SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Daniel

The Complete Book

Chapters 1–12, Observation · Interpretation · Application

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

Ed Smith · Smith For Christ Publishing

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Daniel 1

Purposed in His Heart: Faithful in Babylon

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Babylon can take a young man's home, his name and his schooling, but not his heart. Daniel decides ahead of time where his line is, holds it with courtesy, and leaves the results to God — and God gives, from start to finish.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

DANIEL 1 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

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

2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

4 Children in whom was no blemish , but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.

11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ★ ten times better than all the ⚠ magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

21 And Daniel continued even unto ◷ the first year of king Cyrus.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ◷ In the third year
- **v1** ◷ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon
- **v2** ▲ the Lord gave
- **v2** ◷ Shinar
- **v2** ⚠ the house of his god
- **v4** ⚠ the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans
- **v5** ⇄ the king's meat *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** ◷ three years
- **v7** ⚠ gave names
- **v8** ▮ purposed in his heart
- **v8** ⚠ defile himself *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ▲ God had brought Daniel into favour
- **v12** ▮ Prove thy servants
- **v12** ⇄ ten days *(every occurrence)*
- **v17** ▲ God gave them knowledge
- **v17** ★ visions and dreams
- **v20** ★ ten times better
- **v20** ⚠ magicians and astrologers
- **v21** ◷ the first year of king Cyrus

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 1:2 (KJV)

2 And ▲ the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of ◷ Shinar to ⚠ the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

Setting

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it" (v1). It is 605 BC. The first wave of captives — teenagers from the royal family and the nobles — is marched hundreds of miles to Babylon. The chapter covers Daniel's whole career in one sweep: from that first year to "the first year of Cyrus the king" (v21), about seventy years later.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the fall:** "The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God" (v2). Nebuchadnezzar takes them to the land of Shinar and puts them

in the treasury of his god.

- vv3–7 — **the program:** the king orders Ashpenaz, chief of his officials, to choose youths "in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom" (v4). They are to learn "the literature and language of the Chaldeans" (v4), eat "a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank" (v5), train three years, and enter the king's service (v5). They get new names: Daniel → Belteshazzar, Hananiah → Shadrach, Mishael → Meshach, Azariah → Abed-nego (vv6–7).
- vv8–16 — **the line Daniel draws:** "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank" (v8). He asks permission, and "God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials" (v9). The commander is afraid: "you would make me forfeit my head to the king" (v10). Daniel goes to the overseer with a proposal: "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink" (v12). After ten days "their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food" (v15). The overseer keeps them on vegetables (v16).
- vv17–21 — **God's result:** "As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams" (v17). At the end of the three years the king interviews them: "not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah" (v19). He finds them "ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm" (v20). "And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king" (v21).

Repeated words

the king (throughout); choice food (vv5, 8, 13, 15, 16); defile (v8 twice); ten (vv12, 14, 15, 20); gave / granted — God gave (vv2, 9, 17); the commander assigned names (v7); youths (vv4, 10, 13, 15, 17); wisdom and understanding (vv4, 17, 20); appearance / faces (vv10, 13, 15).

Contrasts

Nebuchadnezzar seems to win (v1) ⟷ "the Lord gave" Judah into his hand (v2). The vessels of God's house sit in "the treasury of his god" (v2) ⟷ the living vessels — four young men — stay God's own (v8). Babylon renames them (v7) ⟷ Daniel decides who he is (v8). The commander fears the king (v10) ⟷ Daniel fears God. Babylon's three years of training (v5) ⟷ what "God gave them" (v17). Nebuchadnezzar's empire falls (v21) ⟷ Daniel is still standing.

Chapter theme (my words)

Babylon can take a young man's home, his name and his schooling, but not his heart. Daniel decides ahead of time where his line is, holds it with courtesy, and leaves the results to God — and God gives, from start to finish.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 1:17 (KJV)

17 As for these four children, ▲ God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all ★ visions and dreams.

Who is really in charge? (vv1–2)

The headline says Nebuchadnezzar came. But v2 says "the Lord gave" — the key to the whole book. Judah went into exile because of generations of idolatry and broken sabbath years (Lev 26:33–35; 2 Chr 36:20–21; Jer 25:11). Isaiah had warned Hezekiah that his descendants would serve in the palace of the king of Babylon (Isa 39:6–7). Babylon's king thought he was taking the God of Israel captive by putting His vessels in his own temple. The rest of Daniel shows otherwise (5:2–4, 23–30).

The dating question

Daniel says "the third year" of Jehoiakim; Jeremiah calls 605 BC "the fourth year" (Jer 25:1; 46:2). Guzik: Daniel uses the Babylonian method, where a king's first partial year is his accession year and doesn't count; Jeremiah counts it. Walvoord, in Guzik: "Having spent most of his life in Babylon, it is only natural that Daniel should use a Babylonian form of chronology." Guzik also cites the Babylonian Chronicles and Berossus (via Josephus) on Nebuchadnezzar's victory at Carchemish that same year.

The re-education program (vv3–7)

Guzik sees four tools Babylon used — and the world still uses — to reshape a person:

- **Separation** — far from home, family and temple.
- **Education** — "the literature and language of the Chaldeans" (v4): a new worldview.
- **Diet** — the king's table, daily, making them dependent on his provision.
- **Identity** — new names that replace the God of Israel with Babylon's gods.

The names tell the story:

- **Daniel** ("God is my judge") → **Belteshazzar** ("Bel protect his life" / Bel's prince).
- **Hananiah** ("Yahweh has been gracious") → **Shadrach** (likely linked to the moon-god Aku).
- **Mishael** ("Who is what God is?") → **Meshach** (perhaps "Who is what Aku is?").
- **Azariah** ("Yahweh has helped") → **Abed-nego** ("servant of Nebo/Nego").

They were probably teenagers. Isaiah 39:7 speaks of them as "officials" (*saris*), a word that can mean a royal official rather than strictly a eunuch.

Why draw the line at food? (v8)

Daniel didn't refuse the education or the new name; he couldn't control those. He drew the line where obedience to God was at stake. Guzik gives three likely reasons: the food wasn't kosher (Lev 11), it had probably been offered to Babylon's gods first, and eating at the king's table signaled covenant loyalty. Baldwin, in Guzik: "By eastern standards to share a meal was to commit one's self to friendship; it was

of covenant significance." The verb "made up his mind" is literally "set it upon his heart" — the decision came before the pressure did.

How Daniel held the line (vv8–16)

He *asked*; he didn't demand (v8). When the commander was afraid, Daniel didn't argue. He went to the man under him with a creative, limited test — ten days, measurable, low-risk for the overseer (vv11–13). That's wisdom that is "peaceable, gentle, reasonable" (James 3:17). Spurgeon, in Guzik: "Be ready for a bad name; be willing to be called a bigot." But Daniel also was not needlessly offensive. And notice v9 — before Daniel ever asked, "God granted Daniel favor." God had gone ahead of him (Prov 16:7).

Better and fatter (vv15–16)

Ten days of vegetables and water don't normally beat a royal diet. The point is not a diet plan but God's hand (Exod 23:25). Guzik notes that the result came from God, not from nutrition.

God gave (vv17–21)

Three times in this chapter God gave (Hebrew *nathan*): He gave Judah to Babylon (v2), favor to Daniel (v9) and wisdom to the four (v17). Babylon's three-year program didn't make them wise; God did. Daniel's understanding of visions and dreams sets up chapter 2. "Ten times better" — the king's own verdict. Guzik: they were "in Babylon, but not of Babylon" (John 17:15–16). "Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus" (v21) — he outlasted Nebuchadnezzar, the entire Babylonian empire and its fall in 539 BC, and saw the decree that let the Jews go home (Ezra 1:1–4). Faithfulness outlives empires.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **gave — *nathan* (H5414):** to give, hand over — the key verb of the chapter (vv2, 9, 17).
- **vessels — *kelî* (H3627):** articles, utensils, implements of the temple.
- **Shinar — *Shinʿar* (H8152):** the plain of Babylon, where Babel was built (Gen 11:2).
- **no defect — *mum* (H3971):** blemish — the word used of acceptable sacrifices (Lev 22:20).
- **Chaldeans — *Kasdîm* (H3778):** Babylon's people; also its class of wise men and astrologers.
- **choice food — *pathbag* (H6598):** a Persian loanword: the king's delicacies, portion from his table.
- **made up his mind — *sîm* (H7760) + *lēb* (H3820):** "set upon his heart" — a settled decision.
- **defile — *gaʾal* (H1351):** to pollute, stain (Isa 59:3; Mal 1:7).
- **favor — *chesed* (H2617):** loyal kindness, covenant love.
- **compassion — *rachamîm* (H7356):** tender mercy, from the word for womb.
- **test — *nasah* (H5254):** to try, prove.
- **vegetables — *zeroʿîm* (H2235):** things sown — seeds, grains, vegetables.
- **understanding — *bîn* (H995):** to discern, perceive.
- **magicians — *chartom* (H2748):** engraver, scribe-priest, occult expert.
- **conjurers — *ʾashshaph* (H825):** enchanter, one who uses spells.

Cross-references

Gen 11:1–9; Gen 39:1–6, 21–23; Lev 11; Lev 26:33–35; Deut 28:36; 2 Kgs 20:16–18; 2 Kgs 24:1; 2 Chr 36:5–7, 20–21; Ps 119:11; Prov 16:7; Isa 39:5–7; Jer 25:1, 11–12; Jer 29:4–7; Ezek 14:14, 20; Dan 6:3–5, 10; Ezra 1:1–4; Matt 24:15; John 17:15–16; Rom 12:1–2; 1 Cor 10:13; James 3:17; 1 Pet 2:11–12.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 1:8 (KJV)

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Command to obey — "made up his mind."

Daniel decided before the plate was in front of him. I'll settle my lines *now*, not in the moment of temptation: where my eyes go, what I drink, what I click, who I'm alone with. For the men I disciple, this is the heart of recovery — you don't decide at the bar or at 2 a.m.; you decide in the morning, before God, and you tell someone.

Sin to confess — letting Babylon feed me

The world doesn't usually demand that I deny Christ. It just offers me its table every day — its entertainment, its values, its idea of success — until I'm dependent on it. Where have I been eating "the king's choice food" without noticing? I'll name it and ask for a different diet: the Word first (Ps 119:11).

Warning to heed — new names

Babylon renamed them to make them forget whose they were. The world, my past and the enemy all try to rename me: addict, failure, nobody, too far gone. My name is what God says: forgiven, son, His (2 Cor 5:17). For men coming out of prison or addiction, that may be the first truth they need to hear.

Promise to trust — God goes ahead

"God granted Daniel favor" (v9) — before Daniel asked. When I take a stand for Him, I don't take it alone. He can move the heart of the boss, the officer, the judge or the family member (Prov 21:1). Results are His job; faithfulness is mine.

Example to follow — courage with courtesy

Daniel was firm, but he was respectful, creative and reasonable. He asked rather than demanded, proposed a test, and gave the other man a way to say yes. I want to stand firm without being harsh — "with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pet 3:15).

Worship

God gave. He gave Judah into Babylon's hand, gave Daniel favor, gave the four wisdom, and kept Daniel standing seventy years until Cyrus let His people go home. Empires rise and fall; my God is still giving.

Prayer

Lord, You are the God who gives. Help me make up my mind before the pressure comes. Keep me from being fed by Babylon and renamed by the world. Give me Daniel's courage and his courtesy, and let me be faithful in a foreign land until You bring me home. Amen.

Daniel 2

The Statue and the Stone: The God Who Reveals

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Kings rule because God gives them the kingdom, and every human empire is temporary. The God of heaven reveals what no man can know, answers four praying young men, and will one day set up a kingdom that crushes all the others and lasts forever.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

DANIEL 2 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning
Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon:

15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever : for wisdom and might are his:

21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter : and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.

30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

31 Thou, O king, sawest , and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for ▲ the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up ★ a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter : and ▲ the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and ⚠ worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a ▲ God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of ⇄ secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this ⇄ secret.

48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ◷ in the second year
- **v5** ⚠ cut in pieces
- **v11** ⚠ except the gods
- **v12** ⚠ destroy all the wise men
- **v14** ⇄ wisdom *(every occurrence)*
- **v18** ▮▮ desire mercies of the God of heaven
- **v18** ⇄ secret *(every occurrence)*
- **v20** ▲ Blessed be the name of God
- **v21** ▲ he removeth kings, and setteth up kings
- **v22** ▲ the light dwelleth with him
- **v28** ▲ there is a God in heaven
- **v28** ◷ the latter days
- **v32** ◷ head was of fine gold
- **v32** ◷ breast and his arms of silver
- **v32** ◷ belly and his thighs of brass
- **v33** ◷ legs of iron
- **v33** ◷ part of iron and part of clay
- **v34** ★ a stone was cut out without hands
- **v35** ★ a great mountain
- **v37** ▲ the God of heaven hath given thee

- **v44** ★ a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed
- **v45** ▲ the dream is certain
- **v46** ⚠ worshipped Daniel
- **v47** ▲ God of gods, and a Lord of kings

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 2:32 (KJV)

32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

Setting

"Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him" (v1). Daniel is still a young man, newly out of training (1:5, 18). At v4 the text switches from Hebrew to Aramaic, the language of Babylon, and stays in Aramaic through 7:28.

Structure

- vv1–13 — **the impossible demand:** the king summons the magicians, conjurers, sorcerers and Chaldeans (v2). He won't tell them the dream; they must tell him the dream *and* its meaning, or "you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap" (v5). They protest: "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king" — only "gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh" (vv10–11). The king orders all the wise men of Babylon destroyed, and they look for Daniel and his friends too (vv12–13).
- vv14–23 — **Daniel prays:** Daniel replies "with discretion and discernment" to Arioch (v14), asks the king for time (v16), and gathers his three friends "so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery" (v18). "Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven" (v19). His song: "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings … It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things" (vv20–22). "To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise" (v23).
- vv24–30 — **Daniel before the king:** "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon" (v24). Arioch: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah" (v25). Daniel: no wise man can do this, "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days" (vv27–28). "As for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man" (v30).
- vv31–35 — **the dream:** a great statue, bright and awesome (v31). Head of fine gold; breast and arms of silver; belly and thighs of bronze; legs of iron; feet partly iron and partly clay (vv32–33). "A stone was cut out without hands" and struck the feet; the whole statue became like chaff the wind carried

away; "the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (vv34–35).

- vv36–45 — **the interpretation:** "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom" (v37). "You are the head of gold" (v38). Another inferior kingdom, a third of bronze ruling all the earth, a fourth "as strong as iron" that crushes everything (vv39–40). The feet and toes: a divided kingdom, partly strong and partly brittle, mixing but not holding together (vv41–43). "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed … it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever" (v44). "The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy" (v45).
- vv46–49 — **the response:** the king falls on his face before Daniel and orders offerings (v46). "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries" (v47). Daniel is made ruler over the province of Babylon and chief prefect over all its wise men; at Daniel's request his three friends are appointed too (vv48–49).

Repeated words

dream(s) (throughout); interpretation (throughout); mystery / secret (vv18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47); reveal(s) (vv19, 22, 28, 29, 30, 47); wisdom (vv20, 21, 23, 30); the God of heaven (vv18, 19, 37, 44; "a God in heaven," v28); kingdom (vv37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44); king(s) (throughout); crush / break in pieces (vv34, 35, 40, 44, 45).

Contrasts

the king's wise men: "There is not a man on earth who could" (vv10–11, 27) ⟷ "there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries" (v28). The king's fury (v12) ⟷ Daniel's "discretion and discernment" (v14). Gold at the top ⟷ clay at the feet — each kingdom less precious than the one before (vv32–33). A statue made by human glory ⟷ a stone "cut out without hands" (v34). Kingdoms that become chaff (v35) ⟷ a kingdom "which will never be destroyed" (v44). The king worships Daniel (v46) ⟷ Daniel had already pointed him to God (vv28, 30).

Chapter theme (my words)

Kings rule because God gives them the kingdom, and every human empire is temporary. The God of heaven reveals what no man can know, answers four praying young men, and will one day set up a kingdom that crushes all the others and lasts forever.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 2:28 (KJV)

28 But ▲ there is a God in heaven that revealeth ⇄ secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in ◷ the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

An impossible demand (vv1–13)

Guzik argues the king's demand was fair: these men claimed access to the gods, so let them prove it. If they could only explain a dream he described, they could simply invent an answer — "you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me" (v9). Their confession is the turning point of the chapter: no man can do this; only gods "whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh" (v11). They were right — and the God who does dwell with flesh is about to answer (John 1:14). The punishment, dismemberment, was a real practice in that world. Guzik notes the king may also have welcomed the excuse to replace his father's advisors.

The switch to Aramaic (v4)

From 2:4 to 7:28, Daniel is written in Aramaic, the international language of the empire. Guzik notes it is one of three major Aramaic sections in the Old Testament (with Ezra 4:8–6:18; 7:12–26). Fittingly, the chapters about the Gentile kingdoms are written in the Gentiles' language; the chapters about Israel's future (8–12) return to Hebrew.

A prayer meeting changes history (vv14–23)

Daniel doesn't panic. He speaks with tact to the executioner, asks for time, and calls a prayer meeting with three friends. Strauss, in Guzik: "In prayer meetings such as this history has been made." The answer comes as revelation, not research (v19). Then Daniel worships *before* he goes to the king (vv20–23). His song is the theology of the whole book:

- **God changes times and epochs** — history is not random (Acts 17:26).
- **He removes and establishes kings** — no ruler is in charge on his own (Rom 13:1; Prov 21:1).
- **He gives wisdom** — it is a gift (James 1:5).
- **He reveals hidden things** — nothing is dark to Him (Ps 139:12).

Notice "we" and "us" in v23 — Daniel credits the answer to the four of them praying together.

Not for any wisdom in me (vv24–30)

Arioch rushes in to take credit: "I have found a man" (v25). Daniel deflects all of it. Before he says a word about the dream, he tells the most powerful man in the world that there is "a God in heaven" (v28) — and that the dream is about "the latter days," the long sweep of the future. Guzik: true humility doesn't deny the gift, it points to the Giver (1 Cor 4:7).

The statue: four kingdoms (vv31–43)

Daniel names only the first: "You are the head of gold" (v38). The rest are identified by history and by Daniel's later visions (8:20–21). Guzik gives the classic view:

- **Gold — Babylon** (605–539 BC): an absolute monarchy under one man.
- **Silver — Medo-Persia** (539–331 BC): larger but "inferior," its king bound by his own laws (6:8, 15; see 5:28; 8:20).
- **Bronze — Greece** (331 BC onward): Alexander's empire, the kingdom that "will rule over all the earth" (2:39; see 8:21).
- **Iron — Rome**: strong, crushing everything in its path, lasting centuries.
- **Iron and clay — a final divided form of the fourth kingdom**: partly strong, partly brittle, mixing but never truly united.

Guzik notes that critical scholars make the four Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece, to avoid a prophecy that reaches Rome, but Daniel himself treats Medo-Persia as one kingdom (5:28; 8:20). The metals decline in value but grow in hardness — Guzik calls it "devolution," not evolution: human government does not climb toward utopia.

The ten toes

The toes (v42) parallel the ten horns of the fourth beast (7:7, 24) and the ten kings of Revelation 17:12. Guzik: nothing in Rome's history matches ten kings ruling together when God's kingdom crushed them, so he sees a future, revived form of the fourth kingdom — a federation under the final world ruler. Some faithful interpreters see the stone's blow as Christ's first coming; Guzik answers that the church has not yet crushed the world's kingdoms in one decisive blow. Heslop, in Guzik: "Smashing is not salvation."

The stone cut without hands (vv34–35, 44–45)

No human hand makes it — it is God's work. Guzik identifies the stone as the Messiah Himself: the stone the builders rejected (Ps 118:22; Matt 21:42–44), the stumbling stone (Isa 8:14), the tested cornerstone (Isa 28:16). It strikes the statue at its feet — at the end of human history — grinds every kingdom to chaff, and grows into a mountain that fills the earth (Isa 2:2–3; 11:9). "In the days of those kings" (v44): God's kingdom doesn't evolve out of the others; it replaces them (Rev 11:15).

The king's response (vv46–49)

Nebuchadnezzar falls on his face — and worships the wrong one. His confession is true but shallow: "your God is a God of gods" (v47). Chapter 3 will show he hasn't bowed his own heart yet. Daniel is promoted, and he remembers his friends who prayed with him (v49).

Word study (Aramaic)

- **dream — *chelem* (H2493):** a dream (Aramaic form of Hebrew *chalom*).
- **interpretation — *peshar* (H6591):** an explanation, solution.
- **magicians — *chartom* (H2749):** occult scribe, sacred-writing expert.
- **Chaldeans — *Kasday* (H3779):** here the class of astrologer-priests.
- **torn limb from limb — *haddam* (H1917):** a member, a piece — "made into pieces."

- **discretion — *ʿeta* (H5843):** counsel, prudence.
- **compassion — *rachamin* (H7359, plural of *rechem*):** mercy, tender compassion.
- **mystery — *raz* (H7328):** a secret, a hidden thing — later Greek *mystērion*.
- **reveal — *gela* (H1541):** to uncover, reveal.
- **times — *ʿiddan* (H5732):** time, a set period.
- **epochs — *zeman* (H2166):** appointed time, season.
- **image / statue — *tselem* (H6755):** an image, idol.
- **stone — *ʾeben* (H69):** a stone.
- **without hands — *dî-lāʾ bîdayin*:** "not by hands" — by no human agency.
- **kingdom — *malku* (H4437):** kingdom, reign, sovereignty.
- **forever — *ʿalam* (H5957):** perpetuity, everlasting.

Cross-references

Gen 41:8, 16, 25; Ps 2:1–12; Ps 118:22; Ps 139:11–12; Prov 21:1; Isa 2:2–4; Isa 8:14; Isa 28:16; Isa 44:24–45:7; Dan 4:17, 25, 34–35; Dan 5:28; Dan 7:1–27; Dan 8:20–22; Amos 3:7; Matt 6:10; Matt 21:42–44; Luke 1:32–33; Luke 20:17–18; Acts 4:11; Acts 17:26; Rom 13:1; 1 Cor 1:26–31; 1 Cor 4:7; 1 Pet 2:4–8; Rev 11:15; Rev 17:12–14.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 2:18 (KJV)

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Command to obey — call a prayer meeting

When Daniel's life was on the line, his first move was to gather three friends and pray (vv17–18). I need that kind of brotherhood — men who will pray with me when it's life or death, and men I'll pray for. This week I'll ask the men in my group for specific requests and pray *with* them, not just *for* them. For a man in recovery, that's often the difference: you don't face the crisis alone.

Sin to confess — taking credit

Arioch said "I have found a man" (v25); Daniel said "not for any wisdom residing in me" (v30). Whenever God uses me — a study, a website, a conversation that helps a man — I'm tempted to take a little of the glory. I'll confess it and practice pointing past myself: "there is a God in heaven."

Warning to heed — the statue falls

Every kingdom in the dream looked permanent, and every one became chaff the wind blew away (v35). That includes the kingdoms I'm tempted to trust: a nation, a party, a company, a bank account, my

own reputation. None of them is the rock. Only God's kingdom "will never be destroyed" (v44).

Promise to trust — "He removes kings and establishes kings."

The news, the courts and the powerful are not out of His control (v21). For the man facing a parole board, a judge or a boss, this is solid ground: God changes the times and gives wisdom to those who ask Him (James 1:5).

Example to follow — worship before the meeting

Daniel had the answer and the king was waiting, but he stopped to praise God first (vv19–23). I want to thank God before I see how things turn out, not only after.

Worship

"Wisdom and power belong to Him" (v20). The stone cut without hands is Jesus, and His kingdom is coming. Every throne will crumble before Him, and His kingdom will fill the whole earth. Thy kingdom come.

Prayer

God of heaven, You change the times and the epochs; You remove kings and establish kings. Thank You that You reveal what is hidden and answer when Your people pray together. Keep me from trusting kingdoms that will become chaff. Let me point every man to You and not to me. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done. Amen.

Daniel 3

The Fiery Furnace:
But Even If He Does Not

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

When the whole world bows, three young men stand — trusting God's power, surrendering to His will, and refusing to worship anything else. They don't escape the fire, but they meet the Son of God in it, and they walk out without even the smell of smoke.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

DANIEL 3 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp , sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp , sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

8 Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.

9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.

10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp , sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer , and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:

11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp , sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, ▲ our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the ⇄ burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 ▮▮ But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one ◷ seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the ⇄ burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen , and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the ⇄ burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the ⇄ burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see ★ four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and ▲ the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the ⇄ burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of ▲ the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies ★ the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, ★ nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that ★ trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and ▮▮ yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is ▲ no other God that can deliver after this sort.

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ⚠ an image of gold
- **v1** ◷ the plain of Dura
- **v5** ⇄ fall down and worship *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ⇄ burning fiery furnace *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ◷ the same hour
- **v12** ▮▮ they serve not thy gods
- **v15** ⚠ who is that God that shall deliver you
- **v17** ▲ our God whom we serve is able to deliver us

- **v18** But if not
- **v19** seven times more
- **v25** four men loose
- **v25** the form of the fourth is like the Son of God
- **v26** the most high God
- **v27** the fire had no power
- **v27** nor the smell of fire
- **v28** trusted in him
- **v28** yielded their bodies
- **v29** no other God that can deliver

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 3:1 (KJV)

[1]Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

Setting

In chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar heard that he was the head of gold — and that his kingdom would pass. Now "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon" (v1). Not just a golden head this time, but gold from head to foot. Daniel is not mentioned in the chapter.

Structure

- vv1–7 — **the image and the decree:** every official in the empire is summoned to the dedication (vv2–3). A herald: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language" (v4). When the music plays, fall down and worship (v5). "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire" (v6). The music plays and everyone bows (v7).
- vv8–12 — **the accusation:** certain Chaldeans "brought charges against the Jews" (v8). They remind the king of his decree and name names: "These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up" (v12).
- vv13–18 — **the confrontation:** "Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego" (v13). He offers a second chance — and a challenge: "what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" (v15). Their answer: "we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up" (vv16–18).
- vv19–25 — **the furnace:** "Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered" (v19). He orders the furnace heated "seven times more than it was usually heated" (v19). His

strongest soldiers tie them up in their clothes and throw them in (vv20–21); the flames kill the soldiers (v22). The three fall in, bound (v23). The king jumps up: "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" (v24). "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" (v25).

- vv26–30 — **out of the fire:** "come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" (v26). The officials see that "the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them" (v27). The king: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him" (v28). A new decree protects their God, "inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way" (v29). The king causes them to prosper (v30).

Repeated words

the image / golden image (vv1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18); set up (vv1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 18); fall down and worship (vv5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15); serve (vv12, 14, 17, 18, 28); furnace of blazing fire (vv6, 11, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23, 26); deliver (vv15, 17, 28, 29); the music list (vv5, 7, 10, 15); Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego (throughout); peoples, nations and men of every language (vv4, 7; compare v29).

Contrasts

all the people fall down (v7) ⟷ three men stand. "What god is there who can deliver you?" (v15) ⟷ "our God … is able to deliver us" (v17). Three bound men thrown in (v23) ⟷ four men loosed, walking (v25). The fire kills the soldiers outside (v22) ⟷ doesn't singe a hair inside (v27). The king's decree to bow (v5) ⟷ the king's decree to honor their God (v29). The king's word (v28) ⟷ their trust in God, "violating the king's command" (v28).

Chapter theme (my words)

When the whole world bows, three young men stand — trusting God's power, surrendering to His will, and refusing to worship anything else. They don't escape the fire, but they meet the Son of God in it, and they walk out without even the smell of smoke.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 3:25 (KJV)

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see ★ four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and ▲ the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

The image (vv1–7)

Sixty cubits by six — about 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. Guzik suggests it was probably wood overlaid with gold, maybe set on a pedestal. It looks like Nebuchadnezzar's answer to chapter 2: if his kingdom was only the head of gold, he would build a statue that was gold all the way down. The dedication was a test of loyalty: everyone who mattered in the empire, bowing together on cue. Guzik draws the line

to every regime that fuses national loyalty with worship. The number six runs through it — sixty cubits, six wide — and many see a foreshadowing of the final image the beast's followers must worship (Rev 13:14–15, 18).

The music

The list of instruments appears four times (vv5, 7, 10, 15). Critics claim three of the names are Greek words, so the book must be late. Guzik answers that Greek mercenaries and traders were in the Near East long before Daniel — loanwords for instruments travel with musicians. The music is the signal and the pressure: worship made easy, emotional and unanimous.

The accusation (vv8–12)

"Certain Chaldeans" — the same class of wise men whose lives Daniel saved in chapter 2. Envy of the Jewish officials is part of it. The three didn't stage a protest; they simply didn't bow, and they knew they'd be seen. Spurgeon, in Guzik: "You will not be able to go through life without being discovered: a lighted candle cannot be hid."

"Who is the god who can deliver you?" (vv13–15)

The king gives them a second chance — the same pressure, again. His question puts himself above every god. Guzik: Nebuchadnezzar talks about gods, but lives as if he himself is the final power.

"But even if He does not" (vv16–18)

"We do not need to give you an answer" isn't rudeness; it means "we don't need to argue our case — our minds are made up." Their answer has three parts:

- **God is able** — faith in His power (Eph 3:20).
- **He will deliver us out of your hand** — one way or another; even death would put them beyond the king's reach.
- **But even if He does not** — surrender to His will (Job 13:15).

Guzik lists the excuses they could have used: everyone's doing it; it's only once; we'll bow on the outside but not in our hearts; we can do more good alive; God will forgive. They used none. Their small faithfulness in chapter 1 — the food — had prepared them for this big test (Luke 16:10).

Seven times hotter (vv19–23)

The king's face changes — the same man who fell on his face before Daniel in 2:46. Anger makes him foolish: a hotter fire doesn't kill faster, and it kills his own men. The three are thrown in bound, fully clothed — every detail emphasizes there is no escape.

The fourth man (vv24–25)

The king sees four men, loosed, walking. The KJV says "like the Son of God"; the NASB "like a son of the gods" — a pagan king's way of saying a divine being. In v28 the king calls him God's "angel." Guzik, with many interpreters, sees a preincarnate appearance of the Son of God — the Angel of the LORD who appears throughout the Old Testament (Gen 16:7–13; Exod 3:2–6; Judg 13:18–22). God didn't keep them out of the fire; He met them in it (Isa 43:2). The only thing the fire burned was the ropes. Guzik notes the Greek Septuagint adds a long song the three sang in the furnace (not in the Hebrew/Aramaic Bible) — and compares Paul and Silas singing in prison (Acts 16:25).

Not even the smell of smoke (vv26–27)

The king calls them "servants of the Most High God." The officials — the same crowd that bowed in v7 — inspect them: not a hair, not a thread, not even the smell. God's deliverance is complete.

The king's confession (vv28–30)

"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego" — still *their* God, not his. Guzik notes how much the king now knows about God — He sends His angel, He delivers, He's worthy of trust — and still doesn't know Him personally. His decree protects God's reputation by threatening violence, which shows how far he still has to go (chapter 4). But he has seen men who "yielded up their bodies" rather than worship any other god — a living sermon (Rom 12:1).

A prophetic picture

Guzik also sees the chapter as a picture of the end: a world ruler demanding worship of an image (Rev 13:14–15), a faithful remnant preserved through the fire, and Daniel — absent from the scene — as a picture of those spared that hour (Rev 3:10).

Word study (Aramaic)

- **image — *tselem* (H6755):** an image, idol — the same word as the statue in 2:31.
- **cubit — *ʾammah* (H521):** a cubit, about 18 inches.
- **set up — *qum* (H6966):** to raise, establish.
- **worship — *segid* (H5457):** to bow down, prostrate oneself in homage.
- **fall down — *nephal* (H5308):** to fall, fall prostrate.
- **furnace — *ʾattun* (H861):** a furnace, kiln.
- **blazing — *yeqad* (H3345):** to burn, blaze.
- **brought charges — *ʾakal qarets* (H399 + H7170):** literally "ate the pieces of" — slandered, informed against.
- **serve — *pelach* (H6399):** to serve, worship, pay reverence.
- **able — *yekil* (H3202):** to be able, have power.
- **deliver — *shezib* (H7804):** to rescue, set free.
- **wrath — *chema* (H2528):** heat, fury.
- **loosed — *sherah* (H8271):** to untie, loosen, set free.
- **without harm — *chabal* (H2257):** hurt, injury — "there is no injury in them."
- **angel — *malʾak* (H4398):** a messenger, angel.
- **trust — *rechats* (H7365):** to trust, rely on.

Cross-references

Exod 20:3–5; Deut 4:23–24; Josh 24:15; 1 Kgs 18:21; Job 13:15; Ps 66:10–12; Isa 43:1–3; Isa 48:10; Dan 6:10, 22; Matt 10:28, 32–33; Luke 16:10; John 16:33; Acts 4:19–20; Acts 5:29; Acts 16:25; Rom 12:1–2; 1 Cor 10:14; Heb 11:33–34; 1 Pet 1:6–7; 1 Pet 4:12–13; Rev 2:10; Rev 13:11–18.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 3:27 (KJV)

27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies ★ the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, ★ nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

Command to obey — "we are not going to serve your gods."

When everybody bowed, they stood. The pressure to bow today rarely comes with a furnace; it comes with music, crowds and "it's no big deal." I'll name the golden image I'm most tempted to bow to — approval, comfort, money, a substance, a screen — and decide now that I won't bow. For the men I disciple, standing may mean being the only one in the dorm, the cell block or the job site who won't go along.

Sin to confess — bowing on the outside

"I'll bow but not mean it" is still bowing. Where have I gone along outwardly to avoid trouble — laughed at what I shouldn't, kept quiet when I should've spoken? I'll confess it and ask for the courage to be seen (Matt 10:32–33).

Warning to heed — the furnace is real

Faithfulness doesn't guarantee escape. They were thrown in. Some faithful believers die in the fire (Heb 11:35–38; Rev 2:10). If my faith depends on God always keeping me out of trouble, it won't survive the first furnace. Their faith was in God Himself, not in a particular outcome.

Promise to trust — "four men loosed."

God didn't keep them out of the fire; He walked with them in it. "When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched" (Isa 43:2). For the man facing a sentence, a diagnosis, a divorce or a relapse: you are not in the furnace alone. And the fire may burn nothing but the ropes that held you.

Example to follow — "But even if He does not."

This is mature faith: God is able, I trust He will, and if He doesn't, I still won't bow. I want to pray that way — boldly asking, fully surrendered. "...not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Worship

The Son of God walks in the fire with His people. He doesn't send a rescue note from outside; He steps in. That's what He did at the cross — He went into the fire for me. "There is no other god who is able to deliver in this way" (v29).

Prayer

Most High God, You are able. Give me the courage of these three young men — to stand when everyone bows, to trust You in the fire, and to say "even if You do not" and mean it. Walk with me in

every furnace, burn off whatever binds me, and let my life show that there is no other god who delivers like You. Amen.

Daniel 4

The Most High Rules: A King Humbled

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The proudest man on earth learns the hard way that the Most High rules. God warned him, gave him a year to repent, humbled him to the level of an animal, and then — when he looked up — restored his mind and his kingdom. "He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

DANIEL 4 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

2 I thought it good to shew the ▲ signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is ▲ an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

4 I Nebuchadnezzar was Amber at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:

5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

6 Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.

7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

8 But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is Sky the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying,

9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that Sky the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

10 Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw , and behold a Sky tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

11 The Sky tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

12 The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, Amber a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;

14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the Sky tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

15 Nevertheless leave ★ the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let Amber seven times pass over him.

17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that ▲ the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

18 This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for ⇄ the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonied for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

20 The ⇄ tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;

21 Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

22 ⚠ It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

23 And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the ⇄ tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till ◷ seven times pass over him;

24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and ◷ seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that ▲ the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the ⇄ tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that ▲ the heavens do rule.

27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and ▮▮ break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by ▮▮ shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

29 ◷ At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

30 The king spake, and said, ⚠ Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for ⚠ the honour of my majesty?

31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; ⚠ The kingdom is departed from thee.

32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and ◷ seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that ▲ the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and ⚠ did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and ★ mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and ▲ none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and ▲ those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ▲ signs and wonders
- **v3** ▲ an everlasting kingdom
- **v4** at rest in mine house
- **v8** the spirit of the holy gods *(every occurrence)*
- **v10** tree *(every occurrence)*
- **v13** a watcher and an holy one
- **v15** ★ the stump of his roots
- **v16** seven times *(every occurrence)*
- **v17** ▲ the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men *(every occurrence)*
- **v22** It is thou, O king
- **v26** ▲ the heavens do rule
- **v27** break off thy sins by righteousness
- **v27** shewing mercy to the poor
- **v29** At the end of twelve months
- **v30** Is not this great Babylon, that I have built
- **v30** the honour of my majesty
- **v31** The kingdom is departed from thee
- **v33** did eat grass as oxen
- **v34** lifted up mine eyes unto heaven
- **v34** ★ mine understanding returned
- **v35** ▲ none can stay his hand
- **v37** ▲ those that walk in pride he is able to abase

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 4:27 (KJV)

27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

Setting

This chapter is written in the first person by Nebuchadnezzar himself — a royal proclamation "to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth" (v1). It is his testimony, written after the events, looking back. He starts with the end of the story: "It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me" (v2). (In Hebrew and Aramaic Bibles, vv1–3 are numbered 3:31–33.)

Structure

- vv1–3 — **the testimony:** "How great are His signs and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion is from generation to generation" (v3).
- vv4–18 — **the dream of the tree:** "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace" (v4) when a dream frightens him (v5). The wise men can't interpret it (v7); "finally Daniel came in before me" (v8). The dream: a tree in the middle of the earth, reaching to the sky, visible to the ends of the earth, with abundant fruit, shade for the beasts and nests for the birds (vv10–12). "An angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven" (v13) and cried, "Chop down the tree" (v14) — but leave the stump with a band of iron and bronze around it (v15). "Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let a beast's mind be given to him, and let seven periods of time pass over him" (v16). The purpose: "that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men" (v17).
- vv19–27 — **Daniel's interpretation and plea:** Daniel "was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him" (v19). "It is you, O king" (v22). He will be driven from men, live with the beasts, eat grass like cattle, and be drenched with dew, "until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes" (v25). The stump means his kingdom will be restored "after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules" (v26). Daniel's counsel: "break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity" (v27).
- vv28–33 — **the boast and the fall:** "Twelve months later" the king walks on the roof of the royal palace (v29): "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (v30). "While the word was in the king's mouth," a voice from heaven: "sovereignty has been removed from you" (v31). "Immediately" it is fulfilled: he is driven away, eats grass like cattle, "until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws" (v33).

- vv34–37 — **eyes up, reason back:** "At the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High" (v34). "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing ... and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" (v35). His kingdom is restored with even greater majesty (v36). "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride" (v37).

Repeated words

the Most High (vv2, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34); the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind (vv17, 25, 32); seven periods of time (vv16, 23, 25, 32); tree (vv10, 11, 14, 20, 23, 26); beasts of the field (vv12, 21, 23, 25, 32); dew of heaven (vv15, 23, 25, 33); driven from men / mankind (vv25, 32, 33); kingdom / dominion / sovereignty (vv3, 17, 25, 26, 31, 32, 34, 36); everlasting (vv3, 34).

Contrasts

"at ease ... flourishing" (v4) ⟷ driven out to eat grass (v33). A tree reaching to the sky (v11) ⟷ chopped to a stump (v14). "Babylon the great, which I myself have built ... by the might of my power" (v30) ⟷ "the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind" (v32). A man's mind ⟷ a beast's mind (v16). Eyes on himself on the palace roof (vv29–30) ⟷ eyes raised toward heaven (v34). "The glory of my majesty" (v30) ⟷ "I ... praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven" (v37).

Chapter theme (my words)

The proudest man on earth learns the hard way that the Most High rules. God warned him, gave him a year to repent, humbled him to the level of an animal, and then — when he looked up — restored his mind and his kingdom. "He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 4:2 (KJV)

2 I thought it good to shew the ▲ signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

A king's testimony (vv1–3)

This is unique in Scripture: a chapter written by a pagan emperor, telling the world what God did to him. Guzik: telling what God has done is good — the devil would rather God's works go unspoken (Ps 107:2). Nebuchadnezzar now calls God "the Most High God" and confesses His "everlasting kingdom" — language that echoes Daniel's own song in 2:20–22. Chapter 2 gave him the truth; chapter 3 showed him its power; chapter 4 finally brings it home.

At ease (vv4–9)

The danger came when life was good. "At ease ... flourishing" (v4) — prosperity, not crisis, set up the fall (Deut 8:11–14; Prov 30:8–9). Again the wise men fail, and Daniel comes in last. Guzik suggests the

dream wasn't hard to interpret — the wise men may have lacked courage more than insight. The king still calls Daniel "Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god" (v8) and speaks of "a spirit of the holy gods" in him: he respects Daniel's God without yet bowing to Him.

The tree (vv10–17)

A great tree was a familiar picture of a mighty ruler (Ezek 31:3–14; compare Ezek 17:22–24). Guzik cites Wood: "Both the Assyrian and the Babylonian kings thought of themselves as rulers over all the earth." The "watcher" is an angel — the only place in the Bible this title is used — an observer who carries out heaven's decree (v17). The stump with a band of iron and bronze is grace inside judgment: the tree will be cut, but not uprooted. "Seven periods of time" is most naturally seven years.

The key verse of the chapter is v17: "the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind … and sets over it the lowliest of men." Repeated in vv25 and 32 and confessed in vv34–35, it is the lesson of the whole book of Daniel.

Daniel's courage and compassion (vv19–27)

Daniel is "appalled" — not because the meaning is unclear, but because he cares about the king. He wishes the dream were about the king's enemies (v19). Then he says it plainly: "It is you, O king" (v22) — like Nathan to David, "You are the man!" (2 Sam 12:7). And he doesn't stop at the warning; he pleads for repentance (v27). Daniel's counsel is specific: break with sin by doing what's right, and show mercy to the poor — the very people a proud king exploits (Prov 14:31; Isa 58:6–7). Repentance might lengthen his peace, as it did for Nineveh (Jonah 3:10).

Twelve months of grace (vv28–30)

God gave him a full year. Then, on the palace roof, looking out over the city, he says it: "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built?" (v30). Guzik notes that archaeology confirms Nebuchadnezzar as Babylon's great builder — bricks stamped with his name, inscriptions boasting of his building. The sin isn't that he built it, but that he took the glory: "I myself … by the might of my power … for the glory of my majesty."

"While the word was in the king's mouth" (vv31–33)

Judgment comes instantly. His mind is taken, and he lives like an animal for seven periods of time. Guzik notes a rare recorded mental illness in which a person believes he is an animal (sometimes called *boanthropy* when he believes he is an ox), and cites ancient writers such as Abydenus who preserved traditions of Nebuchadnezzar's strange end. The point Daniel makes: pride is a kind of madness, and God showed the king outwardly what he had become inwardly — a beast who never looks up (Ps 49:20; 73:22).

Eyes up (vv34–37)

Restoration begins with one act: "I … raised my eyes toward heaven" (v34). His reason returns the moment he looks up — the opposite of v30, where he looked out over his own works. His praise is a real confession: God's dominion is everlasting; the inhabitants of earth are "accounted as nothing"; no one can stop His hand or question Him (v35; Isa 40:15–17; Rom 9:20). Spurgeon, in Guzik: "The God whom we serve not only exists, but reigns." He ends with the lesson of his life: "He is able to humble

those who walk in pride" (v37; James 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5–6). Many believe Nebuchadnezzar came to genuine faith here — it is the last we hear of him in Scripture.

Word study (Aramaic)

- **signs — *ʾath* (H852):** a sign, miraculous token.
- **wonders — *temahh* (H8540):** a wonder, marvel.
- **at ease — *shelēh* (H7954):** at rest, secure, carefree.
- **flourishing — *raʿanan* (H7487):** green, luxuriant, prospering.
- **tree — *ʾilan* (H363):** a tree.
- **watcher — *ʿir* (H5894):** a watcher, a wakeful one — an angel who keeps watch.
- **holy one — *qaddish* (H6922):** holy, a holy one.
- **stump — *ʿiqqar* (H6136):** the root-stock, stump.
- **mind / heart — *lebab* (H3825):** heart, mind, inner man.
- **times — *ʿiddan* (H5732):** time, a set period (here likely a year).
- **ruler — *shallit* (H7990):** having mastery, ruler, sovereign.
- **lowliest — *shephal* (H8215):** low, humble, base.
- **break away — *peraq* (H6562):** to break off, tear away.
- **mercy — *chanan* (H2604):** to show favor, be gracious.
- **majesty — *hadar* (H1923):** honor, splendor.
- **reason — *mandaʿ* (H4486):** knowledge, understanding.
- **humble — *shephal* (H8214):** to bring low, abase.

Cross-references

Deut 8:11–18; 1 Sam 2:6–8; 2 Sam 12:7; 2 Chr 26:16; Ps 49:20; Ps 73:22; Ps 75:6–7; Ps 103:19; Ps 107:2; Prov 16:18; Prov 29:23; Isa 14:12–15; Isa 40:15–17; Isa 47:7–10; Ezek 31:3–14; Jonah 3:10; Luke 1:51–52; Luke 12:16–21; Acts 12:21–23; Rom 9:20; 1 Cor 4:7; James 4:6–10; 1 Pet 5:5–6.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 4:34 (KJV)

34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and ★ mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

Command to obey — "break away now from your sins."

Daniel didn't just warn; he called for change — do what's right and show mercy to the poor (v27). Repentance isn't only feeling bad; it's turning around. Where is God asking me to break away *now*, not

someday? For the men I disciple, this may be the one step they keep putting off — the call, the meeting, the confession, the amends.

Sin to confess — "which I myself have built."

I am a builder: books, websites, apps, ministries. The danger is the roof of the palace — standing over my work and saying "look what I made." I'll confess every place I've taken credit for what God has done through me (1 Cor 4:7) and give Him the glory out loud.

Warning to heed — prosperity sets up the fall

Nebuchadnezzar was "at ease … flourishing" when the dream came. Good seasons are dangerous seasons. And the warning came with twelve months of grace — which he wasted. If God is warning me about something, the time to respond is now. "Pride goes before destruction" (Prov 16:18).

Promise to trust — the stump remains

The tree was cut down, but the stump was left with a band around it (v15). God's judgment on His creature had restoration built into it. For the man who has lost everything — family, freedom, reputation — the stump is hope: God can bring life back from what was cut down (Job 14:7–9).

Example to follow — "I raised my eyes toward heaven."

The turning point was one look up. For a man stuck in the mire, the first step back is to lift his eyes to the God who rules.

Worship

The Most High rules. He gives kingdoms to whom He wishes; He sets the lowly up and brings the proud down; no one can stop His hand. Nebuchadnezzar's last recorded words are worship.

Prayer

Most High God, You rule over the realm of mankind. Forgive me for every time I've stood on the roof of my own works and taken the glory. Humble me before You have to humble me. Lift my eyes to heaven, clear my mind, and let my life end, like this king's testimony, in praise of the King of heaven. Amen.

Daniel 5

The Writing on the Wall: Weighed and Found Wanting

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Belshazzar knew what God had done to his grandfather and mocked Him anyway — on the last night of his life. God numbered his days, weighed his life, and gave his kingdom away before morning. Knowing the truth isn't enough; I must humble my heart.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

DANIEL 5 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

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

2 Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

8 Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonied.

10 Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:

11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

13 Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?

14 I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

15 And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing:

16 And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be ⇄ the third ruler in the kingdom.

17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

18 O thou king, ▲ the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour:

19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew ; and whom he would he kept alive ; and whom he would he set up ; and whom he would he put down .

20 But when ⚠ his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that ▲ the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, ⚠ hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;

23 But hast ⚠ lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the ⇄ vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and ▲ the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

25 And this is the writing that was written, ◷ MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; ▲ God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

27 TEKEL; Thou art ⚠ weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to ◷ the Medes and Persians.

29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be ⇄ the third ruler in the kingdom.

30 ◷ In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

31 And ◷ Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ⚠ a great feast
- **v2** ⇄ vessels *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** ⚠ praised the gods of gold
- **v5** ◷ fingers of a man's hand
- **v5** ◷ the plaister of the wall
- **v6** ⚠ his knees smote one against another
- **v7** ⇄ the third ruler *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ★ an excellent spirit
- **v17** Let thy gifts be to thyself
- **v18** ▲ the most high God gave
- **v20** ⚠ his heart was lifted up
- **v21** ▲ the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men

- **v22** ⚠ hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this
- **v23** ⚠ lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven
- **v23** ▲ the God in whose hand thy breath is
- **v25** ◷ MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN
- **v26** ▲ God hath numbered thy kingdom
- **v27** ⚠ weighed in the balances, and art found wanting
- **v28** ◷ the Medes and Persians
- **v30** ◷ In that night
- **v31** ◷ Darius the Median

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 5:5 (KJV)

5 In the same hour came forth ◷ fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon ◷ the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

Setting

About twenty-three years after Nebuchadnezzar's death, Babylon is under siege by the Medes and Persians. Inside the walls, "Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand" (v1). It is October 539 BC, and this is Babylon's last night. Daniel is now an old man, probably in his early eighties.

Structure

- vv1–4 — **the feast:** while drinking, Belshazzar "gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem" (v2). The king, his nobles, wives and concubines drink from them (v3). "They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone" (v4).
- vv5–9 — **the hand:** "Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace" (v5). "the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together" (v6). He promises purple, a gold necklace and the position of "third ruler in the kingdom" to anyone who can read it (v7). The wise men can't (v8).
- vv10–16 — **the queen remembers Daniel:** the queen enters: "There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods" (v11) — the one Nebuchadnezzar made chief of the wise men, who had "an extraordinary spirit" (v12). Daniel is brought in (v13). The king makes the same offer (vv14–16).
- vv17–24 — **Daniel's sermon:** "Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king" (v17). Daniel reminds him of Nebuchadnezzar: God gave him greatness (vv18–19), but "when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed" (v20), until he recognized "that the Most High God is ruler

over the realm of mankind" (v21). "Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven" (vv22–23). "But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified" (v23). So the hand was sent (v24).

- vv25–28 — **the writing:** "MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN" (v25). "MENĒ — God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it" (v26). "TEKĒL — you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient" (v27). "PERĒS — your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians" (v28).
- vv29–31 — **that same night:** Daniel is clothed in purple and proclaimed third ruler (v29). "That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain" (v30). "So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two" (v31).

Repeated words

vessels (vv2, 3, 23); drank / drinking wine (vv1, 2, 3, 4, 23); gods of gold and silver … (vv4, 23); writing / inscription (vv5, 7, 8, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25); interpretation (vv7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 17, 26); third ruler (vv7, 16, 29); purple and a gold necklace (vv7, 16, 29); face / countenance changed (vv6, 9, 10); father (Nebuchadnezzar) (vv2, 11, 13, 18); the Most High God (vv18, 21).

Contrasts

a thousand drinking (v1) ⟷ one hand writing (v5). Holy vessels for God (v2) ⟷ used to praise idols (v4). The king's knees knocking (v6) ⟷ Daniel calm, refusing gifts (v17). Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself (v21) ⟷ Belshazzar "knew all this" and didn't (v22). Gods "which do not see, hear or understand" (v23) ⟷ "the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways." Purple and gold for Daniel (v29) ⟷ death for the king that same night (v30).

Chapter theme (my words)

Belshazzar knew what God had done to his grandfather and mocked Him anyway — on the last night of his life. God numbered his days, weighed his life, and gave his kingdom away before morning. Knowing the truth isn't enough; I must humble my heart.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 5:23 (KJV)

23 But hast ⚠ lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the ⇄ vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and ▲ the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

Who was Belshazzar?

For centuries critics said Daniel was wrong: ancient lists named Nabonidus as Babylon's last king, and no Belshazzar was known. Then cuneiform records — including the Nabonidus Cylinder and the Nabonidus Chronicle — turned up naming Belshazzar as Nabonidus's eldest son, who ruled in Babylon as co-regent while his father lived for years in Arabia. Guzik dates the co-regency from about 553 BC to the fall of the city in 539. That explains the strange offer of "third ruler" (vv7, 16, 29): Nabonidus was first, Belshazzar second — the best he could give was third. "Father" (v2) is normal ancient usage for an ancestor or predecessor; Belshazzar may have been Nebuchadnezzar's grandson through his mother.

A party under siege (vv1–4)

The Medo-Persian army was outside the walls. Babylon's walls were famous and its supplies huge, so Belshazzar threw a party. Then, drunk, he did what Nebuchadnezzar never did: he brought out the holy vessels from God's temple to toast his idols. It was deliberate mockery — a statement that Babylon's gods had beaten the God of Israel. Trapp, in Guzik, says drink takes "ale out of the pot, money out of the purse, and wit out of the head" (Eph 5:18; Prov 20:1).

The writing on the wall (vv5–9)

Our phrase "the writing on the wall" comes from here. The hand writes on the plaster "opposite the lampstand" — in the brightest spot, where everyone could see. The king who mocked God falls apart: face pale, legs giving way, knees knocking. A guilty conscience knows when God has spoken (Prov 28:1). His wise men can't read it — perhaps they could read the letters but not make sense of them, perhaps God veiled it until Daniel came.

The forgotten man (vv10–16)

The queen — most likely the queen mother, perhaps Nebuchadnezzar's daughter — remembers what the king has forgotten: Daniel. Guzik notes he seems to have been set aside, out of the current administration. Faithful men are often forgotten by the powerful until a crisis. Belshazzar's words "I have heard about you" (v14; compare v16) show he has never sought Daniel out.

Daniel's sermon (vv17–24)

Daniel refuses the gifts — he can't be bought, and he won't soften the message to earn a reward. Then, before he reads a word, he preaches. He retells chapter 4: God gave Nebuchadnezzar everything,

humbled him when he was proud, and restored him when he acknowledged the Most High. Then the charge: "you … have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this" (v22). Guzik: Belshazzar was judged by the light he had. He had the testimony of his own family, and he sinned against knowledge (Luke 12:47–48; James 4:17). And the deepest charge: the God who holds your every breath, you have not glorified (v23; Acts 17:25, 28; Rom 1:21).

Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin (vv25–28)

The words are Aramaic weights and measures — a mina, a shekel, and halves (*parsin*, plural of *peres*, "half") — like writing "dollar, dollar, dime, half-dollars" on the wall. Daniel reads them as verbs:

- **MENĒ — numbered.** Repeated twice for certainty: God has counted the days of your kingdom and they are up.
- **TEKĒL — weighed.** You were put on God's scales and came up short (1 Sam 2:3; Ps 62:9; Prov 16:2).
- **PERĒS — divided.** Your kingdom is broken and handed to the Medes and Persians. *Peres* also sounds like *Paras*, Persia.

Clarke, in Guzik, sums them up as numeration, weighing and division.

That same night (vv29–31)

Belshazzar keeps his word and honors Daniel — and is killed hours later. Guzik cites Herodotus: Cyrus's engineers diverted the Euphrates, which ran through the city, so his soldiers could walk into Babylon along the riverbed under the walls. Isaiah had named Cyrus as Babylon's conqueror more than a century earlier, and spoke of drying up its rivers and opening its gates (Isa 44:27–45:2; compare Jer 50:38; 51:30–32, 39, 57). The city fell almost without a fight. The head of gold is gone; the silver kingdom of chapter 2 has arrived. Darius the Mede — about sixty-two — receives the kingdom; Guzik identifies him with Gubaru, the governor Cyrus set over Babylon. Daniel has outlived the whole Babylonian empire.

Word study (Aramaic)

- **feast — *lechem* (H3900):** bread, a feast, a banquet.
- **vessels — *maʾn* (H3984):** vessels, utensils.
- **concubines — *lechenah* (H3904):** a concubine.
- **praised — *shebach* (H7624):** to laud, praise, glorify.
- **lampstand — *nebrashta* (H5043):** a lamp, lampstand.
- **plaster — *gir* (H1528):** lime, plaster.
- **interpretation — *peshar* (H6591):** explanation, solution.
- **third ruler — *talti* (H8523, v7) / *telath* (H8531, vv16, 29):** third in rank.
- **extraordinary — *yattir* (H3493):** preeminent, surpassing.
- **humbled — *shephal* (H8214):** to bring low, humble.
- **life-breath — *nishma* (H5396):** breath, life.
- **MENĒ — *mene* (H4484):** numbered; a mina (a weight).
- **TEKĒL — *teqal* (H8625):** weighed; a shekel.
- **PERĒS / UPHARSIN — *peras* (H6537):** divided; a half-mina; plural *parsin*, with *u-* "and."

- **scales — *mo'zenaya'* (H3977):** balances, scales.
- **deficient — *chassir* (H2627):** lacking, wanting.

Cross-references

Exod 20:7; Lev 10:1–3; 1 Sam 2:3; 2 Chr 36:7, 10, 18; Ezra 1:7–11; Ps 2:4; Ps 62:9; Prov 16:2, 18; Prov 20:1; Prov 28:1; Prov 29:1; Isa 13:17–22; Isa 21:1–10; Isa 44:27–45:2; Jer 25:11–12; Jer 50:38; Jer 51:30–32, 39, 57; Luke 12:16–21, 47–48; Acts 17:24–28; Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 10:20–22; Gal 6:7; James 4:17; Heb 9:27; Rev 18:10.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 5:12 (KJV)

12 Forasmuch as ★ an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

Command to obey — humble your heart

"Yet you … have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this" (v22). Knowing isn't enough. I know the stories, the verses, the warnings. The question is whether I've bowed. Today I'll name one truth I know but haven't obeyed, and humble myself in it. For the men I disciple, this is the man who has heard every sermon in rehab or prison and still won't surrender.

Sin to confess — treating holy things as common

Belshazzar took what belonged to God and used it for his party. My body is a temple (1 Cor 6:19–20); my time, my gifts and the Lord's Supper are holy. Where have I taken something God set apart and used it to serve myself? I'll confess it and give it back to Him.

Warning to heed — weighed and found deficient

Every life will be weighed. On my own, I come up short (Rom 3:23). Belshazzar's last night looked like any other party. There may be no warning but the one I already have (Prov 29:1; Heb 9:27). Only in Christ am I found complete (Col 2:10).

Promise to trust — God holds my breath

"The God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways" (v23). For the proud man that's a warning; for the humble man it's comfort. Every breath I take, every road I walk, is in His hand. I don't need to grasp for control.

Example to follow — Daniel at eighty

Forgotten by the powerful, called in only when there was trouble, Daniel was still ready — still faithful, still unbought, still telling the truth with courage. I want to finish like that: not chasing gifts or position, but ready to speak God's word when it's needed.

Worship

The God who numbers kingdoms numbers my days too (Ps 90:12). He weighs nations on His scales, and He gives kingdoms to whom He wills. Babylon fell in a night; His kingdom never will.

Prayer

Lord of heaven, You hold my breath and all my ways. Forgive me for knowing the truth and not humbling my heart. Keep me from treating holy things as common. Teach me to number my days, find me clothed in Christ when I'm weighed, and keep me faithful like Daniel to the very end. Amen.

Daniel 6

The Lions' Den:
As He Had Been Doing Previously

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The only thing Daniel's enemies could attack was his faithfulness to God. He kept praying as he always had, went into the den, and God shut the lions' mouths. A life of daily prayer prepared him for a night with lions — and turned a pagan king's decree into praise for the living God.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

DANIEL 6 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.

3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

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

5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into ⇄ the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, ▲ Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king ◷ sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto ⇄ the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of ▲ the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 ▲ My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him ★ innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, ★ because he believed in his God.

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

25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is ▲ the living God, and stedfast for ever, and ▲ his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

27 ▲ He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

28 So this Daniel ★ prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Marked in the text

- **v3** ★ an excellent spirit
- **v4** ★ he was faithful
- **v4** ★ neither was there any error or fault found in him
- **v5** ▲ the law of his God
- **v7** ⇄ the den of lions *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** ◷ thirty days
- **v8** ◷ the law of the Medes and Persians *(every occurrence)*
- **v10** ◷ his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem
- **v10** ▮▮ kneeled upon his knees
- **v10** ◷ three times a day *(every occurrence)*
- **v10** ▮▮ gave thanks before his God
- **v10** ▮▮ as he did aforetime
- **v13** ⚠ regardeth not thee
- **v14** ⚠ sore displeased with himself
- **v16** ▲ Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee
- **v17** ◷ sealed it with his own signet
- **v20** ▲ the living God *(every occurrence)*
- **v22** ▲ My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths
- **v22** ★ innocency was found in me
- **v23** ★ because he believed in his God

- **v24** ⚠ brake all their bones
- **v26** ▲ his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed
- **v27** ▲ He delivereth and rescueth
- **v28** ★ prospered

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 6:10 (KJV)

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime .

Setting

Babylon has fallen (5:30–31). "Darius the Mede" now governs, and he reorganizes the kingdom: "It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom" (v1), with three commissioners over them, "of whom Daniel was one" (v2). Daniel is past eighty. He has served under Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and now the Medo-Persians. (In Hebrew and Aramaic Bibles the verse numbers in this chapter run one higher; 5:31 is 6:1.)

Structure

- vv1–5 — **a man without fault:** "this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom" (v3). His jealous rivals look for something against him, "but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him" (v4). "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God" (v5).
- vv6–9 — **the trap:** they come to the king as a mob, claim that all the officials agree (v7), and propose that "anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den" (v7) — signed "according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked" (v8). Darius signs it (v9).
- vv10–15 — **Daniel prays as before:** "Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously" (v10). The men find him (v11) and report him (vv12–13). The king "was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him" (v14). But the law cannot be changed (v15).
- vv16–18 — **into the den:** Daniel is thrown to the lions. The king: "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you" (v16). A stone seals the den with the king's signet (v17). The king

spends the night fasting, "and his sleep fled from him" (v18).

- vv19–24 — **"My God sent His angel":** at dawn the king runs to the den: "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?" (v20). "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him" (v22). Daniel is lifted out, "and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God" (v23). His accusers are thrown in with their families, and the lions overpower them before they reach the bottom (v24).
- vv25–28 — **the king's decree:** "men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; for He is the living God and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed" (v26). "He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (v27). "So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (v28).

Repeated words

lions' den (vv7, 12, 16, 19, 24); deliver / rescue (vv14, 16, 20, 27); the law of the Medes and Persians (vv8, 12, 15); injunction / document / signed (vv7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15); petition / prayer (vv7, 11, 12, 13); three times a day (vv10, 13); his / your / my God (vv5, 10, 11, 16, 20, 22, 23); serve constantly (vv16, 20); the living God (vv20, 26); find / found (vv4, 5, 11, 22, 23); harm / injury (vv22, 23).

Contrasts

no fault found in his work (v4) ⟷ fault found only in his faithfulness to God (v5). A law that cannot be changed (v15) ⟷ a God who can deliver (v27). The king's sleepless night (v18) ⟷ Daniel's night with the lions. "Has your God … been able?" (v20) ⟷ "My God sent His angel" (v22). No injury on Daniel (v23) ⟷ the accusers crushed before they hit the bottom (v24). A decree against prayer (v7) ⟷ a decree to fear the God of Daniel (v26).

Chapter theme (my words)

The only thing Daniel's enemies could attack was his faithfulness to God. He kept praying as he always had, went into the den, and God shut the lions' mouths. A life of daily prayer prepared him for a night with lions — and turned a pagan king's decree into praise for the living God.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 6:22 (KJV)

22 ▲ My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him ★ innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

Who is Darius? (vv1–3)

Outside the Bible, no "Darius the Mede" appears by that name. Guzik lists the main views: Darius was another name for Cyrus himself; or Cambyses; or Gubaru, the governor Cyrus set over Babylon. He leans toward Gubaru and notes that "Darius" may be a title rather than a personal name. The reorganization — 120 satraps under three commissioners — fits what we know of Persian administration. Daniel rose to the top again. Calvin, in Guzik: "Daniel here is not the herald of his own virtue, but the Spirit speaks through his mouth."

Faithful in his work (vv4–5)

His enemies investigated him and found nothing — no corruption, no negligence. He was faithful (Aramaic *ʾaman*, trustworthy). That's a high bar: excellence in public work is part of a believer's witness (Col 3:23; 1 Pet 2:12). Maclaren, in Guzik: "The world is a very poor critic of my Christianity, but it is a very sufficient one of my conduct." The only way to get Daniel was to make his relationship with God illegal.

The trap (vv6–9)

The officials "came by agreement" — a noisy crowd — and lied that "all" the commissioners agreed, though Daniel, the chief of them, was never asked. They flatter the king with a thirty-day law making him the only one anyone could petition. Under Medo-Persian law a signed royal decree could not be revoked (compare Esth 1:19; 8:8) — which is exactly why chapter 2 described the silver kingdom as inferior: even the king was bound by his own laws.

Daniel prays as before (vv10–13)

Daniel didn't panic, protest or hide. He went home and did exactly what he had always done — "as he had been doing previously" (v10). Three details matter:

- **Windows open toward Jerusalem** — following Solomon's prayer that exiles would pray toward the temple (1 Kgs 8:46–50).
- **On his knees** — humility before God (Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60; Eph 3:14). Heslop, in Guzik: "Kneeling is a begging posture and we must all come to God as beggars."
- **Three times a day** — the habit of a lifetime (Ps 55:17).

Morgan, in Guzik: "The occasional is always affected by the habitual." Daniel didn't pray *less* to avoid trouble, and he didn't pray *more* to make a show. He just kept his habit. And notice: he prayed "giving thanks" — with a death sentence signed.

The trapped king (vv14–18)

Darius is "deeply distressed" — with himself — and works until sunset to find a way out. But his own law binds him. Guzik notes his words of faith (v16) and his sleepless, fasting night. The seal on the stone ensures nothing will change "in regard to Daniel" (v17) — it also protects Daniel from anyone who might come to finish him off.

"My God sent His angel" (vv19–23)

The king calls him "servant of the living God" and asks whether his God has been able to deliver him (v20). Daniel answers with a royal greeting and a testimony: God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths (v22; Heb 11:33). He was innocent before God and had done no crime against the king. Guzik calls this "obedient disobedience": Daniel disobeyed an unjust law without rebelling against the king (Acts 5:29; Rom 13:1–7). And the reason given for his deliverance: "because he had trusted in his God" (v23).

The accusers (v24)

The lions weren't tame or full — they overpowered the accusers before they hit the bottom. Guzik: the trap they set caught them (Ps 7:15–16; Prov 26:27). The punishment of their families reflects Persian custom, not God's law (Deut 24:16).

Darius's decree (vv25–28)

A Medo-Persian ruler now calls the empire to fear the God of Daniel — "the living God and enduring forever," whose "kingdom … will not be destroyed" (v26) — echoing Nebuchadnezzar's confessions (4:3, 34). Guzik traces Daniel's path through the chapter: plotted against, praying, persecuted, protected, preserved, prospering. Many see a picture of Christ: a righteous man condemned by jealous rulers through a law that couldn't be changed, sealed under a stone, and brought out alive at dawn (Matt 27:18, 62–66; 28:1–6).

Word study (Aramaic)

- **satraps — *ʾachashdarpan* (H324):** a Persian provincial governor.
- **commissioners — *sarak* (H5632):** a chief, overseer.
- **extraordinary — *yattir* (H3493):** surpassing, preeminent.
- **ground of accusation — *ʿillah* (H5931):** a pretext, occasion.
- **faithful — *ʾaman* (H540):** trustworthy, reliable — the root of "amen."
- **corruption — *shechath* (H7844):** a fault, corrupt act.
- **came by agreement — *regash* (H7284):** to throng, come together tumultuously.
- **injunction — *ʾesar* (H633):** a binding decree, interdict.
- **revoked — *ʿada* (H5709):** to pass away, be changed.
- **roof chamber — *ʿillith* (H5952):** an upper room.
- **kneeling — *berak* (H1289):** to kneel; also to bless.
- **giving thanks — *yeda* (H3029):** to praise, give thanks.
- **petition — *baʿu* (H1159):** a request, prayer.
- **deliver — *shezib* (H7804):** to rescue, set free.

- **shut — *segar* (H5463):** to close, shut.
- **innocent — *zaku* (H2136):** purity, innocence.
- **trusted — *ʾaman* (H540):** to believe, trust.
- **living — *chay* (H2417):** alive, living.

Cross-references

1 Kgs 8:46–50; Esth 1:19; Esth 8:8; Ps 5:3; Ps 7:15–16; Ps 34:7; Ps 55:16–17; Ps 91:11–13; Prov 26:27; Matt 6:6; Matt 27:62–66; Luke 18:1; Luke 22:41; Acts 4:19–20; Acts 5:29; Acts 12:5–11; Phil 4:6–7; Col 3:23; 1 Thess 5:17; 2 Tim 3:12; 2 Tim 4:17–18; Heb 1:14; Heb 11:33; 1 Pet 2:12; 1 Pet 5:8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 6:4 (KJV)

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

Command to obey — keep the habit

Daniel didn't start praying when the crisis came; he kept praying the way he always had (v10). The night in the den was won in sixty years of mornings, noons and evenings on his knees. I'll set my prayer times and keep them — not as a law, but as a lifeline. For the men I disciple, a daily rhythm of prayer and the Word is what holds when the lions come.

Sin to confess — a faith that hides

Daniel left his windows open. I'm tempted to keep my faith private when it might cost me — at work, with family, online. I'll confess where I've closed the windows, and ask God for quiet, steady courage, not showy defiance.

Warning to heed — the accusers

Some people will look for anything to use against me. If they search my life, will they find corruption or negligence — or only faithfulness to God? I want to give them nothing to find but Jesus. And I must not become an accuser myself; the trap they set caught them (Prov 26:27).

Promise to trust — "My God sent His angel."

God doesn't always keep me out of the den, but He can shut the lions' mouths. "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them" (Ps 34:7). For the man walking into a courtroom, a prison yard or a hard conversation: the God who shut the lions' mouths goes with you (2 Tim 4:17–18).

Example to follow — faithful at work, faithful to God

Daniel's coworkers couldn't find a single fault in how he did his job. My work — for clients, for my business, for the ministry — should be so honest and excellent that the only charge left is "he serves his God."

Worship

He is the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed. He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders. A pagan king said it; I say it with my whole heart.

Prayer

Living God, You shut the lions' mouths. Build in me a daily habit of prayer that holds when the pressure comes. Make me faithful in my work and unashamed of my faith. When I face the den, let me trust You as Daniel did — and let my life lead others to fear and worship You. Amen.

Daniel 7

Four Beasts and the Son of Man

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Man's kingdoms look like beasts from God's side of the throne — and they all end at His court, where the Son of Man receives the kingdom and shares it with His saints.

Ed Smith · Started 10 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

DANIEL 7 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word

⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] In the ◷ first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

[2] Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

[3] And four great ⇄ beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

[4] The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

[5] And behold another ⇄ beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

[6] After this I beheld , and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the ⇄ beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

[7] After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth ⇄ beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the ⇄ beasts that were before it; and it had ten ⇄ horns.

[8] I considered the ⇄ horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little ⇄ horn, before whom there were three of the first ⇄ horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this ⇄ horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

[9] I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ▲ Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was ▲ white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

[10] A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and ▲ the books were opened.

[11] I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the ⇄ horn spake: I beheld even till the ⇄ beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

[12] As concerning the rest of the ⇄ beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

[13] I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the ▲ Son of man came with the ◷ clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

[14] And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should Green serve him: his dominion is an ★ everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall ★ not be destroyed.

15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.

18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.

21 I beheld , and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;

22 Until the Ancient of days came , and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

28 Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

Marked in the text

- **v1** first year of Belshazzar
- **v2** beast *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** Arise, devour much
- **v7** horn *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** Ancient of Days
- **v9** white as snow
- **v9** white snow
- **v10** the books were opened
- **v13** Son of Man
- **v13** clouds of heaven
- **v14** everlasting dominion
- **v14** not be destroyed
- **v14** serve him
- **v18** possess the kingdom
- **v21** war with the saints
- **v22** possessed the kingdom
- **v22** possession of the kingdom
- **v25** against the Most High
- **v25** a time
- **v27** an everlasting kingdom
- **v27** serve and obey

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 7:9 (KJV)

9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ▲ Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was ▲ white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

Setting

The first year of Belshazzar (about 553 BC) — so chronologically this vision comes *before* the handwriting on the wall (ch. 5) and the lions' den (ch. 6). Daniel is an old man in Babylon, and the dream comes by night, on his bed (v1). He writes it down and relates a summary of it (KJV: "the sum of the matters").

Language

Daniel 7 is the last chapter of the Aramaic section (2:4b–7:28). The Gentile-world prophecy is written in the Gentile language; chapter 8 returns to Hebrew.

Who / what

- Four winds stirring up the great sea (v2) → four great beasts rise out of the sea, each different (v3).
- Beast 1 — lion with eagle's wings; wings plucked, made to stand like a man, given a human mind (v4).
- Beast 2 — bear, raised up on one side, three ribs in its mouth; told "Arise, devour much" (v5).
- Beast 3 — leopard with four wings and four heads; dominion given to it (v6).
- Beast 4 — dreadful, terrifying, extremely strong, large iron teeth, crushing and trampling; different from all the others; ten horns (v7).
- A little horn comes up among the ten, uproots three, has eyes like a man and a mouth speaking great boasts (v8).
- Thrones set up; the Ancient of Days takes His seat — His vesture like white snow, hair like pure wool, throne of fire, a river of fire; thousands upon thousands serve Him; the court sits and the books are opened (vv9–10).
- The beast is slain and burned; the other beasts lose dominion but live on for a time (vv11–12).
- One like a Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days and is given dominion, glory and a kingdom that will not be destroyed (vv13–14).
- Daniel is distressed and asks an attendant (vv15–16), who interprets: four kings; but the saints of the Highest One receive the kingdom forever (vv17–18).
- Daniel presses about the fourth beast and the horn that wages war with the saints and overpowers them — until the Ancient of Days comes (vv19–22).

- Interpretation of the horn: speaks against the Most High, wears down the saints, intends to change times and law; saints given into his hand "for a time, times, and half a time" (vv23–25). Then the court sits, his dominion is taken, and the kingdom is given to the saints (vv26–27).
- Daniel is greatly alarmed, his face grows pale, he keeps the matter to himself (v28).

Repeated words

beast(s), horn(s), dominion, kingdom, saints of the Highest One, "I kept looking" (KJV: "I beheld"), Ancient of Days.

Contrasts

beasts rising from the sea ⟷ the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. Beasts *seize* dominion ⟷ the Son of Man is *given* dominion. The horn *wars against* the saints ⟷ the saints *receive* the kingdom. Kingdoms that pass ⟷ a kingdom that will not be destroyed.

Time words

first year of Belshazzar; "in the night visions"; "for an appointed period of time" (v12); "until the Ancient of Days came"; "a time, times, and half a time"; "forever, for all ages to come" (v18).

Chapter theme (my words)

Man's kingdoms look like beasts from God's side of the throne — and they all end at His court, where the Son of Man receives the kingdom and shares it with His saints.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 7:13 (KJV)

13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the ▲ Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

Context — Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 tell the same story twice

Nebuchadnezzar saw the empires as a magnificent statue of precious metals; Daniel sees the same empires as devouring beasts. Guzik's point: the statue is how man sees his own history; the beasts are how God sees it. Same four kingdoms, same end — a kingdom from heaven that crushes the rest and fills the earth.

The four beasts (Guzik, Enduring Word)

- **Lion with eagle's wings = Babylon.** Lions and eagles both describe Nebuchadnezzar in Jeremiah (Jer 4:7; 49:19–22). The plucked wings and "human mind" fit Daniel 4 — the proud king humbled and restored.
- **Bear raised on one side = Medo-Persia.** The higher side is Persia's dominance in the partnership (compare the ram's higher horn in 8:3). The three ribs are most often read as Lydia, Babylon and

Egypt — three major conquests.

- **Leopard with four wings and four heads = Greece.** Speed: Alexander took the Persian world in about a decade (Granicus 334, Issus 333, Gaugamela 331 BC). After his death in 323 BC his empire split four ways — Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy. Guzik (citing Strauss): the lion devours, the bear crushes, the leopard springs.
- **The fourth beast = Rome** — bigger, longer, harder than all the others, with iron teeth matching the iron legs of Daniel 2. Its ten horns line up with the ten toes of Daniel 2 (Archer). Guzik holds that the ten kings are still future — a final confederation that grows out of the Roman world.

The little horn

He rises after the ten, uproots three, speaks great boasts, wars against the saints, and tries to change times and law (vv8, 20–25). Guzik identifies him with the Antichrist of the last days. That is the same mouth "speaking arrogant words and blasphemies" with authority for forty-two months in Revelation 13:5–6, and the same "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4. "A time, times, and half a time" = 3½ years, which matches the 1,260 days and 42 months of Revelation 11–13 and the last half of Daniel's seventieth week (9:27). Guzik notes that Calvin spiritualized this as fulfilled before Christ's first coming. Guzik disagrees, because nothing in history answers to a kingdom handed to the saints after a final court of judgment.

"Wear down the saints" (v25)

The Aramaic *bela* (H1080) is used of a garment wearing out by long use. Guzik cites Wood: this is continual harassment, not one blow. Guzik also cites Archer: it is easier to die for the Lord in one moment than to live for Him under constant pressure.

The Ancient of Days and the Son of Man

Guzik sees two distinct persons: the Ancient of Days is God the Father, and the Son of Man comes *to* Him (v13). The white garment and white hair speak of eternity and purity, and the fire speaks of judgment. "Son of Man" was Jesus' favorite name for Himself. At His trial He quoted this verse, and the high priest tore his robes because he knew exactly what Jesus was claiming (Mark 14:61–64). Compare Revelation 1:13–14, where Jesus Himself has hair "white like white wool, like snow" — the attributes of the Ancient of Days.

The saints receive the kingdom

Guzik's point on v27: the kingdom is something *received*, not *achieved*. The saints don't build it; it is given at the Lord's return (v22; Rev 20:4; 1 Cor 6:2). He reads it as a literal future reign, not the church slowly improving the world. Strauss (quoted by Guzik): the Bible predicts no peace-loving world ruler for the last days.

Word study (Aramaic — Daniel 7 is Aramaic)

- **beast — *cheva* (H2423):** a wild animal. The empires are not shepherds; they devour.
- **horn — *qeren* (H7162):** a symbol of strength and royal power; a horn = a king (v24).
- **Ancient of Days — *ʿattiq yomin* (H6268 + H3118):** "the One advanced in days" — the Eternal One, seated as Judge.

- **Son of Man — *kebar ʾenash* (H1247 + H606):** "one like a son of man," a truly human figure — yet He rides the clouds, which in the Old Testament only God does (Ps 104:3; Isa 19:1). Divine and human in one person.
- **dominion — *sholtan* (H7985):** rule or sovereignty; used again and again in this chapter. It is taken from the beasts and given to the Son of Man and then to the saints.
- **saints of the Highest One — *qaddishe ʿelyonin* (H6922 + H5946):** the holy ones who belong to the Highest One.
- **wear out — *bela* (H1080):** to wear down slowly, like an old garment.
- **times and law — *zimnin* (H2166) and *dat* (H1882):** set seasons and decrees. He tries to rewrite God's calendar and moral order (Guzik mentions the French Revolution's attempt to impose a ten-day work week).
- **a time — *ʿiddan* (H5732):** a set period (as in 4:16, 23, the "seven periods of time"). Here: 1 + 2 + ½ = 3½.

Cross-references

Dan 2:31–45; Rev 13:1–8; Rev 17:12–14; 2 Thess 2:3–8; Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 14:62; Rev 1:7, 13–14; Rev 5:9–10; Rev 20:4.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 7:14 (KJV)

14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Promise to trust

Every beast in this chapter ends at the same place — the court of the Ancient of Days (vv9–10, 26). No empire, no addiction, no warden, no diagnosis gets the last word. "The court sat, and the books were opened." When the news makes the world look like a sea in a storm, I go back to verse 9: thrones were set up, and Someone took His seat. Heaven isn't anxious, so I don't have to be.

Example to follow

Daniel saw the future and it *troubled* him (vv15, 28). He didn't shrug it off and he didn't fixate on it. He asked for understanding (v16) and kept the matter to himself (v28). That is how I want to handle prophecy and teach it: honest, sober, and prayerful, never sensational.

Sin to confess

The beasts are pride with teeth. The lion was humbled and "made to stand on two feet like a man" (v4), and Nebuchadnezzar learned that lesson the hard way. Where am I building my own little kingdom, trampling and grabbing? Lord, give me a man's heart and not a beast's.

For the men I walk with

"Wear down the saints" (v25) is exactly how the enemy works on men in recovery and men behind the wire. He rarely wins with one big blow; he grinds slowly — the daily drip of shame, temptation and discouragement. The answer in this chapter is not a better grind. It is the Son of Man, who receives the kingdom and *gives* it to His people (vv18, 22, 27). We don't white-knuckle our way into the kingdom; we receive it.

Command to obey

"All the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him" (v14). Today I bow to the Son of Man now, willingly, before every knee bows later.

Prayer

Ancient of Days, You are seated and You are not worried. Lord Jesus, Son of Man, You have the everlasting dominion. When I am worn down, remind me that the kingdom is received, not achieved. Keep me faithful through the long grind, and let me serve You gladly today. Amen.

Daniel 8

The Ram, the Goat and the Little Horn

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

History runs on God's clock. Proud powers rise and break on schedule, and the one who attacks God's people and God's worship is allowed only a measured time, then is broken by God's own hand.

Ed Smith · Started 10 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

DANIEL 8 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.

2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

5 And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.

6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away , and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.

12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days ; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.

16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.

17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright.

19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.

21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

Marked in the text

- **v1** third year of the reign
- **v2** Ulai
- **v3** ram *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** horn *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** goat *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** Beautiful Land
- **v9** pleasant land
- **v11** magnified
- **v12** transgression
- **v12** truth to the ground
- **v13** How long
- **v14** 2,300 evenings and mornings
- **v14** two thousand and three hundred days
- **v14** properly restored
- **v14** sanctuary be cleansed
- **v17** understand
- **v17** time of the end
- **v19** appointed
- **v24** not by his own power
- **v25** Prince of princes
- **v25** broken without
- **v26** many days
- **v27** business

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 8:14 (KJV)

14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days ; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Setting

The third year of Belshazzar (about 551 BC), two years after chapter 7 (v1). In the vision Daniel is at Susa (Shushan), the citadel in the province of Elam, beside the Ulai Canal (v2). Babylon still looks secure, yet the vision skips Babylon entirely and starts with the empire that will replace it.

Language

The Hebrew resumes here (8:1) and runs to the end of the book. The Aramaic chapters were about the Gentile world; from here on the focus is Israel, her sanctuary and her people.

Who / what

- A ram with two long horns — the longer one came up last — butting west, north and south; nothing could stand before him (vv3–4).
- A male goat from the west, crossing the earth without touching the ground, with a conspicuous horn between his eyes (v5). He charges the ram in mighty wrath, shatters both horns and tramples him (vv6–7).
- At the height of the goat's strength the large horn is broken, and four conspicuous horns come up toward the four winds (v8).
- From one of them a small horn grows exceedingly great toward the south, the east and the Beautiful Land (v9). It reaches to the host of heaven, throws some of the stars to the ground and tramples them (v10). It magnifies itself against the Commander of the host, takes away the regular sacrifice and throws down the sanctuary (v11). It flings truth to the ground and prospers (v12).
- One holy one asks another, "How long?" Answer: 2,300 evenings and mornings, then the holy place will be properly restored (vv13–14).
- A voice by the Ulai commands Gabriel to explain the vision (vv15–16). Daniel falls on his face; Gabriel says the vision pertains to the time of the end (vv17–19).
- Interpretation: the ram = kings of Media and Persia (v20); the goat = Greece, and the large horn = its first king (v21); the four horns = four kingdoms, "although not with his power" (v22).
- A king insolent and skilled in intrigue arises; mighty, but not by his own power; destroys the holy people; magnifies himself; opposes the Prince of princes — and will be broken without human agency (vv23–25).
- The vision is true; keep it secret, because it concerns many days in the future (v26). Daniel is exhausted and sick for days, then gets up and does the king's business (v27).

Repeated words

horn(s), ram, goat, great/magnified, host, sanctuary, vision, understand, end.

Contrasts

the ram "magnified himself" (v4) → the goat "magnified himself exceedingly" (v8) → the little horn magnifies himself up to the Commander of the host (v11, 25). Each pride is higher than the last — and each is broken. The horn's power is *not his own* (v24); his end comes *without human hand* (v25).

Places / directions

Susa, Elam, the Ulai; west, north, south, east; the Beautiful Land.

Time words

third year of Belshazzar; "How long?"; 2,300 evenings and mornings; the time of the end; the final period of the indignation; the appointed time; the latter period of their rule; many days in the future.

Chapter theme (my words)

History runs on God's clock. Proud powers rise and break on schedule, and the one who attacks God's people and God's worship is allowed only a measured time, then is broken by God's own hand.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 8:25 (KJV)

25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the ▲ Prince of princes; but he shall be ★ broken without hand.

This chapter names its own empires

Unlike chapter 7, the angel identifies the beasts: the ram is Media and Persia (v20), and the goat is Greece (v21). That anchors the whole of Daniel's prophetic scheme.

The ram = Medo-Persia (vv3–4, 20)

The higher horn that came up last is Persia overtaking Media under Cyrus. Guzik notes that the ram was a known Persian emblem — Wood cites Ammianus Marcellinus, and Strauss mentions a ram stamped on Persian coins. Its conquests run west (Babylon, Asia Minor), north (Armenia, the Caspian) and south (Egypt).

The goat = Greece; the great horn = Alexander (vv5–8, 21)

"Without touching the ground" pictures his speed. In about a decade he went from Macedonia to India. The broken horn is his sudden death at Babylon in 323 BC, around age 32, at the height of his power. Guzik traces the four horns to his generals' kingdoms — Cassander (Macedonia/Greece), Lysimachus (Thrace/Asia Minor), Seleucus (Syria and the east) and Ptolemy (Egypt). The empire was

divided by force, "although not with his power" (v22). Guzik adds that Alexander's spread of common (koine) Greek prepared the world for the New Testament and the Gospel.

The little horn = Antiochus IV Epiphanes (vv9–14, 23–25)

He rose out of the Seleucid horn and pushed south (Egypt), east, and toward the "Beautiful Land" — Israel (compare Dan 11:16, 41; Ezek 20:6). Guzik lists the fulfillments: he seized the throne by intrigue and flattery, slaughtered Jews, stopped the daily sacrifices, set up an altar to Zeus in the temple and offered swine on it (1 Maccabees 1), and seemed to prosper while doing it. He called himself *Theos Epiphanes* — "God manifest" — on his coins. Guzik also notes that God allowed it partly because of the corruption of Israel's own priestly leaders, who bought the high priesthood (Jason and Menelaus). Guzik calls Antiochus an accurate and dramatic fulfillment of this prophecy, written centuries ahead.

The 2,300 evenings and mornings (v14)

Two readings: 2,300 full days (about 6⅓ years), or 1,150 days counting the evening and morning sacrifices separately. Guzik favors 2,300 days, counted from the start of Antiochus' persecution (about 171 BC) to the temple's cleansing by Judas Maccabeus. That rededication is still remembered at Hanukkah — the Feast of Dedication that Jesus attended in John 10:22. Guzik firmly rejects William Miller's use of this verse to set 1844 for Christ's return; it was fulfilled before Christ ever came.

The double fulfillment (vv17, 19, 23)

Gabriel twice says this concerns "the time of the end" and "the final period of the indignation." Guzik — following Wood, and Luther before him — sees Antiochus as a *type*, sometimes called the "Antichrist of the Old Testament." He rises by intrigue, persecutes God's people, stops the sacrifice, desecrates the sanctuary, exalts himself and seems to prosper. All of that rehearses the final Antichrist (Dan 9:27; 11:36–37; Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:3–4). Both share the same end: broken "without human agency." Antiochus died of a sudden illness in 164 BC; the Antichrist will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus at His coming (2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:20).

"Not by his own power" (v24)

Guzik: Satan empowers, and God permits. Evil never has independent power; it operates on a leash.

Daniel's reaction (v27)

Exhausted and sick, Daniel still got up and went back to the king's business. Guzik's application: neither mysteries nor physical weakness kept him from his duty. Studying prophecy should make us more diligent at our work, not less.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **ram — *ʾayil* (H352):** also used of a leader or chief. **he-goat — *tsaphir ʿizzim* (H6842 + H5795):** the shaggy he-goat, which leads the flock.
- **horn — *qeren* (H7161):** strength, power, a king.
- **Beautiful Land — *tsebi* (H6643):** splendor, glory, also "gazelle." The land God calls glorious.
- **regular sacrifice — *tamid* (H8548):** "continual," the morning and evening offerings that never stopped — until he stopped them.

- **evenings and mornings — *ʿereb boqer* (H6153 + H1242):** the day counted the way Genesis 1 counts it; the core of the 2,300 debate.
- **properly restored / cleansed — *tsadaq* (H6663):** "made right, vindicated." The sanctuary is set right again.
- **time of the end — *ʿet qets* (H6256 + H7093):** the appointed end-point on God's schedule.
- **indignation — *zaʿam* (H2195):** God's fierce displeasure, the season of His wrath on rebellion.
- **insolent — *ʿaz panim* (H5794 + H6440):** literally "strong of face," brazen and shameless. **skilled in intrigue — *chidot* (H2420):** riddles, hidden schemes.
- **Prince of princes — *sar sarim* (H8269):** the Commander of the host — God Himself, whom the horn dares to oppose.
- **without human agency — *beʾephes yad* (H657 + H3027):** "with no hand." Compare the stone "cut out without hands" in Daniel 2:34.

Cross-references

Dan 11:21–35 (Antiochus in detail); Dan 11:36–45; Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:3–8; Rev 13:5–7; John 10:22; Dan 2:34, 45.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 8:17 (KJV)

17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

Promise to trust

"How long?" (v13) is the cry of every suffering believer, and heaven answered with a number. God doesn't just know the outcome; He has measured the duration. Whatever I'm walking through — and whatever the men I disciple are walking through, in a cell, in a hospital bed, in early sobriety — has an "evenings and mornings" limit set by God. It will not go one day past what He has appointed.

Sin to confess

The ram magnified himself, the goat magnified himself even more, and the little horn magnified himself up to the Commander of the host (vv4, 8, 11, 25). Pride always escalates, and it always breaks. Where am I making myself big? In ministry, in my opinions, in my own reputation? Lord, I would rather be small and kept than great and broken.

Warning to heed

The little horn will "fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper" (v12). Lies sometimes win for a season. I shouldn't be shocked when deceit seems to prosper, and I mustn't measure truth by what is working. I'll keep picking truth up off the ground.

Watch for this

Antiochus got in partly through the compromise of Israel's own leaders. The danger to God's people usually starts inside the camp before it shows up at the gate. That makes me want to guard my own integrity as a teacher and an editor of God's Word.

Example to follow

Daniel was sick for days and still did not understand the vision — "then I got up again and carried on the king's business" (v27). I don't have to have every prophecy figured out before I'm faithful today. Show up, do the work, keep your post. That is a word for every man in recovery: you don't need all the answers to take the next right step.

Prayer

Prince of princes, You set the limits on evil and You break it without human hands. When the world says "How long?", let me rest in Your appointed time. Humble my pride before it breaks me. Keep me picking truth up off the ground, and keep me faithful at the King's business today. Amen.

Daniel 9

The Prayer and the Seventy Weeks

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

A man who believes the Word prays the Word back to God, and heaven answers by unrolling God's calendar for Israel down to the Messiah — and beyond Him to the end.

Ed Smith · Started 10 October 2026

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00 The Text

DANIEL 9 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our ⇄ desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art ★ greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

24 Seventy ⇄ weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation ▲ for iniquity, and to bring in ★ everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the ▲ Messiah the Prince shall be seven ⇄ weeks, and threescore and two ⇄ weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26 And after threescore and two ⇄ weeks shall Messiah be ▲ cut off, but not for himself: and ⚠ the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war ⇄ desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of ⚠ abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Marked in the text

- **v2** seventy years
- **v2** ▲ the word of the LORD
- **v2** ⇄ desolations *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** prayer and supplications
- **v4** ▲ covenant
- **v5** ⚠ we have sinned
- **v7** ▲ Righteousness belong
- **v9** ▲ forgive
- **v11** ⚠ transgressed
- **v18** ★ great compassion
- **v19** O Lord, hear
- **v21** evening
- **v23** ★ highly esteemed
- **v23** ★ greatly beloved
- **v24** ⇄ weeks *(every occurrence)*
- **v24** Seventy weeks
- **v24** ▲ for iniquity
- **v24** ★ everlasting righteousness

- **v25** ▲ Messiah the Prince
- **v25** ◷ seven weeks
- **v26** ▲ cut off
- **v26** ⚠ the people of the prince
- **v27** ◷ of the week
- **v27** ⚠ abominations

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 9:24 (KJV)

24 Seventy ⇄ weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation ▲ for iniquity, and to bring in ★ everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Setting

The first year of Darius the Mede, about 539/538 BC (v1) — Babylon has just fallen (ch. 5). Daniel is in his eighties and has been in exile since 605 BC, nearly 67 years.

What triggers the prayer

Daniel "observed in the books" the number of years revealed to Jeremiah — seventy years of desolation for Jerusalem (v2; Jer 25:11–12; 29:10). He counts, realizes the time is almost up, and turns to prayer.

Structure

- vv1–2 — Daniel reads Scripture.
- v3 — Daniel prepares: prayer, supplications, fasting, sackcloth, ashes.
- vv4–15 — confession: God is great, awesome and covenant-keeping; "we" have sinned.
- vv16–19 — petition: turn Your anger from Jerusalem; let Your face shine on the desolate sanctuary; not for our righteousness but for Your great compassion; for Your own sake.
- vv20–23 — Gabriel arrives while Daniel is still praying, about the time of the evening offering.
- vv24–27 — the prophecy of the seventy weeks.

Who

Daniel; the LORD my God; Jeremiah; Moses; "our kings, our princes and our fathers"; the man Gabriel; Messiah the Prince; "the people of the prince who is to come"; "the many."

Repeated words

we have sinned / iniquity / rebelled / transgressed; Your name; Your city / Your people / Your holy mountain; desolate / desolations; weeks; righteousness; compassion / mercy; understand.

Lists

- Confession verbs (v5): sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly, rebelled, turned aside.
- Six purposes of the seventy weeks (v24): (1) finish the transgression, (2) make an end of sin, (3) make atonement for iniquity, (4) bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) seal up vision and prophecy, (6) anoint the most holy place.
- Petitions (v19): hear, forgive, listen and take action, do not delay.

Contrasts

"Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame" (v7). "Not on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion" (v18). Daniel asks about 70 *years*; God answers with 70 *weeks* (sevens).

Time words

first year of Darius; seventy years; "about the time of the evening offering"; "at the beginning of your supplications"; seventy weeks; seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; after the sixty-two weeks; one week; the middle of the week; until a complete destruction.

Terms of conclusion / cause

"because we have sinned" (v8); "for we have sinned" (v11); "because of our sins" (v16); "for Your sake" (v17); "for Your own sake" (v19); "for you are highly esteemed" (v23).

Chapter theme (my words)

A man who believes the Word prays the Word back to God, and heaven answers by unrolling God's calendar for Israel down to the Messiah — and beyond Him to the end.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 9:2 (KJV)

2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof ▲ the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish ◷ seventy years in the ⇄ desolations of Jerusalem.

Prophecy read rightly drives a man to his knees (vv1–3)

Guzik's first point is that prophecy is meant to be understood. Daniel took Jeremiah's seventy years as real, literal years. That one decision governs the rest of the chapter: if the seventy *years* were literal, the seventy *weeks* that answer them must be measured the same way. Guzik notes that Daniel was a busy government official who was still a man of prayer, and that the promise didn't make Daniel passive — it made him pray. God's promises invite our participation.

The confession (vv4–15)

It opens with who God is — great, awesome, covenant-keeping — before it says anything about Israel. Daniel was one of the most righteous men in Scripture, yet he prays "we," not "they." Guzik stresses that Daniel even confessed Israel's *prayerlessness*: all this calamity came, "yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD" (v13). The exile was God keeping His word, the curses of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 falling exactly as written (vv11–12).

The plea (vv16–19)

The ground of the request is God's character and glory, not Israel's merit: "for Your own sake." Guzik notes how the petitions come rapid-fire in v19, from a man who will not take no for an answer. Spurgeon (quoted by Guzik) longed for prayers that went beyond praying into agonizing.

Gabriel, swiftly (vv20–23)

The command went out "at the beginning of your supplications" (v23), so heaven moved on Daniel's first word (compare Isa 65:24). Guzik notes the timing: the evening offering, the hour of the afternoon sacrifice. Daniel still kept that hour 70 years after the altar was destroyed — and it was the hour when Jesus would die (Matt 27:45–46).

The seventy weeks (v24)

"Weeks" is Hebrew *shabuaʿ* — a unit of seven, like our word "dozen." Jacob served a "week" of years for Rachel (Gen 29:27–28), and Israel kept sabbatical years (Lev 25). So seventy sevens = 490 years. The address is specific: "your people and your holy city" — Israel and Jerusalem. Guzik, citing Talbot, calls it God's calendar for Israel, and he takes the six purposes literally. Atonement for iniquity was accomplished at the cross. The end of sin, everlasting righteousness, sealed-up prophecy and the anointing of the most holy place still await the King's return, so the seventy weeks are not yet complete.

Sixty-nine weeks to the Messiah (v25)

Guzik weighs four candidate decrees (Ezra 1; Ezra 6; Ezra 7; Nehemiah 2) and argues that only Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah (Neh 2:1–8) actually authorized rebuilding the *city* and its wall. 7 + 62 = 69 weeks = 483 years. He presents Sir Robert Anderson's calculation: - Prophetic year = 360 days (compare Rev 11:2–3; 12:6; 13:5 — 42 months = 1,260 days). - 483 × 360 = **173,880 days**. - Decree: Nisan 1 in Artaxerxes' 20th year = 14 March 445 BC → Triumphal Entry 6 April AD 32. - Check: 476 solar years × 365 = 173,740 + 116 leap days + 24 days (Mar 14 → Apr 6) = **173,880**.

Harold Hoehner's later reckoning (444 BC → 30 March AD 33) reaches the same 173,880 days with different dates. Either way, the Messiah the Prince arrived on schedule. Jesus held Jerusalem accountable for it: "you did not recognize the time of your visitation" (Luke 19:42–44).

Cut off, and the city destroyed (v26)

"After the sixty-two weeks" — after the 69th week, not in it — Messiah is "cut off" (*karat*, used of execution, Gen 9:11; Ex 31:14) "and have nothing" (KJV: "but not for himself"). Then "the people of the prince who is to come" — Rome under Titus — destroy the city and the sanctuary in AD 70. The order is fixed: Messiah had to come *and die* before the Second Temple fell.

The seventieth week (v27)

"He" refers back to the nearest antecedent — the coming prince, not Messiah. Guzik: he makes a firm covenant with "the many" (*ha-rabbim*, Israel) for one week (seven years), breaks it in the middle by stopping sacrifice, and sets up the abomination of desolation (*shiqquts*, idolatry). Jesus placed this event in the future (Matt 24:15), and Paul describes it in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The gap between the 69th and 70th weeks is the present age. The clock stopped at the cross and restarts when that covenant is signed.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **lovingkindness — *chesed* (H2617):** covenant-loyal love; God keeps covenant and *chesed* (v4).
- **compassion — *rachamim* (H7356):** deep, womb-like mercy; plural for intensity (vv9, 18).
- **weeks — *shabuaʿ* (H7620):** a unit of seven.
- **decreed — *chatak* (H2852):** "cut out, determined." It occurs only here in the Old Testament — the 490 years are cut out of history for Israel.
- **atonement — *kaphar* (H3722):** to cover or purge sin by a substitute.
- **Messiah — *mashiach* (H4899):** Anointed One. **Prince — *nagid* (H5057):** a leader or ruler.
- **cut off — *karat* (H3772):** cut down, executed; also the verb for "cutting" a covenant.
- **make a firm covenant — *higbir* (from *gabar*, H1396):** to make strong or confirm — an existing arrangement enforced.
- **abominations — *shiqquts* (H8251):** detestable idols (Deut 29:17; 1 Kgs 11:5–7; 2 Kgs 23:13).
- **desolate — *shamem* (H8074):** appalled, laid waste; the same root runs through vv17, 18, 26 and 27.
- **highly esteemed — *chamudot* (H2530):** precious, treasured. Heaven's name for Daniel (also 10:11, 19).

Cross-references

Jer 25:11–12; 29:10–14; Lev 26:40–45; Neh 2:1–8; Isa 53:8; Luke 19:41–44; Matt 24:15–21; 2 Thess 2:3–4; Rev 11:2–3; 12:6, 14; 13:5.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 9:23 (KJV)

23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art ★ greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Example to follow — Scripture first, then knees

Daniel didn't read prophecy and start speculating; he read it and started praying. That is the order I want for myself and for every study I build: open the Book, believe what it says, then pray it back to God. Prophecy should make me watchful and prayerful, never a date-setter and never apathetic.

Sin to confess — "we," not "they."

Daniel was about as blameless as anyone in Scripture, and he still said "we have sinned." I'm quick to pray "they" prayers — about the culture, the church, the men who relapse. Today I own my part: my prayerlessness, my impatience, my quiet pride. "Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame" (v7).

Promise to trust — mercy, not merit

"We are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion" (v18). That is the ground every man in recovery and every man in prison stands on — and so do I. We don't come to God with a clean record; we come on His compassion. That is what praying in Jesus' name means.

Promise to trust — God answers at the first word

"At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued" (v23). The answer is already moving while I'm still on my knees. And God answered Daniel's question about 70 years with 490 years and the coming of the Messiah. He tends to answer bigger than I ask.

Worship

The Messiah came to the day and was "cut off and have nothing" — He died not for Himself but for me (Isa 53:8). The Bible's most precise prophecy points to the cross. When I'm tempted to doubt God's Word, I remember that sixty-nine weeks have already been kept exactly. The seventieth will be too.

Command to obey

"So you are to know and discern" (v25). I will keep studying this carefully and teach it clearly, so the men I serve can see that God keeps His calendar, and that their lives are on it too.

Prayer

O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and lovingkindness — I have sinned. I don't come on my own merits, but on Your great compassion. Hear, forgive, listen and act, for Your own name's sake. Thank You for the Messiah who was cut off for me. Keep me watching and praying until the last week is done. Amen.

Daniel 10

The War Behind the Answer: Heard from the First Day

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Behind the news of nations is a war in the heavens. Daniel humbled himself and prayed; God heard him the first day, but the answer had to fight its way through. God strengthens His weak servants, calls them highly esteemed, and tells them not to be afraid.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

DANIEL 10 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel;

5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

10 And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

16 And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

17 For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

18 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he ⇄ strengthened me,

19 And said, O man greatly beloved, ▮▮ fear not: peace be unto thee, ▮▮ be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was ⇄ strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast ⇄ strengthened me.

20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, ⚠ the prince of Grecia shall come.

21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in ▲ the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but ★ Michael your prince.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ◷ the third year of Cyrus
- **v1** ▲ the thing was true
- **v2** ◷ mourning three full weeks
- **v3** ▮▮ I ate no pleasant bread
- **v4** ◷ the great river, which is Hiddekel
- **v5** ▲ a certain man clothed in linen
- **v6** ▲ his eyes as lamps of fire
- **v8** ⇄ strength *(every occurrence)*
- **v10** ★ an hand touched me
- **v11** ★ a man greatly beloved *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ▮▮ Fear not *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ◷ from the first day
- **v12** ★ thy words were heard
- **v13** ⚠ the prince of the kingdom of Persia
- **v13** ◷ one and twenty days
- **v13** ★ Michael *(every occurrence)*
- **v14** ◷ the latter days
- **v19** ▮▮ be strong, yea, be strong
- **v20** ⚠ the prince of Grecia
- **v21** ▲ the scripture of truth

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 10:12 (KJV)

12 Then said he unto me, ▮▮ Fear not, Daniel: for ◷ from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, ★ thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

Setting

"In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel ... and the message was true and one of great conflict" (v1). It is about 536 BC. Two years earlier Cyrus had let the Jews go home (Ezra 1:1–4), and about fifty thousand had returned. Daniel, now in his mid-eighties, stayed behind. Chapters 10–12 are one final vision; chapter 10 is the introduction, chapter 11 the message, chapter 12 the conclusion. The book is back in Hebrew (8:1–12:13).

Structure

- vv1–3 — **Daniel mourns:** "In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed" (vv2–3).
- vv4–9 — **the man dressed in linen:** on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, by the Tigris (v4), "I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz" (v5). "His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult" (v6). Only Daniel sees it; the men with him run and hide (v7). "No strength was left in me" (v8). He falls into a deep sleep, face to the ground (v9).
- vv10–14 — **the answer and the delay:** a hand touches him and sets him trembling on his hands and knees (v10). "O Daniel, man of high esteem … stand upright, for I have now been sent to you" (v11). "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words" (v12). "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me" (v13). He has come to explain "what will happen to your people in the latter days" (v14).
- vv15–19 — **strength given:** Daniel is speechless, face down (v15). One "who resembled a human being" touches his lips (v16): "as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength" (v16). He is touched again and strengthened (v18): "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!" (v19). "May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me" (v19).
- vv20–21 — **the war behind history:** "I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come" (v20). "I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince" (v21).

Repeated words

strength / strengthened (vv8, 16, 17, 18, 19); touched (vv10, 16, 18); words / message (vv1, 6, 9, 11, 12, 15); understand / understanding (vv1, 11, 12, 14); man of high esteem (vv11, 19); do not be afraid (vv12, 19); prince(s) (vv13, 20, 21); Persia (vv1, 13, 20); Michael (vv13, 21); the vision (vv1, 7, 8, 14, 16); face to the ground (vv9, 15).

Contrasts

Daniel's three weeks of humbling (vv2–3) ⟷ heard "from the first day" (v12). The answer sent at once (v12) ⟷ delayed twenty-one days (v13). The men who fled (v7) ⟷ Daniel left alone with God (v8). No strength left (vv8, 16–17) ⟷ "take courage and be courageous!" (v19). Kings of Persia and Greece on earth ⟷ princes of Persia and Greece in the heavens (vv13, 20). A small band of returned exiles ⟷ Michael standing for them (v21).

Chapter theme (my words)

Behind the news of nations is a war in the heavens. Daniel humbled himself and prayed; God heard him the first day, but the answer had to fight its way through. God strengthens His weak servants, calls them highly esteemed, and tells them not to be afraid.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 10:1 (KJV)

[1]In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

Why was Daniel mourning? (vv1–3)

The exiles had gone home, but Ezra tells us their work on the temple was stopped by local opposition (Ezra 4:4–5, 24). Guzik suggests Daniel was grieving that so few returned and that the rebuilding had stalled. Note what he did: three weeks of humbling — not a total fast, but giving up "tasty food," meat, wine and ointment (v3). The word "humbling" in v12 is the same idea used for afflicting the soul on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29–31). His mourning ran right through Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (first month, 14th–21st; Exod 12:18). Walvoord, in Guzik, describes the message as about a period "long and strenuous ... involving great conflict and trouble for the people of God."

The man in linen (vv4–9)

Who is he? Commentators divide:

- **Christ before His incarnation** — the description closely matches John's vision of the risen Jesus: a long robe, a golden sash, eyes like fire, feet like bronze, a voice like many waters (Rev 1:13–15; compare Ezek 1:26–28). Daniel's reaction and his companions' terror resemble Paul's on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3–7).
- **A great angel** — because the one speaking in vv12–14 was resisted for twenty-one days and needed Michael's help, which seems unlike Christ.

Guzik notes both views. Many solve it by seeing the man of vv5–6 as Christ, and the one who touches and speaks to Daniel afterward (vv10–21) as an angel — perhaps Gabriel, who explained Daniel's earlier visions (8:16; 9:21). Either way, the vision is overwhelming: Daniel's "natural color turned to a deathly pallor" (v8). Baldwin: the experience was "not one to envy."

"From the first day ... your words were heard" (v12)

God heard Daniel the moment he humbled himself and set his heart to understand. The answer was sent right away. Spurgeon, in Guzik: the assurance that you are loved by God doesn't make you proud — it humbles you. Daniel is "man of high esteem" (literally "man of desires," one greatly treasured — also 9:23; 10:19).

The prince of Persia (v13)

This prince can't be a human king — he resisted a heavenly messenger for three weeks. He is an evil spiritual power assigned to the Persian empire. Scripture describes ranks of spiritual powers (Eph 1:21; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:15), Satan as "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), and demonic forces behind nations (Deut 32:8, 17; Rev 12:7–9; 16:13–14). The delay was not because God was slow, but because there was a battle. Michael — "one of the chief princes," later called "the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people" (12:1) — is the archangel (Jude 9; Rev 12:7). Archer, in Guzik, warns that a believer might quit praying on the twentieth day when the answer is almost there.

A caution: the passage shows the reality of spiritual conflict, but it doesn't give a method for "binding" territorial spirits. Daniel didn't address the prince of Persia at all. He prayed to God, humbled himself, and kept seeking. The battle was fought by God's messengers in response.

Strengthened (vv15–19)

Three times Daniel is touched: set on his hands and knees (v10), his lips touched so he can speak (v16), and strengthened (v18). The word for "anguish" in v16 means the pangs of labor — Daniel was doubled over. God doesn't scold his weakness; He gives strength, peace and courage, and repeats Daniel's worth: "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid" (v19; compare Isa 40:29–31; 2 Cor 12:9).

Persia, then Greece (vv20–21)

The messenger must return to fight the prince of Persia, and the prince of Greece is coming next — exactly the order of empires in chapters 2, 7 and 8. Baldwin, in Guzik: "The heavenly warfare is to be directed against first Persia and then Greece." What happens on earth among kings reflects a conflict in the heavens. "The writing of truth" (v21) is God's settled plan — history written before it happens (Ps 139:16; Isa 46:9–10). And Israel, a handful of exiles, has the mightiest defender: "Michael your prince."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **message — *dabar* (H1697):** word, matter, thing.
- **great conflict — *tsaba gadol* (H6635 + H1419):** literally "a great host / warfare" — hard service, conflict.
- **mourning — *ʾabal* (H56):** to mourn, lament.
- **tasty food — *chamudah* (H2532):** desirable, precious things — the same root as "high esteem."
- **linen — *bad* (H906):** white linen, the priestly cloth (Lev 16:4).
- **beryl — *tarshish* (H8658):** a precious stone, perhaps topaz or chrysolite.
- **tumult — *hamon* (H1995):** a roar, the sound of a multitude.
- **deathly pallor — *mashchith* (H4889):** ruin, corruption — his face was ruined.
- **man of high esteem — *ʾish chamudoth* (H376 + H2532):** a man greatly desired, treasured.
- **humbling yourself — *ʿanah* (H6031):** to afflict, humble oneself.
- **prince — *sar* (H8269):** a chief, commander, ruler.
- **withstanding — *ʿamad le-neged* (H5975 + H5048):** stood in front of, opposed.
- **Michael — *Mikaʾel* (H4317):** "Who is like God?"
- **anguish — *tsir* (H6735):** a pang, the pains of childbirth.
- **take courage — *chazaq* (H2388):** be strong, be firm.

- **writing of truth — *kethab ʾemeth* (H3791 + H571):** the book of truth, God's record.

Cross-references

Lev 16:29–31; Deut 32:8; 2 Kgs 6:15–17; Ezra 1:1–4; Ezra 4:4–5, 24; Job 1:6–12; Ps 34:7; Ps 139:16; Isa 40:29–31; Isa 46:9–10; Isa 65:24; Ezek 1:26–28; Dan 8:15–19; Dan 9:20–23; Dan 12:1; Matt 6:16–18; Luke 18:1–8; Acts 9:3–7; 2 Cor 10:3–5; 2 Cor 12:9; Eph 6:10–18; Col 2:15; James 4:7–10; 1 Pet 5:8–9; Jude 9; Rev 1:12–17; Rev 12:7–9.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 10:13 (KJV)

13 But ⚠ the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me ◷ one and twenty days: but, lo, ★ Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

Command to obey — "do not be afraid … take courage."

Twice the messenger says it (vv12, 19). God's servants still face things that drain all their strength. The word to them is the same: do not fear; be strong. I'll take the command personally today and act on it — not because I feel strong, but because He strengthens me (Phil 4:13).

Sin to confess — quitting on the twentieth day

Daniel kept seeking for three weeks without knowing a battle was being fought for him. I've given up on prayers too soon and decided God wasn't listening. I'll name one prayer I quit praying and start again (Luke 18:1). For the men I disciple, who have prayed for a son, a marriage or their freedom for years: don't quit on day twenty.

Warning to heed — the battle is real

"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood" (Eph 6:12). There is real opposition to God's work — in nations, in families, in a man's recovery. But I don't fight it with formulas or by talking to demons. I fight it the way Daniel did: humbling myself, praying, standing on God's Word, and trusting God's messengers to do the fighting (James 4:7).

Promise to trust — heard from the first day

"From the first day … your words were heard" (v12). Delay is not denial. God may answer before I finish asking (Isa 65:24), even when I can't yet see the answer. My prayers are not lost in the air.

Example to follow — a mourner for God's people

Daniel was in his eighties and comfortable in Babylon, yet he grieved for the struggling exiles in Jerusalem and gave up comforts to pray for them. I want a heart that mourns for the people of God and for the men I serve — and that gives up something to pray for them.

Worship

Behind every headline and every empire is a God who writes history before it happens and sends His messengers in answer to prayer. "Who is like God?" — that's what Michael's name asks. No one.

Prayer

Lord, thank You that You heard me from the first day. Forgive me for quitting when the answer was on its way. Strengthen me where I have no strength, and speak peace to me. Teach me to humble myself and keep seeking You, and to trust You with the battles I can't see. Who is like You? Amen.

Daniel 11

History Written in Advance: The People Who Know Their God

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

History is not random; it is written in advance. Kings rise, scheme and fall exactly as God said. In the worst days, the people who know their God stand strong and teach others — and the last proud king who does as he pleases will come to his end with no one to help him.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

DANIEL 11 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold — God — His character & actions	▮ Green — Command / instruction	⇄ Sky — Key repeated word
⚠ Rose — Sin / warning	★ Violet — Promise / blessing	◷ Amber — Time / place / contrast

1 Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

2 And now will I shew thee ▲ the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

3 And ◷ a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward ◷ the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

5 And ⇄ the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.

6 And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to ⇄ the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

7 But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of ⇄ the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:

8 And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than ⇄ the king of the north.

9 So ⇄ the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

10 But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress.

11 And ⇄ the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with ⇄ the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

12 And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up ; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it.

13 For ⇄ the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

14 And in those times there shall many stand up against ⇄ the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

15 So ⇄ the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

16 But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

17 He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.

18 After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him.

19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.

21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

22 And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.

23 And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

24 He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.

25 And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.

26 Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.

27 And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief , and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.

28 Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

29 At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

30 For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

31 And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

33 And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

34 Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

35 And some of them of understanding shall fall, ★ to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to ◷ the time of the end: because it is yet for a ◷ time appointed.

36 And ⚠ the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and ⚠ magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for ▲ that that is determined shall be done.

37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

38 But in his estate shall he honour ⚠ the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

40 And at ◷ the time of the end shall ⇄ the king of the south push at him: and ⇄ the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

41 He shall enter also into ◷ the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and ▲ none shall help him.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ▲ the truth
- **v3** ◷ a mighty king
- **v4** ◷ the four winds of heaven
- **v5** ⇄ the king of the south *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ⇄ the king of the north *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** ◷ the glorious land *(every occurrence)*
- **v21** ⚠ a vile person
- **v21** ⚠ flatteries *(every occurrence)*
- **v27** ◷ time appointed *(every occurrence)*
- **v28** ★ the holy covenant *(every occurrence)*
- **v31** ⚠ take away the daily sacrifice
- **v31** ⚠ the abomination that maketh desolate
- **v32** ★ the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits
- **v33** 📖 they that understand among the people shall instruct many
- **v35** ★ to try them, and to purge, and to make them white
- **v35** ◷ the time of the end *(every occurrence)*
- **v36** ⚠ the king shall do according to his will
- **v36** ⚠ magnify himself above every god
- **v36** ▲ that that is determined shall be done
- **v38** ⚠ the God of forces
- **v45** ▲ none shall help him

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 11:36 (KJV)

36 And ⚠ the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and ⚠ magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for ▲ that that is determined shall be done.

Setting

The heavenly messenger of chapter 10 keeps speaking. He had helped in "the first year of Darius the Mede" (v1), and now he gives Daniel "what is inscribed in the writing of truth" (10:21): "And now I will tell you the truth" (v2). This is the most detailed prophecy in the Bible — about 375 years of Middle Eastern history, king by king, written ahead of time, and then a leap to the end.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **Persia:** "three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them," and he will "arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece" (v2).
- vv3–4 — **Greece:** "a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases" (v3). "But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants" (v4).
- vv5–20 — **the kings of the South and the North:** a long tug-of-war between "the king of the South" and "the king of the North" — alliances, a royal marriage that fails (v6), invasions and counter-invasions (vv7–13), the "Beautiful Land" caught in between (v16), another marriage plot (v17), a defeat in the coastlands (v18), and a tax collector king who dies "within a few days" (v20).
- vv21–35 — **the despicable person:** "In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue" (v21). He breaks alliances and deceives (vv22–27). "His heart will be set against the holy covenant" (v28). "Ships of Kittim" turn him back from Egypt (v30), and he takes out his rage on Jerusalem: "Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation" (v31). "But the people who know their God will display strength and take action" (v32). Those with insight teach many, though many fall by sword, flame and captivity (v33) — "in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time" (v35).
- vv36–45 — **the king who does as he pleases:** "Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done" (v36). He disregards "the gods of his fathers or … the desire of women" (v37) and honors "a god of fortresses" (v38). "At the end time" he is attacked from South and North (v40), enters the Beautiful Land (v41), takes Egypt's treasures (vv42–43), is troubled by rumors from the east and north (v44), and sets up

his royal tents "between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him" (v45).

Repeated words

king of the South (vv5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 25, 40); king of the North (vv6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 40); stand / arise (throughout); do as he pleases (vv3, 16, 36); the Beautiful Land (vv16, 41; compare v45); the holy covenant (vv28, 30); intrigue / smooth words / hypocrisy (vv21, 32, 34); appointed time (vv27, 29, 35); the end time (vv35, 40); fortress (vv7, 10, 19, 31, 38, 39); heart(s) (vv12, 27, 28).

Contrasts

kings who "do as they please" (vv3, 16, 36) ⟷ "that which is decreed will be done" (v36). Those who "act wickedly toward the covenant" (v32) ⟷ "the people who know their God." Smooth words and intrigue (vv21, 32) ⟷ those with insight who teach the many (v33). The despicable person's power (v21) ⟷ "he will come to his end, and no one will help him" (v45). The saints falling (v33) ⟷ refined and made pure (v35).

Chapter theme (my words)

History is not random; it is written in advance. Kings rise, scheme and fall exactly as God said. In the worst days, the people who know their God stand strong and teach others — and the last proud king who does as he pleases will come to his end with no one to help him.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 11:2 (KJV)

2 And now will I shew thee ▲ the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

Why so much detail?

Guzik notes the chapter predicts some 375 years of history so precisely that critics insist it must have been written after the events (in the 160s BC). Baldwin, in Guzik, observes that most critical scholars treat it as history written in the form of prophecy. Guzik answers: if that's true, the whole vision of chapter 10 is fiction. Jesus Himself called Daniel a prophet and treated this prophecy as future (Matt 24:15). The detail is the point: God knows the end from the beginning (Isa 46:9–10).

Persia (v2)

After Cyrus, three more kings (Cambyses, the impostor Smerdis or Gaumata, and Darius I), then a fourth, very rich: Xerxes (486–465 BC), who threw the whole empire against Greece and was defeated at Salamis in 480 BC. He is the Ahasuerus of Esther.

Alexander (vv3–4)

The "mighty king" is Alexander the Great, who conquered the Persian empire. He died in Babylon in 323 BC at about 32. His sons were murdered, and his empire was divided among four generals — "toward the four points of the compass" (compare 8:8, 21–22).

The South and the North (vv5–20)

From here the prophecy follows two of those four kingdoms, because they fought over the land of Israel: the **Ptolemies** in Egypt (the South) and the **Seleucids** in Syria (the North). Historians match the details closely:

- **v5:** Ptolemy I (South) and Seleucus I, once his general, who became even stronger (North).
- **v6:** Ptolemy II gave his daughter Berenice to Antiochus II. The alliance failed; Berenice and her son were murdered.
- **vv7–9:** Her brother, Ptolemy III, invaded the North in revenge and carried off treasure and idols to Egypt.
- **vv10–19:** Antiochus III ("the Great") fought for decades — beaten at Raphia (217 BC, v11), victorious at Panium (about 200 BC, vv15–16), taking the Beautiful Land. He gave his daughter Cleopatra I in marriage to Ptolemy V, hoping to control Egypt, but she sided with her husband (v17). Rome defeated him in the coastlands (v18), and he died plundering a temple in his own territory (v19).
- **v20:** Seleucus IV sent a tax collector (Heliodorus) through the kingdom — even attempting to seize the temple treasury in Jerusalem — and was soon assassinated.

The despicable person (vv21–35)

This is Antiochus IV, who called himself *Epiphanes* ("God made manifest"); his enemies nicknamed him *Epimanes*, "the madman." He seized the throne by intrigue (v21), removed the high priest (likely "the prince of the covenant," v22), and invaded Egypt (vv25–27). On his second campaign "ships of Kittim" — the Roman fleet — met him. Guzik tells the story: the Roman envoy drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and told him to decide before stepping out of it. Humiliated, he withdrew (v30) and vented his fury on Jerusalem. In 167 BC his forces stopped the temple sacrifices and set up an altar to Zeus on the altar of burnt offering — "the abomination of desolation" (v31; 1 Macc 1:54). Jews who compromised were flattered and rewarded (v32). But "the people who know their God" resisted — the Maccabees and many faithful Jews, some of whom died for their faith (vv32–35; Heb 11:35–38). In December 164 BC the temple was cleansed and rededicated — the origin of Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication Jesus attended (John 10:22).

The shift at v36

Verses 36–45 don't fit Antiochus's history: he did not magnify himself above every god in this way, and his death doesn't match vv40–45. And the angel says it is "the end time" (vv35, 40). So, like Guzik, most futurist interpreters see a jump to the final world ruler — the Antichrist. Guzik's picture: Antiochus is the "trailer," the Antichrist is the "feature." Paul describes the same figure: he "exalts himself above every so-called god … displaying himself as being God" (2 Thess 2:3–4). John calls him the beast who speaks "arrogant words and blasphemies" (Rev 13:5–6). Jesus pointed to a future "abomination of desolation" (Matt 24:15) — two centuries after Antiochus.

Who is the final king? (vv36–39)

He "will do as he pleases" — a law to himself. He rejects the religion of his fathers, disregards "the desire of women" (some see a total lack of natural affection; others, the Messiah, the one Jewish women longed to bear; compare Hag 2:7), and worships "a god of fortresses" — military power. Guzik cautions that much speculation here is uncertain. But the headline is clear: "he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done" (v36). Even the worst tyrant runs on God's clock.

The last campaign (vv40–45)

Kings of the South and North attack him; he sweeps through the Beautiful Land and Egypt; news from the east and north troubles him (compare Rev 16:12); he sets up his headquarters between the seas and Mount Zion. Guzik admits the details are hard to map. But the ending is certain: "he will come to his end, and no one will help him" (v45; 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:20).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **truth — *ʾemeth* (H571):** firmness, faithfulness, truth.
- **arise / stand — *ʿamad* (H5975):** to stand, take a stand, arise — the chapter's most repeated verb.
- **do as he pleases — *ʿasah kirtsono* (H6213 + H7522):** literally "do according to his will."
- **king of the South — *melek ha-negeb* (H5045):** the Negev, the south — Egypt.
- **king of the North — *melek ha-tsaphon* (H6828):** the north — Syria.
- **Beautiful Land — *ʾerets ha-tsebi* (H6643):** the land of beauty, the glorious land — Israel.
- **despicable — *bazah* (H959):** to despise, hold in contempt.
- **intrigue / hypocrisy — *chalaqlaqqoth* (H2519), vv21, 34:** slipperiness, flattery; compare "smooth words," *chalaqqah* (H2514), v32.
- **covenant — *berith* (H1285):** the covenant (vv22, 28, 30, 32).
- **Kittim — *Kittim* (H3794):** Cyprus and the western coastlands — here Rome.
- **abomination — *shiqquts* (H8251):** a detestable thing, an idol.
- **desolation — *shamem* (H8074):** to make desolate, appall.
- **know — *yada* (H3045):** to know intimately, by experience.
- **display strength — *chazaq* (H2388):** be strong, hold firm.
- **insight — *sakal* (H7919):** to be wise, have insight — the same word as "those who have insight" in 12:3.
- **refine, purge, make pure — *tsaraph*, *barar*, *laben* (H6884, H1305, H3835):** to smelt, to purify, to make white.
- **fortresses — *maʿoz* (H4581):** a stronghold, place of safety.

Cross-references

Isa 46:9–10; Dan 2:39–40; Dan 7:7–8, 24–26; Dan 8:3–14, 20–25; Dan 9:26–27; Dan 12:1, 3, 10–11; Hag 2:7; Mal 3:2–3; Matt 24:15–21; Mark 13:14; John 10:22; 2 Thess 2:3–12; 1 Pet 1:6–7; 1 John 2:18; Rev 13:1–18; Rev 16:12–16; Rev 19:19–20.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 11:35 (KJV)

35 And some of them of understanding shall fall, ★ to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to ◷ the time of the end: because it is yet for a ◷ time appointed.

Command to obey — know your God

"The people who know their God will display strength and take action" (v32). Not those who know *about* Him — those who know Him. Strength in the evil day comes from relationship built in ordinary days. I'll spend time this week simply knowing Him: reading, listening, praying, obeying. For the men I disciple, this is the whole goal — not religion, but knowing God.

Sin to confess — bought by smooth words

Antiochus didn't conquer all of Israel by force; he flattered and rewarded the compromisers (vv21, 32). Where have I been bought by praise, comfort or advantage to quietly give up a conviction? I'll confess it and ask God to make me immune to flattery (Prov 29:5).

Warning to heed — doing as I please

Three times the chapter describes a king who "does as he pleases" (vv3, 16, 36). Each one falls. The spirit of Antichrist is self-will crowned as god (1 John 2:18). It starts small: my way, my will, my rules. The cure is daily surrender: "not My will, but Yours be done."

Promise to trust — "that which is decreed will be done."

Hundreds of years of kings, wars and marriages happened exactly as God said. If He kept every detail of history, He will keep every promise to me. The tyrant prospers only "until the indignation is finished" (v36), and then "he will come to his end, and no one will help him" (v45).

Example to follow — those with insight teach many

In the darkest days, the wise "give understanding to the many" (v33), even at the cost of their lives. That's my calling — to teach the men God gives me, through books, studies and conversations, so they can stand when the pressure comes (2 Tim 2:2).

Worship

God wrote history before it happened. Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria, Rome — all came and went at His word. The final tyrant will fall the same way. My times are in His hand (Ps 31:15).

Prayer

Sovereign Lord, You know the end from the beginning, and what You decree will be done. Let me be among the people who know their God. Guard me from flattery and from doing as I please. Refine me through trials, make me pure, and use me to give understanding to many until the end. Amen.

Daniel 12

Go Your Way to the End: Rest and Rise

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The worst trouble in history is coming, but God's people are written in His book, guarded by His angel and promised resurrection. I won't understand every detail — even Daniel didn't — but I can be wise, lead many to righteousness, keep waiting, and go my way to the end, knowing I will rise to my portion.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

DANIEL 12 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions · Green Command / instruction · Sky Key repeated word · Rose Sin / warning · Violet Promise / blessing · Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And at that time shall ★ Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be ⚠ a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time ★ thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found ★ written in the book.

2 And many of them that ★ sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to ★ everlasting life, and some to ⚠ shame and everlasting contempt.

3 And ★ they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that ▮ turn many to righteousness ★ as the stars for ever and ever.

4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and ▮ seal the book, even to ◷ the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and ◷ knowledge shall be increased.

5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, ◷ How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and ▲ sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for ◷ a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

9 And he said, ▮ Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till ◷ the time of the end.

10 Many shall be ★ purified, and made white, and tried; but ⚠ the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but ★ the wise shall understand.

11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and ⚠ the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be ◷ a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

12 ★ Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to ◷ the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

13 But ▮ go thou thy way till the end be: for ★ thou shalt rest, and ★ stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ★ Michael stand up, the great prince
- **v1** ⚠ a time of trouble, such as never was
- **v1** ★ thy people shall be delivered
- **v1** ★ written in the book
- **v2** ★ sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake
- **v2** ★ everlasting life
- **v2** ⚠ shame and everlasting contempt
- **v3** ★ they that be wise shall shine
- **v3** ▮ turn many to righteousness
- **v3** ★ as the stars for ever and ever

- **v4** seal the book
- **v4** the time of the end *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** knowledge shall be increased
- **v6** How long
- **v7** sware by him that liveth for ever
- **v7** a time, times, and an half
- **v9** Go thy way
- **v10** purified, and made white, and tried
- **v10** the wicked shall do wickedly
- **v10** the wise shall understand
- **v11** the abomination that maketh desolate
- **v11** a thousand two hundred and ninety days
- **v12** Blessed is he that waiteth
- **v12** the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days
- **v13** go thou thy way
- **v13** thou shalt rest
- **v13** stand in thy lot at the end of the days

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 12:1 (KJV)

[1]And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Setting

This is the end of the vision that began in 10:1 — and the end of the book. The messenger has just described the final willful king who "will come to his end, and no one will help him" (11:45). "Now at that time" (12:1) ties what follows to those last days. Daniel is old, still beside the Tigris (10:4), and this is the last word God gives him.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **trouble, rescue, resurrection:** "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued" (v1). "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (v2). "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever" (v3).
- v4 — **seal the book:** "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."
- vv5–7 — **how long?** Two more figures stand on either bank of the river. One asks the man dressed in linen, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?" (v6). He raises both hands to heaven and

swears by Him who lives forever: "it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed" (v7).

- vv8–10 — **Daniel doesn't understand:** "As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, 'My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?'" (v8). "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time" (v9). "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand" (v10).
- vv11–12 — **the numbered days:** "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days" (v11). "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!" (v12).
- v13 — **Daniel's own future:** "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

Repeated words

that time (v1 three times); the end / end time / end of time (vv4, 6, 9, 13); seal / sealed / conceal (vv4, 9); understand (vv8, 10); those who have insight (vv3, 10); many / the many (vv2, 3, 4, 10); forever / everlasting (vv2, 3, 7); go your way (vv9, 13); the man dressed in linen (vv6, 7); days (vv11, 12).

Contrasts

a time of distress like no other (v1) ⟷ everyone written in the book rescued. Awake to everlasting life ⟷ to disgrace and everlasting contempt (v2). Sleep in the dust (v2) ⟷ shine like the stars (v3). Many purged, purified and refined ⟷ the wicked keep acting wickedly (v10). Those with insight understand ⟷ none of the wicked understand (v10). Daniel doesn't understand (v8) ⟷ but he is promised rest and his portion (v13).

Chapter theme (my words)

The worst trouble in history is coming, but God's people are written in His book, guarded by His angel and promised resurrection. I won't understand every detail — even Daniel didn't — but I can be wise, lead many to righteousness, keep waiting, and go my way to the end, knowing I will rise to my portion.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 12:7 (KJV)

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and ▲ sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for ◷ a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

"At that time" (v1)

Guzik: this is the same time as 11:36–45 — the days of the final willful king. Michael, Israel's guardian (10:13, 21), "will arise" — to fight for them (Rev 12:7–9). "A time of distress such as never occurred" is the Great Tribulation, which Jeremiah called "the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it" (Jer 30:7). Jesus quoted this verse directly: "there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will" (Matt 24:21). Satan's fury will fall on Israel (Rev 12:13–17). Chuck Smith, in Guzik: "The Jew has always been a target of Satan." But "everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued" — not every Israelite by birth, but those whose names God has written (Rom 11:25–27; Rev 13:8).

The resurrection (v2)

This is the Old Testament's clearest statement of a bodily resurrection of both righteous and wicked. "Sleep in the dust" is death (Job 7:21; Ps 22:15); "awake" is resurrection (Isa 26:19). Two destinies, both everlasting: life, or "disgrace and everlasting contempt." Jesus taught the same: "all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28–29). The New Testament shows these happen in order — the righteous first, the rest after the thousand years (Rev 20:4–6, 11–15). Baldwin notes that "many" in Hebrew can carry the sense of "all."

Shining like the stars (v3)

"Those who have insight" (*maskilim*) are the same people as in 11:33, 35 — the wise who taught the many and suffered for it. Their reward: to shine like the sky and the stars forever. The greatest honor isn't power or fame but leading others to righteousness (Prov 11:30; Matt 13:43; Phil 2:15; 1 Thess 2:19–20).

Seal the book (v4)

"Conceal" and "seal" here mean to guard and preserve, not to hide forever. Guzik: an ancient document was sealed to authenticate it and keep it safe until it was needed. The prophecy would be better understood as the end approached. "Many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase" — some apply this to modern travel and technology; Guzik, with Wood and Newell, reads it as people searching back and forth through the prophecy, and understanding growing. Newell: "many shall search it through and through" (compare Amos 8:12).

"Time, times, and half a time" (vv5–7)

The man in linen raises *both* hands — an unusually solemn oath (compare Deut 32:40; Rev 10:5–6). The period is three and a half years — the same span as Daniel 7:25 and the last half of the seventieth week (9:27), also given as 1,260 days and 42 months in Revelation (11:2–3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). It ends when "the power of the holy people" has been completely shattered — when Israel has nowhere left to turn but to its Messiah (Zech 12:10; 13:8–9; Rom 11:26).

"I heard but could not understand" (vv8–10)

This is encouraging: Daniel, the great interpreter, didn't understand everything either. God's answer is not more detail but "go your way" — trust and keep living faithfully. The end-time years will divide people: many will be purified and refined (Mal 3:2–3; 1 Pet 1:6–7), while the wicked keep on in wickedness and never understand (Rev 22:11). Spiritual understanding is given to the wise — those who fear God (Ps 25:14; Prov 9:10).

1,290 and 1,335 days (vv11–12)

Both counts start from the abomination of desolation, which Jesus pointed to as still future in His day (Matt 24:15). The period of 1,260 days ends with Christ's return; 1,290 adds 30 days, and 1,335 adds 45 more. Guzik suggests the extra time covers the setting up of Christ's kingdom — including the judgment of the nations (Matt 25:31–46) — and Chuck Smith, in Guzik, speaks of a 45-day period of judgment before the kingdom fully begins. Other careful interpreters hold different views, and Scripture doesn't spell it out. What is clear: "How blessed is he who keeps waiting" — the reward belongs to those who endure to the end (Matt 24:13).

"Go your way to the end" (v13)

The last verse of the book is personal. Daniel won't see these things in his lifetime. He is to keep living faithfully until he dies — "you will enter into rest" — and then "rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age." Clarke, in Guzik, draws out four truths: each of us has a way, and an end; and for God's people there is rest, and an inheritance. Like Jesus told Peter, "what is that to you? You follow Me!" (John 21:22).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **arise — *ʿamad* (H5975):** to stand, stand up — Michael takes his stand.
- **stands guard — *ʿamad ʿal* (H5975):** stands over, protects.
- **distress — *tsarah* (H6869):** trouble, anguish, a narrow place.
- **rescued — *malat* (H4422):** to escape, be delivered.
- **book — *sepher* (H5612):** a scroll, written record.
- **sleep — *yashen* (H3463):** sleeping — a picture of death.
- **awake — *qits* (H6974):** to awake, arise.
- **everlasting — *ʿolam* (H5769):** long duration, forever.
- **contempt — *deraʾon* (H1860):** abhorrence — used only here and Isa 66:24.
- **those who have insight — *maskilim* (H7919):** the wise, those who understand.
- **shine — *zahar* (H2094):** to shine, give light.
- **lead to righteousness — *tsadaq* (H6663):** to make righteous, turn to righteousness.

- **seal — *chatham* (H2856):** to seal up, preserve.
- **purged, purified, refined — *barar*, *laben*, *tsaraph* (H1305, H3835, H6884):** to purify, to make white, to smelt.
- **keeps waiting — *chakah* (H2442):** to wait for, long for.
- **rest — *nuach* (H5117):** to rest, settle down.
- **allotted portion — *goral* (H1486):** a lot, inheritance.

Cross-references

Job 19:25–27; Ps 16:10–11; Ps 25:14; Prov 11:30; Isa 26:19; Isa 66:24; Jer 30:7; Dan 7:25; Dan 9:27; Dan 11:33–35; Zech 12:10; Zech 13:8–9; Mal 3:2–3; Matt 13:43; Matt 24:13, 15, 21; Matt 25:31–46; John 5:28–29; John 21:22; Rom 11:25–27; 1 Cor 15:51–55; Phil 2:15; 1 Thess 4:13–17; Rev 10:5–7; Rev 12:6–17; Rev 13:5–8; Rev 20:4–6, 11–15; Rev 22:10–11.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 12:2 (KJV)

2 And many of them that ★ sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to ★ everlasting life, and some to ⚠ shame and everlasting contempt.

Command to obey — "go your way to the end."

God didn't answer all of Daniel's questions; He told him to keep living faithfully. I don't need to solve every timeline to obey today. I'll lay down my need to understand everything and go my way faithfully this week — one step, one day, one man at a time.

Sin to confess — curiosity without obedience

I can spend more energy on charts and dates than on being purified and refined (v10). Prophecy is meant to make me wise, not just informed. I'll confess where I've loved knowing about the end more than preparing for it.

Warning to heed — two resurrections, two destinies

Every person who ever lived will wake up — "these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (v2). That includes the men I meet in recovery and in prison. This is why I can't stay quiet about Jesus.

Promise to trust — written in the book

"Everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued" (v1). My name is written by grace (Luke 10:20; Phil 4:3). The worst trouble in history can't erase it. And for my own death: "you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion." I have a portion waiting.

Example to follow — shine by leading many to righteousness

The brightest stars in eternity won't be the famous, but those who helped others turn to God (v3). Every book I publish, every study I build and every man I disciple is aimed here. I want to be one of "those who lead the many to righteousness."

Worship

From a teenage captive in chapter 1 to an old man at the river in chapter 12, God kept Daniel and kept every promise. The Ancient of Days rules; the Son of Man will receive the kingdom; the dead will rise. "How blessed is he who keeps waiting."

Prayer

Lord, You hold the end of history and the end of my life. Thank You that my name is written in Your book. When I don't understand, help me go my way faithfully. Purify me, make me wise, and use me to lead many to righteousness. Keep me waiting and watching until I rise to my portion at the end of the age. Amen.