (see PK 522); his mother was probably a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar (see p. 806). The word “father” must be understood to mean “grandfather” or “ancestor,” as in many other passages of the Bible (see on 1 Chron. 2:7). For the descent of Belshazzar from Nebuchadnezzar, see Additional Note at the end of this chapter. Of itself, the expression “his father” could also be understood in the sense of “his predecessor.” An example of such usage is found in an Assyrian inscription which calls the Israelite king, Jehu, “a son of Omri,” although the two had no blood relationship whatsoever. Actually Jehu was the exterminator of the whole house of Omri (2 Kings 9; 10).

His wives, and his concubines. The two Aramaic words translated “wives” and “concubines” are synonyms, both meaning “concubines.” One may have represented a higher class than the other. It has been suggested that the one class of concubines may have consisted of women from respectable homes, or even the homes of nobility, and the other, women bought for money or captured in war. Although women took part in the banquet, as we learn from this passage, it appears that the “queen” was not found among the riotous drinkers. After the appearance of the handwriting on the wall she is described as entering the banqueting hall (v. 10). The LXX makes no reference to the participation of women in the sacrilegious rioting. Some think this is because, according to the custom of the Greeks, wives took no part in such festivals.

4. Praised the gods. The songs of the drunken heathen were in honor of their Babylonian gods, whose images adorned the various temples of the city.

5. Upon the plaster. If the large throne hall excavated by Koldewey in the Southern Palace of Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon (see p. 798) was the scene of this feast, it is not difficult to visualize what took place at the fateful moment described here. The hall was 56 by 171 ft. (17 by 52 m.). In the center of one of the long sides, opposite the entrance, was a niche, in which the throne may have stood. The walls were covered with white plaster made of fine plaster of Paris. We may imagine that the candlestick, or lampstand, was near the king’s seat. Lampstands with numerous oil lamps were in use at that time. Across the room from this lampstand the mysterious hand appeared and wrote on the plaster so that Belshazzar saw it. It is not explained whether the writing took the form of painted letters or was incised in the plaster.

Part of the hand. It is not stated how much of the hand was visible. The Aramaic *pas*, translated “part,” has sometimes been interpreted to mean “palm,” at other times to designate the hand proper below the wrist, as opposed to the lower part of the arm.

6. Were loosed. Compare Isa. 21:3. The terror was heightened by an accusing conscience, which roused itself and filled the king with dark forebodings. The gloom of his thoughts must have been deepened as he realized the mortal danger into which the empire had been thrown through past political blunders, his own immoral life and acts, the recent disastrous defeat of his army and the sacrilegious acts in which he was engaged. No wonder “his thoughts troubled him”!

7. Astrologers. See on ch. 1:20.

Chaldeans. See on ch. 1:4.

Soothsayers. See on ch. 2:27.

Scarlet. Aramaic *'argewan*, better, “purple.” Ancient royal purple was deep purplish red in color, more nearly like crimson. That purple was the royal color of antiquity is attested by documentary evidence from the time of the Persians (Esther 8:15; Xenophon *Anabasis* i. 5. 8), the Medes (Xenophon *Cyropaedia* i. 3. 2; ii. 4. 6), and later periods. Daniel attests the existence of this custom for the Neo-Babylonian period, which preceded the Persian.

Chain of gold. The custom of honoring favorite public servants of the crown by the granting of gold chains, decorations, or collars existed in Egypt many centuries earlier (see on Gen. 41:42). The custom was common among ancient nations.

The third ruler. Prior to the time that Belshazzar’s place in the kingdom and his relationship to Nabonidus were fully understood (see Additional Note at the end of this chapter), commentators could only conjecture as to the identity of the *second* ruler in the kingdom. The existence of such a ruler was implied by the promise to make the reader of the mysterious script on the wall “the *third* ruler in the kingdom.” The queen mother, Belshazzar’s wife, or a son had all been suggested. It was, of course, thought that Belshazzar himself was the first ruler over the empire. Now that it is known that Belshazzar was only a coruler with his father, and hence the second ruler in the kingdom, it is clear why he could bestow no higher position in the realm than that of “third ruler.”

8. Then came in all. Some have seen a contradiction between this statement and the account of the preceding verse that records an address of the king to the wise men. The most natural explanation is that the king’s address recorded in v. 7 was spoken to the wise men who were already present at the banquet when the handwriting appeared on the wall. Verse 8 would then apply to “all the king’s wise men,” including those who came into the banquet hall in response to Belshazzar’s command.

They could not read. The reason is not stated, and any explanation that may be offered is only conjecture. The words were apparently in Aramaic (see on vs. 26–28). But the words were so few and so cryptic that even a knowledge of their individual meanings would not reveal the message concealed in them. Whether the king himself could not read because of excessive use of wine, or whether the letters themselves were indistinguishable because of their dazzling brilliance (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on vs. 5–9), or whether the script was singular, decipherable only by divine illumination, is not stated. The conjecture that the characters were in the ancient Hebrew script and consequently illegible to the Babylonians does not appear plausible. It is extremely unlikely that the wise men of Babylon should not have known these old Semitic characters, which had been used not only by the Hebrews but also by the Phoenicians and other peoples of Western Asia.

10. The queen. From the time of Josephus (*Antiquities* x. 11. 2) commentators have usually taken this “queen” to be the king’s mother or grandmother (see PK 527). According to Oriental custom none but a ruling monarch’s mother would dare to enter the presence of the king without being summoned. Even the wife of a king endangered her life by so doing (see Esther 4:11, 16). Babylonian cuneiform letters written by kings to their mothers show a remarkably respectful tone and clearly reveal the exalted position in which royal mothers were held by their sons. This high position of a queen mother can

also be deduced from the fact that when, in 547, Nabonidus' mother, Belshazzar's grandmother, died at *Dur Karâshu* on the Euphrates above Sippar, there was an extensive official court mourning. The fact of her death prior to the events of this chapter was unknown to commentators who identified the "queen" as Belshazzar's grandmother.

O king, live for ever. For this common salutation see on ch. 2:4.

11. *There is a man.* It need not be thought strange that Daniel was not among the group of wise men summoned by the king. His term of public service had doubtless closed some time before, perhaps with Nebuchadnezzar's death or earlier (see p. 746). Yet he would be well known to a representative of the earlier generation, to which the king's mother belonged. On the possible reasons for his retirement see on v. 13.

Spirit of the holy gods. Compare Nebuchadnezzar's statement (chs. 4:8, 9). The similarity supports the probability, suggested also by other evidence, that the queen was a close relative, probably a daughter, of Nebuchadnezzar (see p. 806). The information she imparts concerning Daniel's distinguished service in the past and concerning the prophet's elevated position under Nebuchadnezzar is apparently new to Belshazzar. This suggests that Daniel had not held office for some time prior to the event narrated here. Hence probably few men, if any, in the king's entourage, who had grown up with him, were well acquainted with Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar thy father. See on v. 2.

Magicians. See on ch. 1:20; cf. ch. 2:2, 27.

12. *Doubts.* Aramaic *qitrîn*, literally, "knots." The word was later used as a magical term in Syria and Arabia. Here the meaning seems to be "difficult tasks," or "problems" (RSV).

13. *Art thou that Daniel?* This clause may also be translated, "You are that Daniel" (RSV). If this is the correct rendering, the salutation suggests that Belshazzar was acquainted with Daniel's origin, but that he had had no official intercourse with him. This much seems clear, Daniel was no longer the president of the magicians at the king's court (ch. 2:48, 49).

It seems that with the passing of Nebuchadnezzar, the policy for which Daniel had stood had come into disfavor at the court of Babylon, and that, as a result, he was retired from public service. Belshazzar and his predecessors evidently knew all about God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 5:22), but had deliberately rejected the latter's policy of acknowledging the true God and cooperating with His will (chs. 4:28–37; 5:23). The fact that Daniel later entered the service of Persia (ch. 6:1–3) implies that his retirement during the closing years of the Babylonian Empire was not due to ill-health or old age. His bitter censure of Belshazzar (ch. 5:22, 23) is evidence of the king's hostility toward the principles and state policy that Daniel represented. Daniel's disapproval of official Babylonian policy may have been one of the factors that led the first rulers of the Persian Empire to favor him.

14. *Spirit of the gods.* In contrast with the words of the queen (v. 11) and of Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 4:8), Belshazzar omits the adjective "holy" in connection with "gods."

17. *To thyself.* Some have thought that, as a divinely enlightened seer, Daniel declined the distinction and the place of honor promised the interpreter in order to avoid every appearance of self-interest in the presence of such a king. This may be true. It is also possible that Daniel, knowing that Belshazzar's reign was about to end, had no

interest in receiving any favors from the man who that very night had, by acts and words, blasphemed the God of heaven and earth. That even now, in his old age, Daniel was not in principle opposed to accepting a high government position can be demonstrated from the fact that a short time later he was once more in high office (ch. 6:21). The office was doubtless accepted because Daniel felt that he could exercise a wholesome influence upon the king and be an instrument in the hand of God to bring about the release of his people from exile. But perhaps Daniel felt that to accept any honors or dignities from Belshazzar not only was useless but could even be harmful and dangerous.

Nebuchadnezzar. Before Daniel read and interpreted the writing he reminded the king of what Nebuchadnezzar had experienced as a result of his refusal to fulfill the divine destiny with regard to himself and his nation. Besides, Nebuchadnezzar had been mightier and more prudent than the wretched Belshazzar. The prophet showed Belshazzar how he, the (grand)son, had acted wickedly toward God, the Lord of his life, and had learned nothing from the experience of Nebuchadnezzar.

24. Then. A reference to the recent moment when, in drunken revelry, Belshazzar had praised his gods and drunk wine out of the consecrated vessels from the Temple of Jerusalem, as described in v. 23.

Part of the hand. See on v. 5.

This writing. The inscription was still visible upon the wall.

25. This is the writing. Daniel proceeds to read the words written on the wall, apparently four words in Aramaic. It is futile to speculate concerning the nature of this script and its relationship to any other known script (see on v. 8). But, even after the words had been read, they could not be understood except by divine illumination. A whole truth was expressed in each key word; hence the need for an interpretation.

26. Mene. The Aramaic *mene*' is a passive participle of the verb "to number," or "to count," and, if taken alone, simply means "numbered," or "counted." By divine illumination Daniel drew from this word the interpretation, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it."

27. Tekel. The Jewish scholars called Masoretes, who somewhere between the 7th and 9th centuries of the Christian Era added vowel signs to the Bible manuscripts (see Vol. I, pp. 34, 35), pointed the Aramaic word *teqel* as a noun. Like *mene*' (see on v. 26), it should obviously be pointed as a passive participle (*teqil*). The form *teqel* was probably chosen by the Masoretes on account of its greater similarity of sound with *mene*'. *Teqil* comes from the verb "to weigh." Daniel at once informed the king as to the import of this divine weighing. Belshazzar was found lacking in moral worth.

Found wanting. These fearful words of doom, addressed to the profligate king of Babylon, condemn all who, like Belshazzar, neglect their God-given opportunities. In the investigative judgment now in progress (see on ch. 7:10) men are weighed in the balances of the sanctuary to see whether their moral character and spiritual state correspond with the benefits and blessings God has conferred upon them. There is no appeal from the decisions of that court. In view of the solemnity of the hour, all must watch lest the decisive moment that forever fixes every man's destiny finds them unprepared and "wanting." Compare 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:11, 12.

28. *Peres*. This word is not a passive participle like the two words *mene'* and *teqil*, although the vocalization indicates that the Masoretes considered it a verb form. It is a noun, here singular in form. The plural form appeared on the inscription (v. 25). There it is also connected to the preceding words by the conjunction *we*, "and." The *we* appears as *u* in the word *upharsin*. This accounts for the difference between *upharsin* and *peres*.

Peres means "share," or "portion," and if the plural form *upharsin* (v. 25) is adopted, may be translated, "pieces." Daniel's interpretation, "Thy kingdom is divided," could also be rendered, "Thy kingdom is broken into pieces." The emphasis is not necessarily that the kingdom was to be divided into two equal parts, the one part given to the Medes and the other to the Persians. The kingdom was to be divided into pieces, destroyed, and dissolved. This was to be effected by the Medes and the Persians. Significantly, the Aramaic form *peres* contains the consonants of the Aramaic words (see Vol. I, pp. 25, 26) for Persia and Persians, who were even then at the gates of Babylon.

29. *Then commanded Belshazzar*. The king fulfilled the promise he had made to Daniel, although Daniel clearly indicated that he was not interested in the proffered honors. Because of Belshazzar's drunken condition it may not have been possible to deter him from his course. Some have objected that the dignity of being third ruler was not possible, because, according to v. 30, Belshazzar was slain that very night. The objection is based on the supposition that the proclamation was publicly made in the streets of the city. But the words do not necessitate such a supposition. The proclamation may have been made only before the notables assembled in the palace. It could not become effective because of succeeding events.

30. *In that night*. Although Belshazzar is not mentioned in the cuneiform sources describing the fall of Babylon, Xenophon declares that "the impious king" of Babylon, whose name is not mentioned in the account, was slain when Cyrus' army commander Gobryas entered the palace (*Cyropaedia* vii. 5. 30). Although it must be recognized that Xenophon's narrative is not historically reliable in all details, many of his statements are based on fact. According to cuneiform sources Nabonidus was absent from Babylon at the time of its capture. When Nabonidus surrendered, Cyrus sent him to distant Carmania. Therefore the king who was slain during the capture of Babylon could have been none other than Belshazzar. For a summary of the history of Belshazzar see Additional Note at the end of this chapter.

31. *Darius the Median*. The ruler mentioned in this verse and throughout the 6th chapter is still an obscure figure as far as secular history is concerned. The Additional Note at the end of ch. 6 presents a brief survey of the various identifications proposed by commentators, as well as a possible solution of the various historical problems involved.

The conjunction "and," with which the verse begins, shows that the author of the book closely connected the death of Belshazzar, recorded in the preceding verse, with the accession of "Darius the Median" to the throne. In the printed editions of the Hebrew Bible this verse is counted as the first verse of ch. 6. However, most modern versions, following the LXX, connect v. 31 with ch. 5. This is preferable.

There is no difference between the spelling of the name of the Darius mentioned here and that of "Darius [I] king of Pesia" in Ezra 4:24 (see comments there) and elsewhere, in Aramaic and Hebrew as in English.

Threescore and two years. Darius' advanced age was probably responsible for the brevity of his reign. The book of Daniel mentions only the first regnal year of Darius (chs. 9:1, 2; 11:1). The king's death occurred "within about two years of the fall of Babylon" (PK 556).

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 5

One of the great puzzles to Bible commentators through the centuries has been the identity of Belshazzar. Until fairly recently no reference in ancient records to such a king had been discovered. The name Belshazzar was known only from the book of Daniel and from works that borrowed the name from Daniel—as, for example, the Apocryphal Baruch and Josephus' writings. Many attempts were made to harmonize secular history with the Biblical records. The difficulty was accentuated by the fact that several ancient sources gave lists of the kings of Babylon to the end of the history of that nation, all of which mentioned Nabonidus, in different spellings, as the last king before Cyrus, who was the first king of Persia. Since Cyrus conquered Babylon and succeeded its last Babylonian king, there seemed to be no place for Belshazzar in the royal line. The book of Daniel, on the other hand, puts the events immediately preceding the fall of Babylon in the reign of Belshazzar, a "son" of Nebuchadnezzar (see on ch. 5:2), who lost his life during the night of the conquest of Babylon by the invading Medes and Persians (ch. 5:30).

Of the numerous interpretations formerly set forth to explain the apparent discrepancies between the Biblical records and other ancient sources the following are listed (according to Raymond P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, pp. 13, 14):

Belshazzar was (1) another name of Nebuchadnezzar's son known as Evil-Merodach, (2) a brother of Evil-Merodach, (3) a son of Evil-Merodach, hence Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, (4) another name for Nergal-shar-usur, Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, (5) another name for Labashi-Marduk, Nergal-shar-usur's son, (6) another name for Nabonidus, and (7) the son of Nabonidus and a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar.

According to another view, held by the majority of critical scholars prior to the discovery of Belshazzar's name in cuneiform sources toward the close of the 19th century, the name Belshazzar was an invention of the writer of Daniel, who, these critics assert, lived in the time of the Maccabees in the 2d century B.C.

This list of divergent views demonstrates the nature and extent of the historical problems confronting interpreters of the book of Daniel, one that seems to abound in more problems than any other OT book of its size. That the identity and office of Belshazzar have now been fully established from contemporary sources, thus vindicating the reliability of ch. 5, is one of the great triumphs of Biblical archeology of the last century. The extreme importance of this achievement calls for a brief review of the subject.

In 1861 H. F. Talbot published certain texts found in the Moon Temple at Ur, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (vol. 19, p. 195). The texts contained a prayer of Nabonidus pronounced in favor of *Bel-shar-ušur*, his eldest son. Several writers, among them George Rawlinson, brother of the famous decipherer of the cuneiform script, identified this *Bel-shar-ušur* with the Biblical Belshazzar. Others rejected this identification, among them Talbot himself, who, in 1875, listed his arguments with a new translation of the text mentioning Belshazzar (*Records of the Past*, vol. 5, pp. 143–148).

Seven years later (1882) Theophilus G. Pinches published a text brought to light in the preceding year, which is now called the Nabonidus Chronicle. This text describes the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, and states also that Nabonidus stayed in Tema for several years while his son was in Babylonia. Although at the time Pinches did not completely understand the text, and incorrectly identified Tema, which lies in western Arabia, he made several accurate deductions concerning Belshazzar. He observed, for example, that Belshazzar “seems to have been commander-in-chief of the army, probably had greater influence in the kingdom than his father, and so was regarded as king” (*Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. 7 [1882], p. 150).

In the succeeding years more texts were discovered that shed light on the various functions and important positions that Belshazzar, Nabonidus’ son, held before and during his father’s reign. However, none of these texts called Belshazzar king as the Bible does. Nevertheless a number of scholars, on the basis of the accumulating evidence, suggested the view—later proved to be correct—that the two men may have been coregents. In 1916 Pinches published a text in which Nabonidus and Belshazzar were jointly invoked in an oath. He claimed that texts like this indicated that Belshazzar must have held a “regal [viceregal] position,” although he stated that “we have yet to learn what was Belshazzar’s exact position in Babylonia” (*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. 38 [1916], p. 30).

Confirmation of the conclusion that a coregency between Nabonidus and Belshazzar had existed finally came in 1924, when Sidney Smith published the so-called “Verse Account of Nabonidus” of the British Museum, in which the clear statement is made that Nabonidus “entrusted the kingship” to his eldest son (*Babylonian Historical Texts* [London, 1924], p. 88; see translation by Oppenheim in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. by Pritchard [Princeton, 1950], p. 313). This text, which settled all doubts about a kingship for Belshazzar, was a severe blow to scholars of the higher-critical schools who claimed that Daniel was a product of the 2d century B.C. Their dilemma is reflected in the words of R. H. Pfeiffer of Harvard University, who states:

“We shall presumably never know how our author learned ... that Belshazzar, mentioned only in Babylonian records, in Daniel, and in *Bar. 1:11*, which is based on Daniel, was functioning as king when Cyrus took Babylon”

(*Introduction to the Old Testament* [New York, 1941], pp. 758, 759).

The discovery of so many cuneiform texts that shed light on the reign of Nabonidus and Belshazzar led Raymond P. Dougherty of Yale University to collect all source material, cuneiform and classical, in one monograph, which appeared in 1929 under the title *Nabonidus and Belshazzar* (New Haven, 1929, 216 pp.).

Cuneiform inscriptions indicate that Nabonidus was the son of the prince of Haran, *Nabû-balâtsu-iqbi*, and of the priestess of the Moon Temple at Haran. After the Medes and Babylonians captured Haran in 610 B.C. the mother of Nabonidus was possibly taken as a distinguished prisoner to Nebuchadnezzar’s harem, so that Nabonidus grew up in the court under the eyes of the great king. He was most likely the “Labynetus” of Herodotus (i. 74), who acted as peace mediator between the Lydians and Persians in 585 B.C. This appears evident from the following observations: Herodotus calls the king of Babylon who reigned at the time of the fall of Sardis, in 546, Labynetus (i. 77). Later he identifies the father of the ruler of Babylon at the time of its fall in 539 by the same name (i. 188). We know that Nabonidus was king of Babylon in 546, also that he was Belshazzar’s father. That, in 585, Nabonidus was chosen to act as diplomatic representative of

Nebuchadnezzar was a high honor, and shows that the young man must have been a favorite of the king at that time. It is possible, as Dougherty thinks, that his wife Nitocris, whom Herodotus describes as a wise woman (i. 185, 188), was a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar by an Egyptian princess.

However, the family relationship between Belshazzar, Nabonidus' son, and Nebuchadnezzar is not yet definitely established from contemporary records.

For lack of more complete information it is impossible at present to determine precisely how the repeated statements of ch. 5, that Nebuchadnezzar was Belshazzar's father, are to be understood. As far as Biblical usage is concerned "father" may mean also "grandfather" or "ancestor" (see on 1 Chron. 2:7). Three interpretations have been offered: (1) Nabonidus was a son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar's grandson through his mother. (2) Nabonidus was called son because his mother belonged to Nebuchadnezzar's harem and was therefore his stepson. (3) Belshazzar was son only in the sense of the analogous case of Jehu, king of Israel, whom the Assyrian contemporary inscriptions call the "son of Omri." Jehu was not related by blood to the house of Omri, but Jehu extinguished the dynasty that Omri had founded and became the next king of Israel.

Cuneiform records have thrown an abundant stream of light on Belshazzar, his office and activities during the years he was coregent with his father. After conferring the kingship upon Belshazzar in 553/552 B.C., or shortly thereafter (see on ch. 5:1), Nabonidus conducted a successful expedition against the Arabian Tema, and made it his residence for many years. During this time Belshazzar was the acting king in Babylon and functioned as commander in chief of the army. Although legal documents continued to be dated according to the regnal years of Nabonidus, the fact that the names of both father and son were pronounced together in oaths, whereas under other kings' reigns only one name was used, clearly reveals the dual rulership of Nabonidus and Belshazzar.

Information from the secular sources, briefly sketched above, has, in a positive way, vindicated the historical accuracy of ch. 5. At the conclusion of his monograph on Belshazzar and Nabonidus, Dougherty has forcefully expressed this conviction: "Of all non-Babylonian records dealing with the situation at the close of the Neo-Babylonian empire *the fifth chapter of Daniel ranks next to cuneiform literature in accuracy* so far as outstanding events are concerned. The Scriptural account may be interpreted as excelling because it employs the name Belshazzar, because it attributes royal power to Belshazzar, and because it recognizes that a dual rulership existed in the kingdom. Babylonian cuneiform documents of the sixth century B.C. furnish clear-cut evidence of the correctness of these three basic historical nuclei contained in the Biblical narrative dealing with the fall of Babylon. Cuneiform texts written under Persian influence in the sixth century B.C. have not preserved the name Belshazzar, but his role as a crown prince entrusted with royal power during Nabonidus' stay in Arabia is depicted convincingly. Two famous Greek historians of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. do not mention Belshazzar by name and hint only vaguely at the actual political situation which existed in the time of Nabonidus. Annals in the Greek language ranging from about the beginning of the third century B.C. to the first century B.C. are absolutely silent concerning Belshazzar and the prominence which he had during the last reign of the Neo-Babylonian empire. The total information found in all available chronologically-fixed documents later than the cuneiform texts of the sixth century B.C. and prior to the writings of Josephus of the first century A.D. could not have provided the necessary material for the historical framework of the fifth chapter of Daniel" (*op cit.*, pp. 199, 200).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-31PK 522-538; TM 434-436

1, 2 PK 523

3–5PK 524
 4 COL 259
 6 TM 436
 6–8PK 527
 10–16PK 528
 17–24PK 529
 23, 24 MM 151; 5T 244
 24–284T 14
 25–29PK 530
 25 TM 436
 27 CG 155, 569; COL 267; CS 142; CT 348; EW 37, 246; FE 228, 468; GC 491; LS 117;
 MM 151, 164, 195; MYP 229; PK 219; TM 237, 286, 440, 450; 1T 126, 152, 260, 263,
 317, 406; 2T 43, 54, 58, 83, 266, 409, 439, 452; 3T 185, 370, 522, 538; 4T 311, 339, 385,
 386, 470; 5T 83, 116, 154, 279, 397, 411, 420, 435; 6T 230, 405; 7T 120; 8T 14, 247
 27–31Te 49
 30 COL 259; PK 531

CHAPTER 6

1 *Daniel is made chief of the presidents.* 4 *They conspiring against him obtain an idolatrous decree.* 10 *Daniel, accused of the breach thereof, is cast into the lions' den.* 18 *Daniel is saved.* 24 *His adversaries devoured,* 25 *and God magnified by a decree.*

1. Princes. Aramaic *'achashdarpan*, literally, “satraps” (see on ch. 3:2). The various details of the provincial administration of the Persian Empire prior to Darius I’s reorganization are still obscure. Herodotus (iii. 89) states that Darius I created 20 satrapies as main divisions of the empire. Each satrapy was divided into provinces. The inscriptions of Darius give various totals for the satrapies (21, 23, 29), indicating that the king probably changed the number as well as the size of satrapies during his reign. Some Greek historians use the term “satrap” for lower officials, as Daniel apparently did when he used the term to designate provincial governors. Compare the 127 provinces of Esther 1:1 in the time of Xerxes.

2. Three presidents. This administrative body is not mentioned in non-Biblical sources. There is a complete lack of contemporary documentary evidence as to the organization of the Persian Empire prior to the reign of Darius I.

Daniel was first. Literally, “Daniel was one”. The word here translated “first” is rendered “one” in (chs. 2:9; 4:19; 7:5, 16). The aged prophet soon distinguished himself by conscientious service.

No damage. The reason for the elaborate organization of civil service in Persia is here pictured in vivid colors. On precautions taken by the imperial system to guard against loss of revenue and other damage, compare Ezra 4:13–16.

Excellent spirit. This was not the first time that royal observers had noticed a unique “spirit” in Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar had testified to Daniel’s possession of “the spirit of the holy gods” (ch. 4:8). The queen mother repeated the expression in her interview with Belshazzar on his last fateful night (ch. 5:11). On the same occasion she called attention to the “excellent spirit” that had been observed in Daniel (ch. 5:12). This spirit had no doubt manifested itself, not only in the solving of “hard sentences” (ch. 5:12), but also in scrupulous integrity, unwavering faithfulness, loyalty to duty, and integrity in words and acts—qualities rarely seen in civil servants of that age. A brief acquaintance with this

elderly statesman, a survivor of the golden age of imperial Babylonia, was sufficient to convince Darius that Daniel would be a wise choice as chief administrator of the new empire and counselor of the crown.

4. *Against Daniel.* In his plans to elevate Daniel to the highest civil office in the state, the king doubtless acted in the interests of the crown and of the empire. However, he failed to take into account the feelings of jealousy that would naturally be aroused among the Median and Persian dignitaries when a Jew, a former minister of the Babylonians, occupied a position that, according to their expectations, should be theirs.

Any error. Despite his advanced age—he was now in his middle eighties—Daniel was able to perform his duties of state in such a way that no errors or faults could be charged against him. This accomplishment was due to his personal integrity and to confidence in the unfailing guidance of his heavenly Father. To love and serve God was to him more important than life itself. Scrupulous adherence from his youth to the laws of health doubtless gave him a vigor far beyond what was usual for men of his age.

5. *The law of his God.* A careful scrutiny of Daniel's habits, a close observation of his dealings with associates and subordinates, and a careful checking of the records, revealed no irregularities to provide a ground for complaints or accusations. However, Daniel's enemies discovered that he was never to be found worshipping in any of the temples of Babylon, nor did he take part in any heathen religious ceremonies. Undoubtedly they had noticed that he was absent from his office every Sabbath, the day of weekly rest prescribed in "the law of his God." They doubtless reasoned that his set times for prayer interfered with the discharge of his official duties.

6. *These presidents and princes.* There is no need to assume that all governors of the empire assembled before the king concerning this matter. Doubtless only those appeared who envied Daniel's position. If all had been called together for the occasion, the king might have become suspicious, especially if Daniel was not among them. The plotters probably calculated that with only a few approaching the king with the request, the chances of deceiving the monarch were greater than if they waited until all the governors from every corner of the empire could be assembled to appear before him.

Live for ever. See on ch. 2:4.

7. *All.* Doubtless a lie, for it is questionable that all were consulted.

Whosoever shall ask a petition. A decree of this nature would be entirely alien to the Persians, who won the reputation of being largehearted in matters of religious tolerance. It is unthinkable that a man like Cyrus would have signed such a decree. However, Darius the Mede evidently had a different background. We know little of the thinking of the Medes with respect to religious tolerance. Cyrus, the Persian king, rebuilt temples of nations destroyed by the Babylonians, and thereby showed his spirit of tolerance with regard to other peoples' religious feelings and practices. On the other hand Darius I claimed that the False Smerdis, his predecessor, a Magian from Media who ruled for about half a year in 522 B.C., showed his spirit of intolerance by destroying temples. Although generalizations are subject to error, we must reckon with the possibility that the Medes, or at least some of their rulers, showed less religious tolerance than the Persians.

It has also been observed that the command to pray for one month to none but the king, though in this instance especially aimed at Daniel, may have been suggested by a national religious custom of earlier date among the Medes, according to which divine honors were rendered to the king. Herodotus (i. 199) remarks that Deioeces, one of the

earliest known kings of the Medes, had made his person the object of reverential awe in the eyes of his subjects by removing himself from the observation of the common man, in order to convince his people that he was different from them. That even Persian kings were willing occasionally to accept divine honors is evident from the fact that in Egypt they allowed divine attributes to be added to their names. Hieroglyphic inscriptions refer to Cambyses as the “son of Re” the sun-god, and to Darius as “the son of god.” Hence it is not necessary to go down in history to the Roman emperors to find the first historical parallels to the command referred to in Dan. 6:7, as some critical scholars have claimed.

Den of lions. Contemporary literature and works of art frequently depict kings of antiquity, such as those of Egypt, Assyria, and Persia, engaged in the sport of hunting wild animals. Game consisted chiefly of lions, but included also panthers, wild bulls, and elephants. Reports tell of vassal kings sending captured wild animals to their royal lords in Mesopotamia as tribute. There they were kept in menageries, as symbols of the monarch’s world power and for the amusement of the king and his friends. Although no examples of capital punishment by throwing the culprit before wild animals are known from contemporary records in Persian times, these sources speak of extraordinarily barbaric forms of capital punishment ordered by otherwise humane Persian kings.

8. It be not changed. On the irrevocability of the law of “the Medes and Persians” compare Esther 1:19; 8:8. This characteristic is also attested by Greek writers. For example, Diodorus Siculus (xvii. 30) describes the attitude of Darius II toward the sentence of death upon Charidemus. He claims that the king, after pronouncing the death sentence, repented and blamed himself for having greatly erred in judgment; yet it was impossible to undo what had been done by royal authority.

Medes and Persians. Higher critics frequently pointed to the presence of this expression in the book of Daniel, used at a time when the Persians were actually more in control of the former empire than the Medes, as proof of the supposed late authorship of the book. They claimed that such a term would be used only at a time when the real political situation had become hazy in the memory of the people. Contemporary documents, since discovered, have proved this higher critical view incorrect. These documents refer to the Persians as “Medes,” and to “Medes and Persians,” as does the Bible. The cuneiform documents also mention various Persian kings by the title “king of the Medes,” as well as by the customary title “king of Persia”. Since Darius was a “Mede,” it is only natural that any courtier referring in his presence to the law of the land would speak of “the law of the Medes and Persians”.

10. His house. Daniel’s house probably had a flat roof, like the majority of both ancient and modern houses in Mesopotamia. Usually on one corner there is an apartment raised above the flat roof that contains latticed windows for ventilation. Such rooms provided ideal places of seclusion.

His windows being open. An identical Aramaic expression is used in an Aramaic papyrus from Elephantine. The papyrus describes a house having “open windows” at the lower end and above (Cowley, No. 25, line 6). Another papyrus speaks of a house whose “one window opens to the two compartments” (Kraeling, No. 12, line 21). Daniel’s open windows faced in the direction of Jerusalem, the city he had left as a boy and probably never saw again. On the custom of turning in prayer toward Jerusalem see 1 Kings 8:33, 35); Ps. 5:7; 28:2.

He kneeled. The Bible notes various postures in prayer. We find servants of God praying while sitting, like David (2 Sam. 7:18), bowing, like Eliezer (Gen. 24:26) and Elijah (1 Kings 18:42), and frequently standing, like Hannah (1 Sam. 1:26). The most common attitude in prayer seems to have been that of kneeling, of which the following are examples: Ezra (Ezra 9:5), Jesus (Luke 22:41), Stephen (Acts 7:60). See further PK 48; GW 178.

Three times a day. In later Jewish tradition the offering of prayer three times a day took place at the third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day (the hours being counted from sunrise). The third and ninth corresponded to the time of the morning and the evening sacrifices. The psalmist followed the same practice (Ps. 55:17). Three daily prayers later became a fixed custom with every orthodox Jew living according to rabbinical regulations (*Berakoth* iv. 1). This custom of the three daily times of prayer seems also to have been adopted in the early Christian church (*Didache* 8).

11. Found Daniel praying. The plotters did not have to wait long to see Daniel disregard the king's prohibition. Decree or no decree, this man of God felt that he should continue his regular prayer habits. God was to him the source of all his wisdom and success in life. The favor of Heaven was dearer to him than life itself. His conduct was the natural result of his trust in God.

13. Of the captivity. The form of the accusation revealed the full hatred and contempt that these men felt toward Daniel. They did not refer to the dignity of his office but characterized him merely as a foreigner, a Jewish exile. They doubtless hoped thereby to bring his conduct under the suspicion of being an act of rebellion against the royal authority. They inquired, in effect, How could a man whom the king had so highly honored, and who had every reason to demonstrate his gratitude toward the king by strict obedience to royal decrees, be so shameless as to defy the royal orders openly? Their words were calculated to lead Darius to regard Daniel as an ungrateful, if not traitorous, character.

14. Deliver him. The monarch saw the snare that had been set for him. When the decree was proposed, the men had resorted to flattery, and the aging king had agreed without recognizing the plot that underlay the plan of the men whose judgment he had been accustomed to trust. He suddenly realized that the whole matter had been conceived, not, as he had thought, to bring honor to his reign and person, but to deprive him of a true friend and trustworthy public servant. Despite his almost frantic efforts, the king could find no legal loophole by which to save Daniel and at the same time preserve the basic Median and Persian concept of the inviolability of law.

15. Assembled. For the second time on that fateful day Daniel's enemies came to the king, this time in the evening. For many hours they had waited for the execution of the verdict, and when nothing happened they resorted again to the king and impudently claimed their prey. They knew they had a legal right to demand Daniel's execution, and that there was no loophole in the law by which he could escape.

16. Deliver thee. The king's words were in striking contrast with those of Nebuchadnezzar uttered on another occasion that was in some respects similar (ch. 3:15). Darius may have been acquainted with the miracles that God had performed in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.

17. A stone was brought. No ancient lions' den has yet been excavated, and it is thus impossible to reconstruct an accurate picture of such a place.

Sealed it. The official sealing by the king and his lords had a twofold purpose. It served as a guarantee to the king that Daniel would not be killed by any other means, in case he was not harmed by the lions. Because Darius hoped that Daniel's God would save His faithful servant from the lions, he would naturally want to take precautions against any interference on the part of the men who were determined to take Daniel's life. On the other hand the seal provided assurance to Daniel's enemies that no attempt could be made to save him, in the event he was not immediately torn to pieces by the wild animals. Darius' counselors may have feared that such an attempt to save Daniel from the pit would be made by Daniel's friends or by the king as soon as everyone had withdrawn from the place of execution. Hence, their seal, as well as that of the king, was used to make sure that the stone would not be tampered with during the night.

Sealed Egyptian tombs may serve to illustrate the technique of sealing an opening. After the door had been closed for the last time, it was covered with plaster, and either seals were stamped all over the wet plaster or roll seals were rolled over it. A similar procedure may have been followed in the case of the closing and sealing of the lions' den. The sealing was most probably carried out by means of cylinder seals, which were common among the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians. Every excavation in Mesopotamia brings to light numerous examples of such seals.

18. Instruments of musick. Aramaic *dachawan*. The word is obscure. In the Bible it occurs only here. The medieval Jewish commentator Rashi explained it to mean "tables". Ibn Ezra, another Jewish scholar, interpreted the word to mean "musical instruments." His interpretation may have influenced the translators of the KJV. Among the many other interpretations found in translations and commentaries, all of which are conjectural, the following may be listed: "foods," "musicians," "dancing women," "perfumes," "entertainers," and "concubines." The translation of the RSV, "diversions," appears to aim at a noncommittal reading.

19. Very early in the morning. Aramaic *shepharpar*, "dawn." The meaning of the passage is clearly revealed in Keil's translation: "The king as soon as he arose at morning dawn, went hastily by the early light."

20. Lamentable. Aramaic *asib*, "sad," "pained," "full of anxiety". The voice is an index to the emotions, and it is difficult for people to hide their inner feelings. The king had gone through the ordeal of seeing his most faithful servant thrown to the lions. This dreadful experience was followed by a long, sleepless night. Little wonder that his voice betrayed his inner restlessness, anxiety, and bitter remorse!

Servant of the living God. The words of Darius reveal a degree of acquaintance with the God and religion of Daniel. The fact that the king spoke of Daniel's God as the "living God" suggests that Daniel had instructed him concerning the nature and power of the true God.

21. O king, live for ever. For this ceremonial greeting see on ch. 2:4.

22. Shut the lions' mouths. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews refers to this experience of Daniel and attributes the deliverance of the prophet to the power of faith (Heb. 11:33).

Innocency was found in me. Presumably Daniel had not defended himself or his actions before he was thrown to the lions. Any word spoken at that time might have been

interpreted by his enemies as weakness or a sign of fear. Now, however, after God had seen fit to save his life, Daniel chose to declare his innocence.

23. Take Daniel up. The requirements of the royal decree had been met. That decree had not required the execution of the transgressor, but only that he “be cast into the den of lions” (v. 7). There is no question, of course, but that these words implied the death sentence. Daniel had been cast into the lions’ den, and there were no constitutional restrictions to prevent the king from removing Daniel from the lions’ den.

24. They cast them. The angry king acted in the fashion typical of despots of his day. Ancient history gives many examples of such actions. Some critical commentators have tried to show that the narrative is unhistorical by claiming that the den in which the lions were kept could not have been large enough to receive 122 men with their families; further, that there could not have been enough lions in Babylon to eat so many victims. However, the Bible nowhere states that this was the number condemned to death. These critical scholars have drawn the unnecessary conclusion that every one of the 120 princes and the two presidents of vs. 1, 2 were involved in the unfortunate experience. It is pure speculation to say how many were involved in the matter.

Their children. Both Herodotus (iii. 119) and Ammianus Marcellinus (xxiii. 6, 81) testify that consigning to death the wives and children along with condemned men was in accordance with Persian custom.

26. I make a decree. After the wonderful deliverance of Daniel’s friends from the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar had issued an edict to all the nations of his kingdom forbidding them, on pain of death, from saying anything against the God of these Hebrews (ch. 3:29). In similar manner, in consequence of the miraculous preservation of Daniel in the den of lions, Darius gave out an edict commanding all the nations of his realm to fear and reverence Daniel’s God. We need not necessarily conclude from this that the king personally departed from the polytheism of the Medes. Darius acknowledged the God of Daniel as the living God, whose kingdom and dominion are everlasting, but it is not stated that he acknowledged Him as the only true God. See further on p. 751.

28. In the reign. The repetition of these words does not indicate a separation of the Persian kingdom from the Median, but merely a distinction of rulers, one being a Mede and the other a Persian. The sentence construction allows interpretations that make Cyrus either a coruler with, or successor to, Darius.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 6

Following is a summary and evaluation of the various views that have been held as to the identity of Darius the Mede. Prior to the age of modern archeology the book of Daniel posed a number of historical problems, most of which have satisfactorily been solved (see Introduction, p. 747). Of the remaining problems, the question of the person and office of Darius is at present the greatest. However, the remarkable way in which other historical statements of the Bible have been confirmed justifies the confidence that this problem will also be solved.

Higher critics offer their simple but unacceptable explanation that the historical parts of Daniel are legendary and that Darius is a fictitious character invented by a 2d-century author of the book. The fact that secular confirmation of certain Biblical statements of history cannot be produced is no reason for questioning the historical reliability and accuracy of Holy Writ. Many Bible statements formerly challenged by critical scholars

have since proved to be in full harmony with the facts of ancient history as revealed by the spade of the archeologist.

Following is a summary of Scripture statements concerning Darius:

1. Darius was a Mede by descent (chs. 5:31; 9:1; 11:1).
2. He was “the son of Ahasuerus” (ch. 9:1).
3. He was “made king over the realm of the Chaldeans” (ch. 9:1), hence, “took [or “received“ (RSV)] the kingdom” (ch. 5:31).
4. He was “about” 62 years old at the time Babylon was captured (ch. 5:30, 31).
5. Only his first regnal year is noted (chs. 9:1; 11:1).
6. He appointed “an hundred and twenty princes” (literally “satraps”) over the whole kingdom, with “three presidents” as their superiors (ch. 6:1, 2).
7. Cyrus either followed Darius or reigned at the same time (ch. 6:28).

From this evidence the following picture of Darius emerges: After Babylon’s fall the Babylonian Empire was ruled by Darius, perhaps during the first part of the reign of Cyrus, as counted in Babylon. Darius, a son of Ahasuerus (Greek, Xerxes), is called a Mede in contrast with Cyrus, who is called a Persian (ch. 6:28). He was already 62 years of age when Babylon was conquered, and presumably died shortly afterward.

No known non-Biblical sources except those based on Daniel, such as Josephus, mention a Darius as ruler of the conquered Babylonian Empire prior to Darius I (522–486 B.C.). Future finds may bring to light direct references to Darius the Mede. In the meantime Biblical interpreters must seek to identify Darius the Mede with one of the historical figures of the time of Cyrus who was known by another name. Josephus claims that the Darius of the book of Daniel “had another name among the Greeks” (*Antiquities* x. 11. 4). Of the several identifications proposed the following merit examination:

1. That Darius the Mede was Astyages, the last ruler of the Median kingdom before Cyrus took over the empire. Astyages was the son of Cyaxares I, whose name, it is claimed, can be identified linguistically with that of the Ahasuerus of ch. 9:1, although Ahasuerus elsewhere stands for Xerxes (see on Esther 1:1). Since Astyages began to reign about 585 B.C., he would have been an old man at the time of the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C., as Darius is reported to have been (ch. 5:31). This fact gives some plausibility to the suggested identification.

There are serious objections to this identification. According to Greek sources Astyages was the grandfather of Cyrus. When Cyrus was a youth Astyages made several attempts to kill him. Later, when vassal king over the Persian tribes, Cyrus rebelled against his overlord and deposed Astyages in either 553/552 or 550 B.C., making him governor of Hyrcania, south of the Caspian Sea. Not even the Greek sources hint that Astyages was associated with Cyrus at the capture of Babylon in 539. Further, it is questionable whether Astyages, who was a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar and was the great Babylonian king’s brother-in-law, was still alive at that time. It is therefore highly unlikely that the two can be equated.

2. That Darius the Mede was Cambyses, Cyrus’ son. Cambyses is mentioned in several cuneiform tablets by the title King of Babylon, as associated on the throne with his father Cyrus, whom these tablets term King of the Lands. However, his coregency with his father is the only factor in favor of identifying Cambyses with the Darius of Daniel. In all other respects Cambyses does not fit the picture as presented in the Bible. He could not possibly have been 62 years of age in 539 B.C. He was not a Mede, but a

Persian like his father. And he was not the son of Ahasueros. Because of these difficulties, the identification of Cambyses as Darius must be rejected.

3. That Darius the Mede was Gobryas (the view most widely held). Gobryas, says Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* vii), was an elderly general who took Babylon for Cyrus. The Nabonidus Chronicle, an important cuneiform document describing the fall of Babylon, mentions him. It says that “*Ugbaru*, the governor of Gutium, and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle” on the 16th of Tishri. After describing Cyrus’ entry into Babylon it also mentions a certain “*Gubaru*, his governor,” who “installed [sub-]governors in Babylon.” Furthermore, after recounting how the gods exiled to Babylon by Nabonidus were returned to their respective cities, the tablet states that “in the month Arahshamnu, on the night of the 11th day, *Ugbaru* died.” The next sentence is broken, and scholars disagree as to whether it refers to the death of *Ugbaru* or to the death of a royal personage. The next sentence mentions an official mourning held throughout the country for seven days.

Some have taken *Ugbaru* and *Gubaru* as variant spellings of the same name, representing Gobryas of the Greek sources. However, *Ugbaru* died in the month of Arahshamnu—either in the year of Babylon’s fall or in the next—while there was another *Gubaru*, who lived on for many years as governor over the satrapies of Babylonia and Greater Syria and later as father-in-law of Darius I, the Great, as attested by tablet documents. According to this view *Ugbaru* and *Gubaru* of the Nabonidus Chronicle must be two different persons. The former, having taken Babylon, died soon after. The latter lived on as governor of Babylonia.

Those who identify Darius the Mede with Gobryas and equate *Ugbaru* with *Gubaru* point out that Gobryas is reported to have taken Babylon, and that he virtually became ruler over Babylonia, hence could have been called “king,” although the contemporary records call him only governor. The fact that, according to the Nabonidus Chronicle, he is reported to have appointed governors over Babylonia, seems to corroborate ch. 6:1, 2, where this work is attributed to Darius the Mede. The name *Gubaru* has also been explained as of Median origin. Also his earlier position as governor of Gutium, a province bordering on Media, seems to allow the possibility that he was a Mede.

Although this identification of Darius with *Ugbaru* (Gobryas) has more in its favor than the two previously mentioned, there are objections to this view. Gobryas is called a governor, not a king. Since he lived many years after the fall of Babylon, he must have been much younger than 62 years of age in 539 B.C.

An alternative Gobryas theory, based on a reinterpretation of the Nabonidus Chronicle, proposes that Darius the Mede was not *Gubaru*, the later governor of the contract tablets, but *Ugbaru/Gubaru* of the Nabonidus Chronicle, the governor of Gutium who took Babylon for Cyrus and died in Arahshamnu, not three weeks but a year and three weeks later. This would allow time for ch. 6 during his rule “over the realm of the Chaldeans” (ch. 9:1). For *Ugbaru/Gubaru* the term *king* would be only a courtesy title;

Cyrus, already master of Persia, Media, and Lydia before conquering Babylonia, was the *de facto* ruler of the whole empire.

4. That Darius the Mede was Cyaxares II, the son of Astyages. Compare the statements in PK 523, 556, 557 concerning Cyrus as the nephew and general of Darius with Xenophon's claim that (1) Cyrus, Astyages' grandson through his mother Mandane, had become acquainted with his uncle Cyaxares during the years Cyrus spent at the court of his Median grandfather (*Cyropaedia* i. 3. 1; 4. 1, 6–9, 20–22; 5. 2); (2) that Cyaxares followed his father on the throne as king of Media, after the latter's death (i. 5. 2); (3) that when Cyrus had conquered Babylon he visited his uncle with gifts and offered him a palace in Babylon; that Cyaxares accepted the presents, and gave Cyrus his daughter as well as the kingdom (viii. 5. 17–20).

Although the details of the story as given by Xenophon cannot be accepted, it is possible that the Greek writer preserves correctly the tradition that Cyaxares was the last Median ruler, and that he was Cyrus' father-in-law as well as an intimate friend of the great Persian. If these points can be accepted as historical facts, it can be assumed that Cyrus, upon rebelling against Astyages, permitted Cyaxares to rule as a shadow king to please the Medes. At the same time everyone in the kingdom would know that the actual sovereign was Cyrus, and that Cyaxares was a mere figurehead. In that case Darius the Mede may be identified with Cyaxares II, who, presumably, had come to Babylon at Cyrus' invitation to act in an honorary capacity as king.

That Cyaxares II was advanced in age at the time of the fall of Babylon can be shown as follows, assuming Xenophon to be correct: Cyaxares II was the father-in-law of Cyrus. Cyrus himself was most likely at least 40 years old at the time, as is evident from the fact that his son, Cambyses, was mature enough to represent him in an official position during the next New Year's Day activities. Hence Cyaxares II could have been 62 years old at the fall of Babylon, the age Daniel assigned to Darius the Mede. His comparatively advanced age—in a time when most people died young—may have been responsible for the fact that he did not survive the fall of Babylon very long. This would explain why Daniel mentions only his first regnal year. Xenophon reports nothing further concerning Cyaxares shortly after the conquest of Babylon.

Daniel's statement that Darius was the "son" of Ahasuerus should probably be understood as meaning that he was the "grandson" of Ahasuerus. That the Hebrew word for "son" may mean "grandson," or an even more remote descendant, can be abundantly demonstrated (see on 2 Kings 8:26). The English form Ahasuerus is from the Heb.

'*Achashwerosh*, which might possibly be a rendering of *Uvaxshtrah*, the Old Persian spelling of Cyaxares I, but not of Astyages.

If after his arrival at Babylon, Darius became a special friend of Daniel's, it is understandable that the prophet would date the visions received during this brief reign in terms of Darius' regnal years (chs. 9:1; 11:1), rather than of the regnal years of Cyrus. However, after the one year credited to Darius, Daniel dated events in terms of the years of Cyrus' reign (chs. 1:21; 10:1).

Contemporary evidence that might shed light on this reconstruction of the history of Cyaxares II is ambiguous and meager. There is a possible reference to Cyaxares in the Nabonidus Chronicle. Since it is certain that *Gubaru* lived for many years after the conquest of Babylon, whereas *Ugbaru* died soon after, and a state mourning was

provided for some high personage during the same month, it may be possible to see Cyaxares II in the *Ugbaru* of the Nabonidus Chronicle. Or, the name of Cyaxares may have been in the broken line which speaks about the death of a distinguished individual for whom a nationwide mourning was held. However, there seems to be an error in the first mention of *Ugbaru* in the Nabonidus Chronicle. Either the name *Ugbaru* is a scribal error for *Gubaru*, or the title “governor of Gutium” was by mistake transferred by the author of the tablet from *Gubaru* to *Ugbaru*.

A second possible piece of contemporary evidence may lie in the double mention of a Cyaxares in the great Behistun inscription of Darius I (on the Behistun inscription see Vol. I, pp. 98, 110). Among the several pretenders to the throne against whom Darius I fought were two who claimed to be of the family of Cyaxares. The Cyaxares in question may have been either Cyaxares I, the father of Astyages, or possibly Cyaxares II, the father-in-law of Cyrus, and last shadow king of Media.

The foregoing summary makes evident that there are still many obscure factors in the solution of the problem of identifying Darius the Mede from historical and archeological sources. All things considered, however, this commentary favors the fourth view.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1–28PK 539–548; 1T 295, 296
- 1–4SL 42
- 1–5PK 539
- 3, 4 1T 295
- 4 Ed 56; FE 305; ML 75; PK 546; 7T 248
- 4–104T 368
- 5 SL 43
- 6–9PK 540
- 7 SL 43
- 10 CH 423; GW 178; PK 48, 541; SL 43; 1T 296; 4T 373, 569; 5T 43, 453, 527
- 12, 13 PK 542
- 14–16SL 44
- 14–17PK 543
- 16 AA 575; Ed 254; 4T 448, 525
- 17–24SL 35
- 20–27PK 544
- 22 ML 317; 5T 453, 527
- 22–28PK 557; TM 443; 1T 296
- 25–27Ed 56
- 26 PK 545
- 27 2T 54
- 28 PK 545

CHAPTER 7

1 *Daniel's vision of four beasts.* 9 *Of God's kingdom.* 15 *The interpretation thereof.*

1. First year of Belshazzar. It should be pointed out that Daniel does not present the materials of his book in strict chronological order. The events of chs. 5, 6 took place after those recorded in the 7th chapter, but, doubtless for reasons of continuity, the historical

narrative is carried through to completion in chs. 1–6. On the identity and place in history of Belshazzar see Additional Note on Chapter 5.

Had a dream. Literally, “saw a dream.” In a dream the Lord gave to Daniel a pictorial view of the future history of the world.

The prophecy of ch. 7 covers essentially the same span of history as the dream of ch. 2, both reaching from the prophet’s day to the time of the establishment of the kingdom of God. Nebuchadnezzar saw the world powers represented by a great metallic image; Daniel saw them as symbolic beasts and horns, and saw also aspects of history related to the experience of God’s people and the outworking of His plan. Chapter 2 deals largely with political matters. It was given, first of all, for the instruction of Nebuchadnezzar, to secure his cooperation in the divine plan (see on ch. 2:1). The relationship of the people of God to the shifting political scenes was not a subject of that prophecy. The prophecy of ch. 7, like those of the remainder of the book, was given especially for the people of God in order that they might understand their part in the divine plan for the ages. The inspired preview of events was given against the background of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The efforts of the arch-enemy of souls to destroy the “holy people” were unveiled and the final victory of truth assured.

He wrote. So that it might be preserved for future generations.

Sum of the matters. The Aramaic words thus translated are particularly difficult to phrase in English. The word for “sum” is *re’sh*, which means “head,” or “beginning.” The original Greek version reads, *eis kephalaia logōn*, which may be interpreted to mean “a summary.” Evidently what is meant by the expression is that Daniel wrote down and reported the chief contents of the dream. Ehrlich translates the phrase, “the important details.”

2. Winds. From the Aramaic *ruach*, equivalent to the Heb. *ruach*, which has a variety of meanings, such as “air” (Jer. 2:24, translated “wind”), “breath” (Job 19:17), human “spirit” (Ps. 32:2), divine “Spirit” (Ps. 51:12), and “wind” (Ex. 10:13). Metaphorically the word is also used of vain and empty things (Jer. 5:13). When used in symbolic vision, as here, the word seems to denote activity or energy of some form, the particular form to be determined by the context. For example, the “winds” of Ezekiel’s symbolic vision, which revived the dry skeletons, were representative of divine energy reviving the lifeless nation of Israel (Eze. 37:9–14). The “winds” of Daniel, which strove upon the great sea, causing four beasts—or empires—to emerge, represented those movements, diplomatic, warlike, political, or otherwise, that were to shape the history of the period.

The “four winds,” being from the four points of the compass, doubtless represent political activity in various parts of the earth (Jer. 49:36; cf. Dan. 8:8; 11:4; Zech. 2:6; 6:5, margin).

Strove. Aramaic *guach*, which means “to stir up.” The form of the verb suggests continued action.

Great sea. No specific body of water, such as the Mediterranean Sea, need be inferred. The sea is here symbolic of the nations of the world—the “great sea” of humanity in all ages (see Rev. 17:15; cf. Isa. 17:12; Jer. 46:7).

3. Four ... beasts. The application of the symbol is not left to speculation. According to v. 17 the four beasts represent “four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.” For “kings” the LXX, Theodotion, and the Vulgate read “kingdoms.” The fourth beast is

specifically called “the fourth kingdom” (v. 23). There is general agreement that these four beasts represent the same four world powers symbolized by the metallic image of ch. 2.

Came up. The world powers represented did not bear rule contemporaneously but successively.

Diverse. The diversity here spoken of was illustrated by the different metals presented (ch. 2:38–40).

4. Lion ... eagle's wings. An appropriate symbol for Babylon. The winged lion is found on Babylonian objects of art. The combination of lion and eagle was a common motif—more often a lion with eagle's wings, sometimes with claws or a beak; a similar composite was the eagle with a lion's head. The winged lion is one of the forms of the beast often pictured in combat with Marduk, the patron god of the city of Babylon. On these lion-eagle combinations see S. H. Langdon, *Semitic Mythology* (“The Mythology of All Races,” vol. 13), pp. 118, 277–282, and Fig. 51 facing p. 106 (winged lion), and pp. 116, 117 (lion-headed eagle); see illustrations of various Babylonian and Assyrian composite beasts in L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. I, pp. 50, 52.

Other prophets referred to King Nebuchadnezzar by similar figures (Jer. 4:7; Jer. 50:17, 44; Lam. 4:19; Eze. 17:3, 12; Hab. 1:8). The lion as the king of beasts and the eagle as the king of birds fittingly represented the empire of Babylon at the height of its glory. A lion is noted for its strength, whereas the eagle is famous for the power and the range of its flight. Nebuchadnezzar's power was felt not only in Babylon but from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, and from Asia Minor to Egypt. Thus it is fitting, in order to represent the spread of Babylon's power, that the lion should be provided with eagle's wings.

Plucked. The lion was no longer able to fly like an eagle upon its prey. This doubtless refers to the time when less powerful rulers followed Nebuchadnezzar in the kingdom of Babylon, rulers under whose administration Babylon lost glory and power. Some have suggested a possible reference also to Nebuchadnezzar's later life, when for seven years he was deprived not only of his power but also of his reason (ch. 4:31–33).

Lifted up. A lion standing erect like a man is indicative of the loss of lionlike qualities.

A man's heart. King Richard's nickname, the “Lion-Hearted,” ascribed to him unusual courage and boldness. Conversely, a “man-hearted” lion would indicate cowardice and timidity. In its declining years Babylon became weak and enfeebled through wealth and luxury, and fell a prey to the Medo-Persian kingdom.

Some see in the expression “man's heart” the disappearance of the animal characteristic of greed and ferocity and the humanizing of the king of Babylon. Such could apply to Nebuchadnezzar after his humiliating experience, but would not be a fitting representation of the kingdom in its closing years.

5. A bear. The Persian, or Medo-Persian, Empire, corresponding to the silver of the image (see on ch. 2:39). As silver is inferior to gold, so, in some respects at least, the bear is inferior to the lion. The bear is, nevertheless, cruel and rapacious, characteristics that are attributed to the Medes in Isa. 13:17, 18.

On one side. The interpreter (v. 16) does not explain this feature of the vision. However, a comparison with ch. 8:3, 20 seems clearly to indicate that the kingdom was

composed of two parts. Of the Medes and the Persians, the latter became the dominant power a few years before the dual empire conquered Babylon (see on ch. 2:39).

Three ribs. These are not mentioned in the interpretation (vs. 17–27), but many commentators have considered them a symbol of the three principal powers that were conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire—Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt (see on Isa. 41:6).

They said. The speaker is not identified. The subject should perhaps be regarded impersonally, “it was said.”

6. Like a leopard. The leopard is a fierce, carnivorous animal noted for the swiftness and agility of its movements (see Hab. 1:8; cf. Hosea 13:7).

The power succeeding the Persian Empire is identified in ch. 8:21 as “Grecia.” This “Grecia” must not be confused with the Greece of the classical period, inasmuch as that period preceded the fall of Persia. The “Grecia” of Daniel was the semi-Greek Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great (see on ch. 2:39), which inaugurated what is called the Hellenistic period. Not until Alexander’s day could reference be made to the “first king” (ch. 8:21) of a Greek empire who was “a mighty king” with “great dominion” (ch. 11:3).

In 336 Alexander succeeded to the throne of Macedonia, a semi-Greek state on the northern border of Greece. Alexander’s father, Philip, had already united most of the city-states of Greece under his rule by 338 B.C. Alexander proved his mettle by subduing revolts in Greece and Thrace. After order had been restored in his own kingdom, Alexander set himself the task of conquering the Persian Empire, an ambition he had inherited from his father. Among the factors that spurred the young king on in his plans were personal ambition, the need for economic expansion, the desire to spread Greek culture, and a not unnatural animosity toward the Persians because of their past relations with his countrymen.

In 334 B.C. Alexander crossed the Hellespont and entered Persian territory with only 35,000 men, the meager sum of 70 talents in cash, and but one month’s store of provisions. The campaign was a series of triumphs. The first victory was achieved at Granicus, the next at Issus in the following year, and the next at Tyre in the year after that. Passing through Palestine, Alexander conquered Gaza and then entered Egypt virtually unopposed. Here in 331 B.C. he founded the city of Alexandria. He declared himself the successor to the Pharaohs and his troops hailed him as a god. When he set forth again that year he directed his armies toward Mesopotamia, the heart of the Persian Empire. The Persians took their stand near Arbela, east of the junction of the Tigris and Great Zab rivers, but their forces were defeated and routed. The fabulous riches of the world’s greatest empire lay open to the young king, 25 years old.

After preliminary organization of his empire Alexander pushed his conquests to the north and to the east. By 329 B.C. he had taken Maracanda, now Samarkand in Turkistan. Two years later he invaded northwest India. Soon after crossing the Indus River, however, his troops refused to go farther, and he was forced to yield to them. Returning to Persia and Mesopotamia, Alexander was faced with the stupendous work of organizing the administration of his territories. In 323 B.C. he made his capital in Babylon, a city that still preserved reminders of the glory of Nebuchadnezzar’s day. In the same year, after a round of hard drinking, Alexander fell ill and died of “swamp fever,” which is thought to be the ancient name for, or counterpart of, malaria.

Four wings of a fowl. Although the leopard is itself a swift creature, its natural agility seems inadequate to describe the amazing speed of Alexander's conquest. The symbolic vision represented the animal with wings added to it, not two but four, denoting superlative speed. The symbol most fittingly describes the lightning speed with which Alexander and his Macedonians in less than a decade came into possession of the greatest empire the world had yet known. There is no other example in ancient times of such rapid movements of troops on so large and successful a scale.

Four heads. Obviously parallel with the four horns of the he-goat, which represented the four kingdoms (later reduced to three) that occupied the territory of Alexander's short-lived conquests (see on ch. 8:8, 20–22). For some years, however, Alexander's Macedonian generals attempted to preserve, in theory if not in fact, the unity of the vast empire. Alexander died without arranging for the succession to his throne. First his weak-minded half brother Philip and then his posthumous son Alexander were the titular rulers under the regency of one or another of the generals, and the empire was divided into a large number of provinces, the most important of which were controlled by about six leading generals as satraps (see p. 824, map A).

But the central authority—that is, the regency for the two puppet kings—was never strong enough to weld the vast empire together. Through some 12 years of internal struggle, during which the control of various sections of the territory changed repeatedly, and during which both kings were slain, Antigonus emerged as the last of the claimants for central power over the whole empire. He was opposed by a coalition of four powerful leaders, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, who were bent on dividing the territory among themselves. In 306 Antigonus declared himself king (jointly with his son Demetrius) of the entire empire, the successor of Alexander. Thereupon the four allies, abandoning their subordinate title of satrap, declared themselves kings of their respective territories (see p. 824, map B).

The long life-and-death struggle over the question as to whether the empire should be united under Antigonus and Demetrius or divided by the four generals was settled by the Battle of Ipsus in 301 B.C. Antigonus was killed, Demetrius fled, and their territory was divided. This left, with the exception of the small fragments, four independent kingdoms (see p. 825, map C) in place of the huge empire that Alexander had won but had not been able to consolidate. Ptolemy had Egypt, also Palestine and part of Syria; Cassander had Macedonia, with nominal sovereignty over Greece; Lysimachus had Thrace and a large part of Asia Minor; and Seleucus had the bulk of what had been the Persian Empire—part of Asia Minor, northern Syria, Mesopotamia, and the east. Demetrius, reduced to control of a navy and a number of coastal cities, had no kingdom, though he later displaced the heirs of Cassander and founded the Antigonid dynasty in Macedonia.

About 20 years after the division the four were reduced to three, for Lysimachus was eliminated (see p. 825, map D). Much of his territory was taken by the Seleucid Empire, but part was overrun by the Gauls, or fell apart into small independent states, the most important of which was Pergamum. But Macedonia, Egypt, and the Seleucid Empire (sometimes known as Syria, for the eastern part was soon lost) continued on as the three major divisions of the eastern Mediterranean until they were absorbed, one by one, into the Roman Empire.

Many historians, especially writers of textbooks who must eliminate details in a broad survey, skip over the division into four and mention only the later and longer-lasting division into the three principal kingdoms that retained their identity into Roman times.

Some would seek to find the continuation of the four kingdoms on into the Roman period by reckoning Pergamum as the successor of Lysimachus' short-lived kingdom. But regardless of whether we speak of three principal kingdoms and the much smaller Pergamum, or three kingdoms plus a group of smaller states, it is significant that at the critical time—when the last hope of holding Alexander's empire together failed, and the division was inevitable—the whole territory, with the exception of minor fragments, fell into *four* kingdoms (see Alexander's Empire as Arranged After His Death, The Principal Territories in Alexander's Empire, Alexander's Empire Divided into Four Kingdoms, Three Principal Kingdoms of Alexander's Empire) as specified by prophecy (ch. 8:22). For the approximate boundaries of these four kingdoms, see maps in Willis Botsford, *Hellenic History*, facing p. 463; see discussion in Botsford, p. 454; W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, [2d ed.], pp. 6, 9.

Alexander's empire, even in its divided phase, was still a continuation and embodiment of its founder's ideal—a Greco-Macedonian-Asiatic world of diverse peoples united by Greek language, thought, and civilization. Except for political centralization, the Hellenistic world constituted as much a unity as it had been under Alexander, and more so than had ever been achieved before. It was aptly represented by a single beast with multiple heads (or in ch. 8, with multiple horns). For the Hellenistic period and the rise of Rome see article on the intertestament period in Vol. V.

7. Fourth beast. Compare v. 19. There was, presumably, no parallel in the natural world by which to designate this hideous creature, for no comparison is made as in the case of the first three beasts. There should be no question, however, but that it represents the same power that is portrayed by the iron legs of the great image (see on ch. 2:40).

It is clear from history that the world power succeeding the third prophetic empire was Rome. However, the transition was gradual so that it is impossible to point to a specific event as marking the change. As already stated, the empire of Alexander was divided after 301 into four (later three) Hellenistic kingdoms (see on ch. 8:8), and their replacement by the Roman Empire was a gradual process in several principal stages. Writers differ in attempting to choose a significant turning point.

By 200 B.C., when Carthage was no longer a rival (although it was not destroyed until more than half a century later), Rome was the mistress of the western Mediterranean and had begun to enter into contacts with the East, where she was thenceforth to become dominant also. In 197 Rome defeated Macedonia and set up the Greek states under her own protection. In 190 Rome defeated Antiochus III and took the Seleucid territory as far east as the Taurus Mountains. In 168, at the Battle of Pydna, Rome ended the monarchy in Macedonia, dividing it up into four confederacies; and probably in the same year warned Antiochus IV away from his attack on Egypt. In 146 Rome annexed Macedonia as a province and placed most of the Greek cities under the governor of Macedonia.

If Rome's mastery of the East is reckoned from the removal of the monarchs of the three Hellenistic kingdoms, by Roman power, the date 168 may be regarded as the first step in the process. However, the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings remained on their thrones till much later, 63 in Syria and 30 in Egypt. If the dates of the annexation of these three kingdoms as Roman provinces are chosen, the dates would be 146, 64, and 30

respectively. Some historians emphasize 168 because by that time Rome had conquered Macedonia and had saved Egypt from falling to the Seleucid kingdom by merely forbidding the invasion of Antiochus IV. This demonstrated that Rome virtually controlled all three kingdoms even though she had as yet conquered only one of them.

No single date can be given for a gradual process. Regardless of one's choice of the most significant date or dates, the change of world power to Rome is clear, and the absorption of the territory of Alexander from Macedonia to the Euphrates was completed in 30 B.C. See article on the intertestament period in Vol. V.

Great iron teeth. These enormous metallic teeth speak of cruelty and strength. As the animal tore to pieces and devoured its prey with these grotesque fangs, so Rome devoured nations and peoples in its conquests. Sometimes whole cities were destroyed, as in the case of Corinth in 146 B.C., then again kingdoms, such as Macedonia and the Seleucid dominions had been, were divided into provinces.

The Chief Provinces of Alexander's Empire as Arranged After His Death in 323 B.C.

2



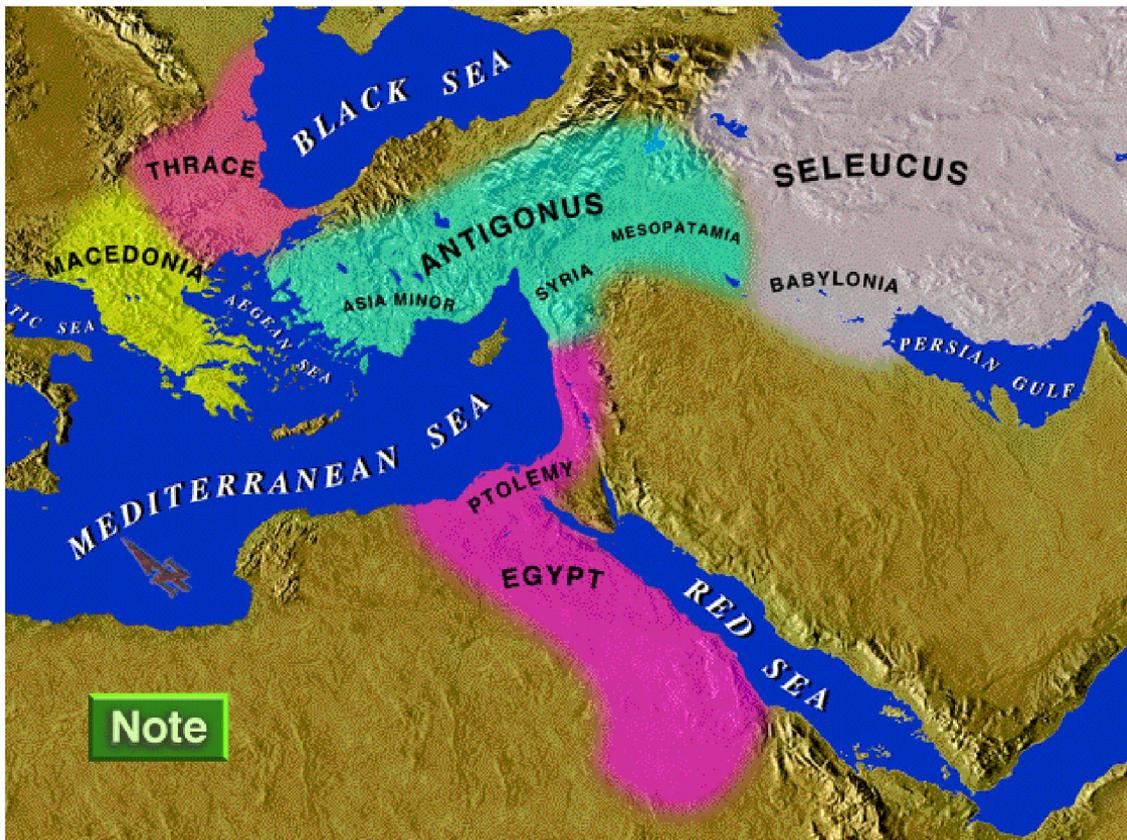
Immediately after Alexander died, in 323 B.C., his generals distributed among themselves the provinces of the empire. These they governed nominally under the

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Da 5:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

authority of the regency for the two puppet kings, Alexander's weak-minded half brother Philip and the posthumous infant Alexander. Antipater was in command in Europe; in Asia, Perdiccas, who had control of the kings. Other leaders held the chief provinces; those in the east remained as they had been in Alexander's lifetime. A struggle for supremacy soon broke out among the leaders, in which Perdiccas and others were eliminated and the various generals jockeyed for power. In 321 B.C. the armies met for the last formal distribution. New names appear, such as Seleucus as satrap of Babylonia. The new regent, Antipater, lasted only two years, and the struggle for dominance long continued among the leading generals.

3

The Principal Territories in Alexander's Empire in 311 B.C.



The truce of 311 B.C., ended a stalemated war in which Antigonus had emerged as the strongest of five principal leaders, though his attempts to control the whole empire had been blocked by the other four. The war had begun soon after the murder of Philip (317). Antigonus drove Seleucus from Babylon (316) and claimed a regent's authority over the other satraps. The principal struggle was between Antigonus and the coalition of Cassander (son of Antipater), Lysimachus, and Ptolemy, with whom Seleucus had sought

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

refuge; but it involved others of lesser importance. There were varied conflicts in Greece, the islands, and elsewhere, and boundries shifted repeatedly. Seleucus regained Babylon (312) and subsequently consolidated the eastern provinces. Not long after the truce the second king, Alesander's son, was killed, and the struggle for power went on.

Alexander's Empire Divided Into Four Kingdoms in 301 B.C.

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



In 301 B.C. the question of the unification or the division of Alexander's empire was settled. The final phase of the long conflict had begun when Antigonus in 306 declared himself king (jointly with his son Demetrius) of the whole empire. Then the four allies, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, assumed the royal title in the respective territories. The issue of one kingdom or four was decided at the battle of Ipsus, in 301. Antigonus was killed and his territory fell to Lysimachus and Seleucus. Demetrius was left with no kingdom, only a fleet, and a number of coastal cities, and a foothold in Greece. Henceforth there was no hope of a unified empire; at the decisive moment it irrevocably fell apart, and four principal kingdoms (plus minor fragments) emerged. This decisive partition of Alexander's empire was not permanent; later one of the four kingdoms was eliminated.

The Three Principal Kingdoms of Alexander's Empire in 280 B.C.

6



After Seleucus defeated and killed Lysimachus in 281 B.C. there remained three great Hellenistic kingdoms dominating the Near East: Macedonia, the Seleucid empire (Syria), and Egypt. Macedonia, previously taken by Lysimachus, did not fall to Seleucus; he was killed (280) before he could take it over. It soon afterward fell to Antigonos, son of Demetrius, and thenceforth was held by the Antigonid line of kings. For some years large parts of Asia Minor were ruled by the Seleucid kings, though almost immediately after the death of Lysimachus the invading Gauls overran part of it, and other fragments fell away (Lysimachus' territory eventually becoming a welter of small states, including Pergamum). The Seleucids later lost all but Syria. Before the time of Christ the three

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Da 7:8). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Hellenistic kingdoms, Macedonia, Syria, and Egypt, each successively became a Roman province.

Stamped the residue. Where Rome did not destroy or subjugate a people, it often employed them as slaves or sold them into slavery. In the intensity of its power to destroy, Rome surpassed the kingdoms that had previously ruled the world.

Ten horns. Explained as “ten kings” (v. 24). If the “four kings” of v. 17 represent kingdoms (see on v. 3), parallel to the four empires of ch. 2, then there is fully as much reason to understand these “ten kings” as kingdoms also, even as the four horns of the goat are “four kingdoms” (ch. 8:22). The successive invasions of the Roman Empire by numerous Germanic tribes, and the replacement of the empire by a number of separate states or monarchies, are well established facts of history. Owing to the fact that a score or more barbarian tribes invaded the Roman Empire, commentators have compiled various lists of the kingdoms that were founded. The following list is representative: Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Alamanni, Anglo-Saxons, Heruli, Lombards, Burgundians. Some prefer to list the Huns in place of the Alamanni, however the Huns disappeared early without leaving a settled kingdom. The period was one of great upheaval, confusion, and change, during which a large number of states secured their independence.

8. Another little horn. Better, “another horn, a little one.” Though small at the beginning, this little horn is described later as “more stout than his fellows,” literally, “greater than its companions.” It will be seen that this was the continuation of the Roman power in the Roman Church.

“Out of the ruins of political Rome, arose the great moral Empire in the ‘giant form’ of the Roman Church” (A. C. Flick, *The Rise of the Medieval Church* [1900], p. 150). See further on vs. 24, 25.

“Under the Roman Empire the popes had no temporal powers. But when the Roman Empire had disintegrated and its place had been taken by a number of rude, barbarous kingdoms, the Roman Catholic church not only became independent of the states in religious affairs but dominated secular affairs as well. At times, under such rulers as Charlemagne (768–814), Otto the Great (936–73), and Henry III (1039–56), the civil power controlled the church to some extent; but in general, under the weak political system of feudalism, the well-organized, unified, and centralized church, with the pope at its head, was not only independent in ecclesiastical affairs but also controlled civil affairs” (Carl Conrad Eckhardt, *The Papacy and World-Affairs* [1937], p. 1).

Before. Aramaic *qodam*, a word occurring frequently in Daniel, meaning either “before in point of time,” or “in the presence of.” The phrase “before whom” may be interpreted as meaning “to make way for him.”

Three of the first horns. The “little horn” is a symbol of papal Rome. Hence the plucking up of three horns symbolizes the overthrow of three of the barbarian nations. Among the principal obstructions to the rise of papal Rome to political power were the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. All three were supporters of Arianism, which was the most formidable rival of Catholicism.

The Heruli were the first of the barbarian tribes to rule over Rome. They were German auxiliary troops in Rome who mutinied, and in 476 deposed the boy Romulus Augustus, the last emperor of the West. At the head of the Heruli and the other mercenary

⁷Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ge 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

troops was Odovacar (Odoacer), who made himself king in Rome. Odovacar, an Arian, though tolerant toward the Catholics, was hated by the Italians. At the suggestion of the Emperor Zeno of the Eastern Empire, Theodoric, leader of the Ostrogoths, next invaded Italy. He arrived there in 489, and in 493 secured Odovacar's surrender and soon afterward killed him (see Thomas Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, vol. 3, pp. 180–213).

So far as the position of the Roman Church was concerned the arrival of Theodoric marked no change for the better, but merely a change of leaders. Theodoric was as strong an Arian as his predecessor on the throne of Italy. Although he granted toleration to the various religions in his kingdom, the lofty ambitions of the Roman pontiff could not succeed under a system that granted only toleration.

In the meantime the Vandals, led by Gaiseric (Genseric), had settled in North Africa, having taken Carthage in 439. Being fanatically Arian and warlike, they posed a threat to the supremacy of the Catholic Church in the West. They were particularly intolerant toward the Catholics, whom they termed heretics. To help the cause of the Catholics in the West the Emperor Justinian, who ruled the Eastern half of the Roman Empire in Constantinople, dispatched Belisarius, the ablest of his generals. Belisarius completely vanquished the Vandals in 534.

This victory left the Ostrogoths in Italy as the sole surviving Arian power of significance to hinder the hegemony of the papacy in the West (see Hodgkin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, ch. 15). Having wiped out the Vandals, Belisarius in 534 began his campaign against the Ostrogoths in Italy. Though this campaign lasted for twenty years before the imperial armies emerged completely victorious (see Hodgkin, *op. cit.*, vol. 5, pp. 3–66), the decisive action occurred early in the campaign. The Ostrogoths, who had been driven from Rome, returned and laid siege to it in 537. The siege lasted for a full year, but in 538 Justinian landed another army in Italy, and in March the Ostrogoths abandoned the siege (see Hodgkin, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, pp. 73–113, 210–252; Charles Diehl, "Justinian," in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2, p. 15). It is true that they re-entered the city for a very brief time in 540, but their stand was short-lived. Their withdrawal from Rome in 538 marked the real end of Ostrogothic power, though not of the Ostrogothic nation. Thus was "plucked up" the third of the three horns that stood in the way of the little horn.

Justinian is noted not only for his success in temporarily reuniting Italy and parts of the West with the Eastern half of what had been the Roman Empire, but also for the gathering and organizing of the then-existing laws of the empire, including new edicts of Justinian himself, into a unified code. Incorporated into this imperial code were two official letters of Justinian, which had all the force of royal edicts, in which he legally confirmed the bishop of Rome as the "head of all the holy churches" and "head of all the holy priests of God" (Code of Justinian, book 1, title 1). In the later epistle he also commends the pope's activities as corrector of heretics.

Although this legal recognition of the pope's ecclesiastical supremacy was dated in 533, it is obvious that the imperial edict could not become effective for the pope so long as the Arian Ostrogothic kingdom was in control of Rome and the greater part of Italy. Not until the rule of the Goths was broken could the papacy be free to develop fully its power. In 538, for the first time since the end of the Western imperial line, the city of Rome was freed from the domination of an Arian kingdom. In that year the Ostrogothic kingdom received its deathblow (although the Ostrogoths survived some years longer as a people). That is why 538 is a more significant date than 533.

To summarize: (1) The pope had already been recognized generally (though by no means universally) as supreme bishop in the churches of the West, and had exercised considerable political influence, from time to time, under the patronage of the Western emperors. (2) In 533 Justinian recognized the pope's ecclesiastical supremacy as "head of all the holy churches" in both East and West, and this legal recognition was incorporated into the imperial code of laws (534). (3) In 538 the papacy was effectively freed from the domination of the Arian kingdoms that followed the Western emperors in the control of Rome and Italy. From then on the papacy was in a position to increase its ecclesiastical power. The other kingdoms became Catholic, one by one, and since the distant Eastern emperors did not retain control of Italy, in the turbulent developments that followed, the pope emerged often as the leading figure in the West. The papacy acquired territorial rule and eventually it reached its peak in political as well as religious dominance in Europe (see Additional Note at the end of this chapter). Though this dominance came much later, the turning point can be found in the time of Justinian.

Some find it significant that Vigilius, the pope who held office in 538, had, the year before, replaced a pope who had been under Gothic influence. The new pope owed his office to the Empress Theodora, and was regarded by Justinian as the means of uniting all the churches, East and West, under his own imperial dominance. It has been pointed out that, beginning with Vigilius, the popes were more and more men of the state as well as of the church, and often became rulers of the state (Charles Bemont and G. Monod, *Medieval Europe*, p. 121).

This horn. With the ten horns representing the divided state of the Roman Empire after its fall (see on v. 7), the little horn must represent some power that would come into being among them and take the place of some of these kingdoms (see quotation in comments on ch. 8:23).

Eyes. Generally taken to be a symbol of intelligence. In contrast with the barbarians, who were largely illiterate, the power represented by the "little horn" was noted for its intelligence, its insight, and its foresight.

Speaking great things. See on v. 25.

9. Cast down. Aramaic *remah*. The word also means "to place," or "to set up," though it may also mean to throw (chs. 3:20; 6:16, 24). The LXX has *tithēmi*, which is defined, "to set up," "to place," "to erect." The translation "cast down" seems to have been based on an interpretation that regarded the thrones as belonging to the beasts. A symbolic representation of the great final assize, fixing the destinies of men and of nations, is here brought to view.

The Ancient of days. The Aramaic reads literally, "an Ancient of days," or "One, ancient of days." The expression is descriptive rather than being a title. The article is used in vs. 13, 22 as an article of previous reference, that is, its function is to refer to the Being earlier described. God the Father is represented.

Whose garment. Caution must be exercised when interpreting the representations of symbolic visions. "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18). Daniel saw only a representation of the Deity. To what extent the representation reflected the reality cannot be known. In vision Deity is presented in various forms, the form assumed generally having reference to the teaching objective of the vision. In a vision of the second advent, John saw Jesus as sitting upon a white horse, clothed in a garment dipped in blood, and having a sword proceeding out of His mouth (Rev. 19:11–15). Obviously we do not

expect to see our Saviour thus clothed, equipped, or mounted when He returns. But each of these features has instructive value (see on Rev. 19:11–15). In Daniel’s vision we may see in the white garment a symbol of purity and in the white hair a mark of antiquity, but to go beyond symbolization and to speculate on the appearance of Him who dwelleth “in the light which no man can approach unto” (1 Tim. 6:16) is to enter the realm of forbidden theorizing (see 8T 279). That God is a personal being cannot be doubted. “God is a spirit; yet He is a personal being, for man was made in His image” (8T 263). “Let none indulge in speculation regarding His nature. Here silence is eloquence” (8T 279). On the interpretation of symbolic visions see on Eze. 1:10.

10. Thousand thousands. These represent the heavenly angels who wait before the Lord and are ever attendant on His will. The angels perform an important part in the judgment. They function as both “ministers and witnesses” (GC 479).

Was set. Or, “began to sit.” Daniel is shown the final judgment in both its phases, investigative and executive.

In the investigative judgment the records of all who have at one time or another professed allegiance to Christ will be examined. The investigation is not conducted for the information of God or of Christ, but for the information of the universe at large—that God may be vindicated in accepting some and rejecting others. Satan claims all men as his lawful subjects. Those for whom Jesus pleads in judgment, Satan accuses before God; but Jesus defends their penitence and faith. As a result of the judgment a register of those who will be citizens of the future kingdom of Christ will have been made up. This register includes the names of men and women from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. John speaks of the ransomed in the new earth as “the nations” of the saved (Rev. 21:24).

The books were opened. Compare Rev. 20:12. The following classification appears in GC 480, 481: (1) the book of life, wherein are recorded the names of all those who have accepted the service of God; (2) the book of remembrance, a record of the good deeds of the saints; and (3) a record of the sins of men. In the record of a vision of the executive phase of the judgment at the end of the 1000 years the following classification appears: (1) the book of life, containing a record of the good deeds of the saints; (2) the book of death, containing the record of the evil deeds of the unrepentant, (3) the statute book, the Bible, according to whose standard men are judged (EW 52).

11. I beheld. In prophetic vision Daniel saw one event rapidly following another. Note the repetition of the statements “I beheld” and “I saw” throughout the narrative of the visions. These clauses introduce the transition from one scene to the next.

Great words. See on v. 25.

Was slain. This represents the end of the system, or organization, symbolized by the horn. Paul presents the same power under the title “man of sin,” “son of perdition,” “that Wicked,” and speaks of its destruction at the second coming of Christ (2 Thess. 2:3–8; cf. Rev. 19:19–21).

12. Dominion taken away. The territory of Babylon was made subject to Persia, yet the subjects of Babylon were allowed to live on. Similarly, when Macedonia conquered Persia and when Rome conquered Macedonia, the inhabitants of the conquered countries were not destroyed. With the final destruction of the little-horn power the whole world will be depopulated (see on v. 11).

13. Like the Son of man. Aramaic *kebar 'enash*, literally, “like a son of man.”

According to Aramaic usage, the phrase could be rendered “like a man” (Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen* [Halle, 1927], p. 315d). The LXX has, *hōs huios anthrōpou*, also literally, “like a son of man.”

Many of the revised translations (see RV, RSV, etc.) follow this literal rendering. Some have felt that such a rendering detracts from the majesty of our Redeemer. The English phrase “a son of man” is admittedly indefinite in tone. However, the corresponding phrase in the Aramaic is full of meaning. Along with other ancient languages, the Aramaic omits the article when the primary stress is upon quality, and uses it when the stress is on identity. The normal order in prophetic narrative is for the prophet first to describe what he has seen, and later to give attention to identity. Prophetic items are usually introduced without the article. When subsequently referred to, the article is employed (see on v. 9). Thus there were “four great beasts” (v. 3), not “the four great beasts,” but later “all the beasts” (v. 7). The Ancient of days was introduced as “One, ancient in days” (see on v. 9) but later referred to as “the Ancient of days” (vs. 13, 22; see on v. 9). Compare further, “a ram” and “the ram,” “two horns” and “the two horns,” “an he goat” and “the he goat” (ch. 8:3–8), etc. In harmony with this rule the Son of God is introduced literally as “One, of human form.” He is not again referred to by this expression in this prophecy. If He were, the definite article would probably appear. In the NT the expression “Son of man” which most commentators agree is based on ch. 7:13, occurs almost invariably with the article.

Instead of the translation “a son of man” the translation “One, human in form” would more adequately represent the Aramaic phrase. God chose to present His Son in prophetic vision with special emphasis on His humanity (see MB 14).

At the incarnation the Son of God took upon Himself the form of humanity (John 1:1–4, 12, 14; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; etc.) and became the Son of man (see on Mark 2:10), so uniting divinity with humanity by a tie never to be broken (DA 25). Thus, repentant sinners have as their representative before the Father “one like” themselves, One who was in all points tempted like as they are and who is touched with the feeling of their infirmities (Heb. 4:15). Comforting thought!

Came to the Ancient of days. This cannot represent the second coming of Christ to this earth, for Christ comes to “the Ancient of days.” The coming of Christ to the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary is here represented (GC 426, 480).

14. Given him dominion. In Luke 19:12–15 Christ is represented as a nobleman who took his journey into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. At the close of His priestly ministry in the sanctuary, while still in heaven, Christ receives the kingdom from His Father and then returns to earth for His saints (see GC 428; EW 55, 280).

15. Grieved. Aramaic *kerah*, “to be distressed.”

16. One of them. This being is not identified. Here, Daniel is still in vision, and the being he addresses is probably one of the attendants at the judgment. Whenever we inquire with a sincere heart for spiritual enlightenment, the Lord has one standing by to help us. Angels are eager to communicate truth to men. They are ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), commissioned by God to bring messages from heaven to earth (Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2; Rev. 1:1).

17. Four kings. See on vs. 3–7.

18. Take the kingdom. All earthly kings and governments will pass away, but the kingdom of the Most High will endure forever. The usurpation and misrule of the wicked may last for a time, but soon it will be at an end. Then this earth will be restored to its rightful Owner, who will share it with the saints. Those who have long been destitute and despised by men will soon be honored and exalted by God.

For ever, even for ever and ever. The repetition of the phrase emphasizes the idea of perpetuity. There is nothing transitory about the occupancy of the restored earth. The lease will never expire, and the inhabitants will be secure in their own dwelling places. “They shall not build” only to have someone else take over the building. “They shall not plant,” and another eat the fruit, for the “elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands” (Isa. 65:22).

19. Know the truth. Compare v. 7. Daniel repeats the specifications earlier described. He is particularly interested in the fourth beast so different in appearance and activity from the preceding. His query dramatically focuses attention on the great persecuting power of history (see on vs. 24, 25).

20. Stout. Aramaic *rab*, “large,” “great,” “big.” The clause reads literally, “whose appearance was bigger than that of its companions.” Though small at the beginning, this little horn grew until it became greater than any of the other horns. This power would gain superiority over all other earthly powers. For an interpretation of the specifications here noted, see on vs. 24, 25.

21. Made war with the saints. This little horn represented a persecuting power, carrying on a campaign of extermination against the people of God (see on v. 25).

Prevailed against them. For many long centuries (see on v. 25) the saints seemed to be helpless against this destructive force.

22. Ancient of days came. Daniel is relating events as they appeared to him in vision. By the *coming* of the Ancient of days he means the appearance of this Being on the prophetic screen. On the significance of the events see on vs. 9–14.

Judgment was given. Not only would judgment be given in favor of the saints, but according to Paul (1 Cor. 6:2, 3) and John (Rev. 20:4) the saints will assist in the work of judgment during the 1000 years (see GC 661).

23. Devour. See on v. 7.

24. Ten horns. On the divisions of the Roman Empire see on v. 7.

From the first. Better, “from the former [horns].” The word for “first” is plural. The former represented political kingdoms. The power represented by this unique horn was religio-political in nature. The papacy was an ecclesiastical kingdom ruled over by a pontiff; the other kingdoms were political powers ruled by kings.

25. Great words. Aramaic *millin* (singular *millah*), simply, “words.” The word “great” is supplied. The expressions “great things” (v. 8) and “very great things” (v. 20) are translations of the Aramaic *rabreban*. *Millah* is translated “thing” in chs. 2:5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17; 4:33; 5:15, 26; 6:12; “matter” in chs. 2:23; 7:1, 28; “word” in chs. 2:9; 3:28; 4:31; 5:10; 7:11, 25; and “commandment” in ch. 3:22.

Against. Aramaic *leşad*. *Şad* literally means “side.” *Leşad* may be interpreted as meaning “over against,” implying that in its opposition to the Most High the little horn would set itself up as being equal with God (see on 2 Thess. 2:4; cf. Isa. 14:12–14).

Ecclesiastical literature is replete with exhibits of the arrogant, blasphemous claims of the papacy. Typical examples are the following extracts from a large encyclopedic work written by a Roman Catholic divine of the 18th century:

“The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God. ...

“The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions. ...

“The Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief of kings, having plenitude of power, to whom has been intrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom. ...

“The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws. ...

“The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man but of God, and he acts as vicegerent of God upon earth with most ample power of binding and loosing his sheep.

“Whatever the Lord God himself, and the Redeemer, is said to do, that his vicar does, provided that he does nothing contrary to the faith”

(translated from Lucius Ferraris, “Papa II,” *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, pp. 25–29).

Wear out. Or, “wear away.” The event is earlier described in the words, “the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them” (v. 21). The phrase depicts continuous and relentless persecution. The papacy acknowledges that it has persecuted, and defends such acts as a legitimate exercise of power presumably granted her by Christ. The following is from *The Catholic Encyclopedia*:

“In the Bull ‘Ad extirpanda’ (1252) Innocent IV says: ‘When those adjudged guilty of heresy have been given up to the civil power by the bishop or his representative, or the Inquisition, the podestà or chief magistrate of the city shall take them at once, and shall, within five days at the most, execute the laws made against them.’ ... Nor could any doubt remain as to what civil regulations were meant, for the passages which ordered the burning of impenitent heretics were inserted in the papal decretals from the imperial constitutions ‘Commissis nobis’ and ‘Inconsutibilem tunicam.’ The aforesaid Bull ‘Ad extirpanda’ remained thenceforth a fundamental document of the Inquisition, renewed or re-enforced by several popes, Alexander IV (1254–61), Clement IV (1265–68), Nicholas IV (1288–92), Boniface VIII (1294–1303), and others. The civil authorities, therefore, were enjoined by the popes, under pain of excommunication to execute the legal sentences that condemned impenitent heretics to the stake”

(Joseph Blötzer, art. “Inquisition,” Vol. VIII, p. 34).

Think. Aramaic *sebar*, “to mean to,” “to intend,” “to strive,” “to endeavor.” A deliberate attempt is indicated (see GC 446).

Times. Aramaic *zimmīn* (singular, *zeman*), a term denoting fixed time, as in chs. 3:7, 8; 4:36; 6:10, 13, or a period of time, as in chs. 2:16; 7:12 (where *zeman* is translated “season”). A suggestion as to the meaning of the expression of the expression “to change times” is given in ch. 2:21, where the identical Aramaic words for “change” and “times” are again coupled together. However, Daniel there ascribes to God the prerogative to change times. It is God who has the destiny of nations under His control. It is He who “removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (ch. 2:21). “Above, and through all the play and counter-play of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, [are] silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will” (Ed 173). It is God who determines also the “time” (Aramaic *zeman*) that the saints shall possess the kingdom (ch. 7:22). For the little horn to endeavor to change times would indicate a deliberate attempt to exercise the prerogative of God in shaping the course of human history.

Laws. Aramaic *dath*, used of both human (chs. 2:9, 13, 15; 6:8, 12, 15) and divine (Ezra 7:12, 14, 21, 25, 26) law. Here it is evident that divine law is referred to, inasmuch

as human law is changed at will by those in authority, and such changes would hardly become the subject of prophecy. Inquiring as to whether the papacy has endeavored to change divine law, we find the answer in the great apostasy of the early Christian centuries that introduced numerous doctrines and practices contrary to the will of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The most audacious change was in the matter of the weekly day of worship. The apostate church freely admits it is responsible for the introduction of Sunday worship, claiming that it has the right to make such changes (see GC 446). An authoritative catechism for priests says: "But the Church of God [that is, the apostate church] has in her wisdom ordained that the celebration of the Sabbath day should be transferred to 'the Lord's day'" (*Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Donovan translation, 1829 ed., p. 358). This catechism was written by order of this great council, and published under the auspices of Pope Pius V.

Throughout NT times Christians observed the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath (see on Acts 17:2). The transition from Sabbath to Sunday was a gradual process that began sometime before A.D. 150 and continued for some three centuries. The first historical references to the observance of Sunday by professed Christians occur in the *Epistle of Barnabas* (ch. 15) and in Justin Martyr's *First Apology* (ch. 67), both dating from about A.D. 150. Both denounce Sabbath observance and urge that of Sunday. The first authentic references to Sunday as the "Lord's day" come from the apocryphal *Gospel According to Peter* and from Clement of Alexandria (*Miscellanies*, v. 14), toward the close of the 2d century.

Prior to the Jewish revolt under Bar Cocheba, A.D. 132–135, the Roman Empire recognized Judaism as a legal religion and Christianity as a Jewish sect. But as a result of this revolt Jews and Judaism were discredited. To avoid the persecution that followed, Christians henceforth sought by every means possible to make it clear that they were not Jews. Repeated references by Christian writers of the next three centuries to the observance of the Sabbath as "Judaizing," together with the fact that no historical references to the Christian observance of Sunday as a sacred day occur prior to the Jewish revolt, point to the period A.D. 135–150 as the time when Christians began to attach Sabbath sacredness to the first day of the week.

The observance of Sunday did not, however, immediately replace that of the Sabbath, but accompanied and supplemented it. For several centuries Christians observed both days. Early in the 3d century, for instance, Tertullian observed that Christ did not rescind the Sabbath. A little later the apocryphal *Apostolic Constitutions* (ii. 36) admonished Christians to "keep the Sabbath and the Lord's day festival."

By the early 4th century Sunday had achieved definite official preference over the Sabbath. In his *Commentary on Psalm 92* Eusebius, foremost church historian of the period, wrote, "All things whatsoever it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day, as more appropriately belonging to it, because it has a precedence and is first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath."

The first official action of the Catholic Church expressing preference for Sunday was taken at the Council of Laodicea, in the 4th century. Canon 29 of this council stipulates that "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday [Sabbath], but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ." This council made provision for Sabbath worship, but designated the

day as a work day. It is worthy of note that this, the first ecclesiastical law enjoining the observance of Sunday, specifies Judaizing as the reason for avoiding the observance of the Sabbath. Furthermore, the stern injunction against Sabbath observance is evidence that many were still “Judaizing” on that day. Indeed, the writers of the 4th and 5th centuries repeatedly warn their fellow Christians against this practice. About the year 400, for instance, Chrysostom observes that many were still keeping the Sabbath in the Jewish manner, and thus Judaizing.

Contemporary records also reveal the fact that the churches in Alexandria and Rome were chiefly responsible for promoting Sunday observance. About A.D. 440 the church historian Socrates wrote that “although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this” (*Ecclesiastical History* v. 22). About the same time Sozomen wrote that “the people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria.”

Three facts are thus clear: (1) The concept of Sunday sacredness among Christians originated, primarily, in their effort to avoid practices that would tend to identify them with Jews, and thus lead to persecution. (2) The church at Rome early developed a preference for Sunday; and the increasing importance attached to Sunday in the early church, at the expense of the Sabbath, closely parallels Rome’s gradual rise to power. (3) Finally, Roman influence prevailed to make the observance of Sunday a matter of church law, as it did with many other practices such as the worship of Mary, the veneration of saints and angels, the use of images, and prayers for the dead. Sunday sacredness rests upon the same basis as these other nonscriptural practices introduced into the church by the bishop of Rome.

A time and times and the dividing of time. The Aramaic *‘iddan*, here translated “time,” occurs also in ch. 4:16, 23, 25, 32. In these passages the word *‘iddan* undoubtedly means “a year” (see on ch. 4:16). The word translated “times,” also from *‘iddan*, was pointed by the Masoretes as a plural, but scholars generally agree that it should have been pointed as a dual, thus denoting “two times.” The word translated “dividing,” *pelag*, may also be translated “half.” Hence the more acceptable translation of the RSV, “a time, two times, and half a time.”

A comparison with parallel prophecies calling attention to this same time period, but by other designations, enables us to calculate the length of time involved. In Rev. 12:14 the period is denominated “a time, and times, and half a time.” The same period is referred to earlier in the chapter by the designation “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” (Rev. 12:6). In Rev. 11:2, 3 the expression “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” is equated with “forty and two months.” Thus it is clear that a period of three and a half times equals 42 months, which in turn equals 1260 days, and that a “time” represents 12 months, or 360 days. This period may be denominated a prophetic year. However, a *prophetic* year of 360 days, or 12 30-day months, must not be confused either with a Jewish calendar year, which was a lunar year of variable length (with both 29-day and 30-day months), or with a solar calendar year of 365 days (see Vol. II, pp. 111, 112). A prophetic year means 360 prophetic days, but a prophetic day stands for a solar year.

This distinction may be explained thus: A 360-day prophetic year is not literal, but symbolic; hence its 360 days are prophetic, not literal, days. By the year-day principle, as illustrated in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6, a day in symbolic prophecy stands for a literal year. Thus a prophetic year, or “time,” represents 360 literal, natural years, and similarly a period of 1260 or 2300 or any other number of prophetic days means as many literal, actual years (that is, full solar years as marked off by the seasons, which are controlled by the sun). Although the number of days in each lunar year was variable, the Jewish calendar was corrected by the occasional addition of an extra month (see Vol. II, p. 104), so that for Bible writers—as for us—a long series of years always equaled the same number of natural solar years. For the historical application of the year-day principle see pp. 39–76.

The validity of the year-day principle has been demonstrated by the precise fulfillment of various prophecies calculated by this method, notably the 1260 days and the 70 weeks. A period of three and a half literal years falls absurdly short of fulfilling the requirement of the 1260-day prophecies in regard to the papacy. But when, by the year-day principle, the period is extended to 1260 years, the prophecy meets a unique fulfillment.

In July, 1790, thirty Roman Catholic bishops appeared before the leaders of the revolutionary government of France to protest legislation designed to free the French clergy from the jurisdiction of the pope and to make them directly responsible to the government. Were the leaders of the Revolution, they inquired, going to leave all religions free “except that which was once supreme, which was maintained by the piety of our fathers and by all the laws of the State, and has been for twelve hundred years the national religion?” (A. Aulard, *Christianity and the French Revolution*, p. 70).

The prophetic period of the little horn began in A.D. 538, when the Ostrogoths abandoned the siege of Rome, and the bishop of Rome, released from Arian control, was free to exercise the prerogatives of Justinian’s decree of 533, and thenceforth to increase the authority of the “Holy See” (see on v. 8). Exactly 1260 years later (1798), the spectacular victories of the armies of Napoleon in Italy placed the pope at the mercy of the French revolutionary government, which now advised him that the Roman religion would always be the irreconcilable enemy of the Republic, and added that “there is one thing even more essential to the attainment of the end desired, and that is to destroy, if possible, the centre of unity of the Roman Church; and it is for you, who unite in your person the most distinguished qualities of the general and of the enlightened politician, to realize this aim if you consider it practicable” (*Ibid.*, p. 158). In response to these instructions and at the command of Napoleon, Berthier, with a French army, entered Rome, proclaimed the political rule of the papacy at an end and took the pope prisoner, carrying him off to France, where he died in exile.

The overthrow of the papacy in 1798 marks the climax of a long series of events connected with its progressive decline, and also the conclusion of the prophetic period of 1260 years. For a more complete outline of the rise and decline of the papacy, see Additional Note at the end of this chapter.

26. *The judgment shall sit.* See on vs. 9–11. The judgment will pass sentence of extinction upon the papacy. This power will continue its war against the saints to the very last. Then its dominion over them will be forever removed, and it will be consumed.

27. *Shall be given.* Here is a reassuring glimpse of the final outcome of all the turmoil and persecution through which the saints have passed. Blessed thought! Christ is soon to return for His saints and usher them into their everlasting kingdom and reward.

All dominions. In the restored earth, the abode of the righteous, there will be no discord or disaffection. One pulse of harmony will beat throughout the entire universe. All who are saved will render willing obedience to God and abide in His blessed presence forever.

28. *My cogitations.* Or, “my thoughts.”

Troubled. Or, “frightened.”

Countenance. Aramaic *ziw*, which according to some authorities means “complexion,” according to others, “brightness,” probably in the sense of “appearance.” A revelation of the future history of the saints greatly astonished and saddened the prophet.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 7

The development of the great apostasy that culminated in the papacy was a gradual process that covered several centuries. The same is true of the decline of this power.

With respect to the future, Jesus warned His disciples, “Take heed that no man deceive you,” for “many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many,” performing “signs and wonders” in confirmation of their deceptive claims, “insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:4, 11, 24).

Paul, speaking by inspiration, declared that men would “arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29, 30). The result would be a “falling away” in which the power he refers to as “that man of sin” and “the mystery of iniquity” would be revealed, opposing truth, exalting itself above God, and usurping the authority of God over the church (2 Thess. 2:3, 4). This power, which, he warned, was already at work in a limited way (v. 7), would operate “after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (v. 9). The subtle manner of its rise was to be so cleverly camouflaged that none but those who sincerely believed and loved the truth would be safe from its deceptive claims (vs. 10–12).

Before the close of the first century the apostle John wrote that “many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1), and a little later, that “many deceivers are entered into the world” (2 John 7). This, he said, is the “spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1 John 4:3).

These predictions warned of the presence of ominous forces already at work in the church, forces that foreshadowed heresy, schism, and apostasy of major proportions. Claiming prerogatives and authority that belong only to God, yet operating on satanic principles and by satanic methods, this instrument would eventually deceive the majority of Christians into accepting its leadership, and thus secure control of the church (see Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:3–12).

In apostolic times each local congregation selected its own officers and regulated its own affairs. The church universal was nevertheless “one body” by virtue of the invisible operation of the Holy Spirit, and the guidance of the apostles, that united believers everywhere in “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (see Eph. 4:3–6). Leaders in the local churches were to be men “full of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 6:3), selected, qualified, and guided by the Holy Ghost (see Acts 13:2), and appointed (Acts 6:5) and ordained by the church (Acts 13:3).

As the church “left” its “first love” (Rev. 2:4), it forfeited its purity of doctrine, its high standards of personal conduct, and the invisible bond of unity provided by the Holy Spirit. In worship, formalism took the place of simplicity. Popularity and personal power came more and more to determine the choice of leaders, who first assumed increasing authority within the local church, then sought to extend their authority over neighboring churches.

Administration of the local church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit eventually gave way to ecclesiastical authoritarianism at the hands of a single official, the bishop, to whom every church member was personally subject and through whom alone he had access to salvation. Henceforth leadership thought only of ruling the church instead of serving it, and the “greatest” was no longer one who considered himself “servant of all.” Thus, gradually, developed the concept of a priestly hierarchy that interposed between the individual Christian and his Lord.

According to writings attributed to Ignatius of Antioch, who died about 117, the presence of the bishop was essential to the celebration of religious rites and to the conduct of church business. Irenaeus (d. about 200) ranked bishops of the various churches according to the relative age and importance of the churches over which they presided. He accorded special honor to churches founded by the apostles, and held that all other churches should agree with the church in Rome in matters of faith and doctrine. Tertullian (d. 225) taught the supremacy of the bishop over the presbyters—locally elected elders.

Cyprian (d. about 258) is considered the founder of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. He advocated the theory that there is but one true church, and that outside of it there is no access to salvation. He put forth the claim that Peter had founded the church in Rome, that the bishop of the church at Rome should therefore be honored above other bishops, and his opinions and decisions should always prevail. He emphasized the importance of direct apostolic succession, asserted the literal priesthood of the clergy, and taught that no church might celebrate religious rites or conduct its affairs without the presence and consent of the bishop.

Factors contributing to the ascendancy and eventual supremacy of the bishop of Rome were: (1) As capital of the empire and metropolis of the civilized world Rome was the natural place for the headquarters of a world church. (2) The church at Rome was the only one in the West that claimed apostolic origin, a fact which, in those days, made it seem natural that the bishop of Rome should have priority over other bishops. Rome occupied a highly honorable position even before A.D. 100. (3) The removal of the political capital from Rome to Constantinople by Constantine (330) left the bishop of Rome comparatively free of imperial control, and thereafter the emperor rather consistently supported his claims as against those of other bishops. (4) In part, the Emperor Justinian strongly supported the bishop of Rome, and advanced his interests, by an imperial edict recognizing his supremacy over the churches of both East and West—an edict that could not become fully effective until after the breaking of the Ostrogothic hold on Rome in 538. (5) The success of the church at Rome in resisting various so-called heretical movements, notably Gnosticism and Montanism, gave to it a high reputation for orthodoxy, and contending factions elsewhere often appealed to the bishop of Rome to arbitrate their differences. (6) Theological controversies that divided and weakened the church in the East left the church at Rome free to devote itself to more

practical problems and to take advantage of opportunities that arose to extend its authority. (7) Repeated instances of success in averting or mitigating barbarian attacks on Rome enhanced the political prestige of the papacy, and often in the absence of civil leadership the pope provided the city with the essential functions of civil government. (8) Mohammedan invasions hindered the church in the East, so eliminating Rome's only important rival. (9) The barbarian invaders of the West were already, for the most part, nominally converted to Christianity, and these invasions freed the pope from imperial control. (10) With the conversion of Clovis (496), king of the Franks, the papacy found a strong army to champion its interests, and effective help in converting other barbarous tribes.

Professing Christianity, Constantine the Great (d. 337) linked church and state, subordinated the church to the state, and made the church an instrument of state policy. His reorganization of the political administration of the Roman Empire became the pattern for the ecclesiastical administration of the Roman Church, and thus of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. About 343 the Synod of Sardica assigned the bishop of Rome jurisdiction over metropolitan bishops, or archbishops. Pope Innocent I (d. 417) claimed supreme jurisdiction over the entire Christian world, but was not able to exercise that power.

Augustine (d. 430), one of the great church Fathers and founder of medieval theology, maintained that Rome had always been supreme over the churches. His classic *The City of God* set forth in bold outline the Catholic ideal of a universal church in control of a universal state, and this provided the theoretical basis for the medieval papacy.

Leo I (the Great, d. 461) was the first bishop of Rome to proclaim that Peter had been the first pope, to assert the succession of the papacy from Peter, to claim primacy directly from Jesus Christ, and to succeed in applying these principles to papal administration of the affairs of the church. Leo I gave to the theory of papal power its final form, and made that power a reality. It was he who procured an edict from the emperor declaring that papal decisions have the force of law. With imperial support he set himself above the councils of the church, assuming the right to define doctrine and to dictate decisions. His success in persuading Attila not to enter Rome (452) and his attempt to stop Gaiseric (Genseric, 455) enhanced his prestige and that of the papacy. Leo the Great was definitely a temporal as well as a spiritual leader of his people. Later papal claims to temporal power were based largely on the supposed authority of forged documents known as "pious frauds," such as the so-called Donation of Constantine.

The conversion of Clovis, leader of the Franks, to the Roman faith about the year 496, when most of the barbarian invaders were still Arians, gave the pope a strong political ally willing to fight the battles of the church. For more than twelve centuries the sword of France, the "eldest son" of the papacy, was an effective agent for the conversion of men to the Church of Rome and for maintaining papal authority.

The pontificate of Pope Gregory I (the Great, d. 604), first of the medieval prelates of the church, marks the transition from ancient to medieval times. Gregory boldly assumed the role, though not the title, of emperor in the West. He laid the basis for papal power throughout the Middle Ages, and it is from his administration in particular that later claims to papal absolutism date. Extensive missionary efforts begun by Gregory the Great greatly extended the influence and authority of Rome.

When, more than a century later, the Lombards threatened to overrun Italy, the pope appealed to Pepin, king of the Franks, to come to his assistance. Complying with the request, Pepin thoroughly defeated the Lombards and, in 756, presented the pope with the territory he had taken from them. This grant, commonly known as the Donation of Pepin, marks the origin of the Papal States and the formal beginning of the temporal rule of the pope.

From the seventh to the eleventh centuries papal power was, generally speaking, at ebb tide. The next great pope, and one of the greatest of them all, was Gregory VII (d. 1085). He proclaimed that the Roman Church had never erred and could never err, that the pope is supreme judge, that he may be judged by none, that there is no appeal from his decision, that he alone is entitled to the homage of all princes, and that he alone may depose kings and emperors.

For two centuries there was a running struggle between pope and emperor for supremacy, with sometimes one and sometimes the other achieving temporary success. The pontificate of Innocent III (d. 1216) found the papacy at the height of its power, and during the next century it was at the very zenith of its glory. Claiming to be the vicar of Christ, Innocent III exercised all the prerogatives claimed by Gregory a century and more earlier.

A century after Innocent III, the ideal medieval pope, Boniface VIII (d. 1303) attempted unsuccessfully to rule as his illustrious predecessors had ruled before him. He was the last pope to attempt to exercise universal authority as asserted by Gregory VII and maintained by Innocent III. The waning power of the papacy became fully evident during the so-called Babylonian Captivity (1309–77), when the French forcibly removed the seat of the papacy from Rome to Avignon, in France. Soon after the return to Rome, what is known as the Great Schism (1378–1417) broke out. During this time there were at least two, and sometimes three, rival popes, each denouncing and excommunicating his rivals and claiming to be the true pope. As a result the papacy suffered irreparable loss of prestige in the eyes of the peoples of Europe. Long before Reformation times many voices within and without the Catholic Church were raised in criticism of its arrogant claims and its many abuses of both secular and spiritual power. The rebirth of learning (Renaissance) in Western Europe, the age of discovery, the growth of strong national states, the invention of printing, and various other factors contributed to the gradual loss of papal power. By the time of Martin Luther much had already been done to undermine the authority of Rome.

The Reformation, commonly thought of as beginning in 1517, with the posting of the Ninety-five Theses, saw papal power driven from large areas of Northern Europe. Efforts of the papacy to combat the Reformation took such forms as the Inquisition, the Index, and the organization of the Jesuit order. The Jesuits became the intellectual and spiritual army of the church for the extermination of Protestantism. For nearly three centuries the Church of Rome carried on a vigorous but gradually losing struggle against the forces battling for civil and religious freedom.

Finally, during the course of the French Revolution, the Catholic Church was outlawed in France—the first nation of Europe to espouse its cause, the nation that had, for more than twelve centuries, championed its claims and fought its battles, the nation where papal principles had been tested more fully than in any other land, and had been found wanting. In 1798 the French Government ordered the army operating in Italy under

Berthier to take the pope prisoner. Though the papacy continued, its power was shorn, and it has never since wielded the same kind or measure of power that it did in former days. In 1870 the Papal States were completely absorbed into the united kingdom of Italy, the temporal power the papacy had formally exercised for more than 1,000 years came to an end, and the pope voluntarily became “the prisoner of the Vatican” until his temporal power was restored in 1929. See on ch. 7:25.

It is evident from this brief sketch that the rise of papal power was a gradual process covering many centuries. The same is true of its decline. The former process may be thought of as continuing from about A.D. 100 to 756; the latter, from about A.D. 1303 to 1870. The papacy was at the height of its power from the time of Gregory VII (1073–85) to that of Boniface VIII (1294–1303). It is thus clear that no dates can be given to mark a sharp transition from insignificance to supremacy, or from supremacy back to comparative weakness. As is true with all historical processes, the rise and fall of the papacy were both gradual developments.

However, by 538 the papacy was completely formed and functioning in all significant aspects, and by 1798, 1260 years later, it had lost practically all the power it had accumulated over a period of centuries. Inspiration allotted 1260 years to the papacy for a demonstration of its principles, its policies, and its objectives. Accordingly these two dates should be considered as marking the beginning and the end of the prophetic period of papal power.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–28PK 548, 553, 554

2, 3 GC 440

9, 10 GC 479

10 EW 52; GC 414, 480, 512; LS 241; MH 417; MYP 330; PP 339, 357; 1T 100; 4T 384, 453, 482

13 Ed 132; GC 422

13, 14 GC 424, 426, 480

14 GC 427

18 AH 540; ML 273; PP 342

22 GC 661

25 DA 763; Ev 233; EW 33; GC 51, 54, 439, 446; LS 101; PK 178, 183, 184; SR 328, 331, 382; 1T 76; 9T 230

27 DA 828; EW 151, 280, 295; GC 347, 614; MB 108; PP 170; SR 44, 403; 9T 219

28 PK 553

CHAPTER 8

1 *Daniel’s vision of the ram and he goat.* 13 *The two thousand three hundred days of sacrifice.* 15 *Gabriel comforteth Daniel, and interpreteth the vision.*

1. Third year. For a discussion of the reign of Belshazzar, see Additional Note on Chapter 5. Beginning with ch. 8 the writer reverts to the Hebrew language (see p. 749), which is used from here to the end of the book.

At the first. Doubtless a reference to the vision of ch. 7.

2. I was at Shushan. There has been considerable discussion as to whether the prophet Daniel was bodily present in Susa, or was present there only in vision. As far as the context is concerned, bodily presence need not be inferred. “I saw in a vision,” or simply “I saw in vision,” may be understood as introducing a series of events seen in

vision with no necessary reference to actual presence. Other examples of such transportations taking place in vision, but not in actuality, are the “visit” of Ezekiel to Jerusalem (see on Eze. 8:3) and that of John to the wilderness (Rev. 17:3). We might mention also the experiences of Ellen G. White (see EW 32, 39). On the other hand, it cannot be proved that Daniel was not bodily in Susa at the time. It is not difficult to imagine that his travels, either on official business or otherwise, may at some time or another have taken him to the former metropolis of Elam. At the time of this vision, if we begin the 1st year of Belshazzar in 553, Elam was probably still a Babylonian province, though it went over to Cyrus at some time before he took Babylon. Josephus alleges that the prophet was actually in Susa at the time of the vision (*Antiquities* x. 11. 7).

Palace. Heb. *birah*, “citadel,” or “acropolis.” In the Hebrew the term is in apposition to Shushan. The phrase may be translated “in the citadel Shushan,” or, employing the form of the name more familiar in modern times, “Susa the capital” (RSV). According to the Greek historian Xenophon, Persian kings later used the city as a winter residence, and spent the rest of the year at Babylon or at Ecbatana. For further information regarding Susa see on Esther 1:2.

Ulai. Assyrian *Ula*, an unidentified river. Classical writers place Susa on the Eulaeus (*Karun*) or on the Choaspes (*Kerkha*). Some scholars see it as a canal between the Choaspes and Coprates rivers.

3. A ram which had two horns. The angel later identifies this symbol as representing the kings of Media and Persia (v. 20).

Higher than the other. Although it rose later than Media, Persia became the dominant power when Cyrus defeated Astyages of Media in 553 or 550. The Medes, however, were not treated as inferiors or as a subjugated people, but rather as confederates. See on ch. 2:39.

4. Pushing westward. Cyrus conquered Lydia in 547 B.C. and Babylon in 539. Cambyses extended the conquests south into Egypt and Nubia in 525. Darius Hystaspes went north against the Scythians in 513 (see Vol. III, pp. 54–59).

The Medo-Persian Empire covered much more territory than its predecessor, Babylon. So successful were Persian arms that in the days of Ahasuerus (Esther 1:1) the empire extended from India to Ethiopia, the eastern and southern extremities of the then-known world. A frequent title of the Persian monarch was “king of kings” or “king of the countries.”

Became great. Literally, “did great things,” “made himself big,” or “magnified himself” (RSV).

5. Goat. Identified by the angel as representing Greece (v. 21), that is, the Macedonian Empire of Alexander (see on ch. 7:6).

From the west. Greece lay west of the Persian Empire.

Touched not the ground. This description of great swiftness appropriately depicts the astonishing speed and completeness of Alexander’s conquests (see on ch. 7:6).

Notable horn. According to v. 21 (see also the parallel prophecy, ch. 11:3, 4), this notable horn represents the first great Grecian king, that is, Alexander the Great (see on ch. 7:6).

7. Moved with choler. Heb. *marar*, in the form here found, “to be enraged”. Choler is Old English for “anger.” The language of this verse depicts the completeness of the

subjection of Persia to Alexander. The power of the empire was completely broken. The country was ravished, its armies cut in pieces and scattered, its cities plundered. The royal city of Persepolis, whose ruins still stand as a monument to its ancient splendor, was destroyed by fire.

8. Waxed very great. Or, “magnified himself exceedingly” (see on vs. 4, 9).

When he was strong. Prophecy predicted that Alexander would fall while his empire was at the height of its power. At the age of 32, still in the prime of life, the great leader died of a fever aggravated, no doubt, by his own intemperance. See on ch. 7:6.

Four notable ones. On the four Macedonian (or Hellenistic) kingdoms into which Alexander’s empire was divided, see on chs. 7:6; 11:3, 4.

9. Out of one of them. In the Hebrew this phrase presents confusion of gender. The word for “them,” *hem*, is masculine. This indicates that, grammatically, the antecedent is “winds” (v. 8) and not “horns,” since “winds” may be either masculine or feminine, but “horns,” only feminine. On the other hand the word for “one,” *’achath*, is feminine, suggesting “horns” as the antecedent. *’Achath* could, of course, refer back to the word for “winds,” which occurs most frequently in the feminine. But it is doubtful that the writer would assign two different genders to the same noun in such close contextual relationship. To reach grammatical agreement, either *’achath* should be changed into a masculine, thus making the entire phrase refer clearly to “winds,” or the word for “them” should be changed into a feminine, in which case the reference would be ambiguous, since either “winds” or “horns” may be the antecedent. A number of Hebrew manuscripts have the word for “them” in the feminine. If these manuscripts reflect the correct reading, the passage is still ambiguous.

Commentators who interpret the “little horn” of v. 9 to refer to Rome have been at a loss to explain satisfactorily how Rome could be said to arise out of one of the divisions of Alexander’s empire. If “them” refers to “winds,” all difficulty vanishes. The passage then simply states that from one of the four points of the compass would come another power. Rome came from the west. In the literal explanation of the symbols of the vision Rome is said to arise “in the latter time of their kingdom” (v. 23), that is, the “kingdom” of the four horns. However, v. 23 refers only to the time when the little horn would arise and says nothing of the place of its rising, whereas v. 9 is concerned exclusively with its location.

It should be remembered that the prophet is here giving a running account of the prophetic symbolization, as the scenes were presented to him. He is not yet interpreting the vision. The interpretation of this feature of the vision occurs in v. 23. An important rule to follow when interpreting the symbols of visions is to assign an interpretation only to those features of pictorial representation that were intended to have interpretative value. As in parables, certain features are needed to complete the dramatic presentation, but are not necessarily significant of themselves. Which of these have interpretative value, Inspiration alone can determine. Seeing that in this instance Inspiration (v. 23) speaks only of the *time* when the power represented by this horn was to emerge, and says nothing as to its geographical point of origin, there is no reason for us to lay stress on the phrase, “out of one of them.”

Inasmuch as the vision of ch. 8 closely parallels the prophetic outlines of chs. 2 and 7, and inasmuch as in both of those outlines the power succeeding Greece is Rome (see on

chs. 2:40; 7:7), the reasonable assumption here is that the “horn” power is of v. 8 also applies to Rome. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that Rome precisely fulfilled the various specifications of the vision.

A little horn. This little horn represents Rome in both its phases, pagan and papal. Daniel saw Rome first in its pagan, imperial phase, warring against the Jewish people and the early Christians, and then in its papal phase, continuing down to our own day and into the future, warring against the true church. On this double application see on vs. 13, 23.

Exceeding. Heb. *yether*, basically meaning “remainder.” In a few instances it describes, as here, that which is above measure, in the sense of leaving a remainder. It is translated “excellency” (Gen. 49:3), “plentifully” (Ps 31:23), “much more abundant” (Isa. 56:12). The word translated “very” in Dan. 8:8 is *me’od*, the more common word for “exceedingly.” In the OT *me’od* is translated “exceeding” or “exceedingly” 22 times (Gen. 13:13; 15:1; etc.) in its simple form and 9 times in its repeated form. It cannot be argued that *yether* (Dan. 8:9) represents a greater degree than *me’od*. Any excelling greatness in Rome over that of Greece must be proved historically, not on the basis of these words.

Toward the south. Egypt was long an unofficial protectorate of Rome. Her fate was already in Rome’s hands in 168 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanes, who was seeking to make war on the Ptolemies, was ordered out of the country. Egypt, still under the administration of its Ptolemaic rulers, was a pawn of Roman Eastern policy for many years before it became, in 30 B.C., a Roman province.

Toward the east. The Seleucid Empire lost its westernmost lands to Rome as early as 190 B.C., and finally became the Roman province of Syria in 65 B.C. or shortly thereafter.

Pleasant land. Heb. *šebi*, “ornament,” “decoration,” “glory.” Either Jerusalem or the land of Palestine is here referred to. *Šebi* is translated “glorious” in ch. 11:16, 41. However, there the Hebrew has the word for “land,” whereas here “land” is understood. Palestine was incorporated into the Roman Empire in 63 B.C.

10. Host of heaven. Daniel is still describing what he saw in vision. Inasmuch as the angel later provides the interpretation (v. 24), we are not left in darkness concerning the significance of what is here described. The “host” and “stars” obviously represent “the mighty and the holy people” (v. 24).

Stamped upon them. This has reference to the fury with which Rome has persecuted the people of God so often throughout the centuries. In the days of the tyrants Nero, Decius, and Diocletian in pagan times, and again in papal times, Rome has never hesitated to deal harshly with those whom she chooses to condemn.

11. Prince of the host. Verse 25 speaks of this same power standing up against the Prince of princes. The reference is to Christ, who was crucified under the authority of Rome. See on chs. 9:25; 11:22.

By him. Heb. *mimmennu*, which may also be rendered “from him,” that is, from the “prince of the host.” The Hebrew of this passage presents certain difficult problems of translation. A very different reading is found in the Greek version of Theodotion. It reads as follows: “And [this shall be] until the chief captain shall have delivered the captivity: and by reason of him the sacrifice was disturbed, and he prospered; and the holy place shall be made desolate.” There is no way of determining to what extent, if any, this

version reflects more perfectly the original text of Daniel. The Masoretic text as reflected by the KJV and RSV seems on the whole to be the more natural reading.

Daily sacrifice. Heb. *tamid*, a word occurring 103 times in the OT, used both adverbially and adjectivally. It means “continually” or “continual,” and is applied to various concepts, such as continual employment (Eze. 39:14), permanent sustenance (2 Sam. 9:7–13), continual sorrow (Ps. 38:17), continual hope (Ps. 71:14), continual provocation (Isa. 65:3), etc. It is used frequently in connection with the ritual of the sanctuary to describe various features of its regular services, such as the “continual bread” that was to be kept upon the table of shewbread (Num. 4:7), the lamp that was to burn continually (Ex. 27:20), the fire that was to be kept burning upon the altar (Lev. 6:13), the burnt offerings that were to be offered daily (Num. 28:3, 6), the incense that was to be offered morning and evening (Ex. 30:7, 8). The word itself does not mean “daily,” but simply “continual” or “regular.” Of the 103 occurrences it is translated “daily” only in Num. 4:16 and in the five occurrences of it in Daniel (chs. 8:11, 12, 13; 11:31; 12:11). The idea of “daily” was evidently derived, not from the word itself, but from that with which it was associated.

In ch. 8:11 *tamid* has the definite article and is therefore used adjectivally. Furthermore, it stands independently, without a substantive, and must either be understood subjectively as meaning “continuance” or be supplied with a substantive. In the Talmud, when *tamid* is used independently as here, the word consistently denotes the daily sacrifice. The translators of the KJV, who supplied the word “sacrifice,” obviously believed that the daily burnt offering was the subject of the prophecy.

As to the meaning of *tamid* in this passage three main views have been held:

1. That the “daily” refers exclusively to the sacrifices offered in the Temple in Jerusalem. Some expositors holding to this view apply the taking away of the “daily” to the interruption of the Temple service by Antiochus Epiphanes for a period of three years, 168–165 or 167–164 B.C. (see on ch. 11:14). Others apply it to the desolation of the Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70.
2. That the “daily” stands for “paganism,” in contrast with “the abomination that maketh desolate” (ch. 11:31), or the papacy; that both terms identify persecuting powers; that the word for “daily,” correctly meaning “continual,” refers to the long continuance of Satan’s opposition to the work of Christ through the medium of paganism; that the taking away of the daily and the setting up of “the abomination that maketh desolate” represents papal Rome replacing pagan Rome, and that this event is the same as that described in 2 Thess. 2:7 and Rev. 13:2.
3. That the term “daily”—“continual”—refers to the continual priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1) and to the true worship of Christ in the gospel age; that the taking away of the “daily” represents the substitution by the papacy of compulsory unity in a visible church in place of the voluntary unity of all believers in Christ, of the authority of a visible head—the pope—in place of that of Christ, the invisible head of the church, of a priestly hierarchy in place of direct access to Christ by all believers, of a system of salvation by works ordained by the church in place of salvation by faith in Christ, and, most particularly, of the confessional and the sacrifice of the mass in place of the mediatorial work of Christ as our great high priest in the courts of

heaven; and that this system quite completely diverted men's attention from Christ and thus deprived them of the benefits of His ministry.

Further, inasmuch as this third view maintains that the little horn is a symbol of imperial Rome as well as of papal Rome (see on vs. 9, 13), predictions concerning its activities may also be understood as applying to pagan Rome, as well as to papal Rome. Thus the "daily" may also refer to the earthly Temple and its services, and the taking away of the "daily" to the desolation of the Temple by Roman legions in A.D. 70 and the consequent cessation of the sacrificial services. It was this aspect of the activity of "the abomination of desolation" to which Christ referred in His delineation of future events (see on Dan. 11:31; cf. Matt. 24:15–20; Luke 21:20).

In comment on these three views it may be said that the Antiochus view must be ruled out for the reason that Antiochus does not fit the time periods or other specifications of the prophecy (see on Dan. 9:25).

Both the second and the third interpretations have been held by the various able expositors within the Advent Movement. Some devout Bible students have considered that the "daily" refers to paganism, and other equally devout Bible students, that the "daily" refers to the priestly ministry of our Lord. Perhaps this is one of the passages of Scripture on which we must wait until a better day for a final answer. As with other difficult passages of Scripture, our salvation is not dependent upon our understanding fully the meaning of Dan. 8:11.

On the historical development of the second and third views, see pp. 60–64.

Place. Heb. *makon*, "site." *Makon* is used in the phrase "for the house of God to set it up in his place" (Ezra 2:68). The primary reference here may be to the destruction of Jerusalem (see Dan. 9:26).

12. Host. Heb. *šaba'*, generally meaning "host," or "army," and a few times meaning "service," such as military or compulsory labor (see Job 7:1; 10:17; 14:14; Isa. 40:2). Interpreted as "host," or "army," the prediction may refer to the multitudes that fell under the influence of this power. The power would become mighty, "but not by his own power" (Dan. 8:24). See further on Dan. 10:1.

Cast down the truth. The papacy loaded the truth with tradition and obscured it by superstition.

13. How long? The question is tersely stated in the Hebrew, which reads literally, "How long the vision, the continual, the desolating transgression to give both sanctuary and host to trampling."

Daily sacrifice. See on v. 11.

The transgression of desolation. This term covers *both* pagan and papal systems of false religion in conflict with the religion of God (see on vs. 9, 11).

Sanctuary. See on v. 14.

Host. See on v. 10.

14. Unto me. The LXX, Theodotion, and the Syriac read, "unto him."

Days. Heb. *'ereb boqer*, literally, "evening morning," an expression comparable with the description of the days of creation, "the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:5), etc. The LXX has the word "days" following the expression "evening and morning."

In an attempt to make this period roughly conform to the three years of the devastation of the Temple by Antiochus IV, some have ingeniously assigned to the expression “2300 evening morning” only 1150 literal days.

Concerning this, Keil has remarked that the prophetic period of the 2300 evening-mornings cannot be understood as “2300 half days or 1150 whole days, because evening and morning at creation constituted not the half but the whole day.” After quoting the foregoing statement, Edward Young says, “Hence, we must understand the phrase as meaning 2300 days” (*The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 174).

Commentators have tried, but without success, to find some event in history that would fit a period of 2300 literal days. As Wright observes, “All efforts, however, to harmonise the period, whether expounded as 2300 days or as 1150 days, with any precise historical epoch mentioned in the Books of the Maccabees or in Josephus have proved futile. . . . Professor Driver is justified in stating, ‘It seems impossible to find two events separated by 2300 days (=6 years and 4 months) which would correspond with the description’” (Charles H. H. Wright, *Daniel and His Prophecies*, 1906, pp. 186, 187). The only way that consistency can be given to these “days” is to apply them in a prophetic sense by the application of the year-day principle.

The time here involved is specific and definite, but in ch. 8 no date is indicated for its beginning. However, in ch. 9 such a date is specifically mentioned (see on v. 25). This will be shown to be 457 B.C. From this date as a beginning, the 2300 prophetic days, designating as many solar years (see on ch. 7:25), reach to the year A.D. 1844. For a consideration of contextual evidence that ch. 9:24–27 provides an explanation of the vision of ch. 8:13, 14, and thus locates the starting point of the 2300 days or years, see on ch. 9:21. For comment on the validity of the date 457 B.C. see on ch. 9:25. For comment on a nonexistent LXX reading “2400” instead of 2300, formerly often cited but based on a misprint, see p. 58).

Sanctuary. Inasmuch as the 2300 years project us far into the Christian Era, the sanctuary cannot refer to the Temple at Jerusalem, which was destroyed in A.D. 70. The sanctuary of the new covenant is clearly the sanctuary in heaven, “which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:2; GC 411–417). Of this sanctuary Christ is the high priest (Heb. 8:1). John foresaw a time when special attention would be directed toward “the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein” (Rev. 11:1). The symbols employed by the revelator are strikingly similar to those employed in Dan. 8:11–13.

Be cleansed. From the Heb. *šadaq*, “to be just,” “to be righteous.” The verb occurs in the form here found (niph'al) only this once in the OT, which may suggest that a specialized meaning of the term is indicated. Lexicographers and translators suggest various meanings, such as “be put right,” or “be put in a rightful condition,” “be righted,” “be declared right,” “be justified,” “be vindicated.” The translation “shall be cleansed” is the reading of the LXX, which here has the verb form *katharisthēsetai*. It is not known whether the translators of the LXX gave an adapted meaning to the Heb. *šadaq* or translated from manuscripts employing a different Hebrew word, perhaps *ṭahar*, the common Hebrew word for “to be clean,” “to cleanse.” The Vulgate has the form *mundabitur*, which also means “cleansed.” See on ch. 9:24.

As an aid to determining what event in connection with the heavenly sanctuary is here referred to, it is helpful to examine the services of the earthly sanctuary, for the priests in the earthly sanctuary served “unto the example and shadow of heavenly things” (Heb. 8:5). The services in the wilderness tabernacle and in the Temple consisted of two main divisions, the daily and the yearly. Christ’s daily ministration as our high priest was typified in the daily services. The annual Day of Atonement typified a work that Christ would undertake at the close of the age. For a detailed discussion of these two phases of service see on Lev. 1:16; see also GC 418–432. The prophecy of Dan. 8:14 announces the time for the beginning of this special work. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary comprehends the entire work of final judgment, beginning with the investigative phase and ending with the executive phase, which results in the permanent eradication of sin from the universe.

A significant feature of the final judgment is the vindication of God’s character before all the intelligences of the universe. The false charges that Satan has lodged against the government of God must be demonstrated as utterly groundless. God must be shown to have been entirely fair in the selection of certain individuals to make up His future kingdom, and in the barring of others from entrance there. The final acts of God will evoke from men the confessions, “Just and true are thy ways” (Rev. 15:3), “Thou art righteous, O Lord” (Rev. 16:5), and, “True and righteous are thy judgments” (Rev. 16:7). Satan himself will be led to acknowledge God’s justice (see GC 670, 671). The word translated “just” and “righteous” is *dikaïos*, equivalent to the Heb. *šaddiq*, derived from *šadaq*, a form of which is translated “shall be cleansed” in Dan. 8:14. Thus the Heb. *šadaq* may convey the additional thought that God’s character will be fully vindicated as the climax to “the hour of his judgment” (Rev. 14:7), which began in 1844. See *Problems in Bible Translation*, pp. 174–177.

15. Sought for the meaning. Daniel did not understand the meaning of what he had seen. Many times the bearers of a prophetic message need to study that message themselves in order to discover its meaning (1 Peter 1:10–12). It is the duty of the prophet faithfully to relate what he has seen and heard (see Rev. 1:11).

16. Gabriel. In the OT the name Gabriel occurs only here and in ch. 9:21. The NT reports the appearance of this heavenly being to announce the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11–20), again to announce to Mary the birth of the Messiah (Luke 1:26–33). The angelic visitor declared of himself, “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God” (Luke 1:19). Gabriel occupies the position from which Satan fell (see DA 693; cf. DA 99). Gabriel was also the bearer of the prophetic messages to John (Rev. 1:1; cf. DA 99). See on Luke 1:19.

17. Time of the end. The vision reached until the time when the desolating power would be destroyed, an event associated with the coming of Jesus (2 Thess. 2:8).

The fact that the last events represented in the vision will be fulfilled at the end of this world’s history must be borne in mind when seeking an interpretation of the symbols of the vision. Any exposition that finds a complete fulfillment of the vision in an earlier period such as in the time of the Maccabees (see on Dan. 8:25) falls short of meeting fully the angel’s specifications, and must be considered erroneous and misleading.

19. End of the indignation. See on v. 17.

20. The ram. See on vs. 3, 4.

21. Rough. Heb. *śa'ir*, “hairy,” or “shaggy.” *Śa'ir* is also used independently to describe a he-goat (Gen. 37:31; Lev. 4:23; etc.). On the interpretation see on Dan. 8:5.

Great horn. A symbol of Alexander the Great, the “first king” of the Greco-Macedonian world empire that was destined to replace the Persian Empire (see on vs. 5–8; ch. 7:6).

22. Four kingdoms. Compare v. 8; ch. 11:4. On the Hellenistic kingdoms that developed out of Alexander’s empire see on ch. 7:6. The accurate fulfillment of these features of the vision assures us that what follows will surely come to pass as predicted.

23. Latter time. That is, after the divisions of Alexander’s empire had existed for some time. The empire of Rome arose gradually, and attained supremacy only after the divisions of the Macedonian Empire had become weak. The prophecy applies to Rome in both its pagan and papal forms. There appears to be a blending of application, certain features applying to both, others more specifically to one or the other (see on ch. 8:11). That papal Rome was, for all practical purposes, the continuation of the Roman Empire is a well-established fact of history:

“Whatever Roman elements the barbarians and Arians left ... were ... put under the protection of the Bishop of Rome, who was the chief person there after the Emperor’s disappearance. ... *The Roman Church in this way privily pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation*; the empire has not perished, but has only undergone a transformation. ... That is no mere ‘clever remark,’ but the recognition of the true state of the matter historically, and the most appropriate and fruitful way of describing the character of this Church. It still governs the nations. ... It is a political creation, and as imposing as a World-Empire, because the continuation of the Roman Empire. The Pope, who calls himself ‘King’ and ‘Pontifex Maximus,’ is Caesar’s successor” (Adolf Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* [New York; G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1903], pp. 269, 270, italics in the original).

The transgressors. The Greek versions read “sins,” a translation that may be obtained from the Hebrew by a change in the Masoretic pointing.

Come to the full. There may be a reference here to various nations, or possibly specifically the Jews, filling up the cup of their iniquity (see Gen. 15:16; Ed 173–177).

Fierce countenance. Probably an allusion to Deut. 28:49–55.

Dark sentences. Heb. *chidoth*, “enigmatic statements,” as in Num. 12:8, “riddles,” as in Judges 14:12; Eze. 17:2, or “perplexing questions,” as in 1 Kings 10:1. Some believe the meaning here is “ambiguous speech,” or “double dealing.”

Stand up. That is, to assume power.

24. Not by his own power. Compare, “an host was given him” (v. 12). Some see a reference here to the fact that the papacy reduced the civil power to subservience and caused the sword of the state to be wielded on behalf of its religious objectives.

Destroy wonderfully. Better, “cause frightful destruction.” This power persecuted even unto death those who opposed its blasphemous claims, and would have extinguished “the holy people” had not the Lord intervened on their behalf.

25. Craft. Better, “deceit.” The methods of this power are the perfection of subtlety and deceit.

By peace. Better, “while they live at ease,” that is, while many feel they are living in security they will be destroyed unawares.

Prince of princes. Evidently the same being designated “the prince of the host” in v. 11, none other than Christ. It was a Roman governor who sentenced Christ to death. Roman hands nailed Him to the cross, and a Roman spear pierced His side.

Without hand. This implies that the Lord Himself will eventually destroy this power (see ch. 2:34). The ecclesiastical system represented by this power will continue until destroyed without human hands at the second coming of Christ (see 2 Thess. 2:8).

A number of commentators have set forth the view that the “little horn” power of ch. 8 symbolizes the career of Antiochus Epiphanes (see on ch. 11:14). However, a careful examination of the prophecy makes evident the incompleteness with which this persecuting Seleucid king fulfilled the specifications set forth. The four horns of the goat (ch. 8:8) were kingdoms (v. 22), and it is natural to expect the little horn to be a kingdom also. But Antiochus was only one king of the Seleucid empire, hence was a part of one horn. Therefore he could not be *another* complete horn. Further, this horn grew great toward the south, the east, and the pleasant land of Palestine (v. 9). Antiochus’ advance into Egypt ended in humiliation from the Romans, his successes in Palestine were short-lived, and his push to the east was cut short by his death. His policy of enforced Hellenism utterly failed, nor did his craft bring him outstanding prosperity (v. 12).

Furthermore, Antiochus did not come at the latter end (v. 23), but about the middle of the period of the divided Hellenistic kingdoms; his might could hardly be attributed to anything but his own power (v. 22); his craft and policy failed more than they prospered (v. 25); he did not stand up against any Jewish “Prince of princes” (v. 25); his casting of the truth to the ground (v. 12) was temporary and completely unsuccessful, for it drove the Jews to the defense of their faith against Hellenism. Even though he spoke proud words, oppressed the people of God, and briefly desecrated the Temple, and though some other points might be argued for as partly true of his activities, nevertheless the inadequacy of Antiochus as a fulfillment of many specifications of the prophecy is obvious. See further on v. 14; chs. 9:25; 11:31.

26. Evening and the morning. A clear reference to the time prophecy of v. 14 (see comments there). At the present the angel does not enlarge upon the 2300-day vision but merely emphasizes its truthfulness.

Shut thou up. Compare similar instructions recorded in ch. 12:4 (see comments there).

For many days. The fulfillment of the various details of the vision of this chapter would extend into the distant future.

27. I Daniel fainted. Daniel was doubtless deeply concerned about the events that had been revealed to him. Instead of predicting an immediate end to the indignation, Gabriel informed the prophet that the ultimate end would be many years in the future.

None understood it. Further information was given later (see on ch. 9:23).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–27PK 548, 553, 554

12 EW 74

13, 14 PK 554

14 Ev 223; EW 42, 54, 63, 243, 250, 253; GC 326, 328, 352, 399, 409, 417, 424, 426, 457, 486; LS 58, 63, 278; SR 369, 375, 377; 1T 52, 58

16 DA 234

26, 27 PK 554

27 GC 325

CHAPTER 9

1 *Daniel, considering the time of the captivity, 3 maketh confession of sins, 16 and prayeth for the restoration of Jerusalem.* 20 *Gabriel informeth him of the seventy weeks.*

1. The first year of Darius. For the identity and date of Darius the Mede see Additional Note on ch. 6. It is seldom that the prime minister of a conquered kingdom is appointed as a high official by the conqueror, but such was the case with Daniel. Because of his abilities and integrity, the Persians did not execute him but established him in high office.

2. Understood by books. Although busy amid the affairs of state, the prophet did not cease to study the Word of God. Daniel was obviously perplexed as to how to relate what had been revealed to him in the vision of ch. 8 to the events of the immediate future—the return of the Jews at the end of the 70 years (Jer. 29:10). See on Dan. 9:21.

Seventy years. On the dating of these years see Vol. III, pp. 96, 97. This period had now almost expired. Little wonder that Daniel's attention was focused upon the time prophecy. He was anxious lest the Lord should delay the liberation of His captive people.

3. To seek by prayer. Although the Lord had promised deliverance to His people at the time appointed, Daniel knew of the conditional nature of many of God's promises (see Jer. 18:7–10). He may have feared that the impenitence of his people might postpone the fulfillment of the promise (see SL 48). Moreover, the vision of Dan. 8 had predicted further desolation for the sanctuary and the city. His lack of understanding of “the vision of the evening and the morning” (v. 26) must have left him in deep perplexity.

4. I prayed. Verses 4–19 record one of the outstanding prayers of the OT. It is a prayer on behalf of the people of God, offered by a sincere petitioner.

Great and dreadful God. Compare Neh. 1:5; 9:32. The word translated “dreadful” (Heb. *nora*) means “awe-inspiring,” or “revered” (see on Ps. 111:9).

Keeping the covenant. Daniel begins his prayer with an acknowledgment of the faithfulness of God. God never fails to keep His promises. He is a covenant-keeping God. He will fulfill His part of the agreement. If the covenant fails, man is to blame (see Heb. 8:8).

Love him. Love to God and the keeping of His commandments always go together. Those who love God are admonished to demonstrate that love by keeping His commandments (John 14:15). The one essential carries the other with it. Love for God will result in glad and willing obedience. The true church at the close of time will be distinguished by its commandment keeping (Rev. 12:17).

5. We have sinned. Compare 1 Kings 8:47; Ps. 106:6. Daniel identifies himself with his people. There is no self-righteousness in his prayer.

6. The prophets. It had been the prophets' duty to call the attention of the people to their neglect of the divine precepts, as well as to give direction in present emergencies. But the guidance thus graciously bestowed had been almost totally ignored. The people's sin was not due to ignorance but to willful disobedience.

7. Righteousness. Daniel contrasts the righteousness of God with the unrighteousness of Israel. In all His dealings with mankind in general and with Israel in particular, God has always manifested righteousness.

9. Mercies and forgiveness. Literally, “the compassions and the forgiveness.” Despite Israel's backsliding and rebellion, Daniel remained confident that the Lord, because of His great mercy, was ever ready to forgive those who should come to Him with a contrite

heart. In this confidence Daniel pleads with God for the people of Israel. He sets forth in bold relief the compassion of God, in contrast with the sinfulness of the people.

11. *Is poured.* Moses had foretold that a curse would descend upon all who were willfully disobedient to God's law (Lev. 26:14–41; Deut. 28:15–68). Such treatment was no more than they deserved.

The servant of God. Moses is similarly titled in Deut. 34:5 and Joshua 1:13.

13. *As it is written.* See Deut. 29:21, 27.

14. *Watched.* Heb. *shaqad*, meaning “to be on the alert,” “to be wakeful.”

15. *Brought thy people forth.* Daniel cites the former great deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage and bases his petition upon the great act of mercy performed by the Lord at the time of the Exodus.

16. *Righteousness.* In Hebrew the noun is in the plural, suggesting, doubtless, the many deeds of righteousness that God had done on behalf of His people. Daniel does not present his plea on the ground of any goodness of his people; he cites the Lord's gracious dealings with Israel in times past as a basis for his petition.

Thy holy mountain. Israel should have been a light to all the world (see on 2 Sam. 22:44, 50; 1 Kings 8:43; 2 Kings 23:27), but because of stubborn rebellion, Jerusalem and Israel were now a byword and a reproach among the nation of earth.

17. *Cause thy face to shine.* An expression signifying, “look with favor” (see Num. 6:25).

Sanctuary. Daniel's mind centered upon the sanctuary in Jerusalem. Throughout the many years of captivity the city and the sanctuary had lain in ruins, and now the time for rebuilding was at hand.

19. *Defer.* Heb. *'achar*, “to delay,” “to hesitate.” Daniel is anxious that the promised deliverance be no longer delayed. The Lord delights to have us appeal to Him in this way, asking Him to hasten His promised salvation.

21. *Gabriel.* See ch. 8:15, 16. This is the same being who had explained the first three sections of the vision of ch. 8. He now returns with the purpose of completing his assigned task.

Some commentators have missed the close connection between chs. 8 and 9, and thus the relationship between the 2300 “days” of ch. 8 and the 70 “weeks” of ch. 9. The context, however, requires precisely this relationship, as the following facts make evident:

1. All symbols of the vision of ch. 8:2–14 are explained fully in vs. 15–26, with the exception of the 2300 “days” of vs. 13, 14 (see GC 325). In fact, all of vs. 13 and 14 is explained in vs. 24, 25 *except the time element involved*. In v. 26 Gabriel mentions the time element, but breaks off his explanation before saying anything further about it (see No. 3, below).
2. Daniel knew that the 70 years of captivity foretold by the prophet Jeremiah were nearly at an end (ch. 9:2; see Vol. III, pp. 90–92, 94–97; see on Jer. 25:11).
3. Daniel did not understand the 2300-day time period, the only part of the vision not yet explained (ch. 8:27; see No. 1, above), and evidently feared that it implied an extension of the Captivity and the continued desolation of the sanctuary (see ch. 9:19). He knew that the promise of restoration was conditional upon Israel's sincere repentance (SL 48; see Vol. IV, p. 34).

4. The prospect of terrible persecution during the course of the 2300 “days” (Dan. 8:10–13, 23–25) proved more than the aged Daniel could bear, and as a result he “fainted, and was sick certain days” (ch. 8:27 GC 325). Accordingly, the angel discontinued the explanation of the vision at this time.
5. During the interval preceding the angel’s return (ch. 9:21) Daniel turned to the prophecies of Jeremiah for a clearer understanding of the divine purpose in the Captivity (see Vol. IV, p. 31), particularly with respect to the 70 years (ch. 9:2).
6. Concluding that Israel’s transgression as a nation was responsible for what he evidently took to be an extension of the 70 years (see No. 3, above), Daniel interceded most earnestly with God for forgiveness, for the return of the captive exiles, and for the restoration of the now desolate sanctuary in Jerusalem (see ch. 9:3–19). His prayer closes with a reiteration of the petition that God will “forgive” the sins of the nation and “defer not” the promise of restoration (v. 19).
7. Note particularly that the unexplained portion of the vision of ch. 8 had foretold that “the sanctuary and the host” would be “trodden under foot” (vs. 13, 14, 24) for a period of 2300 “days.” In his prayer Daniel pleads with God that the time allotted to the Captivity should not be extended (see vs. 16–19). A careful comparison of the prayer of ch. 9 with the problem of ch. 8 makes it clear beyond possible doubt that Daniel had the problem in mind as he prayed. He thought that the vision of the 2300 “days” of desolation for the sanctuary and persecution for God’s people implied that God would “defer” the restoration (ch. 9:19).
8. In answer to this prayer, Gabriel, who had been commissioned to explain the vision of ch. 8 (ch. 8:15–19) but had not as yet completed the explanation (see No. 4, above), greeted Daniel with the announcement, “I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding” (ch. 9:22).
9. The explanation of ch. 9:24–27 is clearly Heaven’s reply to Daniel’s prayer (v. 23), and the solution of the problem about which he was praying (see Nos. 6, 7, above). Compare the original command to Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel (ch. 8:16) with the renewal of the command at the time of Daniel’s prayer (ch. 9:23), and Gabriel’s command to Daniel to “understand” and “know” (ch. 8:17, 19), with similar expressions in ch. 9:23.
10. Note particularly that Daniel was told to “understand the matter, and consider the vision” (ch. 9:23), that is, the vision he had seen “at the beginning” (v. 21). This can refer only to the vision of ch. 8:2–14, as no other vision had been given since that one. Compare the words “understand the vision” (ch. 8:16) with “consider the vision” (ch. 9:23).
11. The context thus makes certain beyond the possibility of doubt that the explanation of ch. 9:24–27 is a continuation, and completion, of the explanation begun in ch. 8:15–26, and that the explanation of ch. 9:24–27 deals exclusively with the unexplained portion of the vision, that is, with the time element of the 2300 “days” of ch. 8:13, 14. The angel is Gabriel in both instances (chs. 8:16; 9:21), the subject matter is identical, and the context makes evident that the concluding portion of the explanation picks up the thread of explanation at the point it was laid down in ch. 8.

Swiftly. How comforting to know that heaven is near to earth. Whenever we need help and ask for it, the Lord commissions a holy angel to come to our aid without delay.

Touched. Heb. *naga'*, which may mean merely "reached," or "approached." We cannot be certain which meaning is here intended.

Oblation. Heb. *minchah*. In Levitical law this is the common word for "grain offerings" (or "meat offerings," KJV). A specified grain offering accompanied the evening and morning burnt offering (see Num. 28:3–8). Daniel evidently prayed at the time when the evening offering had been made in the Temple.

22. Understanding. Doubtless with respect to the vision mentioned in ch. 8:26, 27, which "none understood" (ch. 8:27). Daniel could not understand the relation between the 70 years' captivity foretold by Jeremiah (Jer. 29:10) and the 2300 days (years) that were to elapse before the cleansing of the sanctuary. He had fainted away when the angel informed him that the vision was to be for "many days" (Dan. 8:26).

23. Consider the vision. A reference to "the vision of the evening and the morning" (ch. 8:26). In his last words to Daniel at the time of his previous visit Gabriel stated that the vision of the 2300 evening mornings was "true." Thus in ch. 9:24 the divine instructor begins where he left off in ch. 8:26.

24. Seventy weeks. This expression seems to be a rather abrupt introduction, but the angel had come for the specific purpose of causing Daniel to understand the vision. He immediately began to explain.

The word here translated "week," *shabua'*, describes a period of seven consecutive days (see Gen. 29:27; Deut. 16:9; Dan. 10:2). In the pseudepigraphical Book of Jubilees, as well as in the Mishnah, *shabua'* is used to denote a period of seven years. Here, evidently, weeks of years are intended rather than weeks of days, for in ch. 10:2, 3 when Daniel wishes to specify that the "weeks" there referred to are seven-day weeks he explicitly says, "weeks of days" (Heb.; KJV, "full weeks"). Seventy weeks of years would be 490 literal years, without (here) applying the day-year principle (see on Dan. 7:25).

Are determined. Heb. *chathak*, a word occurring only here in the Bible. It occurs in post-Biblical Hebrew with the meaning "to cut," "to cut off," "to determine," "to decree." The LXX has *krinō*, "to decide," "to judge," etc. Theodotion's version has *suntemnō*, "to shorten," "to abbreviate," etc., which meaning is reflected in the Vulgate reading *abbreviare*. The exact shade of meaning here intended must be determined from the context. In view of the fact that ch. 9 is an exposition of the unexplained portion of the vision of ch. 8 (see on ch. 9:3, 21–23), and inasmuch as the unexplained portion had to do with the 2300 days, it is logical to conclude that the 70 weeks, or 490 years, were to be "cut off" from that longer period. Furthermore, in the absence of contrary evidence, it may be assumed that the 70 weeks would be cut off from the beginning of that period. Viewed in the light of these observations, the translation of *chathak* as "to cut" seems singularly appropriate. In so far as the 490 years were especially assigned to the Jews with respect to their role as God's chosen people, the translations "determine" and "decree" are also appropriate to the context.

Thy people. The 490 years applied especially to the Jewish nation.

To finish. Heb. *lekalle'* from the root *kela'*, "to restrain." The passage may have reference to the restraining power that God would exercise upon the forces of evil during

the period allotted to the Jews. However, some 40 Hebrew manuscripts read *lekalleh*, a form clearly from *kalah*, “to bring a completion.” If *kalah* is the root, then the passage evidently refers to the fact that within this period the Jews would fill the cup of their iniquity. God had suffered long with the Israelites. He had given them many opportunities, but they continually disappointed Him (see pp. 32, 33).

To make an end of sins. This phrase may be parallel in meaning to the one preceding it, “to finish the transgression.” Some expositors note that the word here translated “sins” (Heb. *chatta’oth*, or *orchatta’th*, according to some manuscripts and the Masoretes) may mean either “sins” or “sin offerings.” Of the 290 occurrences in the OT *chatta’th* has the meaning “sin” 155 times, and “sin offering” 135 times. If “sin offerings” is the intended meaning, the following interpretation is suggested: When Christ on Calvary became the antitype of the sacrificial offerings of the sanctuary, it was no longer necessary for the sinner to bring his sin offering (see John 1:29). However, the plural form *chatta’oth* almost invariably describes sins and only once, unless this be an exception also, denotes sin offerings (Neh. 10:33).

To make reconciliation. Heb. *kaphar*, generally translated “to make atonement” (see Ex. 30:10; Lev. 4:20; etc.). By His vicarious sacrifice on Calvary Christ provided reconciliation for all who accept His sacrifice.

Everlasting righteousness. Christ did not come to earth simply to provide for the blotting out of sin. He came to reconcile man to God. He came so that it might be possible to impute and to impart His righteousness to the penitent sinner. When men accept Him, He bestows on them the robe of His righteousness, and they stand in God’s presence as though they had never sinned (see SC 62). God loves repentant, believing souls as He loves His only Son, and for Christ’s sake accepts them into His family. By His life, death, and resurrection, Christ has made everlasting righteousness available to every child of Adam who, in simple faith, is willing to accept it.

To seal up. Here evidently not in the sense of “shutting up,” but of “confirming,” or “ratifying.” The fulfillment of the predictions connected with the first coming of the Messiah at the time specified in the prophecy gives assurance that the other features of the prophecy, notably the 2300 prophetic days, will be as precisely fulfilled.

The most Holy. Heb. *qodesh qodashim*, “something most holy,” or, “someone most holy.” The Hebrew phrase is applied to the altar (Ex. 29:37; 40:10), other vessels and furniture pertaining to the tabernacle (Ex. 30:29), the holy perfume (Ex. 30:36), specified meat offerings (Lev. 2:3, 10; 6:17; 10:12), trespass offerings (Lev. 7:1, 6), the shewbread (Lev. 24:5–9), devoted things (Lev. 27:28), the holy district (Num. 18:10; Eze. 43:12), and the most holy place of the sanctuary (Ex. 26:33, 34). The phrase is nowhere applied to persons, unless, as some suggest, it is so applied in the text under consideration and in 1 Chron. 23:13. The latter text may be translated, “Aaron was separated to anoint him a most holy one,” although it may also be rendered as in the KJV. Jewish expositors and many Christian commentators have held that the Messiah is referred to.

In view of the fact that the Hebrew phrase cannot elsewhere be shown to refer definitely to a person, and in view of the fact that the heavenly sanctuary is under discussion in the larger aspects of the vision (see on Dan. 8:14), it is reasonable to

conclude that Daniel is here speaking of the anointing of the heavenly sanctuary prior to the time of Christ's inauguration as high priest.

25. Going forth of the commandment. At the time this vision was given, Jerusalem and the Temple were still in ruins. Heaven announces that a command will be issued to rebuild and restore, and that from that date a definite number of years will reach to the long-looked-for Messiah.

Three decrees dealing with the repatriation of the Jews are recorded in the book of Ezra: the first in the first year of Cyrus, about 537 (Ezra 1:1–4); the second in the reign of Darius I, soon after 520 (Ezra 6:1–12); the third in the 7th year of Artaxerxes, 458/457 B.C. (Ezra 7:1–26). See further Vol. III, pp. 97–104.

In their decrees neither Cyrus nor Darius made any genuine provision for the restoration of the civil state as a complete unit, though a restoration of both the religious and the civil government was promised in the prophecy of Daniel. The decree of the 7th year of Artaxerxes was the first to give the Jewish state full autonomy, subject to Persian overlordship.

One of the double-dated papyri found at Elephantine, Egypt, a Jewish colony (see Vol. III, pp. 103–107), was written in Artaxerxes' accession year in January, 464 B.C. From this, the only known document of that year, compared with other ancient records, it can be deduced that by Jewish reckoning his "beginning of reign," or "accession year" (see Vol. II, pp. 138, 139), began after the Jewish New Year of 465 B.C. and ended at the next New Year in the fall of 464. Hence his "first year" (his first full calendar year) would be from the fall of 464 to the fall of 463. The 7th year of Artaxerxes would then extend from the fall of 458 to the fall of 457. The specifications of the decree were not carried out until after Ezra returned from Babylon, which was the late summer or early fall of 457 B.C. For a discussion of Ezra 7 and the historical accuracy of the date 457 B.C. as the 7th year of Artaxerxes, see Vol. III, pp. 100–104. For a full discussion of the subject see S. H. Horn and L. H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7* (rev. ed. 1970).

Messiah. Heb. *mashiach*, from the verb *mashach*, "to anoint." Hence, *mashiach* describes an "anointed one" such as the high priest (Lev. 4:3, 5, 16), Israel's kings (1 Sam. 24:6, 10; 2 Sam. 19:21), Cyrus (Isa. 45:1), etc. Theodotion's Greek version translates *mashiach* literally, *christos*, a word that comes from the verb *chriō*, "to anoint," and hence means simply "an anointed one." The title "Christ" is a transliteration of *Christos*. In later Jewish history the term *mashiach* was applied to the expected Deliverer who was to come (see John 1:41; 4:25, 26).

Daniel predicted that the long-looked-for Prince Messiah would appear at a specified time. To this time Jesus referred when He declared, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15; DA 233). Jesus was anointed at the time of His baptism in the autumn of A.D. 27 (see Luke 3:21, 22; Acts 10:38; cf. Luke 4:18).

Prince. See on ch. 11:22.

Seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks. The natural method of calculating these weeks is to consider them consecutive, that is, the 62 weeks begin where the 7 weeks end. These divisions are components of the 70 weeks mentioned in v. 24 thus: $7+62+1=70$. For the one week see on v. 27.

Beginning with the autumn of 457 B.C., when the decree went into effect, 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 years, reach to the baptism of Jesus in 27 A.D. It is to be noted

that if the 483 years had been reckoned from the beginning of 457 B.C., they would have extended to the close of A.D. 26, for 483 years requires 457 full years B.C. plus 26 full years A.D. Since the period began many months after the beginning of 457, it would end as many months after the end of A.D. 26, that is, in 27. This is due to the fact that historians (unlike astronomers) never count a year zero (see Vol. I, p. 178). Some have been puzzled as to how Christ could begin His work in A.D. 27 when the record says that He was about 30 years of age when He started His public ministry (Luke 3:23). This is due to the fact that when the Christian Era was first computed, an error of about four years occurred. That Christ was not born in A.D. 1, is evident from the fact that when He was born Herod the Great was still alive, and Herod died in 4 B.C. (see Matt. 2:13–20).

A number of modern expositors place an entirely different interpretation upon these time periods. The “messiah” is variously identified as Cyrus, Zerubbabel, or the high priest Joshua (see Ezra 3:2; 3:1, 3; 6:11–13). The “commandment to restore and to build” is regarded by some as that given through Jeremiah that Jerusalem should be rebuilt (see Jer. 29:10). These expositors believe that this “commandment” became effective in 586 B.C., the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the “seven weeks,” or 49 years, reach roughly to the decree of Cyrus. Further, these expositors hold that the 62 weeks, or 434 years, were intended to reach to the Maccabean era. By the covenant of the 70th week they understand Antiochus’ consorting with the renegade Jews. They translate “midst of the week” (Dan. 9:27) as “half a week” (see on ch. 9:27) and apply the “half a week” to Antiochus’ sacrilege of the Temple from 168 to 165 B.C. (see 1 Macc. 1:54; 4:52, 53). Translators of this school of interpretation follow an alternate punctuation in Dan. 9:25 to suit this idea (see RSV; RV; ASV, margin).

As shown above, only a distortion of the chronological figures enables these expositors to arrive at the events they assume fulfill the prophetic requirements. When these figures are applied to Christ, His ministry and death, and the gospel to the Jews, perfect synchronism is achieved. See further on ch. 8:25.

Street. Heb. *rechob*, “a broad place.”

Shall be built. Some interpreters attach special import to the period of “seven weeks,” or 49 years, as representing the time during which the building of the street and wall would be completed. However, historical information for this period is extremely meager. Little is known of the condition of Jerusalem in the time from Artaxerxes to Alexander. What may be gleaned from the Bible and from historical sources is fragmentary.

Wall. Heb. *charuṣ*, used in the present sense only here in the OT. In Mishnaic Hebrew it means “a trench.” In the Akkadian the word means “a city-moat.” “Wall” is the reading of Theodotion’s Greek version and of the Vulgate.

Troublous times. For a summary history of this period see Vol. 3, pp. 73–79.

26. After threescore and two weeks. The cutting off of the Messiah would take place, not within this period, but after its completion. This expression is not intended to fix the exact time when the calamitous event of the death of the Messiah would take place. That is done in v. 27, where the event is placed “in the midst of the week.”

Cut off. According to this prophetic statement, Messiah would not appear as the Jews expected, a glorious conqueror and emancipator. Instead, He would meet a violent death; He would be “cut off.” On the term “cut off” meaning death, see Gen. 9:11.

But not for himself. Literally, “and nothing to him.” The meaning of this phrase is not clear. Many possible meanings have been suggested, such as “and shall have nothing,” “he shall not be,” “and there was no helper to him.”

And the people. The marginal reading, “and they [the Jews] shall be no more his people,” found in some Bibles, is unsupported by the Hebrew.

The city and the sanctuary. An obliteration of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, is here foretold. This was fulfilled by the Romans in A.D. 70. The Roman soldiers took blazing firebrands and deliberately set them in the interior woodwork of the Temple structure, with the result that it was soon utterly demolished. For “the people of the prince that shall come” the LXX reads “the king of nations.”

With a flood. That is, in the sense of being overwhelming (see Isa. 8:7, 8).

Desolations are determined. The passage may literally be rendered, “unto the end [shall be] war, a determination of ruins.”

27. He shall confirm the covenant. The “he” here spoken of is the Messiah of the preceding verses. Interpreting the verse thus makes the entire 70 weeks, or 490 years, of prophecy a consistent, continuous unit. The statements made meet a unique fulfillment in the time of the Messiah. The confirming of the covenant may be considered to be the continuation of the Jewish nation as the chosen people of God through the period named. On the other hand the “confirming” may be that of the everlasting covenant (see on ch. 11:28).

For one week. This week, the 70th, began in A.D. 27 with the opening of Christ’s public ministry at the time of His baptism. It extended beyond the crucifixion “in the midst of the week,” in the spring of A.D. 31, to the rejection of the Jews as the covenant people in the autumn of A.D. 34 (490 years after 457 B.C. is A.D. 34; see on v. 25 for the method of computation). The “vineyard” was then “let out . . . unto other husbandmen” (Matt. 21:41; cf. Isa. 5:1–7; GC 328, 410). For about 31/2 years the authorities in Jerusalem tolerated the preaching of the apostles, but their spite was finally translated into decisive action in the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and the general persecution that then broke upon the church. Until this time the apostles and other Christian workers appear to have confined their efforts largely to the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem (see Acts 1:8; 8:1).

Inasmuch as the 70 weeks, or 490 years, are part of the longer period of 2300 years, and inasmuch as the first 490 years of the period extend to the autumn of A.D. 34, it is possible to calculate the ending date of the 2300 years. Adding the remaining 1810 years of the 2300 years to A.D. 34 brings us to the autumn of 1844 as the time when the heavenly sanctuary would be “cleansed” (see on ch. 8:14).

It is to be noted, also, that the fulfillment of the predictions of the prophecy concerning the 70 weeks was to “seal up the vision” (v. 24), that is, the vision of the longer period of 2300 days (see on v. 21). The accurate fulfillment of events foretold for the 70th week, having to do with the ministry and crucifixion of our Lord, provides incontestable evidence of the certainty of events at the close of the 2300 days.

In the midst. Heb. *chaṣi*, a word meaning either “half” (Ex. 24:6; 25:10, 17; etc.) or “middle” (Ex. 27:5; 38:4; etc.), the particular meaning to be assigned in any instance being determined by the context. A number of the more recent versions read “half.” This translation is based on the assumption that the context is speaking of Antiochus Epiphanes, who, for a period of about three years, suspended the services of the Temple

at Jerusalem. But Antiochus does not fit into the prophetic chronology. He cannot be the subject of the present prediction. As has already been shown, the prophetic periods reach to the time of the Messiah, and the fulfillment must be found in His day.

The midst of the week would be the Passover season of A.D. 31, 31/2 years after Christ's baptism in the autumn of A.D. 27. For evidence as to the length of Christ's public ministry, see on Matt. 4:12. For a discussion of "half" and "midst" see *Problems in Bible Translation*, pp. 184–187.

To cease. The sacrifices met their anti-typical fulfillment in the voluntary sacrifice of Christ. The rending of the Temple veil by an unseen hand at the instant of Christ's death was heaven's announcement that the sacrifices and oblations had lost their significance.

Overspreading. Literally, "wing." Here the desolater is poetically pictured as being carried along upon the wing of abominations. This has reference in part at least to the horrors and atrocities that were perpetrated upon the Jewish nation by the Romans in A.D. 70.

The consummation. That is, the end of that which was to come upon the Jewish nation. Sad was the fate of those who rejected their hope of salvation.

Desolate. Better, "desolater." The desolater himself would eventually be destroyed (see on Matt. 23:38).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 PK 556
- 2 PK 554
- 3–9PK 555
- 4–6SL 46
- 5 SL 48
- 5–75T 636
- 15 GC 470
- 16 PK 555
- 16, 17 SL 48
- 17–19PK 556
- 18 GC 470
- 18, 19 SL 47
- 19 4T 534
- 20 GC 470
- 21 SL 48
- 22, 23 GC 325
- 23 FE 87; PK 555; 5T 635
- 24 7T 149
- 24, 25 DA 233; PK 698
- 24–27GC 323, 326, 351
- 25 DA 31, 98, 579; GC 313, 327, 345, 347; PK 556
- 27 DA 233; GC 327; PK 699

CHAPTER 10

1 *Daniel having humbled himself seeth a vision. 10 Being troubled with fear he is comforted by the angel.*

1. Third year of Cyrus. Counted from the fall of Babylon by either the spring or the fall year, this would be 536/535 B.C. (see on Dan. 10:4; also on Ezra 1:1). Daniel was

now apparently near the end of his life (see Dan. 12:13), about 88 years old, considering that he was 18 when he was taken captive (see 4T 570) in 605 B.C. (see on ch. 1:1). Dan. 10:1 introduces the final section of the book, ch. 10 providing the setting in Daniel's experience for his fourth great prophecy, recorded in chs. 11 and 12. The main body of the prophetic narrative begins with ch. 11:12 and closes with ch. 12:4, the remainder of ch. 12 being a sort of postscript to the prophecy. On the year reckonings from the spring and the fall see Vol. II, pp. 109–111.

King of Persia. This is the only prophecy of Daniel's dated in terms of Cyrus' reign. Cyrus is here given the title "king of Persia," which would seem to imply that the whole empire was ruled by the Persians, as contrasted with the more limited title, "king over the realm of the Chaldeans," ascribed to Darius in ch. 9:1. Arising from comparative obscurity as prince of the little country of Anshan located in the highlands of Iran, Cyrus overthrew successively within a few years the Median, Lydian, and Babylonian kingdoms, and united them under his rule into the largest empire yet known. It was with such a monarch that Daniel and his people now had to deal, and with whom the powers of heaven are here revealed (ch. 10:13, 20) as striving.

A thing. A unique expression used by Daniel to describe his fourth great prophetic outline (chs. 10–12) which was apparently revealed without a preceding symbolic representation and without any allusion to symbols (cf. chs. 7:16–24; 8:20–26). The word *marah*, "vision," of vs. 7, 8, 16 refers simply to the appearance of Daniel's two celestial visitants, mentioned in vs. 5, 6 and 10–12 respectively. Accordingly, some have considered the fourth prophetic outline a further, more detailed explanation of events pictured symbolically in the "vision" of ch. 8:1–14. On this basis chs. 10–12 would be interpreted in terms of the vision of chs. 8, 9. However, the relationship between chs. 10–12 and 8, 9 is by no means so clear or certain as that between ch. 8 and ch. 9 (see on ch. 9:21).

Beltshazzar. See on ch. 1:7.

Time appointed. Heb. *ṣaba'*, the exact meaning of which here is doubtful. The phrase translates a single Hebrew word. *Ṣaba'* occurs nearly 500 times in the OT in the sense of "army," "host," "warfare," and "service" Its plural form, *ṣeba'oth*, forms part of the divine title "Lord God of Hosts." The KJV translates *ṣaba'* "appointed time," or "time appointed," only three times (Job 7:1; 14:14; and here). Inasmuch as the word everywhere else apparently has to do with an army, or warfare, or hard service, and inasmuch as in these three passages the same ideas of warfare, or hard service, make excellent sense, these definitions probably ought to be retained here. The present text seems to emphasize an intensity of struggle rather than an extended period of time. The passage may be translated, "even a great warfare" (RV), or "it was a great conflict" (RSV).

He understood. In contrast with the three other visions (chs. 2; 7; 8–9), which were couched in highly symbolic terms, this final revelation was given largely in literal language. The angel stated specifically that he had come to make Daniel "understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days" (ch. 10:14). This is the subject matter of chs. 11 and 12. It is not until near the end of this vision (ch. 12:8) that Daniel encounters a revelation concerning which he confesses, "I heard, but I understood not."

2. Mourning. Daniel does not state specifically the cause of mourning, but an indication of the reason may be found in the events that were occurring among the Jews in Palestine at this time. It was evidently a serious crisis that occasioned Daniel's three weeks of mourning. It was probably about the time when opposition was raised by the Samaritans against the Jews who under Zerubbabel had recently returned from exile (Ezra 4:1–5; see PK 571, 572). Whether the events of this chapter occurred before or after the Jews had actually laid the foundation stone (Ezra 3:8–10) of the Temple depends upon varying interpretations of the chronology of this period (see Vol. III, p. 97), and on a possibility that Daniel might have used a different reckoning in Babylonia from that of the Jews in Palestine in that time of transition. Daniel's period of mourning seems to have been contemporary with the serious threat that Cyrus' decree might not be carried to completion after all, because of the false reports sent by the Samaritans to the court of Persia, in an attempt to stop the building operations. The significant fact that during these three weeks the angel was struggling to influence Cyrus (vs. 12, 13) indicates that a vital decision of the king was at stake. While praying for further light on subjects not yet fully explained in earlier visions, the prophet doubtless engaged in another period of intensive intercession (see ch. 9:3–19) that the work of the adversary might be checked and that God's promises of restoration might be fulfilled to His chosen people.

3. Pleasant bread. That is, delicacies. During Daniel's period of fasting, he took but the simplest of food, sufficient only to maintain his strength.

Anoint myself. The use of oils for soothing the skin was in great popularity among ancient peoples, especially among those who lived in countries where the climate was very hot and dry. During his period of fasting and prayer the prophet saw fit to forgo this personal luxury.

4. Four and twentieth day. This is the only date in the book of Daniel given to the exact day and month. Nothing is said, of course, as to whether the reckoning here is in terms of the Babylonian-Persian calendar (which Daniel's contemporary Ezekiel may have used), or in accordance with the Jewish calendar (as Ezra and Nehemiah later reckoned). If Daniel's date is on the basis of the Babylonian-Persian calendar (beginning the year in the spring), the first month of Cyrus' third year would be about March/April, 536 B.C. If, on the other hand, Daniel reckoned by the Jewish method (which began the year in the fall), the first month of Cyrus' third year would come 12 months later and would correspond roughly to March/April, 535 B.C. For an explanation of the differences between Babylonian and Jewish calendars, see Vol. II, pp. 112–122.

Since the three weeks of Daniel's fasting ended on the 24th day of the first month, they must have begun on the 4th day, and thus his fast extended through the Passover season. But to what degree the feast was observed in captivity is not known.

Hiddekel. This Hebrew name represents the Akkadian *Idiqlat*, Old Persian *Tigrā*, which has come into modern languages as Tigris. The Tigris is the smaller of the two great rivers of Mesopotamia. A river by the same name is mentioned in Gen. 2:14. However, there reference is to the antediluvian stream. Precisely where on the Tigris the incident occurred is not stated.

5. A certain man. The heavenly Being appeared in human form (see Gen. 18:2; Dan. 7:13; Rev. 1:13). The description closely resembles that given by John when Christ was revealed to him. It was, indeed, the same Being who appeared to Daniel (see SL 50; GC 470, 471).

Uphaz. The location of Uphaz is not known. The name occurs elsewhere in the OT only in Jer. 10:9, where Uphaz is again identified as a source of gold. Some have suggested that it is identical with Ophir, which was famous for its fine gold (see 1 Kings 9:28). Such an identification is not impossible. The names Uphaz and Ophir are similar when written in Hebrew characters.

6. Beryl. Heb. *tarshish*, perhaps indicating the place at which the product was obtained.

Lamps of fire. Compare Rev. 1:14.

Polished brass. Compare Rev. 1:15.

7. Daniel alone saw. The revelation was given only to the Lord's chosen servant, yet the effect of the presence of a being from heaven was felt by those who were with the prophet. Compare the experience of Saul and his companions (Acts 9:3–7; 22:6–9).

8. Remained no strength. Compare Rev. 1:17. For discussion of the physical state of prophets in vision see F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp. 51–61.

9. Deep sleep. From the Heb. *radam*, a word occurring elsewhere only in Judges 4:21; Ps. 76:6; Dan. 8:18; Jonah 1:5, 6. Here it seems to mean "to be benumbed."

10. Hand touched me. Compare Eze. 2:2; 3:24; Rev. 1:17. The hand is evidently that of Gabriel. (PK 571, 572).

Set. From the Heb. *nua'*. In the form here used *nua'* means literally, "to cause to tremble," "to set tottering." Though Daniel was lifted from his position of complete collapse upon the ground, his strength was still not such that he could support himself without trembling.

11. Greatly beloved. Heb. *chamudoth*, translated "pleasant" in v. 3. This was the second time that Daniel had been so wonderfully reassured of God's love for him (see ch. 9:23).

12. Fear not. Compare Rev. 1:17. These words doubtless encouraged the prophet personally in the presence of the angel, for he "stood trembling" (v. 11), and also reassured Daniel that even though he had been praying for three weeks without an apparent answer, yet from the very first God had heard his supplication and set Himself to answer it. Daniel needed not to fear for his people; God had heard him, and God was in control.

13. Prince. Heb. *śar*, a word occurring 420 times in the OT, but apparently never with the meaning "king." It refers to a king's chief servants (Gen. 40:2, translated "chief"), to local rulers (1 Kings 22:26, translated "governor"), to Moses' subordinates (Ex. 18:21, translated "rulers"), to the nobles and officials of Israel (1 Chron. 22:17; Jer. 34:21, translated "princes"), and especially to military commanders (1 Kings 1:25; 1 Chron. 12:21, translated "captains"). In this last sense it appears in the expression *śar haśšaba'*, "commander of the army" (the same expression translated "prince of the host," Dan. 8:11), on one of the Lachish ostraca, a letter written by a Judean army officer to his superior, probably at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Judah in 588–586 B.C., during the time that Daniel was in Babylon (see Vol. II, pp. 97, 98; see Jer. 34:7).

The heavenly Being who appeared to Joshua at Jericho is termed "the captain [Heb. *śar*] of the Lord's host" (Joshua 5:14, 15). Daniel frequently uses this word in reference to supernatural beings (Dan. 8:11, 25; 10:13, 21; 12:1). On the basis of these observations

some have conjectured that *śar* denotes a supernatural being who at that time was standing in opposition to the angels of God, and who was trying to direct the course of the kingdom of Persia against the best interests of God's people. Satan has ever been eager to declare himself the prince of this world. The basic issue here was the welfare of God's people as against their heathen neighbors. Inasmuch as Michael is declared to be the "prince [*śar*] which standeth for the children of thy people" (ch. 12:1), it does not seem unreasonable that the "prince of the kingdom of Persia" would be a self-styled "guardian angel" for that country from among the hosts of the adversary. That the conflict was against the powers of darkness is clear: "For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus. . . . All that heaven could do in behalf of the people of God was done. The victory was finally gained; the forces of the enemy were held in check all the days of Cyrus, and all the days of his son Cambyses" (PK 571, 572).

On the other hand, *śar* may be used in the common sense of "ruler," and in that sense would refer to Cyrus, king of Persia. So understood, the angels of heaven are seen striving with the king, that he might render a verdict favorable to the Jews.

Withstood me. The prophet provides a glimpse of the mighty struggle going on between the forces of good and the forces of evil. The question may be asked, Why did the Lord allow the powers of evil to struggle for control of Cyrus' mind for 21 days, while Daniel continued in mourning and supplication? This question must be answered with the truth in mind that these events have to be understood in the light of the "broader and deeper purpose" of the plan of redemption, which "was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. . . . Before all the universe it [the death of Christ] would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan" (PP 68, 69; cf. DA 625). "Yet Satan was not then destroyed [at the death of Christ]. The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed" (DA 761). See on ch. 4:17.

In order to refute Satan's claim that God is a tyrant, the heavenly Father has seen fit to withhold His hand and allow the adversary an opportunity to demonstrate his methods and seek to win men to his cause. God does not force men's wills. He allows Satan a degree of freedom, while through His Spirit and His angels He pleads with men to resist evil and follow the right. Thus God demonstrates to the onlooking universe that He is a God of love, and not the tyrant Satan has accused Him of being. It was for this reason that Daniel's prayer was not immediately answered. The answer waited until the king of Persia made his choice for good and against evil, by his own free will.

Here is revealed the true philosophy of history. God has set the ultimate goal, which most surely will be reached. By His Spirit He works on the hearts of men to cooperate with Him in attaining that goal. But the question as to which way any individual chooses to go is entirely his own decision to make. Thus the events of history are the product both of supernatural agencies and of human free choice. But the final outcome is God's. In this chapter, as perhaps nowhere else in Scripture, the veil that separates heaven from earth is drawn aside, and the struggle between the powers of light and darkness is revealed.

Michael. Heb. *Mika'el*, literally, "who [is] like God?" He is here described as "one of the chief princes [Heb. *śarim*]." Later He is described as Israel's particular protector (ch.

12:1). His identity is not definitely stated here, but a comparison with other scriptures identifies Him as Christ. Jude 9 terms Him “the archangel.” According to 1 Thess. 4:16, the “voice of the archangel” is associated with the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Jesus. Christ declared that the dead will come forth from their graves when they hear the voice of the Son of man (John 5:28). It thus seems clear that Michael is none other than the Lord Jesus Himself (see EW 164; cf. DA 421).

The name Michael as the name of a heavenly being appears in the Bible only in apocalyptic passages (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7), in instances where Christ is in direct conflict with Satan. The name in Hebrew, signifying “who is like God?” is at once a question and a challenge. In view of the fact that Satan’s rebellion is essentially an attempt to install himself on the throne of God and “be like the most High” (Isa. 14:14), the name Michael is a most fitting one for Him who has undertaken to vindicate the character of God and disprove Satan’s claims.

I remained there. The LXX, followed by Theodotion, reads: “and I left him [Michael] there.” Such a reading has been adopted by several modern versions (Good-speed, Moffatt, RSV), doubtless because it did not seem clear why the angel should state that *he* was left with the kings of Persia when Michael had come to his aid. Compare with this reading the statement, “But Michael came to his help, and then he remained with the kings of Persia” (EGW, Supplementary Material, on Dan. 10:12, 13).

Some see another possible meaning in the Hebrew text as it stands. The struggle here described was essentially one between the angels of God and “the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus” (see PK 571, 572). With the entrance into the contest of Michael, the Son of God, the powers of heaven gained the victory, and the evil one was forced to retreat. The word translated “remained” is elsewhere used in the sense of “to remain over” when others have left or been taken away. Thus this verb is used of Jacob when he remained behind at the brook Jabbok (Gen. 32:24), and of those heathen whom Israel allowed to remain in the land (1 Kings 9:20, 21). It is also the word applied by Elijah to himself when he believed that everyone else had departed from the true worship of Jehovah: “I, even I only, am left” (1 Kings 19:10, 14). As used by the angel in the present passage, it could mean that with the coming of Michael, the evil angel was forced to leave, and God’s angel “was left remaining there beside the kings of Persia.” “The victory was finally gained; the forces of the enemy were held in check” (PK 572). Two translations that have suggested this same thought are those of Luther, “there I gained the victory with the kings in Persia,” and Knox, “and there, at Persia’s court, I was left master of the field.”

Kings of Persia. Two Hebrew manuscripts read, “kingdom of Persia.” The ancient versions read, “king of Persia.”

14. In the latter days. Heb. *be’acharith hayyamim*, “in the latter part [or end] of the days.” This is an expression frequently used in Biblical prophecy, pointing to the final part of whatever period of history the prophet has in view. Thus Jacob used the term “last days” in reference to the ultimate fortune of each of the twelve tribes in the land of Canaan (Gen. 49:1); Balaam applied the term to the first advent of Christ (Num. 24:14); Moses used it in a general sense of the distant future, when Israel would suffer tribulation (Deut. 4:30). The expression may, and often does, refer directly to the final events of history. See on Isa. 2:2.

For many days. As indicated by italics, there is no word for “many” in the Hebrew text. The word “days” here seems to have the same meaning as in the clause immediately preceding. The angel came to tell Daniel what would befall the saints throughout the centuries until Christ’s second coming. The emphasis of this final clause of the verse is not so much upon the length of time in prospect, as upon the fact that the Lord has still further truth to be conveyed to Daniel by a vision. Translated literally, this verse reads, “And I have come to cause you to understand that which will happen to your people in the latter part of the days, for still there is a vision for the days.”

16. *Like the similitude.* Gabriel veiled his brightness and appeared in human form (see SL 52).

The vision. Some commentators consider that Daniel here refers to the vision of chs. 8 and 9; others believe that it was the present revelation that afflicted the prophet so acutely. In view of the fact that the term “vision” in both vs. 1 and 14 seems to apply to the revelation in chs. 10–12, and also because Daniel’s statement here in ch. 10:16 is a logical continuation of his reaction (v. 15) to the angel’s declaration concerning “the vision” (v. 14), it seems reasonable to conclude that the prophet is here speaking of the vision of divine glory he was witnessing.

19. *Greatly beloved.* See on v. 11.

20. *With the prince.* The KJV may be understood as meaning either that the angel was to fight on the side of the prince of Persia, or that he was to fight against him. The Greek versions are likewise ambiguous. The preposition *meta*, “with,” which it employs, may imply either alliance, as in 1 John 1:3, or hostility, as in Rev. 2:16. The Hebrew of this passage, however, seems to give a clear indication of its meaning. The verb *lacham*, “to fight,” is used 28 times in the OT, followed, as here, by the preposition *‘im*, “with.” In these instances the context clearly indicates that the word is to be taken in the sense of “against” (see Deut. 20:4; 2 Kings 13:12; Jer. 41:12; Dan. 11:11). It seems certain, then, that the angel is here speaking of further conflict between himself and the “prince of Persia.” That this struggle did continue long after the time of Daniel’s vision is shown by Ezra 4:4–24. “The forces of the enemy were held in check all the days of Cyrus, and all the days of his son Cambyses, who reigned about seven and a half years” (PK 572).

Prince of Grecia. The Hebrew word here for “prince,” *śar*, is the same as that employed previously (see on v. 13). The angel had told Daniel that he was returning to continue the struggle with the powers of darkness that contended for control of the mind of the king of Persia. Then he looked further toward the future and indicated that when he finally would withdraw from the struggle, a revolution would ensue in world affairs. As long as God’s angel held at bay the evil forces seeking to dominate the Persian government, that empire stood. But when divine influence was withdrawn and the control of the leaders of the nation was left entirely to the powers of darkness, ruin for their empire quickly followed. Led by Alexander, the armies of Greece swept over the world and quickly extinguished the Persian Empire.

The truth stated by the angel in this verse throws light on the revelation that follows. The ensuing prophecy, a record of war upon war, assumes greater meaning when understood in the light of what the angel has here observed. While men struggle with one another for earthly power, behind the scenes, and hidden from human eyes, an even greater struggle is going on, of which the ebb and flow of earthly affairs is a reflection

(see Ed 173). As God's people are shown to be preserved throughout their troubled history—recorded prophetically by Daniel—so it is sure that in that greater struggle, the legions of light will have the victory over the powers of darkness.

21. Noted. Heb. *rasham*, “to inscribe,” “to write down.”

Scripture. Heb. *kethab*, literally, “a writing,” from the verb *kathab*, “to write.” The eternal plans and purposes of God are here represented as written down. Compare Ps 139:16; Acts 17:26; see on Dan. 4:17.

None that holdeth. This phrase may also be translated, “there is no one who exerts himself.” This cannot be taken to mean that all were oblivious of the struggle except the two heavenly beings mentioned here. “The controversy was one in which all heaven was interested” (PK 571). The probable meaning of the passage is that Christ and Gabriel assumed the special work of contending with the hosts of Satan who attempted to secure control of the empires of this earth.

Your prince. The fact that Michael is spoken of specifically as *your* (the Hebrew pronoun is plural) prince, places Him in sharp contrast with the “prince of Persia” (vs. 13, 20) and “the prince of Grecia” (v. 20). Michael was the champion on God's side of the great controversy.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 6T 406
- 2–6SL 49
- 7, 8 SL 50
- 8 DA 246; GC 471; MB 15; SC 29
- 11 GC 470
- 11–13 SL 51
- 13 PK 572
- 15, 16, 19 SL 51
- 21 DA 99

CHAPTER 11

1 *The overthrow of Persia by the king of Grecia. 5 Leagues and conflicts between the kings of the south and of the north. 30 The invasion and tyranny of the Romans.*

1. Also 1. This verse is a continuation of the angel's statement in ch. 10:21. The chapter division at this point is unfortunate. It gives the false impression that a new part of the book begins here, when the narrative is clearly continuous. Gabriel informs Daniel that Darius the Mede had been honored of Heaven (see PK 556). The vision was given in the third year of Cyrus (ch. 10:1). The angel is telling Daniel of an event that took place in the first year of Darius. In that year Darius the Mede had been honored of Heaven by a visit of the angel Gabriel “to confirm and to strengthen him” (PK 556).

2. The truth. The substance of the fourth great revelation in Daniel begins with this verse. All that precedes, from chs. 10:1 to 11:1, is background and introduction.

Three kings in Persia. Inasmuch as this vision was given to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus (ch. 10:1), the reference is doubtless to the three kings who followed Cyrus on the throne of Persia. These were: Cambyses (530–522 B.C.), the False Smerdis (Gaumata, whose Babylonian name was Bardiya; see Vol. III, pp. 348, 349), a usurper (522 B.C.), Darius I (522–486 B.C.).

The fourth. Commentators generally agree that the context points to Xerxes as “the fourth” king, but differ as to the enumeration of the various kings referred to in this verse. Some hold that “the fourth” king, thus designated, was actually the last of the three who were yet to “stand up.” They reckon Cyrus as the first of the four, and omit the False Smerdis, because he was not of the legitimate line and held the throne but a few months. Others omit Cyrus as the first of the four and include the False Smerdis as one of the three that were to follow him. Either way, Xerxes is “the fourth.” However, the second of the two views seems to represent more nearly the natural sense of the text.

Far richer. Xerxes is to be identified with the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther (see Vol. III, p. 459; see also on Esther 1:1). Of him it is recorded that he was particularly proud of “the riches of his glorious kingdom” (see Esther 1:4, 6, 7). Herodotus, who wrote at length of Xerxes, leaves a vivid, detailed account of his military might (vii. 20, 21, 40, 41, 61–80).

Stir up all. This passage may be translated in two different ways. It has usually been taken, as in the KJV, to mean that Xerxes would stir up the nations of the world against Greece. That this occurred is a well-known fact of history. By the time of Xerxes, the Greek peninsula remained the only important area in the eastern Mediterranean not under Persian domination. In 490 B.C., Darius the Great, predecessor of Xerxes, while attempting to subdue the Greeks, had been stopped at Marathon. With the accession of Xerxes, new plans on a lavish scale were laid for the conquest of Greece. Herodotus (vii. 61–80) enumerates over 40 nations that furnished troops for Xerxes’ army. Included in the vast army were soldiers from such widely separated lands as India, Ethiopia, Arabia, and Armenia. Even the Carthaginians seem to have been induced to join in the assault by attacking the Greek colony of Syracuse in Sicily.

By 480 B.C., the Greeks had the vast Persian Empire in arms against them. The Greek city-states, so often at war with one another, rallied to save their freedom. At first they suffered a series of setbacks. They were defeated at Thermopylae, and Athens was taken and partially burned by the Persians. Then the tide turned. The Greek navy, under Themistocles, found itself bottled up by superior Persian squadrons in the Bay of Salamis, on the coast of Attica not far from Athens. Soon after battle was joined it became evident that the Persian ships were in too tight formation for effective maneuvering. Under persistent Greek onslaughts many were sunk, and only a fraction of the navy escaped. With this Greek victory the Persian sea forces were eliminated from the struggle for Greece. The following year, 479 B.C., the Greeks decisively defeated the troops of Persia at Plataea and drove them forever from Greek soil.

The reading of this text as it appears in the KJV strikingly fits the fact that Xerxes did “stir up all against the realm of Grecia.” But it is possible to translate the somewhat obscure Hebrew of this passage differently. The problem is whether the Heb. *'eth*, here translated “against,” is to be understood as a preposition meaning “against,” or as a sign of the direct object of the verb. It is a fact that with certain other verbs denoting strife and warfare *'eth* is sometimes so used (see Gen. 14:2). But it is also a fact that the verb here translated “stir up” occurs 12 other times in the OT followed by *'eth*, in every one of which passages the context clearly indicates that *'eth* is to be taken as the sign of the

direct object. If *'eth* is so taken here, the passage reads: “He shall rouse all the realm of Greece.”

If this latter translation of the passage be preferred, the following interpretation is reasonable: From the long-range viewpoint of world history, the war between Persia and the Greeks constitutes one of the great historical epochs. The subsequent history of Europe, and of the world, might well have been much different had the decision at Salamis and Plataea been otherwise. Western civilization, then confined almost entirely to its homeland of Greece, succeeded in saving itself from being engulfed by Oriental despotism. The Greek states came to feel a sense of unity they had not previously known. The victory at Salamis proved to Athens the importance of sea power, and soon the city established itself as the head of a maritime empire. Viewed in this light, the last sentence of Dan. 11:2 forms an appropriate setting for ch. 11:3.

Grecia. Heb. *Yawan*, transliterated “Javan” in Gen. 10:2 (see comments there). The Greeks, or Ionians, were descendants of Javan. See on Dan. 2:39.

3. A mighty king. Heb. *melek gibbor*, “a valiant [warrior] king.” This clearly refers to Alexander the Great (336–323 B.C.).

Great dominion. Alexander’s dominion extended from Macedonia and Greece to northwestern India, from Egypt to the Jaxartes River east of the Caspian Sea—the largest empire the world had yet known (see on ch. 2:39; 7:6).

4. When he shall stand up. Alexander had scarcely reached the pinnacle of his power when he was cut down. In 323 B.C. this king who ruled from the Adriatic to the Indus suddenly fell ill, and 11 days later was dead (see on ch. 7:6).

Shall be broken. Alexander left no one in his immediate family who could be expected to hold together the territories he had won. Some of the leading generals tried, for a number of years, to hold the empire intact in the name of Alexander’s half brother and his posthumous son (both under regents), but in less than 25 years after Alexander’s death, a coalition of four generals had defeated Antigonus, the last aspirant to the control of the whole empire, and Alexander’s territory was divided into four kingdoms (later reduced to three). For this division, see on chs. 7:7; 8:22; see also maps on pp. 824, 825.

The four winds. Representing the four quarters of the compass. The same division is represented by the four heads of the leopard (see on ch. 7:6) and by the four horns of the goat (see on ch. 8:8, 22).

Not to his posterity. Alexander’s posthumous son was called king, but he was killed while still a child, in the struggle between the generals over the actual rule of the empire. Thus there was no descendant of Alexander who ruled.

5. The king of the south. From this point on through much of the chapter, the prophecy focuses on the two kingdoms emerging from Alexander’s empire with which God’s people, the Jews, had most to do. These were Syria, ruled by the Seleucids, and Egypt, ruled by the Ptolemies. From the geographical standpoint of Palestine, the former was north, and the latter, south. The original Greek translation, in fact, has “king of Egypt” for “king of the south”; also v. 8 points to Egypt as king of the south. A similar designation can be demonstrated from historical sources. One of the best known south Arabian inscriptions (Glaser No. 1155) refers to a war between Persia and Egypt and calls the respective kings the Lord of the North and the Lord of the South.

At the point in history referred to in this verse, the king of Egypt was Ptolemy I Soter (also called son of Lagus, 305–283 B.C.), one of Alexander’s best generals, who established the most enduring of all the Hellenistic monarchies.

One of his princes. This evidently applies to Seleucus I Nicator (305–281 B.C.), another of Alexander’s generals, who made himself ruler of most of the Asiatic part of the empire. That he should here be spoken of as “one of his [Ptolemy’s] princes” (Heb. *śarim*, “generals”; see on ch. 10:13) is probably to be understood in the light of his relations with Ptolemy. In 316 B.C., Seleucus was driven from Babylonia, which he had held since 321, by his rival Antigonus (see on ch. 7:6). Thereupon Seleucus placed himself under the command of Ptolemy, whom he assisted in defeating Demetrius, son of Antigonus, at Gaza in 312 B.C. Shortly after this, Seleucus succeeded in regaining his territories in Mesopotamia.

Strong above him. That is, Seleucus, who at one time could be considered one of Ptolemy’s “princes,” later became stronger than the Egyptian king. When Seleucus died in 281 B.C., his realm extended from the Hellespont to northern India. Arrian, the leading ancient historian for this period, states that Seleucus was “the greatest king of those who succeeded Alexander, and the most royal mind, and ruled over the greatest extent of territory, next to Alexander” (*Anabasis of Alexander* vii. 22).

6. End of years. The prophetic view next focuses on a crisis about 35 years after the death of Seleucus I.

Join themselves. To solidify peace between the two kingdoms after a long and costly war, Antiochus II Theos (261–246 B.C.), grandson of Seleucus I, married Berenice, a daughter of the Egyptian king, Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Antiochus also deposed his former wife and sister, Laodice, from her position of priority and debarred her children from succession to the throne.

King of the north. This term is used here for the first time in this prophecy. In the present context it refers to the Seleucids, whose territories were north of Palestine. The then “king of the north” was Seleucus II Callinicus (246–226 B.C.), son of Antiochus II and Laodice. On the expressions “king of the north” and “king of the south” see on v. 5 and on Isa. 41:25.

Shall not retain the power. After a son had been born to the new marriage, a reconciliation was effected between Antiochus and Laodice.

Neither shall he stand. Antiochus died suddenly, poisoned, according to popular opinion, by Laodice.

His arm. This is also the reading of the LXX. By a simple change in Hebrew vowels several ancient versions (Theodotion, Symmachus, Vulgate) read “his seed.” This would then refer to Antiochus’ son by Berenice, whom Laodice killed.

Given up. That is, Berenice, who along with her infant son was killed by the henchmen of Laodice.

They that brought her. Many of Berenice’s Egyptian ladies in waiting perished with her.

He that begat her. Heb. *yoledah*, correctly, according to Masoretic tradition, “her begetter.” This would of course apply to Berenice’s father, Ptolemy II, who had died shortly before in Egypt. It is not clear, however, why his death should be mentioned here, as it was entirely apart from the vengeance wreaked by Laodice. Several ancient

translations read *yaldah*, “maid,” doubtless having in mind Berenice’s entourage. A simple change in vowel pointing permits us to read “her child” (see RSV). This would, of course, refer to her son, who was killed by command of Laodice.

He that strengthened her. Probably Antiochus, Berenice’s husband.

7. A branch of her roots. Ptolemy III Euergetes, son of Ptolemy II and brother of Berenice, succeeded his father in 246 B.C., and invaded Syria in revenge for his sister’s murder.

Shall prevail. Ptolemy III seems to have been entirely victorious in his campaign against Seleucus II. He pressed his conquests inland at least as far as Mesopotamia—though he boasted of having penetrated to Bactria—and he established Egyptian sea power on the Mediterranean.

8. Egypt. This sole occurrence (until v. 42) of the actual name of the country of “the king of the south” establishes beyond doubt the identity of that land.

Their gods. The Decree of Canopus (239/238 B.C.) states in praise of Ptolemy III: “And the sacred images carried off from the land by the Persians, the king having made a foreign campaign, recovered into Egypt, and restored to the temples from which each of them had been carried away” (translation in J. P. Mahaffy, *A History of Egypt Under the Ptolemaic Dynasty* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1899], p. 113). Jerome (*Commentariorum in Daniele Liber*, ch. XI, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 25, col. 561) states that Ptolemy III brought back immense booty to Egypt.

He shall continue. Literally, “he shall stand,” that is, “he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north” (RSV). Although it is possible to translate the Hebrew as does the KJV, the fact that Ptolemy III died in 222 B.C., not two years after Seleucus III, would seem to make such a rendering not very meaningful. On the other hand, since in his latter years Ptolemy was not engaged in warfare of any importance, the alternative translation of the Hebrew seems more reasonable.

9. King of the south. The Hebrew here may be understood either as in the KJV, where “king of the south” is taken as the subject of the sentence (so also Vulgate, Syriac), or as in the LXX, Theodotion, ASV, and RSV, where “king of the south” is attached to “kingdom.” The latter versions support the reading, “He will come into the kingdom of the king of the south.” This translation seems preferable because it follows more naturally the Hebrew word order; it does not necessitate the insertion of the word “his” before kingdom, and it makes the verse more meaningful and less redundant. If this translation is accepted, the verse is doubtless to be interpreted as a reference to the fact that after Ptolemy III had returned to Egypt, Seleucus re-established his authority and marched against that country, hoping to retrieve his riches and regain his prestige.

Return into his own land. Seleucus was defeated and forced to return to Syria empty-handed (about 240 B.C.).

10. His sons. That is, the two sons of Seleucus II, Seleucus III Ceraunus Soter (226/225–223/222 B.C.), who was murdered after a short reign, and Antiochus III, the Great (223/222–188/187 B.C.).

Overflow, and pass through. In 219 B.C., Antiochus III initiated his campaign for southern Syria and Palestine by retaking Seleucia, the port of Antioch. Thereafter he set out upon a systematic campaign to conquer Palestine from his rival, Ptolemy IV Philopator (222–204 B.C.), during which he penetrated Transjordan.

11. Moved with choler. For the meaning of the expression see on ch. 8:7. In 217 B.C., Ptolemy IV met Antiochus at Raphia near the Palestine-Egyptian border.

He. The antecedents of the various pronouns in this verse become clearer when it is recognized that the passage is in the form of a Hebrew inverted parallelism in which the first and fourth elements, and the second and third, are in parallel. Thus in this verse the references are as follows: King of the south, king of the north, he (king of the north), his (king of the south). See Vol. III, p. 27.

A great multitude. Polybius, the leading ancient historian for this period, states that Antiochus' army numbered 62,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 102 elephants (*Histories* v. 79). Ptolemy's troops seem to have been of about the same number. Compare the reference to "ten thousands" in v. 12.

Given into his hand. The Battle of Raphia (217 B.C.), between Antiochus III and Ptolemy IV, resulted in a stinging defeat for the former, who is reported to have lost 10,000 infantry and 300 cavalry, plus 4,000 prisoners.

12. He. That is, Ptolemy IV.

Not be strengthened. Indolent and dissolute, Ptolemy failed to make the best of his victory at Raphia. In the meantime, during the years 212–204 B.C. Antiochus III turned his energies to recovering his eastern territories, and campaigned successfully as far as the border of India. Ptolemy IV's death (205? B.C.) was concealed for some time; then a son, aged four or five, succeeded him as Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180 B.C.).

13. Shall return. The accession of the child Ptolemy V presented Antiochus III with the opportunity of avenging himself upon the Egyptians. In 201 B.C. he invaded Palestine again.

After certain years. Literally, "at the end of times, years." The reference is probably to the period of some 16 years (217–201 B.C.) between the Battle of Raphia (see on v. 11) and Antiochus' second campaign against the south.

14. In those times. Beginning with this verse, interpretations of the remainder of the chapter differ widely. One group of commentators considers that vs. 14–45 continue to narrate the subsequent history of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings. Others hold the view that with v. 14 the next great world empire, Rome, enters the scene, and that vs. 14–35 sketch the course of that empire and of the Christian church.

Here or at some point later in the chapter many commentators find reference to Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), who ruled from 175 to 164/163 B.C., and to the national crisis that his policy of Hellenization brought upon the Jews. It is, of course, an undeniable historical fact that the attempt of Antiochus to force the Jews to give up their national religion and culture, and to adopt in its place the religion, culture, and language of the Greeks, is the most significant event in Jewish history during the entire intertestament period.

The threat posed by Antiochus Epiphanes confronted the Jews with a crisis comparable to the crises precipitated by Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Haman, and Titus. During his brief reign of 12 years Antiochus very nearly exterminated the religion and culture of the Jews. He stripped the sanctuary of all its treasures, plundered Jerusalem, left the city and its walls in ruins, slew thousands of Jews, and carried others into exile as slaves. A royal edict commanded them to abandon all rites of their own religion and to live as heathen. They were forced to erect pagan altars in every Judean town, to offer swine's flesh upon them, and to surrender every copy of their Scriptures to

be torn up and burned. Antiochus offered swine before a pagan idol set up in the Jewish Temple. His suspension of the Jewish sacrifices (either 168–165 or 167–164 B.C., by two methods of reckoning the Seleucid Era; see Vol. V. p. 25n) endangered the survival of the Jewish religion and the identity of the Jews as a people.

Eventually the Jews rose in revolt and drove the forces of Antiochus from Judea. They even succeeded in repelling an army sent by Antiochus for the specific purpose of exterminating them as a nation. Free once more from his oppressive hand, they restored the Temple, set up a new altar, and again offered sacrifice (1 Macc. 4:36–54). Entering into an alliance with Rome a few years later (161 B.C.), the Jews enjoyed nearly a century of comparative independence and prosperity under Roman protection, until Judea became a Roman ethnarchy in 63 B.C. Those who hold that Antiochus Epiphanes is mentioned in vs. 14, 15 see the “robbers” as those Jews who turned traitors to their own countrymen and assisted Antiochus in the execution of his cruel and blasphemous decrees and policies. For a detailed account of the bitter experiences of the Jews during this evil time, see 1 Macc. 1 and 2; Josephus *Antiquities* xii. 6, 7; *Wars* i. 1.

It is possible that the crisis occasioned by the policies of Antiochus Epiphanes is referred to in ch. 11, though there is considerable difference of opinion as to which part of the prophecy takes notice of him. To recognize that the activities of Antiochus Epiphanes are referred to in ch. 11 does not require that he be considered the subject of prophecy in chs. 7 or 8, any more than the mention of other Seleucid kings requires that they be considered the subject of prophecy in those chapters.

The robbers of thy people. Literally, “the sons of the breakers of thy people.” This expression may be understood subjectively, “the children of the violent among thy people” (ASV; cf. RSV). Thus understood, it probably applies to those among the Jews who saw in the international strife of their times an opportunity to further their own national interests, and were willing to go beyond the bounds of law to accomplish them. On the other hand, if understood objectively, the passage would mean, “those who act violently against thy people.” In this sense it has been taken as referring to the Romans, who eventually (63 B.C.) robbed the Jews of their independence, and later (in A.D. 70 and 135) destroyed the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. It was, in fact, during the reign of Antiochus III (see on vs. 10–13) that the Romans, interfering to protect the interests of their allies, Pergamum, Rhodes, Athens, and Egypt, first made themselves felt in the affairs of Syria and Egypt.

15. King of the north. Following the parenthetical remarks of v. 14, this verse continues the narrative begun in v. 13 concerning Antiochus’ second campaign in Palestine.

Mount. Heb. *solelah*, “a mound,” that is, “siegeworks.”

The most fenced cities. Heb. *‘ir mibšaroth*, literally, “a city of fortifications.” The reference is possibly to Gaza, which fell to Antiochus III in 201 B.C., after a considerable siege. Some commentators understand this passage to refer to Sidon, where Antiochus cornered an Egyptian army in this same war, and after a siege forced the Egyptians to surrender.

Arms. A symbol of strength (see vs. 22, 31).

16. Glorious land. That is, Palestine (see on ch. 8:9). According to the view that the Romans are introduced in v. 14, the conquest of Palestine here described is believed to be that of Pompey, who, in 63 B.C., intervened in a dispute between the two brothers,

Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, rivals to the throne of Judea. The defenders shut themselves behind the Temple defenses and for three months held out against the Romans. It was on this occasion that, according to Josephus (*Antiquities* xiv. 4. 4), Pompey lifted the veil and gazed upon the holy of holies, now empty, of course, for the ark had been hidden since the Exile (see on Jer. 37:10).

17. Upright ones. Heb. *yesharim*. The meaning of the Hebrew of this passage is obscure. The phrase reads literally, “and upright [ones] with him and he shall make.” One attempt at the meaning is that which appears in the KJV. Other versions take *yesharim* as equivalent to *mesharim*, “uprightnesses,” or “equities.” *Mesharim* is used in v. 6 of an equitable agreement between the king of the north and the king of the south. If *mesharim* is the correct reading there may be a possible reference to the fact that when Ptolemy XI Auletes died in 51 B.C., he placed his two children, Cleopatra and Ptolemy XII, under the guardianship of Rome.

The daughter of women. An unusual expression, possibly emphasizing the femininity of the woman referred to. Some have applied this expression to Cleopatra, the daughter of Ptolemy XI. She was placed under Roman guardianship in 51 B.C., and three years later became the mistress of Julius Caesar, who had invaded Egypt. After Julius Caesar was assassinated, Cleopatra turned her affections to Mark Antony, the rival of Caesar’s heir, Octavian. Octavian (later Augustus) defeated the combined forces of Cleopatra and Antony at Actium (31 B.C.). The next year Antony’s suicide (said by some to have been engineered by Cleopatra) opened the way for the new victor. Then Cleopatra, finding that she could not ingratiate herself with Octavian, committed suicide.

With Cleopatra the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt ended, and from 30 B.C. onward Egypt was a province of the Roman Empire. Cleopatra’s devious career fits well the specifications of the final clause of this verse, for Cleopatra did not stand for Caesar, but for her own political interests.

18. The isles. Heb. *‘yiyim*, “sea lands,” or “sea coasts.” War in other parts of the empire drew Julius Caesar from Egypt. The party of Pompey was soon defeated on the coastlands of Africa. In Syria and Asia Minor, Caesar was successful against Pharnaces, king of the Cimmerian Bosphorus.

A prince. Heb. *qashin*, a man in authority generally, as in Isa. 1:10, or more specifically a military commander, as in Joshua 10:24.

Without. The Hebrew of the last sentence of this verse is obscure. The following translation probably reflects the sense of this passage: “Indeed he shall turn his insolence back upon him” (RSV).

19. Stumble and fall. In 44 B.C., Julius Caesar was assassinated in Rome.

20. A raiser of taxes. Heb. *ma‘abir noges’*, literally, “one who causes an oppressor to pass through.” The participle *noges’*, from the verb *nagas*, “to oppress,” “to exact,” is used of Israel’s taskmasters in Egypt (Ex. 3:7) and of foreign oppressors (Isa. 9:4). The passage thus refers to a king who would send oppressors, or exactors, throughout his realm. Most commentators have understood the reference here to be to a taxgatherer, who to the average man in ancient times was the very embodiment of royal oppression. Luke 2:1 records that “it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar

Augustus, that all the world should be taxed [literally, “enrolled,” or “registered,” see on Luke 2:1].” Augustus, who succeeded Julius Caesar, is regarded as having established the Roman Empire, and after a reign of more than 40 years died peacefully in his bed in A.D. 14.

21. A vile person. That is, one lightly esteemed or despised. Augustus was succeeded by Tiberius (A.D. 14–37). Certain historians maintain that there was a deliberate attempt by Suetonius, Seneca, and Tacitus to blacken the character of Tiberius. Doubtless the picture was overdrawn. Nevertheless sufficient factual evidence remains to show that Tiberius was an eccentric, misunderstood, and unloved person.

They shall not give. Literally, “they did not give.” The Hebrew is better translated in the past tense. The reference is probably to the fact that Tiberius was not originally in line for succession to the throne, but became the son of Augustus by adoption, and was appointed heir to the empire only when he had reached middle life.

Peaceably. When Augustus died, Tiberius ascended the throne peacefully. He was only the stepson of his predecessor, and his accession to the imperial dignity was to a considerable extent due to the maneuverings of his mother, Livia.

22. Arms of a flood. “Arms” denotes power, and here, particularly, military power (see vs. 6, 15). The picture is evidently that of floodlike armies of soldiers (see ch. 9:26). Tiberius was eminently successful in leading several military campaigns, both in Germany and in the East on the frontiers of Armenia and Parthia.

Prince of the covenant. Identical with the Prince who confirms the covenant in ch. 9:25–27 (see ch. 8:11). That this was the Messiah, Jesus Christ, is clear from the prophecy of ch. 9. It was when Tiberius reigned (A.D. 14–37), and upon the order of his procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate, that Jesus was crucified, in the year A.D. 31.

23. After the league. Some commentators have suggested that here Daniel goes back in point of time to the league of assistance and friendship arranged between the Jews and the Romans in 161 B.C. (see Josephus *Antiquities* xii. 10. 6). This view assumes that the Hebrew expression translated “time” in v. 24 designates a prophetic “time” of 360 years (see on chs. 7:25; 11:24). Others, who hold to the chronological continuity of the prophetic narrative of ch. 11, find a reference here to the Roman policy of arranging what today would be called mutual assistance pacts, as, for example, the league of assistance and friendship with the Jews. In these treaties the Romans recognized the participants as “allies,” and the treaties were intended, presumably, to protect and promote mutual interests. Rome thus appeared in the role of friend and protector, only to “work deceitfully” by turning these agreements to her own advantage. She often imposed the burdens of conquest on her “allies,” but usually reserved the rewards of conquest for herself. Eventually these “allies” were absorbed into the Roman Empire.

24. For a time. Heb. *‘ad-‘eth*, “until a time.” This expression points to a [point of] time when the devices of the power here set forth were brought to an end. The word *‘eth*, “time,” is here probably not to be taken as a specific period of time, nor as a period of prophetic time. The word translated “times” in chs. 4:16; 7:25 is the Aramaic *‘iddanin*, and in ch. 12:7 the Heb. *mo‘adim*. *‘Ad-‘eth* seems to point to a time at an undetermined distance from the speaker. The evil power was to work until that God-ordained limit was reached (see ch. 11:27; cf. ch. 12:1).

Those who believe that prophetic time is here indicated see in the events narrated a reference to the period of time that the city of Rome would continue as the seat of the empire. The beginning date is considered to be 31 B.C., the year of the Battle of Actium, when Augustus waged a successful campaign against Mark Antony and Cleopatra. From 31 B.C., 360 years reach to A.D. 330, the year that the seat of the empire was moved from Rome to Constantinople.

Some see in the statement of this verse a prediction of Roman policy toward the conquered regions of the empire. History records that the plunder of conquest was distributed generously among the nobility and army commanders, and that it was common practice for even the ordinary soldier to receive a grant of land in conquered regions. “For a time”—a considerable period of time, in fact—no “strong holds” were able to withstand the determined pressure of the invincible legions of Rome.

25. *Stir up his power.* According to one exposition referred to previously (see on v. 24), this verse refers to the struggle between Augustus and Antony, which culminated in the Battle of Actium, and the defeat of Antony.

26. *They that feed.* Some see a reference in this phrase to royal favorites. From the days of the early Caesars, palace intrigue marks the rise and fall of the emperors of Rome. In later years, particularly, when one army officer after another succeeded to the throne of the Caesars, often each at the price of the head of his predecessor, the prediction that royal favorites would rise and “destroy” those who had befriended them and that “many” would “fall down slain” as a result, met a singularly apt fulfillment. In the ancient Orient those who ate food provided by another person were expected to remain loyal to him.

Overflow. The Syriac and the Vulgate read, “be washed,” or “be swept away” (see RSV). According to the exposition referred to above (v. 24), this verse describes the fate of Antony. When Cleopatra, frightened by the din of battle, withdrew from Actium, taking with her the 60 ships supplied by the Egyptian navy, Antony followed her and thereby conceded the victory to Augustus. Antony’s supporters went over to Augustus. Finally Antony committed suicide. According to those who emphasize the chronological continuity of the chapter (see on v. 23), the unstable political situation that plagued the empire between the reigns of Nero and Diocletian is here foretold.

27. *To do mischief.* Some see in this phrase a reference to the intrigues of Octavian (later Augustus) and Antony, both of them aspirants to universal control. Others see a reference to the struggle for power during the closing years of the reign of Diocletian (284–305) and during the years between the death of Diocletian and the time that Constantine the Great (306–337) succeeded in reuniting the empire (323 or 324).

Time appointed. Evil men and their machinations can last only as long as God suffers them to continue. The true philosophy of history is demonstrated throughout the book of Daniel. God “doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand” (ch. 4:35).

28. *Then shall he return.* Some expositors see in this prediction a reference to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70. Others, who hold to the chronological continuity of the prophetic narrative (see on v. 23), see a further description of the work of Constantine the Great.

Against the holy covenant. Christ is spoken of as “prince of the covenant” (v. 22), and it is He who was to “confirm the covenant with many for one week” (ch. 9:27). That

covenant is the plan of salvation, laid in eternity and confirmed by the historic act of Christ's death. It seems reasonable, then, to understand the power here referred to as one which at heart would be in opposition to that plan, and to its outworking in the souls and lives of men. Some see specific reference here to the invasion of Judea by the Romans and to the capture and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Others suggest that Constantine is the subject of the prediction. They observe that although Constantine professed conversion to the Christian faith, he was actually "against the holy covenant," his objective being to make use of Christianity as an instrument for uniting the empire and solidifying his control over it. He extended great favors to the church, but in return expected the church to support his political policies.

29. *It shall not be.* According to the interpretation that the career of Constantine is here delineated, the following is suggested: In spite of all Constantine's attempts to revive the former glory and power of the Roman Empire, his efforts at best met with only partial success.

The former. The passage may be translated, "it shall not be as the former [time], so the latter." Some believe the reference here is to the removal of the seat of the empire to Constantinople. This removal has been designated the signal of the downfall of the empire.

30. *Chittim.* The name Chittim, or Kittim, appears several times in the OT and later ancient Jewish writings, and is used in an interesting variety of ways. In Gen. 10:4 (see comments there; cf. 1 Chron. 1:7), Kittim is listed as a son of Javan and grandson of Japheth. The area occupied by Kittim's descendants was probably Cyprus. The principal Phoenician city of Cyprus, on the southeast coast, was known in Phoenician as *Kt*, in Greek as *Kition*, and in Latin as *Citium*. Balaam makes the statement in his prophecy (Num. 24:24) that "ships shall come from the coast [direction] of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur." Some have applied this prediction to the overthrow of Persia in Mesopotamia by Alexander the Great, who came from the coastlands of the Mediterranean (see on Num. 24:24). The "isles of Chittim" of Jer. 2:10 and Eze. 27:6 apparently refer also to the Mediterranean coastlands.

In Jewish literature outside the Bible the term appears in 1 Macc. 1:1 as descriptive of Macedonia. In addition, two of the Dead Sea scrolls contain the name. The forms *ktyy* 'shwr, "Kittim of Ashur" (Assyria), and *hktyym bmsrym*, "the Kittim in Egypt," appear in *The War Between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness*. The designations may, perhaps, refer to the Seleucids and the Ptolemies—the kings of the north and south. The geographical association of the term Kittim with the Mediterranean coastlands appears to be entirely lost, and Kittim becomes a generalized term for the enemies of the Jews. The *Habakkuk Commentary* among the Dead Sea scrolls also mentions the Kittim. The author of this work believed that the prophecies of Habakkuk referred to the troubles of the Jews in his own day (probably about the middle of the 1st century B.C.). He interpreted Hab. 1:6–11, where the prophet describes the Chaldeans, as referring to the Kittim, who were spoiling the Jews in his time. In the historical context of that work the term probably means the Romans. See Vol. I, pp. 31–34.

It is interesting in this connection to note that the LXX of Dan. 11:30, translated perhaps in the 2d century B.C., reads "Romans" rather than "Chittim." It seems clear,

therefore, that although the word *Kittim* originally referred to Cyprus and its inhabitants, it later was extended to include the Mediterranean coastlands to the west of Palestine, and still later it came to apply in general to foreign oppressors, whether they came from the south (Egypt), the north (Syria), or the west (Macedonia and Rome).

In point of time of authorship the book of Daniel lies much nearer to the references in Jeremiah and Ezekiel than to those of post-Biblical origin, which, indeed, probably arose as an extension of Biblical usage. The phraseology of the present verse, however, is clearly reminiscent of Num. 24:24, where the reference is to conquerors from the west (see comments there). Although students of the Bible do not all agree as to the exact historical reference of the “Chittim” in this verse, it seems clear that in interpreting this passage, two thoughts should be kept in mind: first, that in Daniel’s day the word referred, geographically, to the lands and peoples to the west; and second, that the emphasis may already have been in process of shifting from the geographical meaning of the word to the thought of the Chittim as invaders and destroyers from any quarter.

Some see in the “ships of Chittim” a reference to the barbarian hordes who invaded and broke up the Western Roman Empire.

Covenant. See on v. 28. Some see in the indignation here described a reference to Rome’s efforts to destroy the holy covenant by the suppression of the Holy Scriptures and the oppression of those who believed in them.

31. Stand. That is, “stand up.”

On his part. Heb. *mimmennu*, “from him.” This word modifies the subject rather than the verb of the clause: “Arms [forces] from him shall stand up”; that is, forces belonging to this power (see under “sanctuary of strength”) would rise up to carry out the work of profanation here described.

Pollute. Heb. *chahal*, “to profane.” Although the translation “pollute” has the implication of uncleanness, the Hebrew word indicates, rather, that something sacred has been made common. Thus the word is used of profaning a stone altar by using a tool upon it (Ex. 20:25), and of desecrating the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14). It also describes the deeds of those who profaned God’s name by sacrificing children to a heathen god (Lev. 20:3). For comment on this revolting practice, see on Lev. 18:21.

Sanctuary of strength. Literally, “the holy place, the refuge.” The words are in apposition. Some understand them to apply to the city of Rome, the seat of power in the ancient world, and thus “the sanctuary of strength.” Accordingly, the destructive attacks of barbarian powers are foretold.

Others believe that the heavenly sanctuary is the subject under consideration here. The Heb. *ma’oz*, translated “strength,” is from the verb *‘azaz*, “to be strong,” and is used repeatedly in this chapter (vs. 7, 10, 19, 38, 39), though not uniformly translated.

The earthly sanctuary in Jerusalem was surrounded by fortifications. The heavenly sanctuary, where Christ pleads His blood on behalf of sinners, is the pre-eminent place of refuge. Accordingly, this passage has been understood to describe the action of the great apostate power in Christian history that substituted a false sacrifice and ministration for the true sacrifice of Christ and His ministration as high priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

Daily. See on ch. 8:11.

Abomination that maketh desolate. The work of the papacy is here delineated. This is the first time this expression occurs in the book of Daniel, although similar words

appear in the clause “for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate” (ch. 9:27). In the LXX this clause is rendered, “upon the temple abomination of desolations.” Christ’s words concerning the “abomination of desolation” (Matt. 24:15) may be considered as applying particularly to this earlier reference in Dan. 9:27 rather than to Dan. 11:31. Speaking of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70, Jesus identified the Roman armies surrounding the city as “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (Matt. 24:15; cf. Luke 21:20).

In view of the fact that Dan. 9:27 is part of the angel’s explanation of Dan. 8:11–13, the natural conclusion is that Dan. 8:11–13 is a blended prophecy (similar to that of Matt. 24; see DA 628) that applies both to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans and to the work of the papacy in the Christian centuries.

It should further be noted that Jesus’ explicit reference to the work of the “abomination of desolation” as yet future in His time makes it certain that Antiochus Epiphanes did *not* meet the specifications of the prophecy. See further on Dan. 8:25.

32. Covenant. See on v. 28.

He. That is, the papacy.

Flatteries. Heb. *chalaqqoth*, “smooth, slippery things” (see ch. 8:25). It has ever been Satan’s method to make his way appear easier than God’s. Throughout Christian history God’s own people have clung to the road described by Christ when He said, “Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life” (Matt. 7:14).

Do exploits. Heb. *‘asah*, “to do,” “to make,” “take action” (RSV). As in v. 28, “exploits” is a supplied word. This passage doubtless refers to those who, within lands under the jurisdiction of Rome and beyond, resisted the papal encroachments and maintained a bright faith as, for example, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and others.

The true church is distinguished not only in that God’s people react against sin by withstanding temptation, but even more in that they carry forward a positive program of action for Him. Christianity cannot be passive. Every child of God has a commission to perform.

33. Shall instruct many. Christ’s commission, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Matt. 28:19) is as imperative in times of persecution as it is in periods of peace, and often proves more effective at such times.

Fall. During the centuries in which God’s true people were most bitterly persecuted, those fearless enough to stand forth and bear witness to their convictions were made the particular objects of destruction.

Many days. The Hebrew text, the LXX, and Theodotion’s version read simply “days.” There are some Hebrew manuscripts, however, that do contain the word *rabbim*, “many.” The period referred to is apparently the same as the 1260 days of Dan. 7:25; 12:7 and Rev. 12:6, 14; 13:5; the time during which the power of apostasy most blatantly blasphemed God, exercised its usurped authority, and persecuted those who dissented from its authority (see on Dan. 7:25).

34. A little help. Although in His wisdom God has not always seen fit to deliver His saints from death, every martyr for Him has had the opportunity to know that his life was “hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3).

Throughout the bitter days of apostasy and persecution described in Dan. 11:33, God repeatedly sent His sorely pressed people “a little help” in the person of leaders who spoke forth in the darkness, calling for a return to the principles of Scripture. Among such were the Waldensian ministers of the 12th century onward, John Wyclif of England in the 14th century, and John Huss and Jerome of Prague in the 15th century. In the 16th century the tremendous upheaval in the political, economic, social, and religious life of Europe, which in its spiritual phase made possible the Protestant Reformation, opened the way for many more voices to be added to the faithful ones heard during previous generations.

35. *Make them white.* At times God allows His children to suffer, even to the point of death, that their characters may be purified and made fit for heaven. Even Christ “learned ... obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8). Compare Rev. 6:11.

Time of the end. Heb. *‘eth qeş*. This expression occurs elsewhere in chs. 8:17; 11:40; 12:4, 9. In the context of ch. 11:35 *‘eth qeş* seems to be definitely related to the 1260 years, as marking the end of that period. When these Scripture passages are compared with DA 234; 5T 9, 10; GC 356, it becomes clear that the year A.D. 1798 marked the beginning of the “time of the end.”

A time appointed. Heb. *mo‘ed*, from the verb *ya‘ad*, “to appoint,” *Mo‘ed*, a common Hebrew word, was applied to Israel’s appointed meetings with God (Ex. 23:15; see on Lev. 23:2). The word was used both for the time of meeting (Hosea 12:9) and for the place of meeting (Ps. 74:8). In Dan. 11:35 the idea of time is intended. Even more important is the fact that it is an *appointed* time. “The time of the end” is an appointed time in God’s program of events.

36. *The king.* Among Adventist expositors two views concerning the interpretation of vs. 36–39 have generally been held. One interpretation identifies the power described here as revolutionary France in the year 1789 and following. The other interpretation holds that the power delineated here is the same apostate, persecuting power described in the preceding verses.

Those who understand “the king” to refer to the power of France during the Revolution emphasize that it must be a new power that is introduced here, because it appears immediately after the mention of the “time of the end” and because, presumably, it must fulfill certain specifications that have not been stated concerning the power depicted in the previous verses, particularly that its willfulness will be manifested in the direction of atheism. It is, of course, a fact of common historical knowledge that the guiding philosophy of the French Revolution was not only anticlerical but atheistic as well, and that this philosophy had far-reaching effects on 19th- and even 20th-century thought. Furthermore, that revolution and its aftermath mark the close of the 1260-year period of prophecy.

Those who believe that “the king” of this verse is the power depicted in v. 32, point to the fact that in the Hebrew the definite article precedes the word “king.” This would seem to imply that the ruler here brought to view has already been referred to. They contend that the reference to “the time of the end” in v. 35 may point forward and does not necessarily indicate that vs. 36–39 are to be put exclusively *after* the beginning of that time in 1798 (see on v. 35), especially inasmuch as not until v. 40 is an event specifically said to occur “at the time of the end.” They understand the description of the power in vs.

36–39 to indicate, not atheism, but rather an attempt to supplant all other religious power. Those who hold this view also call attention to the parallelism of chs. 2; 7; 8–9. They conclude that ch. 11 may be expected to carry out the same parallel, and that it is concerned with the culmination of the same apostate power depicted in the other prophecies of the book of Daniel.

Magnify himself. According to the view that France is here described, these words are understood to describe the excesses of atheism indulged in by some of the more radical leaders of the Revolution. As an example of this, on Nov. 26, 1793, the Commune, or governing body, of the city of Paris took official action abolishing all religion in the capital of France. Although this action was reversed by the National Assembly a few days later, it nevertheless illustrates the influence to which atheism attained during that period.

Those who understand these verses to apply to the great apostate power of Christian history, consider this passage parallel to Dan. 8:11, 25; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:2, 6; 18:7. They see the prediction of the present verse fulfilled in the papal claim that the pope is the vicegerent of Christ on earth, in the power claimed for the priesthood, and in “the power of the keys”—the claimed authority to open and close heaven to men.

Speak marvellous things. According to the view that France is the subject under consideration, this clause refers to the boastful words of the revolutionists who abolished all religion and set up the worship of the Goddess of Reason. When later the worship of the Supreme Being was introduced the reactionaries made clear that he was not to be identified with the God of the Christian religion.

On the fulfillment of this passage according to the view that the papacy is here under consideration see on ch. 7:11, 25; cf. 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:5, 6.

37. Desire of women. Those who believe that France is the power here described see a fulfillment of this passage in the declaration of the revolutionists that marriage was a mere civil contract, that without further formality it could be broken at will by the parties concerned.

Those who believe that the papacy is here described see a possible reference to the regard paid to celibacy and virginity by that power.

Nor regard any god. According to one position the words apply to the atheistic power in revolutionary France that attempted to abolish all religion in that country (see on v. 36). According to the other position the words are to be understood in a comparative sense; that is, the power here portrayed is not atheistic, but considers itself to be a spokesman for God and does not regard God as He should be regarded. It blasphemously seeks to put itself in His place (see 2 Thess. 2:4).

38. In his estate. Heb. *‘al-kanno*, “in his place,” that is, in place of the true God.

God of forces. Heb. *‘eloah ma‘uzzim*. Commentators have varied considerably in their interpretation of this expression. Some regard it as a proper name, “the god Mauzzim.” However, a god by such a name is unknown elsewhere. Inasmuch as *ma‘uzzim* seems quite plainly to be the plural of the Heb. *ma‘oz*, “refuge,” “fortress,” which appears repeatedly in this chapter (vs. 7, 10, 19, 31), it seems best to understand these words as meaning “the god of fortresses,” or “god of refuges.”

Some interpret this verse as referring to the worship of Reason instituted at Paris in 1793. Realizing the necessity of religion if France was to remain strong to accomplish her

aim of spreading the Revolution throughout Europe, some of the leaders in Paris attempted to establish a new religion, with reason personified as a goddess. This was later followed by the worship of a “Supreme Being”—nature deified—who might appropriately be considered as a “god of forces.”

Others understand a reference here to the prayers directed to the saints and to the Virgin Mary; still others, to Rome’s alliance with civil powers and her studied efforts to get the nations to do her bidding.

Pleasant things. Heb. *chamudoth*, “desirable, precious things.” A similar word from the same root is employed in Isa. 44:9 to describe the costly ornaments with which the heathen decked their images. Some see the fulfillment of this passage in the priceless gifts that have been bestowed upon images of the Virgin and of the saints (see Rev. 17:4; 18:16).

39. Do in the most strong holds. This passage is obscure and has been translated in various ways. The verb here translated “do,” *‘aśah*, meaning “to make,” “to do,” “to work,” is without a direct object, but it is followed by two prepositions, *le*, “to,” or “for,” and *‘im*, “with.” In Gen. 30:30; 1 Sam. 14:6; and Eze. 29:20 *‘aśah*, without an object and followed by *le*, as here, has the sense, “to work for [someone].” *‘Aśah* followed by *‘im* occurs in 1 Sam. 14:45, with the meaning “work with.” In view of these usages it would seem reasonable to translate the present passage, “And he will work for the strongest refuges (*ma‘uzzim*) with a foreign god.” Inasmuch as the *‘eloah ma‘uzzim* (v. 38) appears to be parallel with “a god whom his fathers knew not,” it is to be expected that here they are to be closely identified with the “foreign god.”

Some see in this passage a reference to the strategic place atheistic and rationalistic ideas occupied among the leaders of France during the Revolution. Others see here a description of the support the Roman Church has given to the worship of “protectors”—the saints—and to festivals held in various cities around the world in honor of the sacrifice of the mass and the virgin Mary.

Divide the land. Some understand these words to describe the breakup of the great estates of the nobility of France, and to the selling of these estates by the government to small landholders. It has been estimated that two thirds of the landed property of France was confiscated by the government during the Revolution.

Others believe these words met their fulfillment in papal domination over temporal rulers and in frequent receipts of revenue from them. It has been suggested that the division of the New World between Spain and Portugal by Pope Alexander VI, in 1493, may be considered one example of the fulfillment of this passage.

For a historical review of Adventist interpretation of Dan 11:36–39 and an evaluation of present positions see *Ministry*, March, 1954, pp. 22–27.

40. Time of the end. Here the king of the north and the king of the south are mentioned as such for the first time since vs. 14, 15. Seventh-day Adventist expositors who find the career of France during the Revolution the subject of vs. 36–39 hold that Turkey is the king of the north of vs. 40–45. Those who apply vs. 36–39 to the papacy here find a prophetic picture of the climax of its career. Some of the latter group identify the papacy as the king of the north, while others distinguish between the two. A few

consider that vs. 40–45 met their fulfillment in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922. See on v. 45.

45. Come to his end. Compare similar predictions in the parallel prophecies of ch. 2 vs. (34, 35, 44, 45), ch. 7 vs. (11, 26), chs. 8 and 9 chs. (8:19, 25; 9:27), and elsewhere in Scripture Isa 14:6; 47:11–15; Jer. 50:32; 1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 18:6–8, 19, 21).

In general, Seventh-day Adventists have held that the fulfillment of v. 45 is yet future. The prudent words spoken by the Advent pioneer James White in 1877 regarding caution in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy are still good counsel today:

“In exposition of unfulfilled prophecy, where the history is not written, the student should put forth his propositions with not too much positiveness, lest he find himself straying in the field of fancy.

“There are those who think more of future truth than of present truth. They see but little light in the path in which they walk, but think they see great light ahead of them.

“Positions taken upon the Eastern question are based upon prophecies which have not yet met their fulfillment. Here we should tread lightly, and take positions carefully, lest we be found removing the landmarks fully established in the advent movement. It may be said that there is a general agreement upon this subject, and that all eyes are turned toward the war now in progress between Turkey and Russia as the fulfillment of that portion of prophecy which will give great confirmation of faith in the soon loud cry and close of our message. But what will be the result of this positiveness in unfulfilled prophecies should things not come out as very confidently expected, is an anxious question”

(James White, *RH* Nov. 29, 1877).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–459T 14

1 PK 556

35, 40 GC 356

CHAPTER 12

8

1 *Michael shall deliver Israel from their troubles. 5 Daniel is informed of the times.*

1. At that time. Heb. *ba‘eth hahi’*, “at that time,” or “in that time.” Some hold that these words point back to the phrase *be‘eth qes*, “at [or in] the time of the end” (ch. 11:40); that is, that the events to be narrated take place within that general period of time. However, the context warrants the conclusion that “that time” refers to the time of the disappearance of the power described at the end of ch. 11. It should be noted that the words “at that time” do not specify whether the events here foretold are to occur simultaneously with those of ch. 11:45, or whether they immediately precede or follow. The important point is that the events of the last verse of ch. 11 and those of the first of ch. 12 are closely related in point of time.

Michael. See on ch. 10:13. Here the divine Champion in the great controversy takes action to deliver His people.

Stand up. Heb. *‘amad*. The same word is used later in the verse to describe Michael’s standing “for the children of thy people.” The sense seems clearly to be that Christ arises to deliver His people (see GC 613, 633, 641, 642, 657).

Prince. Heb. *‘sar* (see on ch. 10:13).

⁸Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Da 10:13). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Standeth for. Heb. *hab'omed 'al*, “who stands over,” that is, in protection.

Time of trouble. When Christ’s mediation ceases and God’s Spirit is withdrawn from men, then all the pent-up powers of darkness descend with indescribable fury upon the world. There will be a scene of strife such as no pen can picture (see GC 613, 614).

Delivered. What a consolation that in this great controversy the outcome is not in doubt! Compare chs. 7:18, 22, 27; 10:14.

The book. That is, the book of life (see on Dan. 7:10; cf. Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 20:15; 21:27; 22:19).

2. Shall awake. A special resurrection precedes Christ’s second advent. “All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message” will arise at that time. In addition, those who beheld with mockery Christ’s crucifixion, and those who have most violently opposed the people of God, will be brought forth from their graves to see the fulfillment of the divine promise and the triumph of truth (see GC 637; Rev. 1:7).

Contempt. Heb. *der'on*, a word that appears in the Bible elsewhere only in Isa. 66:24.

It is related to the Arabic *dara'*, “to repel,” and has the sense of “abhorrence.” After witnessing the awfulness of sin during the millenniums of the great controversy, the inhabitants of the universe will regard sin with a feeling of strong revulsion. When the controversy is finished and God’s name is fully vindicated, a mighty abhorrence of sin and of all it has contaminated will sweep through the universe. It is this abhorrence that makes possible the assurance that sin will never again mar the harmony of the universe.

3. They that be wise. Heb. *hammaškilim*, from the verb *šakal*, “to be prudent.” The form may be understood either in a simple sense, as “those who are prudent,” “those who have insight,” or in a causative sense, “those who cause to have insight,” that is, “those who teach.” The man who truly has insight into the things of God realizes that, by virtue of that very fact, these things must be shared with others. Divine wisdom leads him to be a teacher of that wisdom to others.

Maškilim appears in ch. 11:33, where it is translated, “they that understand.” There they are shown as persecuted for their faithful endeavors; here they are rewarded with eternal glory. Compare v. 10.

4. Shut up the words. Compare the similar admonition in regard to Daniel’s earlier vision (ch. 8:26). This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. It applied, rather, to that part of Daniel’s prophecy that dealt with the last days (AA 585; DA 234). Not until that time was reached could a message, based on the fulfillment of these prophecies, be proclaimed (see GC 356). Compare the “little book open” in the hand of the angel of Rev. 10:1, 2 (see TM 115).

Run to and fro. Heb. *shuṭ*, a word occurring 13 times in the OT (Num. 11:8; 2 Sam. 24:2, 8; 2 Chron. 16:9; Job 1:7; 2:2; Jer. 5:1; 49:3; Eze. 27:8, 26; Dan. 12:4; Amos 8:12; Zech. 4:10). In most of these occurrences *shuṭ* describes a physical roving about.

Many interpreters believe that *shuṭ* is here used in a metaphorical sense and describes an earnest search throughout the pages of the Bible, with the result that there is an increase of knowledge concerning the prophecies of the book of Daniel (see under “knowledge shall be increased”; cf. DA 234; GC 356). Others believe that Daniel here

predicts a multiplication of travel and of means of travel such as have marked the last century.

The LXX exhibits a vastly different reading: “And thou, Daniel, cover up the commands and seal the book until the time of the end, until many will rave violently [literally, “go mad”] and the earth shall be filled with unrighteousness.” Theodotion’s version is nearer the Masoretic: “And thou, Daniel, close the words and seal the book to the time of the end; until many are taught, and knowledge is increased.”

Knowledge shall be increased. This clause may be considered the logical sequel to the immediately preceding clause: When the sealed book is opened at the time of the end, knowledge concerning the truths contained in these prophecies will be increased (see PK 547; cf. Rev. 10:1, 2). At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century a new interest in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation was awakened in widely separated places of earth. The study of these prophecies led to a widespread belief that the second advent of Christ was near. Numerous expositors in England, Joseph Wolff in the Middle East, Manuel Lacunza in South America, and William Miller in the United States, together with a host of other students of the prophecies, declared, on the basis of their study of the prophecies of Daniel, that the second advent was at hand. Today, this conviction has become the driving force of a worldwide movement.

This prophecy has also been interpreted as pointing to the stupendous advances of science and general knowledge in the last century and a half, advances that have made possible a widespread proclamation of the message of these prophecies.

5. I Daniel looked. Verses 5–13 form an epilogue to the vision of chs. 10–12 and may be considered, in a less definite sense, as an epilogue to the entire book.

Other two. Two additional heavenly beings appear here, joining the one who has been narrating the prophecy to Daniel. Some have suggested that they are possibly the two “saints” mentioned in ch. 8:13.

The river. That is, the Hiddekel, or Tigris (see on ch. 10:4).

6. Man clothed in linen. Daniel had seen this heavenly Being at the beginning of his vision (see ch. 10:5, 6).

The casualness with which Daniel refers to “the river” (v. 5) and “the man clothed in linen,” without making fuller identification, strongly suggests that ch. 10, where these both are introduced, is a part of this same vision.

How long? The angel here states the unexpressed question that must have been uppermost in Daniel’s mind. The prophet’s great burden was for the speedy and complete restoration of the Jews (see on Dan. 10:2). True, the decree of Cyrus had already been passed (Ezra 1:1; cf. Dan. 10:1), but much remained to be done. After the long, intricate recital of future events under which the people of God were to suffer, the prophet was naturally anxious to know how long “these wonders” would continue, and when the promise that “thy people shall be delivered” (Dan. 12:1), would be fulfilled. Daniel did not fully understand the relationship of what he had seen to the future. A portion of the prophecy was sealed and would be understood only at “the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4).

7. His right hand. See Deut. 32:40. Lifting both hands would indicate that the greatest solemnity and assurance were attached to the declaration.

Him that liveth. No greater oath could be sworn (see Heb. 6:13; cf. Rev. 10:5, 6).

A time, times, and an half. That is, the 1260-year period, A.D. 538–1798, which is first introduced in ch. 7:25 (see comments there). There the Aramaic *‘iddan*, “a specified

time,” or “a definite time,” is used; here its Hebrew counterpart, *mo‘ed*, appears, a word that emphasizes the fact that the heavenly Being speaks of an “appointed time” (see on ch. 11:35). God has sworn to meet His appointment.

8. *I understood not.* In the introductory verse of this vision (ch. 10:1) Daniel states that he “had understanding of the vision.” In the course of the vision the prophet was assured by the angel that he had come to make him “understand” (ch. 10:14). The revelation that followed was given in literal language. Now after the time element of 1260 years had been introduced in answer to the question, “How long?” Daniel confessed, “I understood not.” The part of this vision that Daniel did not understand, then, would seem to be the time element. He was praying for the speedy restoration of the Temple (see on ch. 10:2—an immediate problem. He seemed unable to fit the time element into his conception of an early deliverance for his people.

End. Though he had already been commanded to seal this part of the revelation (v. 4), the aged prophet still desired to know more of its meaning.

9. *Go thy way.* God’s venerable seer and servant was not permitted to know the full import of the revelations he recorded. The complete significance would be appreciated only by those who should see the historical fulfillment of these prophecies, for only then could the world be given a message based upon the fact that they had been fulfilled (see GC 356).

10. *Be purified, and made white.* Or, “purify themselves and make themselves white,” or, “show themselves to be pure and white.” While man cannot of his own power purify himself, he can show forth by his life the fact that God has purified him. This forms a contrast with the following clause, “but the wicked shall do wickedly.”

Shall understand. A guarantee that those in the last days who study devoutly and intelligently will understand God’s message for their time.

11. *The daily sacrifice.* See on ch. 8:11.

Taken away. The clause may be translated literally, “and from the time of the taking away of the continual, even in order to set up the abomination.” This would indicate that the “taking away” was done with the direct intent of setting up the abomination. The focus may be upon the preparatory “taking away” rather than upon the subsequent “setting up.”

The words of this passage are so clearly similar to those of ch. 8:11, 12, and ch. 11:31 (see comments there) that they must all refer to the same event.

A thousand two hundred and ninety days. This time period is mentioned in close connection with the “time, times, and an half” (v. 7), or 1260 days, and the events to occur at the end of these periods are presumably identical. It seems reasonable to understand, then, that these two periods cover approximately the same historical era. The excess of the 1290 over the 1260 is probably to be understood in view of the fact that the beginning of the 1290 days is focused on the taking away of the “daily sacrifice,” preparatory to the establishment of the “abomination.”

Those who hold to the view that the “daily” represents “paganism” (see on ch. 8:11) subtract 1290 from 1798 and arrive at the date 508. They see in the events surrounding this date, such as the conversion of Clovis, the king of the Franks, to the Catholic faith, and in the victory over the Goths, an important stage in the establishment of the supremacy of the Catholic Church in the West.

Those who hold to the view that the “daily” refers to the continual priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and to the true worship of Christ in the gospel age (see on ch. 8:11) find no satisfactory explanation of this text. They believe that this is one of those Scripture passages on which future study will shed further light.

12. *Blessed is he.* The time periods of vs. 7, 11, 12 reach down to the “time of the end” referred to in vs. 4, 9. “Happy” (see on Matt. 5:3), says the angel, is the person who witnesses the dramatic events of the closing scenes of earth’s history. Then, those portions of Daniel that were to be sealed would be understood (see on Dan. 12:4), and soon “the saints of the most High” would “take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever” (ch. 7:18).

Waiteth. This implies that the following prophetic period may be expected to continue beyond the end of the 1290 days. If the 1290 and the 1335 days begin at the same time, the latter period reaches to the year 1843, a significant date in relationship to the great advent awakening in America, generally known as the Millerite movement.

13. *Stand in thy lot.* The fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecies would reach many years into the future. Daniel was to rest in the grave, but ““at the end of the days”—in the closing period of this world’s history—he [Daniel] would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place” (PK 547; see also EGW, Supplementary Material, on this verse).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 COL 179; Ev 241; EW 33, 34, 36, 43, 56, 67, 71, 85, 282; GC 481, 613, 622, 635, 649; LS 101, 117; MM 38; PP 201, 256; 1T 125, 203, 206, 353; 4T 251; 5T 152, 212; 8T 50; 9T 17, 210, 244
- 2 GC 637, 644; EW 285
- 3 CE 70; CM 155; ChS 109; EW 61; FE 199; GW 145; LS 254; ML 247, 325; 1T 112, 512; 5T 449, 488, 621; 6T 451; 7T 26, 249
- 4 AA 585; DA 234; FE 409; GC 356, 360; PK 547
- 8–13TM 115
- 9, 10 PK 547
- 10 COL 155; DA 234; EW 140; 2T 184; 4T 527; 5T 452
- 13 PK 547

⁹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Da 12:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.