

LESSON 21: Daniel

LOGOS

A General and Light Survey of the Bible

By Dr. Steven Wood

(REVISED) TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Lesson 1:	Overview
Lesson 2:	Genesis
Lesson 3:	Exodus
Lesson 4:	Leviticus
Lesson 5:	Numbers
Lesson 6:	Deuteronomy
Lesson 7:	Joshua
Lesson 8:	Judges, Ruth
Lesson 9:	1st & 2nd Samuel
Lesson 10:	1st & 2nd Kings
Lesson 11:	1st & 2nd Chronicles
Lesson 12:	Ezra, Nehemiah
Lesson 13:	Esther
Lesson 14:	Job
Lesson 15:	Psalms
Lesson 16:	Proverbs
Lesson 17:	Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs

--- SUMMER ---

Lesson 18:	Isaiah
Lesson 19:	Jeremiah, Lamentations
Lesson 20:	Ezekiel
Lesson 21:	Daniel
October 2, 2024:	Hosea, Joel, Amos
October 9, 2024:	Obadian, Jonah, Micah
October 16, 2024:	Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah
October 23, 2024:	Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
October 30, 2024:	INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT
November 6, 2024:	The Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, Luke)
November 13, 2024:	John
November 20, 2024:	Acts
November 27, 2024:	Romans

--- ADVENT / CHRISTMAS ---

January 8, 2025:	1st & 2nd Corinthians
January 15, 2025:	Galatians
January 22, 2025:	Ephesians
January 29, 2025:	Colossians
February 5, 2025:	1st & 2nd Thessalonians
February 12, 2025:	1st & 2nd Timothy
February 19, 2025:	Titus, Philemon
February 26, 2025:	Hebrews
March 5, 2025:	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>
March 12, 2025:	James
March 19, 2025:	1st & 2nd Peter, Jude
March 26, 2025:	1st, 2nd, 3rd John
April 2, 2025:	Revelation

Lesson 21

DANIEL

- In 721BC the Assyrians completed their conquest of Israel (the Northern Kingdom). However, by 612BC Nabopolassar, the king of Babylon attacked Nineveh, the Assyrian capital. By 605BC the Assyrian Empire was completely overrun, and Nebuchadnezzar led the Babylonians against Egypt.
- Upon learning of the death of his father, Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon and was crowned king. His first act as king was to attack Jerusalem, at which time Daniel and his companions were taken as captives.
- Nebuchadnezzar returned to Judah a second time in 597BC in response to Jehoiachin's rebellion. He took 10,000 captives back to Babylon, including Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1–3; 2 Kings 24:8–20; 2 Chronicles 36:6–10).
- Nebuchadnezzar's final conquest of Jerusalem began in 588BC. The city walls were breached, the city destroyed, and the temple burned in 586BC. Most of the Jews who were not killed in this assault were deported to Babylon (2 Kings 25:1–7; Jer. 34:1–7; 39:1–7; 52:2–11).
- After his arrival in Babylon, along with three other young men most know by their Babylonian names: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel rose to the office of prime minister. Despite intense political pressure, he lived a model life of integrity and obedience to God. Because of Daniel's faithfulness, God blessed him with wisdom, the ability to interpret dreams, and symbolic prophecies about the future.
- Daniel is one of the few men about whom God says only good things. Three times he is referred to as "the greatly beloved" one (Daniel 9:23, 10:11, 19). The name Daniel means "God is Judge."
- While included with the prophetic books of the Old Testament, Daniel is apocryphal literature much like the New Testament Book of Revelation. The word apocalypse means "an unveiling of the secret purposes of God."
- Daniel is unique in that he is a Prophet to the Gentiles (Luke 21:24).

OUTLINE

- Personal History of Daniel (chap. 1)
 - Deported to Babylon. *In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God... the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility — young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and*

wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service. Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego. (1:1-7)

- Daniel's devotion to God. *But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you." Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." ...At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ...To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. (1:8-17)*
- Daniel's appointment. *"At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service... The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom. (1:17-21)*
- Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (2-4)
 - *In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled, and he could not sleep. So, the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed... "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So, tell me the dream and interpret it for me." ...The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! ... No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans." This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. ... and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death. When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had*

gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him. Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery... During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision... (2:3-23)

- The dream revealed to Daniel. Then Daniel went to Arioch... "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him." ...The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come... the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen... Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue... The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver; its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces... The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth... The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory... You are that head of gold. After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron... it will crush and break all the others... In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed... This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands... The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future... Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery." Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court. (2:24-49)

NOTE: Many interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream from a premillennial perspective: Daniel's interpretation revealed the course of Gentile kingdoms which would rule over Palestine and the people of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire was represented by the head of gold. He received his power and glory from God. He was viewed as a "king of kings," as his empire included the entire known world. The chest and arms of silver represented the rise of the Medes and Persians who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. The arms represent the two nations that together defeated Babylon. Though they lasted much longer than the Babylonians they were inferior to them. The belly and thighs of bronze represented the Greek Empire and Alexander the Great who conquered the Medo-Persians about 330 B.C. The legs of iron represented the Roman Empire which was stronger than any of the previous empires. The Romans began as iron but to clay mixed with iron. Though they conquered vast territories were never united. The whole statue was finally destroyed by a rock. In Scripture a rock often refers to Jesus Christ (Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 8:14; 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6–8 for example). God himself empowered Nebuchadnezzar and would then transfer to Medo-Persia, then to Greece, and ultimately to Rome, before the arrival of a King who will rule over the earth, subduing it to His authority (Jesus). So, the four empires that ruled over Israel would not be destroyed by human means, but by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the rock. Then He will rule forever in the Millennium and in the eternal state. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar's dream certainly seems to teach premillennialism — that Christ will return to earth to establish His rule on the earth, subduing all nations.

- Nebuchadnezzar's image. (3)
 - *King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide (90' tall x 9' wide), and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So, the [officials] ...assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it. Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound... all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image... (3:1–7)*
 - The accusation against the Jews. *At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebu-*

chadnezzar, "...there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon — Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego — who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up." Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego... "Is it true... that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound... if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?" Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." (3:8–18)

- Deliverance by God. ...Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace... The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire? ...Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the [officials] ...crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore, I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon. (3:19–30)

- Nebuchadnezzar's second dream (chap. 4)
 - *This is about 30 years after the fiery furnace.
 - *I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace... As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. So, I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me... I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. Finally, Daniel came into my presence, and I told him the dream... I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. The tree grew large and strong, and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the wild animals found shelter, and the birds lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed... I looked, and there before me was a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven. He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit... But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground... and let him live with the animals... Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him... This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had... (4:1–18)*
 - Daniel's interpretation. *Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So, the king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you." Belteshazzar answered... "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies... The tree you saw... Your Majesty, you are that tree! You have become great and strong... and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth. Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump...' This is the interpretation, Your Majesty... You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms... The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue." (4:19–27)*
 - *All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. ...He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity*

was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever... his kingdom endures from generation to generation... At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me... I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (4:28–37)

- Belshazzar (5).

NOTE: While Daniel 1–4 cover the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who expanded the Babylonian Empire and ruled 43 years. He died in 562 BC. He was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach who ruled from 562–560 BC (2 Kings 25:27–30; Jer. 52:31–34). He was assassinated by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar who ruled from 560–556 BC. He called Nergal-Sharezzer in Jeremiah 39:3, 13. Neriglissar was succeeded by his son, Labashi-Marduk, who ruled only two months in 556 BC. He was assassinated and usurped by Nabonidus, who reigned from 556–539 BC. During that time he appointed his son, Belshazzar as his coregent, which explains why Belshazzar was called king and exercised kingly authority even though Nabonidus actually held the throne.

- The handwriting on the wall. *King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles... he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem... and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. As they drank... they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall... The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale, and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking... The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners... “Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.” ...but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant... The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. “... There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father, he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods... King Nebuchadnezzar appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners... Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means.” (5:1–12)*
- Daniel interprets the writing. *So, Daniel was brought before the king... Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means... the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and*

greatness... all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him... But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal... he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth... But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. ...You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone... you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Therefore, he sent the hand that wrote the inscription. This is the inscription that was written: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN' Here is what these words mean: ...God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end... You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting... Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians..." Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom. That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two. (5:5–28)

- The edict of Darius (chap. 6)
 - The prominence of Daniel. *It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel... Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. (6:1–3)*
 - The plot of the other leaders. *At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel... but they were unable to do so... So, these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: "...The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den... issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered — in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." So, King Darius put the decree in writing. (6:4–9)*
 - The Lion's Den. *Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had*

done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So, they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "...Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day... Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." So, the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles... Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating... And he could not sleep. At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel... has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "...My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty." The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den... At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. (6:10–24)

- So, Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. (6:28)
- Daniel's apocalyptic visions (chap. 7-12)

*Notice how the writing shifts from third person to first person. It is likely Daniel wrote these chapters with his own hand.

- The four beasts.
 - In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed... "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it. And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!' After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back, it had four wings like those of a

bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule. After that... there before me was a fourth beast — terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully. As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. ...I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority but were allowed to live for a period of time.) ...I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (7:1–14)

- The interpretation “I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this. So, he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ‘The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever... Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast... ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. ...and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under

heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.' This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts... but I kept the matter to myself." (7:15–28)

- Daniel was told the four beasts represented four kingdoms.
 - The lion and eagle were both symbols of Babylon (cf. Jer. 4:7, 13; Ezek. 17:3) and probably represent that kingdom.
 - The bear probably represents the Medes and Persians, a large and powerful kingdom who conquered the Babylonians along with Egypt, Assyria. The three ribs may represent those three kingdoms.
 - The leopard with four wings probably represents the Greeks who conquered Medo-Persia with tremendous speed under Alexander the Great between 334–330BC. The four wings may represent the four kingdoms into which Greece was divided after Alexander died.
 - The fourth beast has probably not yet come into existence. It will be extremely powerful and destructive, crushing all others while being ruled by 10 kings. The small horn may represent the Anti-Christ himself.
- The vision of the ram and the goat (chap. 8)
 - The vision. *"In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision... I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great. As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. It came toward the two-horned ram... and charged at it in great rage... The ram was powerless to stand against it... The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven. Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the*

commander of the army of the LORD; it took away the daily sacrifice from the LORD, and his sanctuary was thrown down. Because of rebellion, the LORD's people and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled... He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated." (8:1–14)

- *The interpretation. While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision." As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end... I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future." (8:15–27)*
- Gabriel was sent to interpret Daniel's vision. The ram represented the Medo-Persians, and the goat represented Greece. The cunning ruler is probably King Antiochus of Greece, a ruthless king who murdered his brother and overran Israel to create a buffer between Greece and Rome. During the conquest he prevented the Jews from practicing their religion and built pagan altars in Jerusalem.
- Many scholars consider Antiochus to have dual meaning and a foreshadowing of the Anti-Christ:
 - He will achieve great power by subduing others.
 - He will rise to power by promising false security.

- He will be intelligent and persuasive.
- He will be controlled by another, that is, satan himself.
- He will be an adversary of Israel and subjugate them to his authority.
- He will rise up in opposition to the Prince of princes, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- His rule will be terminated by divine judgment.
- The vision of the 70 “sevens” (9)
 - *While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD... Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me... He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding... Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place. Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ ...After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” (9:20-27)*
 - **We must tread lightly in our interpretation of this passage!** Daniel was told God’s program would be consummated in 70 “sevens.” Daniel’s people thought in terms of sevens. Seven days are in one week, every seventh year was a sabbath year (Lev. 25:1–7), seven “sevens” brought them to the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8–12). Therefore, seventy “sevens,” is 490 years. This prophecy may not be concerned with world history or church history, but with the history of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. By the time these 490 years are completed six things will happen for Israel:
 - God will finish the transgression of Israel as she repents and turns to Christ as Messiah and Savior. Then Israel will be restored to the land and blessed.
 - God will put an end to sin. Israel’s sin would be punished in Christ and removed at his second coming he

will remove Israel's sin (Ezekiel 37:23; Romans 11:20–27).

- God will atone for wickedness. This too relates to God's final atonement of Israel when she repents at Christ's second coming.
- Being satisfied by the death of Christ, God will bring in everlasting righteousness. That is God will establish an age characterized by righteousness (Isaiah 60:21; Jeremiah 23:5–6).
- God will seal up vision and prophecy. All that God through the prophets said He would do in fulfilling His covenant with Israel will be fully realized in the millennial kingdom.
- God will anoint the most holy. This may refer to the dedication of the Most Holy place in the temple (Ezekiel 41–46), or it may refer to the enthronement of Christ, "the Anointed One" (Dan. 7:25–27) as King of kings and Lord of lords in the Millennium.
- The 70 "sevens" would begin, Gabriel said, with the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. King Cyrus issued a decree in 538 BC (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4; 5:13). A second decree was given by the decree of Darius in 520 BC (Ezra 6:1, 6–12). A third decree was given by Artaxerxes 457 BC (Ezra 7:11–26). The first two decrees pertain to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the third relates to finances for animal sacrifices at the temple. None of the three anything about rebuilding the city itself. Therefore, none was the decree that signaled the beginning of the 70 sevens. However, a fourth decree was given by Artaxerxes in 444 BC (Nehemiah 2:1–8). He granted the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Therefore, this fourth decree could be the one referred to in Daniel 9:25.
 - This 490-year period is divided into three segments: 7 "sevens" (49 years), 62 "sevens" (434 years), and 1 "seven" (7 years). The first period of 49 years may refer to the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. While wall construction took only 52 days, many years may have been needed to remove the city's debris (after being desolate for many decades), to build adequate housing, and to rebuild the streets.
 - The 62 "sevens" (434 years) extend up to the introduction of the Messiah concluding with the Triumphal Entry just before Christ was cut off in crucifixion. During His Triumphal Entry, Jesus, in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, officially presented Himself as Messiah. *"If you, even you, had only known on*

this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes” (Luke 19:42).

- It would seem that there is an interval between the first two “sevens,” and the third one. Daniel’s prophecies leave room for this interval, especially since Jesus prophesied, *“Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? Therefore, I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”* (Matthew 21:42-44). In other words, it is not yet time for the third “seven.”
- Verse 27 reveals what will occur in the third of the “sevens.” This seven-year period will begin after the Rapture of the church and conclude with the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. Jesus said, *“For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again”* (Matthew 24:21). This period is often called the Tribulation.
- Daniel’s final vision (chaps. 10–12)
 - Additional prophecies concerning Israel among the Persians (10:1–11:35).
 - Exiles had returned from Babylon by this time and had begun rebuilding the temple. Daniel had not returned with them because of his age. Although the captivity was over and Jerusalem was being reoccupied, the vision given to Daniel shattered any hope of Israel enjoying freedom and peace for long.
 - The succession of rulers in chapter 11 is seen in the history of the divided kingdoms after the death of Alexander the Great and before the rise of the Roman Empire.
 - The Anti-Christ is seen again in 11:36–45.
- Daniel is given leave. *I asked, “My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?” He replied, “Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand... As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.”* (12:8-13)

NEXT WEEK: Hosea, Joel, and Amos