EDIFIED EDITION

Daniel

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

12	357	Old	27
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Edified Edition (EDE): a modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, in everyday British English. www.edifiededition.com

Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Daniel 1 tells how, after Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim, young men of Judah's royal and noble families were taken to Babylon to be trained for three years in the language and literature of the Chaldeans and to eat from the king's table. Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, renamed Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the king's food and wine, and God gave him favour with the chief official. After a ten-day test on vegetables and water the four looked healthier than all the others. God gave them knowledge and understanding, and Daniel could understand visions and dreams; the king found them ten times better than all the magicians in his kingdom.

[1]It was in the third year that Jehoiakim reigned over Judah that Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon's king, marched on Jerusalem and laid siege to it.[1]

[2]The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the house of God. He carried them off to the land of Shinar, to the temple of his god, and put the articles in the treasury of his god.[2]

[3]Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief official, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility,

[4]young men without any physical defect, handsome, skilled in all wisdom, well informed, quick to understand and fit to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.

[5]The king assigned them a daily allowance of food from his table and of the wine he drank. They were to be trained for three years, and at the end of that time they were to enter the king's service.

6 Among them were some from Judah: Daniel,
Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

7 The chief official renamed them: Daniel he called
Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach,
Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called
Abednego.[3]

8 But Daniel resolved in his heart not to defile
himself with the king's food or with the wine he
drank, and he asked the chief official for
permission not to defile himself.

9 Now God had caused the chief official to show
Daniel kindness and compassion,

10 but the chief official said to Daniel, "I am afraid
of my lord the king, who has assigned your food
and drink. Why should he see you looking worse
than the other young men of your age? You would
put my head at risk with the king."

11 Then Daniel said to the guard whom the chief
official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah,
Mishael and Azariah,

12 "Please test your servants for ten days. Let us
be given vegetables to eat and water to drink.

13 Then compare our appearance with that of the
young men who eat the king's food, and deal with
your servants according to what you see."

14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten
days.

15 At the end of the ten days they looked healthier
and better nourished than all the young men who
ate the king's food.

16 So the guard took away their food and the wine
they were to drink and gave them vegetables.

17 To these four young men God gave knowledge
and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel
could understand visions and dreams of every
kind.

18 At the end of the time the king had set for
bringing them in, the chief official presented them
to Nebuchadnezzar.

19 The king talked with them, and none was found
among them all to equal Daniel, Hananiah,
Mishael and Azariah. So they entered the king's
service.

20 In every matter of wisdom and understanding
about which the king questioned them, he found
them ten times better than all the magicians and
enchanters in his whole kingdom.

21 And Daniel remained there until the first year of
King Cyrus.[4]

1 605 BC, counting Jehoiakim's reign in the Babylonian way; compare Jeremiah 25:1 ('the fourth year').

2 Shinar is an ancient name for Babylonia (Genesis 11:2).

3 The Hebrew names honour the God of Israel ('God is my judge', 'the LORD is gracious', 'Who is what God is?', 'the LORD helps'); the new names probably honoured Babylonian gods.

4 539 BC, when Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon; compare 10:1.

Chapter 2

Daniel 2 tells how Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream and demanded that his wise men tell him both the dream and its meaning, threatening them with death. When they said no one on earth could do it, he ordered all the wise men of Babylon to be killed, including Daniel and his friends. Daniel asked for time, and he and his friends prayed; the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision, and he praised the God of heaven. Before the king, Daniel described a great statue with a head of gold, chest of silver, belly of bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron mixed with clay, struck by a stone cut out without hands, which became a mountain filling the earth. The four parts are successive kingdoms, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, and the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. The king honoured Daniel and made him ruler over the province of Babylon.

1 In the second year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar
had dreams; his spirit was troubled and he could
not sleep.

2 So the king summoned the magicians,
enchanters, sorcerers and Chaldeans to tell him
what he had dreamed. They came in and stood
before the king.[1]

3 The king told them, "I have dreamed a dream,
and my mind is troubled; I must know what it
was."

4 Then the Chaldeans answered the king in
Aramaic, "O king, live for ever! Tell your servants
the dream, and we will give the interpretation."[2]

5 The king replied to the Chaldeans, “My decision
is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream
and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from
limb and your houses turned into rubbish heaps.
6 But if you tell me the dream and its
interpretation, you will receive from me gifts,
rewards and great honour. So tell me the dream
and its interpretation.”
7 Once more they replied, “Let the king tell his
servants the dream, and we will give its
interpretation.”
8 The king answered, “I know for certain that you
are trying to gain time, because you see that my
decision is firm.
9 If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one
sentence for you. You have agreed among
yourselves to speak lying and corrupt words
before me until the situation changes. So tell me
the dream, and I will know that you can give me
its interpretation.”
10 The Chaldeans answered the king, “There is no
one on earth who can do what the king asks! No
king, however great and powerful, has ever asked
such a thing of any magician, enchanter or
Chaldean.
11 What the king asks is too difficult. No one can
reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do
not live among mortals.”
12 This made the king so furious and enraged that
he ordered all the wise men of Babylon to be
destroyed.
13 So the decree went out that the wise men were
to be killed, and men were sent to look for Daniel
and his friends to kill them.
14 When Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard,
went out to kill the wise men of Babylon, Daniel
spoke to him with wisdom and tact.
15 He asked the king’s officer, “Why is the decree
from the king so harsh?” Then Arioch explained
the matter to Daniel.
16 So Daniel went in and asked the king for time,
so that he might give the king the interpretation.
17 Then Daniel went home and explained the
matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and
Azariah.
18 He urged them to plead for mercy from the God
of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and
his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of
the wise men of Babylon.
19 That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a
vision, and Daniel praised the God of heaven.
20 Daniel said, “Blessed be the name of God for
ever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to
Him.
21 He alters the times and the seasons; He deposes
kings and raises up kings. He grants wisdom to
the wise and insight to those who understand.
22 He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows
what lies in the darkness, and light dwells with
Him.
23 I thank and praise You, God of my fathers, for
You have given me wisdom and power. Now You
have made known to me what we asked of You;
You have made known to us the king’s matter.”
24 So Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had
appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon, and
said to him, “Do not destroy the wise men of
Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will give the
king the interpretation.”
25 Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king
and said, “I have found a man among the exiles
from Judah who can tell the king the
interpretation.”
26 The king said to Daniel (who was called
Belteshazzar), “Can you really tell me what I saw
in my dream and what it means?”
27 Daniel answered the king, “No wise men,
enchanters, magicians or diviners can reveal to
the king the mystery he has asked about.
28 But there is a God in heaven who reveals
mysteries, and He has made known to King
Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the latter
days. Your dream and the visions that passed
through your mind as you lay in bed were these:
29 As you lay there, O king, your thoughts turned
to what would happen in the future, and the
Revealer of mysteries has made known to you
what is going to happen.
30 As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me,
not because I have more wisdom than anyone else
alive, but so that the king may know the
interpretation and understand the thoughts of
your mind.
31 You looked, O king, and there before you stood a
great statue, huge and dazzling, awesome in
appearance.
32 The head of the statue was of fine gold, its chest
and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

33 its legs of iron, and its feet partly of iron and
partly of baked clay.
34 As you watched, a stone was cut out, but not by
human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of
iron and clay and smashed them.
35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver
and the gold were all smashed together and
became like chaff on a threshing floor in summer.
The wind swept them away without leaving a
trace. But the stone that struck the statue became
a great mountain and filled the whole earth.
36 This was the dream, and now we will tell the
king its interpretation.
37 O king, you are king over kings, for the God of
heaven has given you dominion, strength, power
and honour.
38 Wherever people live, He has given into your
hand the beasts of the field and the birds of the
sky, and has made you ruler over them all. You are
that head of gold.
39 After you another kingdom will arise, inferior to
yours. Then a third kingdom, one of bronze, will
rule over the whole earth.
40 Finally there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as
iron; for as iron breaks and smashes everything,
so it will crush and break all the others.
41 As you saw that the feet and toes were partly of
potter's clay and partly of iron, so it will be a
divided kingdom. Yet it will have some of the
strength of iron in it, just as you saw iron mixed
with clay.
42 As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so
this kingdom will be partly strong and partly
brittle.
43 And as you saw iron mixed with clay, so they will
mix with one another by marriage, but they will
not hold together, just as iron does not mix with
clay.
44 In the time of those kings the God of heaven will
establish a kingdom that will never be destroyed,
and its rule will never pass to another people. It
will shatter all these kingdoms and put an end to
them, but it will itself last for ever.[3]
45 This is what the stone means, the stone you saw
broken off from the mountain without any human
hand, which crushed the iron and bronze, the clay,
the silver and the gold. A great God has shown the
king what is to come. The dream is sure, and its
meaning can be trusted."
46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, paid
homage to Daniel and ordered that an offering
and incense be presented to him.
47 The king told Daniel, "Surely your God is God
over all gods and Lord over all kings, and He
reveals secrets, since you were able to reveal this
one."
48 Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him
many great gifts. He made him ruler over the
whole province of Babylon and chief over all its
wise men.
49 At Daniel's request the king appointed
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego over the affairs
of the province of Babylon, while Daniel remained
at the king's court.

1 'Chaldeans' here means a class of astrologers and wise men, as well as the people of Babylonia.
2 From here to the end of chapter 7 the book is written in Aramaic, the common language of the Babylonian and Persian empires.
3 Compare 7:14, 27 and Luke 1:33.

Chapter 3

> *Daniel 3 tells how Nebuchadnezzar set up a gold statue sixty cubits high on the plain of Dura and summoned all his officials to its dedication, decreeing that whenever the music sounded everyone must fall down and worship it or be thrown into a blazing furnace. Some Chaldeans accused Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego of refusing. Before the furious king they answered that their God was able to rescue them, but even if He did not, they would never serve his gods or worship the statue. The furnace was heated seven times hotter, the soldiers who threw them in were killed by the flames, yet the king saw four men walking unbound in the fire, the fourth like a son of the gods. The three came out unharmed, without even the smell of fire on them. Nebuchadnezzar praised their God, decreed that no one should speak against Him and promoted them.*

1 King Nebuchadnezzar made a statue of gold,
sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up
on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.[1]

2 Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to
assemble the satraps, prefects, governors,
advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all
the officials of the provinces to come to the
dedication of the statue he had set up.

3 So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers,
treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the
provincial officials assembled for the dedication of
the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and
they stood before it.

4 Then the herald proclaimed loudly, “Peoples,
nations and people of every language, this is what
you are commanded to do:

5 As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, pipe,
lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe and every kind of
music, you must fall down and worship the gold
statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.[2]

6 Whoever does not fall down and worship will at
once be thrown into a blazing furnace.”

7 So as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of
the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp and every kind of
music, all the peoples, nations and people of every
language fell down and worshipped the gold
statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8 At this time some Chaldeans came forward and
denounced the Jews.

9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live
for ever!

10 You, O king, have issued a decree that everyone
who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre,
trigon, harp, bagpipe and every kind of music
must fall down and worship the gold statue,

11 and that whoever does not fall down and
worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.

12 But some Jews you have put in charge of the
province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach and
Abednego, take no notice of you, O king. They will
not serve your gods, and they refuse to bow down
to the gold statue you have erected.”

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar, furious with rage,
ordered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be
brought. So these men were brought before the
king,

14 and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true,
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do
not serve my gods or worship the gold statue I
have set up?

15 Now if you are ready, when you hear the sound
of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe and
every kind of music, to fall down and worship the
statue I have made, very well. But if you do not
worship it, you will at once be thrown into a
blazing furnace. And what god is there who can
rescue you from my hands?”

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered the
king, “Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to give
you an answer on this matter.

17 If it is so, our God whom we serve is able to save
us from the blazing furnace, and He will rescue us
from your hand, O king.[3]

18 And even if He should not, we want you to know,
O king, that we will never serve your gods or bow
before the statue of gold you have raised.”

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and
his face was twisted with rage against Shadrach,
Meshach and Abednego. He ordered the furnace
to be heated seven times hotter than usual,

20 and he commanded some of the strongest men
in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and
Abednego and throw them into the blazing
furnace.

21 So these men were tied up, still wearing their
cloaks, trousers, turbans and other garments, and
thrown into the blazing furnace.

22 Because the king’s command was so urgent and
the furnace so extremely hot, the flames killed the
men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and
Abednego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and
Abednego, fell, still tied up, into the blazing
furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leapt to his feet in
astonishment and said to his advisers, “Did we not
throw three men, tied up, into the fire?”
“Certainly, O king,” they replied.

25 He said, “Look! I see four men unbound, walking
about in the middle of the fire, and they are
unharmed. And the fourth looks like a son of the
gods!”[4]

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the door of the
blazing furnace and called out, “Shadrach,
Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most
High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach,
Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire,

27 and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal
advisers gathered round them. They saw that the
fire had no power over their bodies: not a hair of
their heads was singed, their cloaks were not
scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who sent His angel to save His servants! They put their trust in Him, set aside the king’s order and were ready to give up their lives rather than serve or bow to any god but their own.

29 Therefore I decree that any people, nation or language that says anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will be torn limb from limb and their houses turned into rubbish heaps, for there is no other god who can rescue in this way.”

30 After this the king gave Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego higher positions in the province of Babylon.

1 About 27 metres (90 feet) high and 2.7 metres (9 feet) wide.

2 Several of these instruments cannot be identified with certainty; three of the names are Greek words.

3 Or ‘If our God whom we serve is able to save us, He will rescue us’.

4 In 3:28 the king calls him an angel.

Chapter 4

Daniel 4 is a proclamation by Nebuchadnezzar praising the Most High. He tells of a dream that his wise men could not interpret: a great tree reaching to the heavens, sheltering all creatures, which a holy watcher ordered to be cut down, leaving the stump bound with iron and bronze, while the one it stood for lived like an animal for seven periods of time, until he knew that the Most High rules over human kingdoms. Daniel, troubled, explained that the tree was the king himself, and urged him to break off his sins by doing righteousness and showing mercy to the oppressed. A year later, as the king boasted over the great Babylon he had built, a voice from heaven declared the kingdom taken from him, and he was driven out to eat grass like an ox. At the end of that time he lifted his eyes to heaven, his reason returned, and he praised the King of heaven, whose ways are just and who can humble the proud.

1 King Nebuchadnezzar, to the peoples, nations and people of every language who live in all the earth: May you prosper greatly![1]

2 It is my pleasure to tell you about the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.

3 How vast are His signs, how powerful His wonders! His kingdom will last for ever, and His rule from one generation to the next.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living at peace in my home, prospering in my palace.

5 I had a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me.

6 So I issued a decree that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to make known to me the interpretation of the dream.

7 When the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans and diviners came in, I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.

8 In the end Daniel came before me. He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him. I told him my dream:

9 “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you. Tell me the visions I saw in my dream and their interpretation.

10 These are the visions I saw as I lay in bed: I looked, and there was a tree in the middle of the earth, and its height was great.

11 The tree grew large and strong, its top reached the sky, and it could be seen to the ends of the whole earth.

12 Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the sky nested in its branches, and every creature was fed from it.

13 In the visions I saw as I lay in bed, I looked, and there before me was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.[2]

14 He called out loudly: ‘Cut down the tree and lop off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches.

15 But leave the stump with its roots in the ground, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the animals among the plants of the earth.

16 Let his mind be changed from that of a man, and let him be given the mind of an animal, until seven periods of time pass over him.[3]

17 The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, so that the living may know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of mankind, gives it to whomever He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men.'

18 This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me its interpretation, for none of the wise men of my kingdom can make known to me the interpretation, but you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your enemies!

20 The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, whose top reached the sky and which could be seen by all the earth,

21 whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, on which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field lived and in whose branches the birds of the sky nested,

22 that tree is you, O king! You have become great and mighty; your greatness has risen to the heavens, and your rule extends to the farthest parts of the earth.

23 As for what the king saw, a watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, 'Fell the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with iron and bronze in the grass of the field; let him be soaked with heaven's dew and share the lot of the wild animals until seven periods of time have passed over him,'

24 this is what it means, O king; this is the Most High's decree, and it has come upon my lord the king:

25 You will be driven away from people and will live with the beasts of the field. You will be made to eat grass like an ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you acknowledge that the Most High rules over the kingdom of mankind and gives it to whomever He wishes.

26 And as the command was given to leave the stump of the tree with its roots, your kingdom will be restored to you as soon as you acknowledge that Heaven rules.[4]

27 Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you: break off your sins by doing what is right, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed. Perhaps your prosperity will then continue."

28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.

29 Twelve months later, as he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon,

30 the king said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as a royal residence by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

31 The words were still in the king's mouth when a voice came down from heaven: "To you it is declared, King Nebuchadnezzar: the kingdom has departed from you!

32 You will be driven away from people and will live with the beasts of the field. You will be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you acknowledge that the Most High rules over the kingdom of mankind and gives it to whomever He wishes."

33 At that very hour the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven away from people and ate grass like an ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

34 At the end of that time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me. Then I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives for ever, for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

35 All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing; He does as He pleases with the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?"

36 At that time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom my majesty and splendour were restored to me. My advisers and nobles sought me out; I was restored to my kingdom, and still greater majesty was added to me.

37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honour the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways are just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.

1 In Aramaic 4:1–3 are numbered 3:31–33, and 4:4–37 are numbered 4:1–34.

2 A ‘watcher’ is an angel, one who keeps watch.

3 Probably seven years.

4 ‘Heaven’ is a reverent way of referring to God, as in ‘the kingdom of heaven’.

Chapter 5

Daniel 5 tells of King Belshazzar’s great feast for a thousand nobles, at which he ordered the gold and silver vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem to be brought so that his guests could drink from them while praising gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, and the terrified king promised great honour to anyone who could read it. When his wise men failed, the queen mother reminded him of Daniel. Daniel refused the gifts but recalled how God had humbled Nebuchadnezzar, and rebuked Belshazzar for exalting himself against the Lord of heaven. He read the writing, “Mene, mene, tekel, parsin”: God has numbered the days of the kingdom, the king has been weighed and found wanting, and his kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. That night Belshazzar was killed, and Darius the Mede received the kingdom.

1 King Belshazzar held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine in their presence.[1]

2 Under the influence of the wine, Belshazzar gave orders to bring in the gold and silver vessels that his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them.[2]

3 So they brought in the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them.

4 As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

5 At that very moment the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, opposite the lampstand, and the king watched the hand as it wrote.

6 Then the king’s face turned pale and his thoughts terrified him; his hips gave way and his knees knocked together.

7 The king called out loudly for the enchanters, Chaldeans and diviners to be brought in, and he said to the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple, have a chain of gold placed round his neck and be made the third ruler in the kingdom.”[3]

8 All the royal wise men came in, but none of them could read the inscription or explain to the king what it meant.

9 So King Belshazzar became even more terrified, his face grew paler still, and his nobles were bewildered.

10 The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banqueting hall. “O king, live for ever!” she said. “Do not be alarmed or look so pale![4]

11 There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In your father’s time he was found to have insight, understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans and diviners. Your father the king did this

12 because this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, was found to have an excellent spirit, knowledge and understanding, and the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve hard problems. Now let Daniel be called, and he will tell you what the writing means.”

13 So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, “Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah?

14 I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, understanding and outstanding wisdom.

15 The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me its meaning, but they could not explain it.

16 Now I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve hard problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple, have a chain of gold placed round your neck and be made the third ruler in the kingdom.”

17 Then Daniel answered the king, “Keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone

else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.

18 O king, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness, glory and majesty.

19 Because of the greatness He gave him, all the peoples, nations and people of every language trembled and feared before him. Whom he wished, he killed; whom he wished, he kept alive; whom he wished, he raised up; and whom he wished, he brought low.

20 But when his heart became proud and his spirit hardened with arrogance, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory.

21 He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like an ox, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God rules over the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whomever He wishes.

22 Yet you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, even though you knew all of this.

23 Instead you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven. You had the vessels of His house brought before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honour the God who holds in His hand your very breath and all your ways.

24 So He sent the hand that wrote this inscription.

25 This is the inscription that was written: Mene, mene, tekel, parsin.

26 This is what these words mean. Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

27 Tekel: you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

28 Peres: your kingdom is split apart and handed over to the Medes and the Persians."[5]

29 Then at Belshazzar's command Daniel was clothed in purple, a chain of gold was placed round his neck, and it was proclaimed that he was the third ruler in the kingdom.

30 That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed,

31 and Darius the Mede received the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.[6]

1 Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, and ruled the city on his father's behalf. Babylon fell to the Persians in October 539 BC.

2 'Father' can mean 'ancestor' or 'predecessor'.

3 Third after Nabonidus and Belshazzar himself.

4 Probably the queen mother, who would remember Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

5 The words are names of weights: mina, shekel and half-minas. Daniel reads them as verbs: 'numbered', 'weighed' and 'divided'. 'Peres' (the singular of 'parsin') also sounds like 'Persia'.

6 In Aramaic this verse is 6:1, and 6:1–28 are numbered 6:2–29. Darius the Mede is not otherwise known by this name; he may be Cyrus himself or his governor Gubaru.

Chapter 6

Daniel 6 tells how Darius appointed 120 satraps under three administrators, of whom Daniel was one, and planned to set him over the whole kingdom. The other officials, finding no fault in him except in the law of his God, persuaded the king to sign an irrevocable decree that anyone praying to any god or man except the king for thirty days would be thrown into the lions' den. Daniel continued to pray three times a day at his open window towards Jerusalem, and they reported him. The distressed king could not rescue him, and Daniel was thrown to the lions, the king saying, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" At dawn the king hurried to the den, and Daniel answered that God had sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths. Daniel's accusers were thrown in instead, and Darius decreed that all should fear the God of Daniel, the living God whose kingdom will never be destroyed.

1 It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom,

2 and over them three administrators, of whom Daniel was one, so that the satraps would be accountable to them and the king would suffer no loss.

3 Now Daniel distinguished himself above the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional

spirit, and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

4 Then the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for a charge against Daniel in his conduct of the kingdom, but they could find no grounds or corruption, because he was faithful; no negligence or corruption was found in him.

5 Then these men said, “We will never find any grounds for a charge against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”

6 So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said to him, “King Darius, live for ever!

7 All the administrators of the kingdom, the prefects, the satraps, the advisers and the governors have agreed that the king should issue a decree and enforce an edict that anyone who prays to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, will be thrown into the lions’ den.

8 Now, O king, issue the edict and sign the document so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.”

9 So King Darius signed the written edict.

10 When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went home to his upstairs room, where the windows opened towards Jerusalem. Three times a day he knelt down and prayed, giving thanks before his God, just as he had always done.[1]

11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and pleading with his God.

12 So they went to the king and spoke about the royal edict: “Did you not sign an edict that anyone who prays to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, will be thrown into the lions’ den?” The king answered, “The decree stands, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.”

13 Then they said to the king, “Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the edict you have signed. He still prays three times a day.”

14 When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed and was determined to rescue Daniel. Until sunset he made every effort to save him.

15 Then these men went as a group to the king and said to him, “Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king establishes can be changed.”

16 So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!”

17 A stone was fetched and laid across the opening of the den, and the king sealed it with his signet and with those of his nobles, so that Daniel’s situation could not be altered.

18 Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no entertainment was brought before him, and sleep fled from him.

19 At first light, as soon as it was dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den.

20 When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?”

21 Daniel answered the king, “O king, live for ever!

22 My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found innocent in His sight. Nor have I done any wrong before you, O king.”[2]

23 The king was overjoyed and ordered Daniel to be lifted out of the den. So Daniel was lifted out of the den, and no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

24 At the king’s command, the men who had accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the lions’ den, together with their children and wives. Before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

25 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and people of every language who live in all the earth: “May you prosper greatly!

26 I issue a decree that in every part of my royal dominion people must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, enduring for ever; His kingdom will not be destroyed, and His dominion will have no end.

27 He rescues and He saves; He performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”

28 So Daniel prospered in the reigns of Darius and of Cyrus the Persian.[3]

1 Compare 1 Kings 8:46–49 and Psalm 55:17.

2 Compare Hebrews 11:33.

3 Or ‘the reign of Darius, that is, the reign of Cyrus the Persian’.

Chapter 7

Daniel 7 records Daniel’s vision in the first year of Belshazzar. Four great beasts come up out of the sea, stirred by the four winds: a lion with eagle’s wings, a bear with three ribs in its mouth, a leopard with four wings and four heads, and a fourth beast, terrifying and exceedingly strong, with iron teeth and ten horns, among which a little horn with eyes and a boastful mouth uproots three others. Thrones are set, the Ancient of Days takes His seat, with clothing white as snow and a throne of fire, and the court sits in judgement; the fourth beast is slain. Then one like a son of man comes with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days and is given dominion, glory and an everlasting kingdom that all peoples will serve. An attendant explains that the beasts are four kings, that the little horn will make war on the holy ones for a time, times and half a time, but that the kingdom will be given to the people of the holy ones of the Most High.

1 In Belshazzar’s first year as king of Babylon, Daniel dreamed a dream, with visions passing through his mind as he lay on his bed. He then wrote the dream down, setting out its main points.

2 Daniel said: In my vision at night I looked, and there before me the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.

3 Four great beasts came up out of the sea, each different from the others.[1]

4 The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. As I watched, its wings were torn off, and it was lifted from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it.

5 And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, “Get up and devour much flesh!”

6 After this I looked, and there before me was another beast, like a leopard. On its back it had four wings like those of a bird, and the beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.

7 After this, in my vision at night, I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and crushed its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the beasts before it, and it had ten horns.

8 While I was considering the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

9 As I looked on, thrones were put in place and the Ancient of Days sat down. His robe was as white as snow, the hair on His head like clean wool. Fiery flames were His throne, and its wheels were ablaze.[2]

10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before Him. Thousands upon thousands served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

11 Then I kept watching because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. As I watched, the beast was slain and its body destroyed and given over to the burning fire.

12 As for the rest of the beasts, their authority was taken away, but they were granted a prolonging of life for a season and a time.

13 In my vision at night I looked, and there before me, coming with the clouds of heaven, was one like a son of man. He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.[3]

14 He was given authority, glory and kingship, so that all peoples, nations and people of every language should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom one that will never be destroyed.

15 As for me, Daniel, my spirit was troubled within me, and the visions that passed through my mind alarmed me.

16 I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:

17 “These four great beasts are four kings who will arise from the earth.

18 But the holy ones of the Most High will receive
the kingdom and possess it for ever, yes, for ever
and ever."

19 Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the
fourth beast, which was different from all the
others, exceedingly terrifying, with its iron teeth
and bronze claws, which devoured and crushed its
victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left.

20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its
head and the other horn that came up, before
which three fell, the horn that had eyes and a
mouth that spoke boastfully and that looked
greater than the others.

21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against
the holy ones and prevailing against them,

22 until the Ancient of Days came and judgement
was given in favour of the holy ones of the Most
High, and the time arrived for the holy ones to
possess the kingdom.

23 This is what he said: "The fourth beast will be a
fourth kingdom on earth. It will be different from
all the other kingdoms; it will devour the whole
earth, trampling it down and crushing it.

24 The ten horns are ten kings who will arise from
this kingdom. After them another will arise,
different from the earlier ones; he will put down
three kings.

25 He will speak words against the Most High and
wear down the holy ones of the Most High, and he
will intend to change the set times and the law.
The holy ones will be given into his hand for a
time, times and half a time.[4]

26 But the court will sit in judgement, and his
authority will be taken away, consumed and
destroyed for ever.

27 Then the sovereignty, authority and greatness of
the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be
given to the people of the holy ones of the Most
High. Their kingdom will be an everlasting
kingdom, and all rulers will serve and obey them."

28 This is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel,
my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my face
turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself.[5]

1 The sea stands for the restless nations, and the beasts for successive empires; compare chapter 2.

2 Compare Revelation 1:14 and 20:4.

3 'One like a son of man' means one in human form. Jesus took this verse as speaking of Himself (Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62); compare Revelation 1:13.

4 Probably three and a half years; compare 12:7 and Revelation 12:14.

5 The Aramaic section that began at 2:4 ends here; the rest of the book is in Hebrew.

Chapter 8

Daniel 8 records a vision in the third year of Belshazzar, at Susa by the Ulai Canal. Daniel sees a ram with two horns, one longer than the other, charging west, north and south, until a male goat with one prominent horn comes from the west, shatters the ram's horns and tramples it. The goat's horn is broken at the height of its power, and four horns grow in its place; from one of them comes a little horn that grows towards the south, the east and the beautiful land, reaches up to the host of heaven, sets itself against the Prince of the host, takes away the daily sacrifice and throws down the sanctuary for 2,300 evenings and mornings. Gabriel explains that the ram is the kings of Media and Persia, the goat is the king of Greece, and the little horn is a fierce king who will destroy many but will be broken without human hand. Daniel is exhausted and ill, and appalled by the vision.

1 In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, a
vision appeared to me, Daniel, after the one that
had appeared to me earlier.[1]

2 In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in
the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside
the Ulai Canal.

3 I looked up, and there before me was a ram with
two horns standing beside the canal. Both horns
were long, but one was longer than the other, and
the longer one grew up later.

4 I watched the ram charging westwards,
northwards and southwards. No beast could stand
against it, and no one could rescue from its power.
It did as it pleased and became great.

5 As I was thinking about this, a male goat came
from the west, crossing the whole earth without
touching the ground. The goat had a prominent
horn between its eyes.

6 It came towards the two-horned ram I had seen
standing beside the canal and charged at it in

furious rage.

7 I saw it attack the ram furiously, striking it and shattering its two horns. The ram had no strength to stand against it; the goat knocked it to the ground and trampled on it, and no one could rescue the ram from its power.

8 The male goat became very great, but at the height of its power its large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up towards the four winds of heaven.[2]

9 Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew exceedingly great towards the south and the east and towards the Beautiful Land.

10 It grew until it reached the host of heaven, and it threw some of the host and some of the stars down to the earth and trampled on them.

11 It even set itself up against the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down.[3]

12 Because of transgression, the host and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It cast truth to the ground and succeeded in whatever it did.

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, “How long will the vision last, concerning the daily sacrifice, the transgression that causes desolation, and the giving over of the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?”

14 He said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be restored.”[4]

15 While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man.

16 And I heard a man’s voice from the Ulai calling, “Gabriel, explain the vision to this man.”[5]

17 As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell on my face. “Son of man,” he said to me, “understand that the vision concerns the time of the end.”

18 While he was speaking to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and set me on my feet.

19 He said, “I am going to make known to you what will happen later in the time of wrath, for the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.

20 The ram you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia.

21 The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king.

22 The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will arise from his nation, but not with his power.

23 In the latter part of their reign, when transgressors have reached their full measure, a king of fierce countenance, skilled in intrigue, will arise.

24 He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty and the people of the holy ones.

25 By his cunning he will make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his heart he will exalt himself. He will destroy many who feel secure. He will even stand against the Prince of princes, yet he will be broken, but not by human hand.

26 The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been told is true. But seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.”

27 I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king’s business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

1 From here to the end of the book the text is again in Hebrew.

2 Alexander the Great died in 323 BC, and his empire was divided among four of his generals; see 8:21–22.

3 Fulfilled in part by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who defiled the temple in 167 BC.

4 Probably 1,150 days, counting the evening and morning sacrifices separately.

5 The first time an angel is named in the Bible; compare 9:21 and Luke 1:19, 26.

Chapter 9

Daniel 9 is set in the first year of Darius the Mede. Daniel understands from the book of Jeremiah that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years, and he turns to the Lord God in prayer and fasting, in sackcloth and ashes. He confesses that Israel has sinned and rebelled, refused to listen to the prophets and brought on itself the curse written in the law of Moses, while the Lord is righteous; he pleads, not on the ground of their righteousness but of God's great mercy, that He will turn away His anger from Jerusalem and act for His own sake. While he is still praying, Gabriel arrives at the time of the evening offering and explains that seventy weeks are decreed to finish transgression, atone for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness; an Anointed One will be cut off, the city and sanctuary destroyed, and an abomination that causes desolation set up until the decreed end.

1 In the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus, a
Mede by descent, who was made king over the
kingdom of the Chaldeans,

2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood
from the scriptures the number of years that,
according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah
the prophet, must pass before the desolation of
Jerusalem came to an end: seventy years.[1]

3 So I turned my face to the Lord God to seek Him
by prayer and pleading, with fasting, sackcloth
and ashes.

4 I prayed to the LORD my God and made
confession: "Ah, Lord, the great and awesome
God, who keeps His covenant and His loyal
kindness with those who love Him and keep His
commandments,

5 we have sinned and done wrong; we have acted
wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from Your
commandments and Your judgements.

6 We have paid no heed to Your servants the
prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings
and princes and ancestors, and to the whole
population of the land.

7 Righteousness belongs to You, Lord, but to us
open shame, as at this day, to the people of Judah,
the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, near
and far, in all the countries where You have driven
them because of the unfaithfulness they have
shown towards You.

8 LORD, open shame belongs to us, to our kings,
our leaders and our fathers, because we have
sinned against You.

9 Mercy and forgiveness belong to the Lord our
God, though we have rebelled against Him.

10 We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our
God by walking in His laws, which He set before
us through His servants the prophets.

11 The whole of Israel has broken Your law and
turned aside, unwilling to listen to Your voice. And
so the curse sworn in the law of Moses, God's
servant, has been poured out on us, for we have
sinned against Him.[2]

12 He has carried out the words He spoke against
us and against the rulers who ruled us, by
bringing on us great disaster; under the whole
heaven nothing has ever been done like what has
been done to Jerusalem.

13 Just as it is written in the law of Moses, all this
disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought
the favour of the LORD our God by turning from
our iniquities and giving heed to Your truth.

14 So the LORD kept watch over the disaster and
brought it upon us, for the LORD our God is
righteous in everything He does, yet we have not
obeyed His voice.

15 Now, Lord our God, who brought Your people
out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and
made a name for Yourself that endures to this day,
we have sinned; we have done wickedly.

16 Lord, in keeping with all Your saving acts, let
Your anger and fury turn away from Jerusalem,
Your own city, Your holy mountain. Our sins and
our forefathers' wrongs have made Jerusalem and
Your people a laughing-stock to everyone around
us.

17 Now, our God, hear the prayer and pleas of Your
servant. For Your own sake, Lord, make Your face
shine on Your desolate sanctuary.

18 Incline Your ear, my God, and hear; open Your
eyes and see our desolation and the city that
bears Your name. We do not present our pleas
before You because of our righteousness, but
because of Your great mercy.

19 Lord, hear! Lord, forgive! Lord, listen and act!
For Your own sake, my God, do not delay, because
Your city and Your people bear Your name."

20 While I was still speaking and praying,
confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel

and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for His holy mountain,

21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening offering.

22 He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding.

23 As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. So consider the word and understand the vision:

24 Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.[3]

25 Know and understand this: from the going out of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until an Anointed One, a Prince, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will be rebuilt with streets and a moat, but in troubled times.[4]

26 When the sixty-two weeks have passed, an Anointed One will be cut off and be left with nothing. Then the people of a prince who is coming will lay the city and the sanctuary in ruins. The end will come like a flood; war will continue to the end, and desolations have been decreed.

27 He will make a strong covenant with many for one week, and in the middle of the week he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, until the decreed destruction is poured out on the desolator.”[5]

1 See Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10.

2 See Leviticus 26:14–39; Deuteronomy 28:15–68.

3 ‘Weeks’ means periods of seven, usually understood as seven years each. ‘A most holy place’ may also be read ‘a most holy one’. The meaning of 9:24–27 has been debated since ancient times.

4 Hebrew ‘mashiach nagid’. Christians have long seen here Jesus the Messiah (‘Anointed One’); others read it of Cyrus (Isaiah 45:1) or of the high priest Joshua. The Greek and some English versions join the seven weeks to what follows.

5 Jesus speaks of ‘the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel’ (Matthew 24:15); compare 11:31 and 12:11.

Chapter 10

Daniel 10 introduces the final vision, given in the third year of Cyrus. After three weeks of mourning and fasting, Daniel stands by the great river Tigris and sees a man clothed in linen with a belt of fine gold, his body like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches and his voice like the sound of a multitude. Only Daniel sees the vision; his companions flee in terror, and he falls into a deep sleep. A hand touches him and sets him trembling on his hands and knees. The messenger tells him not to be afraid, for his words were heard from the first day, but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him for twenty-one days until Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help. He has come to explain what will happen to Daniel’s people in the latter days, and he strengthens Daniel, saying, “Peace be with you; be strong!”

1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, and it concerned a great conflict. He understood the message and had understanding of the vision.[1]

2 In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three full weeks.

3 I ate no rich food, no meat or wine passed my lips, and I did not anoint myself at all until the three weeks were over.

4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris,

5 I looked up, and there before me was a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz round his waist.

6 His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.[2]

7 I, Daniel, alone saw the vision; the men who were with me did not see it, but such great terror fell on them that they fled and hid themselves.

8 So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision. No strength was left in me; my face turned deathly pale, and I was helpless.

9 Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I
heard them I fell into a deep sleep on my face,
with my face to the ground.

10 Suddenly a hand touched me and set me,
trembling, on my hands and knees.

11 He said to me, “Daniel, you who are greatly
loved, understand the words I am about to speak
to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to
you.” When he said this to me, I stood up
trembling.

12 Then he told me, “Have no fear, Daniel. Your
words were heard from the very first day you
resolved to gain understanding and humbled
yourself before your God, and I have come in
answer to them.

13 But the prince of Persia’s kingdom stood against
me for twenty-one days, until Michael, one of the
leading princes, came to my aid, for I had been
held there with the kings of Persia.[3]

14 I am here to explain to you what is to befall your
people in days to come, for this vision looks far
ahead.”

15 While he was saying this to me, I turned my face
towards the ground and was speechless.

16 Then one who looked like a human being
touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and
began to speak. I said to the one standing before
me, “My lord, because of the vision, pains have
come upon me, and I have no strength left.

17 How can my lord’s servant talk with my lord?
Now no strength remains in me, and no breath is
left in me.”

18 Again the one who looked like a man touched
me and strengthened me.

19 He said, “Have no fear, you who are greatly
loved. Peace be with you; be strong, yes, be
strong!” As he spoke, my strength came back, and
I said, “Speak, my lord, for you have made me
strong.”

20 Then he asked, “Do you know why I came to
you? Soon I must go back to fight the prince of
Persia, and when I leave, the prince of Greece will
arrive.

21 But first I will tell you what is written in the
Book of Truth. There is no one who stands firmly
with me against these except Michael, your
prince.

1 536 BC. Chapters 10–12 form one vision.

2 Compare Revelation 1:13–15.

3 The ‘princes’ are angelic powers behind the nations. Michael is Israel’s guardian (10:21; 12:1); compare Jude 9 and Revelation 12:7.

Chapter 11

Daniel 11 continues the messenger’s account of what is written in the Book of Truth. Three more kings will arise in Persia, and a fourth, richer than all, will stir up everyone against Greece. Then a mighty king will arise whose kingdom will be broken up towards the four winds. There follows a long struggle between the king of the south and the king of the north, with alliances, marriages, invasions and betrayals. A contemptible person will seize the kingdom by intrigue, set his heart against the holy covenant, profane the sanctuary, abolish the daily sacrifice and set up the abomination that causes desolation; but the people who know their God will stand firm, and the wise will instruct many, though some will fall so that they may be refined. The king will exalt himself above every god and speak astonishing things against the God of gods, yet he will come to his end with no one to help him.

1 And I, in the first year of Darius the Mede, stood
up to support and strengthen him.

2 Now I will tell you the truth: Three more kings
will arise in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be
far richer than all of them. When he has grown
powerful through his wealth, he will stir up
everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

3 Then a mighty king will arise who will rule with
great authority and do as he pleases.[1]

4 But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be
broken up and divided towards the four winds of
heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will
it have the power he exercised, for his kingdom
will be uprooted and given to others besides them.

5 The king of the south will grow strong, but one of
his commanders will grow stronger than he and
will rule his own kingdom with great authority.[2]

6 Some years later the two will form an alliance,
and the southern king’s daughter will go to the

northern king to seal the agreement. But she will not keep her influence, nor will his strength endure; she will be given up, along with those who escorted her, the one who fathered her and the one who stood by her in those days.

7 But a shoot from her roots will arise in his place. He will come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north; he will act against them and prevail.

8 He will also carry off to Egypt their gods with their cast images and their precious vessels of silver and gold. For some years he will leave the king of the north alone.

9 Then the king of the north will invade the realm of the king of the south but will return to his own land.

10 His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will advance like an overflowing flood and sweep through, and again carry the battle as far as his fortress.

11 Then the king of the south, enraged, will march out and fight against the king of the north, who will raise a great army, but the army will be delivered into his hand.

12 When the army is carried off, the king of the south will be filled with pride and will cast down tens of thousands, yet he will not remain triumphant.

13 For the king of the north will again raise an army, larger than the first, and after some years he will advance with a great army and abundant supplies.

14 In those times many will rise against the king of the south. The violent ones among your own people will rise up in fulfilment of the vision, but they will fail.

15 Then the king of the north will come, build up siege ramps and capture a fortified city. The forces of the south will not be able to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand.

16 The invader will do as he pleases, and no one will stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his power.

17 He will resolve to come with the might of his whole kingdom and will make an agreement with the king of the south. He will give him a daughter in marriage in order to destroy the kingdom, but his plan will not succeed or help him.

18 Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and capture many of them, but a commander will put an end to his insolence and turn his insolence back on him.

19 After this he will turn back towards the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall, and be found no more.

20 His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendour. But within a few days he will be broken, though not in anger or in battle.

21 In his place will arise a contemptible person who has not been given royal majesty. He will come in without warning and seize the kingdom by intrigue.[3]

22 Armies will be swept away like a flood before him and broken, and so will a prince of the covenant.

23 After an alliance is made with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power.

24 Without warning he will invade the richest parts of the province and do what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did, scattering plunder, spoil and wealth among his followers. He will plot against strongholds, but only for a time.

25 With a vast army he will rouse his might and his courage against the southern king, who will go to war with an immense and powerful force of his own; yet he will not hold his ground, because of the schemes laid against him.

26 Those who eat from the king’s table will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall slain.

27 The two kings, their hearts set on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, for the end will still come at the appointed time.

28 The king of the north will return to his land with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own land.

29 At the appointed time he will invade the south again, but this time it will not turn out as it did before.

30 Ships of Kittim will come against him, and he will lose heart. He will turn back and rage against the holy covenant and take action; he will show favour to those who forsake the holy covenant.[4]

31 His forces will rise up and profane the sanctuary
fortress. They will abolish the daily sacrifice and
set up the abomination that causes desolation.[5]
32 With flattery he will corrupt those who have
violated the covenant, but the people who know
their God will stand firm and take action.
33 Those who are wise among the people will
instruct many, though for a time they will fall by
sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.
34 When they fall, they will receive a little help,
and many who are insincere will join them.
35 Some of the wise will fall, so that they may be
refined, purified and made spotless until the time
of the end, for it will still come at the appointed
time.
36 The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and
magnify himself above every god and will speak
astonishing things against the God of gods. He
will prosper until the time of wrath is completed,
for what has been decreed must be done.
37 He will show no regard for the gods of his
fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will
he regard any god, for he will magnify himself
above them all.[6]
38 Instead he will honour a god of fortresses, a god
unknown to his fathers, with gold and silver,
precious stones and costly gifts.
39 He will deal with the strongest fortresses with
the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge
him he will greatly honour; he will make them
rulers over many and distribute land as a reward.
40 At the time of the end the king of the south will
engage him in battle, and the king of the north
will storm against him with chariots and horsemen
and many ships. He will invade many countries
and sweep through them like a flood.
41 He will also invade the Beautiful Land, and
many will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of
the Ammonites will be delivered from his hand.
42 He will stretch out his hand against many
countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape.
43 He will gain control of the treasures of gold and
silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans
and Cushites following in his train.
44 But reports from the east and the north will
alarm him, and he will set out in great fury to
destroy and annihilate many.
45 He will set up his royal pavilion between the
seas and the beautiful holy mountain, but his end
will come, and there will be none to help him.

1 Alexander the Great; compare 8:5–8, 21.

2 The kings of the south are the Ptolemies of Egypt, and the kings of the north the Seleucids of Syria, the two kingdoms that grew out of Alexander's empire.

3 Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who reigned 175–164 BC and persecuted the Jews; compare 8:9–12, 23–25.

4 Kittim, originally Cyprus, here means Rome. In 168 BC a Roman envoy forced Antiochus to leave Egypt.

5 In 167 BC an altar to Zeus was set up in the temple (1 Maccabees 1:54). Jesus speaks of a future fulfilment (Matthew 24:15).

6 'The one desired by women' was probably the god Tammuz or Adonis.

Chapter 12

Daniel 12 completes the vision. At that time Michael, the great prince who protects Daniel's people, will arise, and there will be a time of distress such as never was; but every one of the people whose name is written in the book will be delivered. Many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt, and the wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens. Daniel is told to seal the book until the time of the end. Two others appear by the river, and the man in linen swears that it will be for a time, times and half a time. Daniel does not understand, but he is told to go his way, for the words are sealed until the end; many will be purified, the wicked will not understand, and the wise will. He will rest and rise to receive his allotted inheritance at the end of the days.

1 At that time Michael, the great prince who stands
guard over your people, will arise. There will be a
time of distress such as has never happened from
the beginning of nations until then. But at that
time your people will be delivered, everyone
whose name is found written in the book.[1]
2 Multitudes who lie asleep in the dust of the
ground will wake up, some to life that lasts for
ever, others to shame and to contempt that has no
end.[2]
3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness
of the sky, and those who lead many to

righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

4 But you, Daniel, close up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will rush to and fro, and knowledge will increase.”

5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the other.

6 One of them asked the man dressed in linen, who stood above the river’s waters, “How long until these wonders come to an end?”

7 The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, raised his right hand and his left hand towards heaven, and I heard him swear by Him who lives for ever, “It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has finally been shattered, all these things will be completed.”

8 I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, “My lord, what will be the outcome of all this?”

9 He answered, “Go on your way, Daniel, because these words are shut up and sealed until the end time.

10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will go on acting wickedly. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

11 From the time the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

12 Blessed is the one who waits and reaches the 1,335 days.[3]

13 As for you, go your way until the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.”

1 Compare Matthew 24:21 and Revelation 12:7; 20:12.

2 The clearest promise of bodily resurrection in the Old Testament; compare John 5:28–29.

3 The meaning of the two numbers is not explained; both are a little more than the three and a half years of 12:7.