

Daniel

¹ During the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, attacked Jerusalem and surrounded it. ² The Lord allowed him to defeat King Jehoiakim,* and also to remove some of the objects used in the Temple of God. He took them back to Babylon,† to the house of his god,‡ placing them in the treasury of his god.

³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch,§ to take charge of some of the captured Israelites from the royal and noble families, ⁴“They are to be young men without any physical defect who are good-looking,” he said. “They must be well-educated, quick to learn, have good insight, and be well able to serve in the king's palace and be taught the literature and language of Babylon*.” ⁵ The king also provided them with a daily allowance of the same kind of rich food and wine he was served. At the end of their three

* **1:2** “The Lord allowed him to defeat King Jehoiakim”: literally, “The Lord gave King Jehoiakim into his hand.” † **1:2** Literally, “the land of Shinar.” ‡ **1:2** Or “gods.” § **1:3** In other words, his chief of staff. Eunuchs were often given such positions in these times, and the term also came to mean the one in charge of the court, without necessarily meaning he had been castrated. The emphasis is on this man's position of authority. * **1:4** Literally, “the Chaldeans.”

years of education they would enter the king's service.†

⁶ Among those chosen were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, from the tribe of Judah. ⁷ The chief eunuch gave them new names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

⁸ However, Daniel made up his mind not to make himself impure‡ by eating the king's rich food and wine. He asked the chief eunuch to allow him not to make himself impure. ⁹ God had helped Daniel to be viewed with kindness and sympathy by the chief eunuch.

¹⁰ But the chief eunuch told Daniel, "I'm afraid of what my lord the king would do to me. He's the one who decided what you should eat and drink. What if he were to see you looking pale and sickly compared to the other young men of your age. Because of you the king would have my head!"

¹¹ Daniel then spoke with the guard that the chief eunuch had put in charge of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ¹² "Please put us, your servants, to the test and just give us

† **1:5** "Enter the king's service": literally, "they would stand before the king." This is taken to mean entering service (see Deuteronomy 10:8).

‡ **1:8** "Make himself impure": or "unclean." An observant Jew would have had several problems in consuming such a diet—the use of unclean meats, the animals not killed in accordance with Levitical law, portions of the meat and also the wine offered to pagan gods, the rich food and wine would not be a healthy diet etc.

vegetables[§] to eat and water to drink for ten days,” Daniel told him. ¹³ “After that, compare us with those young men who ate the king's rich food. Then decide on the basis of what you see.” ¹⁴ The guard agreed to the proposal they made and tested them for ten days.

¹⁵ When the ten days were up they looked healthier and better fed than all the young men who had eaten the king's rich food. ¹⁶ After that the guard didn't give them the rich food and wine, just vegetables.

¹⁷ God gave these four young men the ability to learn and understand in all areas of literature and knowledge, while Daniel was also given the gift of interpreting all kinds of visions and dreams.

¹⁸ When their time of education ordered by the king was over, the chief eunuch brought all the young men before King Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them and none could compare with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the king's service. ²⁰ Whatever subject the king asked them about, everything that required wisdom of understanding,* he found them ten times better than all the magicians

§ 1:12 The word means “from plants,” so would include cereals, beans, green plants, etc. *** 1:20** The Hebrew does not say “wisdom and understanding” as most versions translate it. Some argue that “wisdom of understanding” indicates a superlative, in that the highest form of wisdom is indicated. Others suggest that “understanding” qualifies the term “wisdom,” indicating that this wisdom did not include so-called Babylonian “wisdom” of astrology and divination etc.

and enchanters in his whole kingdom. ²¹ Daniel remained in this position until the first year of King Cyrus' reign.

2

¹ In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign the king had dreams that upset him so much that he found it difficult to sleep. ² So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. They came in and stood before him. ³ "I've had a dream that has really upset me," he told them. "I need to know what it means."

⁴ The astrologers answered the king in Aramaic,* "May Your Majesty the king live forever! Tell us your dream and we your servants will interpret it for you."

⁵ "I can't recall it,"† the king told the astrologers. "If you can't reveal the dream to me, and its meaning, you will be cut into pieces and your houses will be totally destroyed!" ⁶ But if you can tell me the dream and its meaning you will receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. So tell me the dream and what it means!"

* **2:4** The language of the original switches from Hebrew to Aramaic at this point until the end of chapter 7. † **2:5** "I can't recall it." Some take this phrase to be, "I've firmly decided." The issue is the word "azda," which some see as a loan word from Persian. The Septuagint and Vulgate understand it to mean "gone away," but most modern translations read it as "firm." If it is taken in the sense understood by the Septuagint and Vulgate, the phrase would literally be, "the matter is gone from me." The phrase also occurs in verse 8.

⁷ Again they said the same thing: “If Your Majesty the king would tell us his servants the dream, we will explain what it means.”

⁸ “It’s obvious to me that you’re just trying to buy time!” said the king. “You can see that I can’t remember the dream.[‡] ⁹ If you can’t reveal the dream to me, you will all receive the same punishment! You have conspired against me, telling me lies, hoping things will change. So tell me what my dream was and then I’ll know that you can explain what it means.”

¹⁰ The astrologers answered the king, “No one on earth could tell the king what he dreamed! Never before has a king, however great and powerful, demanded this of any magician, enchanter, or astrologer! ¹¹ What Your Majesty is asking is impossible! No one can tell Your Majesty what you dreamed, except the gods, and they do not live among us mortals.”

¹² This made the king extremely angry, and he ordered all the wise men of Babylon executed.

¹³ The decree was issued. The wise men were about to be executed, and the king’s men[§] went looking for Daniel and his friends.

¹⁴ Daniel approached Arioch, the commander of the imperial guard, whom the king had put in

[‡] **2:8** It may not be that the king was already convinced that they could not tell him the dream, but that they were plotting against him by deferring the interpretation. Dreams were often understood to come at an “opportune time,” and the king may have been concerned that delay could mean he would “miss his chance.” **§ 2:13** “King’s men”: implied.

charge of the order to execute all the wise men of Babylon.* Wisely and tactfully ¹⁵ Daniel asked him, “Why would the king issue such a harsh decree?” So Arioch explained to Daniel what had happened. ¹⁶ Daniel immediately went to see the king and asked for more time to explain the dream and its meaning to him.

¹⁷ Then Daniel went home and shared with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah what was going on. ¹⁸ He told them to pray to the God of heaven, asking for help regarding this mystery, so that he and his friends would not be killed along with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

¹⁹ That night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven:

²⁰ “Praise the wonderful nature[†] of God forever and ever, for he is wise and powerful. ²¹ He is in charge of time and history.[‡] He removes kings, and he sets kings in place. He gives wisdom to make people wise; he gives knowledge to people so they can understand. ²² He reveals deep, mysterious things. He knows what lies in darkness, and light lives in his presence. ²³ I give thanks and praise to you, God of my fathers, for you have given me wisdom and power. Now you

* **2:14** It appears Arioch intended to collect all the wise men together before executing them. † **2:20** “Wonderful nature”: literally “name,” but in Semitic thought “name” is a description of character—who the person actually is. ‡ **2:21** “He is in charge of time and history”: literally, “He changes times and seasons.”

have revealed to me what we asked you; you have revealed to us the king's dream.”

²⁴ So Daniel went to Arioch whom the king had ordered to execute the wise men of Babylon and told him, “Don't execute the wise men of Babylon! Take me to see the king and I will explain to him his dream.”

²⁵ Arioch immediately took Daniel to the king and told him, “I've found one of the captives from Judah who can tell Your Majesty what your dream means.”

²⁶ The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you really able to tell me what my dream was, and what it means?”

²⁷ “No wise men or enchanters or magicians or diviners can explain the mystery Your Majesty wants to know,” Daniel replied. ²⁸ “But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the last days. Your dream and the visions that came to your mind as you were lying in bed were these. ²⁹ As Your Majesty lay there, your thoughts turned to the future, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what would take place. ³⁰ It's not because I have any more wisdom than anyone else that this mystery has been revealed to me, but to explain to Your Majesty what you were thinking about so you could understand.

³¹ Your Majesty, as you looked, there before you stood a great statue. The statue standing in front of you was huge, and blazingly bright. It looked terrifying! ³² The head of the statue was

gold, the chest and arms were silver, its middle and thighs were bronze, ³³ its legs were iron, and its feet were iron and baked clay. ³⁴ While you were watching, a stone was quarried, but not by human hands. It struck the iron and clay feet of the statue and smashed them to pieces. ³⁵ Then the rest of the statue—the bronze, the silver, and the gold—broke into pieces like the iron and clay. The wind blew them all away like chaff from the summer threshing floor, so that no trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶ This was the dream, and now we will explain what it means to the king. ³⁷ Your Majesty, you are the king of kings to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, and power, strength, and glory. ³⁸ He gave you control over all peoples, § as well as the wild animals and birds. He made you ruler of all of them. You are the head of gold.

³⁹ But after you another kingdom will rise that is inferior to your kingdom and will replace yours. After that a third kingdom that is bronze will rise and rule over the whole world. ⁴⁰ The fourth kingdom will be strong as iron and in the same way that iron crushes and smashes everything; it will crush and smash all others. ⁴¹ You saw the feet and toes made from iron and baked clay, and this indicates it will be a divided kingdom. It will have some of the strength of iron but mixed with clay. ⁴² As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, the kingdom will be

§ 2:38 Literally, “wherever the sons of man dwell.”

partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴³ In the same way that you saw the iron mixed with ordinary clay, so the people will mix but they will not stick together just as iron and clay do not mix.

⁴⁴ During the time of these kings* the God of heaven will set up an eternal kingdom that will never be destroyed or taken over by others. It will crush all these kingdoms, bringing them to an end, and it will last forever, ⁴⁵ in the same way that you saw the stone quarried from the mountain, but not by human hands, crush the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God has revealed to Your Majesty what is to come. The dream is true, and the explanation is trustworthy.”

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell down before Daniel and worshiped him, and ordered offerings of grain and incense to be made to him. ⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, the revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.”

⁴⁸ Then the king promoted Daniel to a high position and gave him many expensive gifts, making him governor over the whole province of Babylon and head of all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ At Daniel's request, the king placed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in charge of the province of Babylon, and Daniel remained at the king's court.

* **2:44** Referring to the kings of the time of iron and clay.

3

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar had a gold statue made that was sixty cubits tall and six cubits wide.* He had it set up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. ² Then he summoned the provincial governors,[†] prefects, local governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the statue he had set up. ³ They all[‡] came to the dedication of the statue Nebuchadnezzar had set up and stood in front of it.

⁴ Then a herald announced in a loud voice, “People of all nations and languages, pay attention to the king’s command!” ⁵ As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of musical instruments, you must fall to the ground and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ Anyone who doesn’t immediately fall down and worship will be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.”

⁷ So when all the people heard the sound of the musical instruments§ they all fell down—the people of all nations and languages worshiped

* **3:1** This corresponds to around 90 feet high by 9 feet wide; however, the numbers in cubits are significant, especially in the Babylonian context. † **3:2** “Provincial governors”: literally, “satraps.” Also verse 27 and 6:1. ‡ **3:3** The complete group as identified in verse 2 is repeated in the text. § **3:7** The names of five of the six instruments mentioned in verse 5 are repeated again here.

the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸ Right then some of the astrologers came forward and made accusations against the Jews.*

⁹ They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “May Your Majesty the king live forever! ¹⁰ Your Majesty has decreed that everyone who hears the sound of the musical instruments[†] shall fall down and worship the gold statue, ¹¹ and that anyone who does not shall be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. ¹² But there are some Jews that you placed in charge of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—who pay no attention to Your Majesty’s decree. They do not serve your gods and will not worship the gold statue you set up.”

¹³ This made Nebuchadnezzar absolutely furious. “Bring me Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego!” he demanded. So they were brought before the king. ¹⁴ “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are you deliberately[‡] refusing to serve my gods and worship the gold statue I set up?” asked the king. ¹⁵ “Are you ready now to fall down and worship the statue I had made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments? If you don’t, you will be immediately thrown into the furnace of blazing fire, and there’s no god who can save you from my power!”

* **3:8** “Made accusations against the Jews”: literally, “ate pieces of the Jews.” † **3:10** The musical instruments listed in verse 5 are repeated again here. Also verse 15. ‡ **3:14** “Deliberately”: often translated as “true,” but this is an Aramaic word more to do with intent and purpose.

16 “King Nebuchadnezzar, we don't need to defend ourselves before you over this,” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied. 17 “If our God whom we serve so wishes, he is able to rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire. He will save us from your power, Your Majesty. 18 But even if he does not, Your Majesty needs to know that we would never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

19 This made Nebuchadnezzar so angry with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face twisted in rage. “Make the furnace seven times hotter than normal!” he ordered.

20 Then he commanded some of his strongest soldiers, “Tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the furnace of blazing fire!”

21 So they were tied up, fully dressed in their coats, trousers, turbans, and other clothes,§ and thrown into the furnace of blazing fire.

22 Because the king's command was so harsh in making the furnace so extremely hot, the flames killed the soldiers who threw them in.

23 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, still tied up, fell into the furnace of blazing fire.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar suddenly jumped up in amazement. “Didn't we throw three men tied up into the furnace?” he asked his advisors. “Yes, that's right, Your Majesty,” they replied. 25 “Look!” he cried out. “How is it that I can see four men, not tied up, walking

§ 3:21 The meaning of the words used for these items of clothing is debated.

around in the fire and not being burned? And the fourth one looks like a god!”*

²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar went towards the door of the furnace of blazing fire. “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” he shouted. So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire.

²⁷ The provincial governors, prefects, local governors, and the king's advisors gathered around them and saw that the fire had not harmed them. Their hair wasn't singed, their clothes weren't scorched—there wasn't even the smell of smoke!

²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel and he rescued his servants who trusted in him! They disobeyed my royal command, putting their lives on the line, and refused to worship any other gods except their God. ²⁹ Consequently I am issuing a decree that if anyone of any nation or language speaks disrespectfully about the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego they will be torn to pieces and their houses will be destroyed. There is no other God who is able to save like this!” ³⁰ Then Nebuchadnezzar promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, giving them even greater responsibilities in the province of Babylon.

* **3:25** “A god.” This expression on the lips of a pagan king surely referred to his own religious beliefs. The actual term is “son of god (s),” however in Hebrew “son of” often simply refers to the actual person, not the son (see for example 2:25 which in fact refers to the “sons of the captives,” etc). However, in verse 28 Nebuchadnezzar identifies him as an angel.

4

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar, to people of every nation and language in the whole world: I wish you well!*

² It is my pleasure to share with you an account of the signs and wonders the Most High God has done for me.

³ His signs are incredible. His wonders are amazing! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom, and his rule will last for all generations!

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was doing well at home, living happily in my palace. ⁵ But then one night I had a dream that really scared me—I saw visions that terrified me while I lay in my bed. ⁶ So I ordered all the wise men of Babylon brought before me to explain the dream to me. ⁷ When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and diviners came in I told them the dream, but they couldn't explain to me what it meant. ⁸ In the end Daniel came before me and I told him the dream. (He is also called Belteshazzar after my god, and he has the spirit of the holy gods† in him.)

⁹ “Belteshazzar, chief of magicians,” I said,‡ “I certainly know that the spirit of the holy gods is

* **4:1** “I wish you well”: literally, “May your ‘shelam’ increase.” “Shelam” is equivalent to the Hebrew “Shalom” and can mean both peace and prosperity. However, this is a standard letter greeting, and its use is really a stylized formula. † **4:8** “Spirit of the holy gods”: or, “spirit of the holy God.” Nebuchadnezzar clearly vacillated in his “god concepts”—one moment identifying the true God as the only one, while at other times referring to a pagan god as “his god.” Also verses 9 and 18; and 5:11 and 5:14.

‡ **4:9** Implied.

in you and that no mystery is difficult for you to explain. So tell me about what I saw in my dream and explain what it means.

¹⁰ As I lay in bed dreaming, I saw a tree in the middle of the earth—a really large tree. ¹¹ It grew strong and tall, reaching high into the sky so it could be seen by everyone in the whole world. ¹² Its leaves were beautiful, and it was full of fruit for all to eat. Wild animals rested in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. It fed all living creatures.

¹³ As I went on dreaming, lying on my bed, I saw a watcher, a holy one, § coming down from heaven. ¹⁴ He cried out in a loud voice, ‘Cut down the tree and chop off its branches! Shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit! Drive the animals away from its shade, and scare off the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But leave the stump and its roots in the ground, and bind it with iron and bronze, surrounded by the new grass of the field. Let him* become soaked with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals outside in the undergrowth. ¹⁶ Let his mind become like that of an animal. Let him be like this for seven times.† ¹⁷ This is the decree conveyed by the watchers, the verdict declared by the holy ones in order that everyone alive may know that the Most High

§ 4:13 “A watcher, a holy one”: this is usually understood to be an angel. * 4:15 “Him”: there is a gradual transition from the actual image of the tree to its application to King Nebuchadnezzar. † 4:16 The most common interpretation of “times” is “years,” and this is the understanding of the Septuagint, Josephus, and traditional Jewish commentators.

rules over human kingdoms. He gives them to whoever he chooses—he puts the most humble individuals in charge.’

¹⁸ This is what I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw in my dream. Now it's up to you, Belteshazzar, to give me the explanation as you have before. None of the wise men in my kingdom could explain it to me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

¹⁹ When Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) heard this, he was upset for a while, disturbed as he thought about it. The king told him, “Belteshazzar, don't be worried about the dream and what it means.”

“My lord, I only wish this dream was for those who hate you and the explanation for your enemies,” Daniel replied. ²⁰ “The tree you saw was growing strong and tall, reaching high into the sky so it could be seen by everyone in the whole world. ²¹ Its leaves were beautiful, and it was full of fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived under its shade, and birds nested in its branches. ²² This is you, Your Majesty. You have grown strong, your power has become so great that it has reached high into the sky, and your rule extends to the ends of the earth.

²³ Then Your Majesty saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven who said, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump and its roots in the ground, and bind it with iron and bronze, surrounded by the new grass of the field. Let him become soaked with the dew of heaven and let him live with the animals outside in the

undergrowth. Let his mind become like that of an animal. Let him be like this for seven times.’

²⁴ This is what it means, Your Majesty, and what the Most High has decreed will happen to my lord the king. ²⁵ You will be driven away from human society and you will live with the wild animals. You will eat grass like the cattle, and you will be soaked with the dew of heaven. You will be like this for seven times until you acknowledge that the Most High rules over human kingdoms, and that he gives them to those he chooses. ²⁶ However, as it was decreed, the stump and its roots were to be left in the ground. Your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules.

²⁷ So, Your Majesty, please take my advice. Stop sinning and do what’s right. End your iniquities and be merciful to the oppressed. Maybe then things will continue to go well for you.”

²⁸ (However, all this did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹ Twelve months later he was walking on the roof[†] of the royal palace in Babylon. ³⁰ He said, “I was the one who built this great city of Babylon! By my own great power I built it as my royal residence for my majestic glory!”

³¹ The words were still on the king’s lips when a voice came from heaven, “King Nebuchadnezzar, this is what is decreed concerning you: the kingdom has been taken away from you. ³² You

[†] **4:29** “On the roof”: literally just “on.” Buildings of the time had flat roofs, which would explain why the king was walking “on” the royal palace.

will be driven away from human society and you will live with the wild animals. You will eat grass like the cattle, and you will become soaked with the dew of heaven. You will be like this for seven times until you acknowledge that the Most High rules over human kingdoms, and that he gives them to whoever he chooses.”

³³ Immediately the decree was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar was driven away from human society. He ate grass like the cattle, and his body was soaked with the dew of heaven. His hair grew matted like a vulture, and his nails like bird claws.)

³⁴ Once the time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven and my sanity returned to me. I blessed and praised the Most High and worshiped the One who lives forever. His rule is an eternal rule, and his kingdom lasts for all generations. ³⁵ Everyone who lives on earth are as nothing compared to him. He does whatever he chooses among the heavenly host and among those who live on earth. No one can hold him back from what he does, or ask him, “What are you doing?”

³⁶ When my sanity returned, then my kingdom, majesty, and splendor also returned to me. My advisors and nobles came looking for me, and I was restored as ruler over my kingdom, even greater than before.

³⁷ So now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, honor, and glorify the King of Heaven, for everything he does is right, and his ways are true. He is able to humble those who are proud.

5

¹ King Belshazzar held a great feast for one thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine with them. ² Under the wine's influence Belshazzar ordered his servants to bring in the cups and bowls of gold and silver his father* Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem so that he and his nobles, his wives and concubines, could drink from them. ³ So they brought in the gold cups and bowls that had been taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem. The king and his nobles, his wives and concubines, drank from them. ⁴ As they drank wine they praised their gods—idols made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

⁵ Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared, writing on the plaster wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. The king watched the hand as it wrote. ⁶ His face turned pale,† and he became very frightened. His legs gave way and his knees knocked together.

⁷ The king shouted, “Bring in the enchanters and astrologers and diviners!” He told these wise men of Babylon, “Anyone who can read this writing and explain it to me will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will become the third highest ruler

* **5:2** “Father” as used here does not necessarily mean his actual father. † **5:6** “His face turned pale”: literally “his face changed.”

in the kingdom.”[†]

⁸ However, after all the king's wise men had come in, they could not read the writing or explain to him what it meant. ⁹ This made King Belshazzar even more frightened and his face grew even paler. His nobles also were in panic.

¹⁰ When the queen mother[§] heard the noise the king and the nobles were making she went to the banquet hall. She said to Belshazzar, “May Your Majesty the king live forever! Don't be frightened! Don't look so pale!” ¹¹ There's a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In your father's* time he was found to have understanding and insight, and wisdom like that of the gods. Your Majesty's father, King Nebuchadnezzar put him in charge of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and diviners. Your father did this ¹² because Daniel, (called Beltshazzar by the king) was found to have an excellent mind, full of understanding and insight, and also able to interpret dreams, explain mysteries, and solve difficult problems. Call Daniel in and let him explain what this means to you.”

¹³ So Daniel was brought in before the king.

[†] **5:7** “Third highest ruler”: It is believed that Belshazzar was regent for his father Nabonidus, which is why he could only offer third place rather than second place in the kingdom. **§ 5:10** “Queen mother”: literally, “the queen.” Most commentators agree with this interpretation. *** 5:11** See note under 5:2. “Father” does not necessarily mean his actual father. This could equally be “grandfather” or simply “predecessor.”

The king asked him, “Are you Daniel, one of the prisoners my father the king brought from Judah? ¹⁴ I have heard about you, that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that you were found to have understanding, insight, and great wisdom. ¹⁵ Just now the wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and explain it to me, but they weren't able to do so—they couldn't tell me what it meant. ¹⁶ However, I'm told that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and explain it to me, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will become the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

¹⁷ Daniel answered the king, “Keep your gifts and give your rewards to another. Even so I will read the writing to Your Majesty and explain to you what it means. ¹⁸ Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar this kingdom, and power, glory, and majesty. ¹⁹ Because of the power he gave him, people of every nation and language trembled with fear before him. Those he wished to kill were killed, and those he wished to live were allowed to live. Those he wanted to honor were honored, and those he wanted to humble were humbled. ²⁰ But when he became arrogant and hard-hearted, acting proudly, he was removed from his royal throne and his glory was taken away from him. ²¹ He was driven away from human society and his mind became like that of an animal. He lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like

cattle, and he was soaked with the dew of heaven until he acknowledged that the Most High rules over human kingdoms, and that he gives them to whoever he chooses.

²² But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, even though you knew all this. ²³ You have arrogantly defied the Lord of heaven and you had the cups and bowls of his Temple brought to you. You and your nobles, your wives and concubines, drank wine from them as you praised gods made of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone that can't see or hear or know anything. But you have not honored God who holds in his hand your very breath and everything you do. ²⁴ That's why he sent the hand to write this message.

²⁵ What was written on the wall was this: 'Number, number, weigh, divide.'[†] ²⁶ Here is the meaning: Number—God has numbered your reign and brought it to an end. ²⁷ Weighed—you have been weighed on the balances and you were found lacking. ²⁸ Divided—your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians.”

²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave the order and Daniel was clothed in purple and had a gold chain placed around his neck. He was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom. ³⁰ On that very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians,

[†] **5:25** Literally in the Aramaic, “mene, mene, tekel, parsin.”

was killed ³¹ and Darius the Mede was given[‡] the kingdom at the age of sixty-two.

6

¹ Darius decided it would be good to place the kingdom under the control of one hundred and twenty provincial governors. ² Three chief ministers were placed over them to look after the king's interests. Daniel was one of the three. ³ Soon Daniel was shown to be a far better administrator than the other chief ministers and provincial governors. Because of his exceptional ability, the king planned to put him in charge of the whole kingdom.

⁴ As a result the other chief ministers and provincial governors tried to find a pretext against Daniel as to the way he ran the kingdom. But they couldn't find any cause for complaint or any corruption, for he was trustworthy. They could not discover any evidence that Daniel was negligent or corrupt. ⁵ So they said to themselves, "We won't find any pretext to attack Daniel unless we use his observance of his God's laws against him."

⁶ So these chief ministers and provincial governors went together to see the king. "May Your Majesty King Darius live forever!" they said. ⁷ "We have all agreed—chief ministers, prefects, provincial governors, counselors, and local governors—that Your Majesty should issue

[‡] **5:31** "Was given," literally, "received." The translation "took over" is lacking in that the whole point of the narrative in Daniel is that God is in control of the kingdoms.

a decree, legally enforced, that for the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den. ⁸ Now, Your Majesty, if you will sign the decree and have it issued so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians that cannot be revoked.” ⁹ So Darius signed the decree into law.

¹⁰ When Daniel found out that the decree had been signed he went home to his upstairs room where he would pray three times a day, with the windows open facing Jerusalem. There he kneeled down, praying and thanking his God as he always did. ¹¹ Then the men who had plotted against Daniel* went together and found him praying to his God and asking for help. ¹² They went to the king right away and asked him about the decree. “Didn't Your Majesty sign a decree that for the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den?”

“I certainly did!” the king replied. “The decree stands. According to the law of the Medes and the Persians it cannot be revoked.”

¹³ Then they told the king, “Daniel, one of those captives from Judah, pays no attention to Your Majesty or to the decree you signed and prays three times a day.”

¹⁴ When the king heard this, he was very upset and tried to think of how to save Daniel. He worked hard until sundown trying to rescue

* **6:11** “The men who had plotted against Daniel”: literally, “these men.”

him. ¹⁵ Then the men returned together and said to the king, “You know, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians no decree or statute can be changed.”

¹⁶ Eventually the king gave the order and Daniel was taken and thrown into the lions' den. The king told him, “May the God you so loyally serve save you!”

¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the entrance to the den and the king sealed it with his own personal seal and those of his nobles so that no one could interfere with what was happening to Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went back to his palace. He ate nothing at all that night and refused any kind of entertainment. He couldn't sleep a wink.

¹⁹ At dawn, as soon as it was light, the king got up and rushed to the lions' den. ²⁰ As he approached the den, he called out anxiously to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God whom you honor so faithfully, was your God able to save you from the lions?”

²¹ Daniel replied, “May Your Majesty the king live forever! ²² My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths. They have not hurt me because I was found innocent in his sight. In addition, I have never done you any wrong, Your Majesty.”

²³ The king was extremely pleased and ordered Daniel brought up from the den. Daniel was lifted up from the den and he was found to have no injuries at all because he had trusted in his God.

24 Then the king ordered the men who had accused Daniel to be brought and they were thrown into the lions' den along with their wives and children. Before they even reached the floor of the den the lions attacked them, ripping them to pieces.†

25 Then Darius wrote to all the people of the world, the different nations and languages, saying, "I wish you well!‡ 26 I decree that throughout my entire kingdom everyone should respect and honor the God of Daniel, for he is the living God. He is everlasting and his kingdom will never be destroyed. His reign will never end. 27 He is the one who rescues and saves; he does miracles and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He saved Daniel from death in the lions' den."

28 Daniel experienced good success during the reigns of Darius and Cyrus the Persian.

7

1 In the first year of Belshazzar's reign as king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream in which visions passed through his mind as he lay in bed. Afterwards he wrote down the dream, describing it in summary form.

2 In my vision that I had that night I saw a tremendous storm, blowing from every direction, stirring up a great sea. 3 Four very large beasts were coming up from the sea, every one of them different.

† 6:24 "Ripping them to pieces": literally, "crushing all their bones." ‡ 6:25 On the greeting see 4:1.

⁴ The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. As I watched, its wings were torn off and it was pulled upright so it was standing with its hind legs on the ground and it was given the mind of a human being.

⁵ A second beast appeared, looking like a bear, hunched up on one side and holding three ribs in its mouth with its teeth. It was told, “Get up and eat all the flesh you can.”

⁶ After this I saw a third beast. It looked like a leopard with four wings like those of a bird on its back, and it had four heads. It was given power to impose its rule.

⁷ Then in my vision that I had that night a fourth beast appeared. It was terrifying, frightening, and extremely powerful, with great iron teeth. It tore apart and ate up its victims, and then trampled on what was left. This beast was different to those that came before it, and it had ten horns.

⁸ As I was wondering about the horns, another horn, a little one, came up between them and three of the earlier horns were pulled out before it. It had human-looking eyes and a mouth that made arrogant boasts.

⁹ While I was watching, thrones were set up and the Ancient of Days took his seat.* His clothes were white as snow and his hair looked like the purest wool. His throne blazed like flames; its wheels like burning fire. ¹⁰ A stream of fire poured out, flowing from before him. A

* **7:9** “Took his seat”: in other words, to begin judgment.

thousand thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court sat to begin its judgment, and the books were opened.

¹¹ I was watching because of the boasts the little horn was making. I went on watching until that beast was killed and its body destroyed by burning. ¹² The rest of the beasts were allowed to go on living for a season and a time, but their power to rule had been taken away.

¹³ As I continued watching in my vision that I had that night I saw one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

¹⁴ He was given authority, glory, and the power to rule over all people, the different nations and languages, so they would all worship him. His rule is everlasting—it will never cease, and his kingdom will never be destroyed.

¹⁵ I, Daniel, was deeply disturbed—the visions that had passed through my mind frightened me.

¹⁶ I went up to one of the attendants[†] and asked him to explain what all this meant. He said he would explain it so I could understand. ¹⁷ “These four large beasts symbolize four kingdoms[‡] that will rise to power on the earth. ¹⁸ But those dedicated to the Most High will eventually receive the kingdom. They will possess the kingdom forever, for ever and ever.”

¹⁹ Then I wanted to know what the fourth beast stood for—the one that was different to the rest

[†] **7:16** Referencing those mentioned in verse 10. [‡] **7:17** “Kingdoms”: literally, “kings.”

and so terrifying. It had iron teeth and bronze claws, and it tore apart and ate up its victims, trampling on what was left. ²⁰ I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head, and the other one that came up later, causing three of the other horns to fall. This horn looked more impressive than the others and had eyes and a mouth that made arrogant boasts. ²¹ I watched as this horn attacked God's dedicated people and was conquering them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came and gave judgment in favor of§ the dedicated people of the Most High, and at that time they took possession of the kingdom.

²³ Then he told me, "The fourth beast stands for the fourth kingdom to rule the earth. It will be different to all the rest of the kingdoms. The beast will eat up the whole world, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings that will come to power from this kingdom. The one who comes later is different from them, and will defeat three of them. ²⁵ He will speak words of defiance against the Most High and oppress the dedicated people of the Most High, and attempt to change times and laws, and they will be placed under his power for a time, two times, and half a time.

²⁶ Then the court will execute judgment and take away his power, destroying it forever. ²⁷ Then the right to rule, the power, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to those dedicated to the Most High. His

§ 7:22 "Gave judgment in favor of": or "Gave the right to judge to."

kingdom will last forever, and all who rule will serve and obey him.”

²⁸ This is the end of the summary. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts really disturbed me and my face turned pale, but I kept it all to myself.

8

¹ In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign I, Daniel, saw another vision after the one I had seen previously. ² In my vision I looked around and saw I was in the castle at Susa in the province of Elam. In the vision I was beside the River Ulai. ³ I looked around and saw a ram standing beside the river. It had two long horns, one longer than the other, even though the longer one had grown last. ⁴ I watched the ram charging west, north, and south. No animal could stand up to it—nor was there any chance of rescue from its power. It did whatever it wanted* and grew powerful.

⁵ As I was thinking about what I'd seen, a male goat came in from the west, racing in across the surface of the earth so fast it didn't touch the ground. It had a large, prominent horn between its eyes. ⁶ It approached the ram with the two horns which I had seen standing beside the river, rushing in to attack in a furious rage. ⁷ I watched as the goat charged furiously at the ram, hitting it and breaking off its two horns. The ram did not have the strength to resist the goat's attack. The goat threw the ram to the ground, trampling

* **8:4** Compare 11:3, 11:16, 11:36

on it, and there was no possibility of rescuing it from the goat's power.

⁸ The goat grew very powerful, but at the height of its power its large horn was broken off. In its place four large horns came up, pointing to the four winds of heaven.[†] ⁹ A little horn came up from one of them, and grew extremely powerful to the south and to the east and to the Beautiful Land.[‡] ¹⁰ It grew in power until it reached the heavenly army, throwing some of them and some of the stars down to the earth and trampled on them. ¹¹ It even tried to make itself as great as the Prince of the heavenly army—it removed the continual service,[§] and the place of his sanctuary was destroyed. ¹² An army of people* and the continual service were handed over to it because of rebellion,[†] and it overthrew truth, and it was successful in everything it did.

¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one asked the one who was speaking,

[†] **8:8** “Four winds of heaven”: north, south, east, and west.

[‡] **8:9** “The beautiful land”: a reference to the land of Israel.

§ 8:11 “Continual service”: the word here refers to the continuing sanctuary services that were carried out on a daily basis. (The word used here simply says “daily.”) Some translations restrict this to “daily sacrifice” but the daily ministry in the sanctuary involved much more than this. The same term is used in verses 12 and 13, and 11:31. The continual service was initiated in Exodus 29:38. It was expected to be continual (Leviticus 6:13, Numbers 28:1-15). ^{*} **8:12** The army referenced here is clearly different from the heavenly army mentioned in verse 10. The word for “army” or “host” can simply mean a large group.

[†] **8:12** The Hebrew of the first part of this verse is unclear.

“How long is this vision for—the removal of the continual service, the rebellion that causes devastation, the handing over of the sanctuary and the army of people to be trampled down?”

¹⁴ He replied, “For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings, then the sanctuary will be cleansed.”[†]

¹⁵ As I, Daniel, tried to work out what this vision meant suddenly I saw someone who looked like a man standing in front of me. ¹⁶ I also heard a human voice calling from the River Ulai, “Gabriel, explain to this man the meaning of the vision.” ¹⁷ As he approached me, I was terrified and fell face down before him. “Son of man,” he told me, “You need to understand that this vision refers to the time of the end.”

¹⁸ As he spoke to me I lost consciousness as I laid face down on the ground. But he took hold of me and helped me to my feet. ¹⁹ He told me, “Pay attention! I’m going to explain to you what’s going to happen during the time of anger, which refers to the appointed time of the end. ²⁰ The ram with two horns that you saw symbolizes the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹ The male goat is the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is its first king. ²² The four horns that came up in place of the large horn that was broken represent the four kingdoms that arose from that nation, but not as powerful as the first.

²³ When those kingdoms come to an end, when

[†] **8:14** “Cleansed”: some have suggested “justified” or “restored,” however the Septuagint and the Vulgate both read “cleansed.”

their sins have reached their fullest extent, a ferocious and treacherous kingdom[§] will rise to power. ²⁴ It will become very powerful but not by its own power. It will be terribly destructive, and will succeed in everything it does. It will destroy great leaders and God's dedicated people. ²⁵ Through its deviousness, its lies will be convincing and successful. It shows its arrogance both in thought and action, destroying those who thought they were perfectly safe. It even fights in opposition against the Prince of princes, but it will be defeated, though not by any human power.

²⁶ The vision about the evenings and mornings that has been explained to you is true, but for now seal up this vision because it refers to the distant future.”

²⁷ After this, I, Daniel, became exhausted, and I was sick for days. Then I got up and went back to working for the king, but I was devastated at what I'd seen in vision and I couldn't understand it.

9

¹ It was the first year of Darius the Mede, son of Ahasuerus,* after he had become king of the Babylonians. ² During the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures as given to the prophet Jeremiah that the time of seventy years for Jerusalem to lie desolate would

§ 8:23 “Kingdom” literally, “king,” but here expressive of more than a single person. * 9:1 Xerxes in Greek.

soon be fulfilled.† ³ So I turned to the Lord God in prayer. I fasted and wore sackcloth and ashes, and I pleaded with him in prayer to act.‡

⁴ I prayed to the Lord my God, and confessed, saying,§ “Lord, you are a great and awesome God! You always keep your promises and show your trustworthy love to those who love you and keep your commandments. ⁵ But we have sinned, we have done wrong. We have acted wickedly, we have rebelled against you. We have turned away from your commandments and your laws. ⁶ We have not paid attention to your servants the prophets who spoke in your name to our kings and leaders and forefathers, and to everybody in the country.

⁷ Lord, you always do what is right, but we continue to be ashamed* to this very day—we the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those nearby and those far away, those of every country where you have driven

† **9:2** Daniel's concern, as shown by the following verses, was that the seventy years would soon be completed, but that there was no sign that any change was imminent. ‡ **9:3** “To act”: implied. § **9:4** Daniel's prayer draws on a number of texts from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy, 1 Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Jeremiah) and so switches between me/our, you/your, and he/his. For consistency here the pronouns are regularized e.g. all references to God are designated as “you.” * **9:7** “Ashamed”: this was especially true as a defeated and enslaved nation. Living in Babylon was a daily reminder that their God had not protected them from capture and exile. This humiliation must have been particularly hard to bear for those such as Daniel who maintained their faith in the true God.

them because of their unfaithfulness to you. ⁸ Public shame is ours Lord, and on our kings and princes and forefathers, because we have sinned against you. ⁹ Yet you, the Lord our God, are compassionate and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against you. ¹⁰ We have not obeyed what you, the Lord God, have told us. We have not followed your law that you gave us through your servants the prophets. ¹¹ The whole of Israel has broken your law and turned away from you, not listening to what you had to say. That's why the condemnation that comes from our broken promise has been poured out on us—because of our sin, as made clear in the Law of Moses, the servant of the Lord.

¹² You have carried out what you warned us about, against us and against our rulers—such a terrible punishment brought upon Jerusalem, the worst that has ever happened in the whole world. ¹³ Just as the Law of Moses said, all this punishment has fallen on us, but we still have not asked you, the Lord our God, to be favorable to us, turning away from our sins and paying attention to your truth. ¹⁴ You were ready to punish us, and you were right to do everything you have done, for we didn't listen to you.

¹⁵ You, our Lord God, by your great power brought us out of Egypt, making a name for yourself that lasts even until now. But we have sinned, we have done wicked things. ¹⁶ So Lord, because you are so good, please turn away from your anger and fury against Jerusalem, your

holy mountain. Because of our sins and those of our forefathers, Jerusalem and your people are mocked by all our neighbors. ¹⁷ Now, our Lord, please listen to the prayer and pleading of your servant, and for your own sake look kindly† on your abandoned sanctuary. ¹⁸ Please listen carefully and open your eyes and see the terrible state we are in, and the city that bears your name. We're not making these requests to you for this because of our goodness, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹ Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive! Please pay attention and do something! For your own sake, my God, don't delay, for your city and your people are identified by your name.”

²⁰ I continued speaking, praying and confessing my sins and those of my people Israel, pleading before the Lord my God on behalf of Jerusalem, his holy mountain. ²¹ While I was still praying, Gabriel, whom I'd seen previously when I'd had the vision, came flying rapidly towards me at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He gave me the following explanation,‡ saying, “Daniel, I've come to give you insight and understanding. ²³ As soon as you started praying, the answer was given, and I have come to explain it to you because God loves you very much. So please listen to the explanation and understand the meaning of the vision.

† 9:17 “Look kindly”: literally, “shine your face.” ‡ 9:22 “He gave me the following explanation”: literally, “He instructed and he spoke with me and he said.”

²⁴ Seventy weeks has been allotted to your people and your holy city to deal with the rebellion, to put an end to sin, to forgive wrongdoing, to bring in everlasting goodness, to confirm the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place. ²⁵ You need to know and understand that from the time the command is given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, until the Messiah, § seven weeks plus sixty-two weeks will elapse. It will be built with streets and defenses, in spite of the difficult times.

²⁶ After sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be put to death, and will be brought to nothing.* A ruler will come to power whose army will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end will come like a flood. War and devastation will continue until that period of time is completed. ²⁷ He will confirm the agreement with many people for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put an end to sacrifices and offerings. The idolatry † that causes devastation will be supported until the end when the same fate is poured out on the one who devastates.” ‡

10

¹ In the third year of the reign of King Cyrus of

§ 9:25 “Messiah”: literally means “anointed one.” * 9:26 “He has nothing”: literally, “there is not for him.” The meaning of this phrase is unclear. † 9:27 “Idolatry”: literally, “abomination.” ‡ 9:27 The latter part of this verse literally reads, “on a wing of abominations desolation until the end and what was determined is poured on the desolator.” It has been variously understood.

Persia, a message* was revealed to Daniel (also called Belteshazzar). The message was certain and concerned a great conflict. He understood the message and gained understanding of the vision.

² When this happened, I, Daniel, had been in mourning for three full weeks. ³ I ate no fine food. No meat or wine passed my lips. I used no perfumed oils until those three weeks were over.

⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month I was standing on the bank of the great River Tigris. ⁵ I looked around and saw a man dressed in linen, and around his waist was a belt of pure gold. ⁶ His body shone like a jewel;† his face was as bright as lightning; his eyes were like blazing torches; his arms and legs gleamed like polished bronze; and his voice sounded like the roar of a crowd.

⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one to see this vision‡—the others with me did not see the vision, but they suddenly felt very frightened and ran away to hide themselves. ⁸ I was left alone to see this wonderful vision. My strength

* **10:1** “Message”: literally, “word.” This is not the same as the vision mentioned later—the vision explained the message.

† **10:6** “Jewel”: the exact gemstone is uncertain—beryl, topaz, and jasper have been suggested. ‡ **10:7** This vision, or appearance, is different to Daniel’s previous visions, and indeed the form of the Hebrew word is slightly different. Previously the visions have been while dreaming or are clearly happening “inside his head.” This “vision” seems to be one in which there is a real physical manifestation, and the fact that those present experience some “supernatural effect” supports this.

drained away, and my face turned pale as death. I didn't have an ounce of strength left. ⁹ I heard him speaking, and when I heard his voice I lost consciousness and I lay face down on the ground. [§] ¹⁰ Then a hand touched me and lifted me onto my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said to me, "Daniel, God loves you very much. Pay attention to what I'm telling you. Stand up, because I have been sent to you." When he told me this I stood up, trembling.

¹² "Don't be afraid, Daniel," he said. "From the first day you concentrated on trying to understand this, and to humble yourself before God, your prayer was heard, and I have come to answer you. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia* opposed me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was being detained there by the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I've come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the last days,† for the vision is about a time in the future."

¹⁵ As he told me this I remained there with my face to the ground and couldn't say a word. ¹⁶ Then the one who looked like a human being touched my lips and I was able to speak. I told the one standing in front of me, "My lord, since I saw the vision I've been in agony and I feel really

§ 10:9 See the similar experience in 8:18. *** 10:13** "Prince of the kingdom of Persia": in the context likely a supernatural being, one opposed to those serving God. **† 10:14** "Last days": the future as described in the prophetic vision.

weak. ¹⁷ How can I, your servant, speak to you, my lord? I have no strength, and I can hardly breathe.”

¹⁸ Once again the one who looked like a human being touched me and restored my strength.

¹⁹ “Don't be afraid; God loves you very much. May you have peace! Be strong! Have courage!” As he spoke to me, I became stronger and I said, “My lord, speak to me, for you have strengthened me.”

²⁰ “Do you know why I've come to you?” he asked. “Shortly I will have to go back and fight the prince of Persia, and after that the prince of Greece will come. ²¹ But before that I will tell you what is written down in the Book of Truth. No one helps me fight against these princes except Michael your prince.

11

¹ And I myself,* in the first year of Darius the Mede, took my stand to support and defend him.†

² So now let me reveal the truth to you. There are still three kings to come to power in Persia, and then a fourth who will be far richer than all the others. When he becomes strong through his wealth, he will rally the whole kingdom against Greece.‡

* **11:1** “I myself” refers to the angel, not to Daniel. His speech continues until 12:4. † **11:1** The meaning of this verse is debated, however this statement clearly continues the speech of God's messenger. The next chapter really begins at verse 2.

‡ **11:2** “Rally the whole kingdom against Greece.” Alternatively, this could be read as “rally all the kingdoms of Greece,” though this is a minority opinion.

³ Then a mighty king will come to power. He will rule with great authority and do whatever he wants. § ⁴ But as he extends his power his kingdom will be broken up, divided towards the four winds of heaven.* It will not go to his descendants, and it will not be ruled as he ruled. It will be pulled up and given to others. ⁵ The king of the south will grow strong, but one of his officers will grow even stronger and will rule his kingdom with great authority.

⁶ Some years later they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south will be married to the king of the north to guarantee the peace treaty. However, she will not be able to keep her hold on power, nor will his power† continue. She and her attendants will be betrayed, along with her child and husband. ‡ Later on, however, ⁷ a new king of the south from her family will take over. He will come to attack the army of the king of the north and enter his fortress. He will fight against them and will win. ⁸ In addition he will take back with him to Egypt the idols of their gods, along with their expensive vessels of silver and gold. For some years he will leave the king of the north alone.

⁹ Then the king of the north will march into the kingdom of the king of the south but will have to retreat to his own land. ¹⁰ However, his sons will

§ **11:3** “Do whatever he wants”: see 8:4 and 11:16 and 11:36.

* **11:4** “Towards the four winds of heaven”: in other words, “into four parts.” † **11:6** Or “offspring.” ‡ **11:6** “This vision”: referring back to the vision beginning in 8:13.

prepare for war, assembling a huge number of troops. One of them will lead an advance that rushes forward like a river bursting its banks, crossing over and pressing forward to attack the enemy fortress.

¹¹ This will infuriate the king of the south, who will go out into battle against the large army assembled by the king of the north and will defeat it. ¹² After capturing such a large army, he will become very proud, and will kill thousands. But this triumph will not last long.

¹³ Years later the king of the north will once again raise an army, even larger than before, and will invade with this huge army, accompanied by plenty of supplies. ¹⁴ At the same time many will rebel against the king of the south. Violent men from your own people will rebel in order to fulfill this vision,[§] but they shall fail.

¹⁵ Then the king of the north will come and build siege ramps and he will capture a city with strong defenses. The forces of the south will not be able to prevent it—even his best troops won't be able to resist the attack. ¹⁶ The invader will do whatever he wants;* no one will be able to oppose him. He will stand in the Beautiful Land[†] with the power to destroy it. ¹⁷ He will be determined to come with all the power of his kingdom and will make a peace treaty with the king of the south. To secure this he will give

[§] **11:14** “Husband”: literally, “the one supporting her,” generally understood to mean her husband. * **11:16** “Do whatever he wants”: see 8:4 and 11:3 and 11:36 † **11:16** Israel.

him a daughter of women to marry in order to destroy the kingdom. But she will not be successful and will not support him. ¹⁸ Then he will turn to attack the coastlands and will conquer many, but a commander will put a stop to his arrogant behavior, paying him back for it. ¹⁹ He will return to the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall, and will be gone. ²⁰ His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain royal wealth. However, in a short time he will die, but not violently or in battle.

²¹ A contemptible person will follow him who will not be given royal majesty. He will take over peaceably[†] and assume control of the kingdom through deception. ²² Great armies will be swept away before him. They will be broken, as well as the prince of the agreement. § ²³ After making an alliance with him, he will act deceptively. He will come to power peaceably, becoming strong though only having a few supporters. ²⁴ He will invade the richest parts of the land and do what his fathers and forefathers never did—he will distribute plunder, spoil, and possessions. He will make plans to attack fortresses, but only for a time.

²⁵ Then he will draw on his strength and courage to gather a large army against the king of the south. The king of the south will prepare for war. Fighting back with a large and powerful army, but he will not be successful because of

† **11:21** “Peaceably” or “in a time of peace.” This word is repeated in verse 23, and contrasts with the violence mentioned in verse 22. § **11:22** See 9:27.

plots made against him. ²⁶ Those closest to him* will destroy him. His army will be wiped out—many will fall in battle. ²⁷ The two kings, with evil intentions, will tell each other lies even as they sit together at the same table. But their scheming is pointless—the end will come at the time predicted.

²⁸ The king of the north will return to his own country with all the wealth he has looted.† He will be determined to attack‡ the people of the holy agreement, and do all he can to destroy it before returning to his own country.

²⁹ At the time predicted he will return to invade the south again, but this time it won't be like before. ³⁰ Ships from Cyprus§ will come to attack him, frightening him off so that he retreats. But this will make him mad, and he will attack the people of the holy agreement, recognizing those who abandon their commitment to the holy agreement.

³¹ His forces will occupy and defile the Temple fortress. They will put a stop to the continual service,* and set up a form of idolatry that causes devastation.† ³² The king will use flattery to

* **11:26** “Those closest to him”: literally, “those who eat his royal food.” † **11:28** “He has looted”: implied. ‡ **11:28** “Be determined to attack”: literally, “set his heart against.” In addition, the word “people” is added as an explanation, since the action taken is against them as believers. § **11:30** Hebrew: “Kittim.” * **11:31** “Continual service”: see on 8:11. † **11:31** “Idolatry that causes devastation”: see 9:27.

corrupt those who break the solemn agreement,[†] but the people who know their God will stand firm in their resistance. ³³ Wise leaders of the people will teach many, though for a time they will be killed by sword and fire, or they will be imprisoned and robbed. ³⁴ During this time of persecution they will receive a little help, and many who join them won't be sincere. ³⁵ Some of the wise will be killed, so that they may be refined and purified and cleansed until the time of the end, for the predicted time is still to come.

³⁶ The king will do whatever he wants,[§] praising himself and considering himself greater than any god, even saying outrageous things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of anger has finished, for what has been decided will be accomplished. ³⁷ He will have no time for the gods of his forefathers, nor for the one loved by women, nor for any other god, for he considers himself greater than any of these. ³⁸ Instead he will honor the god of fortresses—a god unknown to his forefathers—giving him offerings of gold and silver and precious stones and expensive gifts. ³⁹ He will deal with strong fortresses* with the help of this foreign god. He will give riches to those who acknowledge him, making them rulers over the people, and distributing the land at a price.

[†] **11:32** “Solemn agreement”: or “covenant,” but this word is not often used today outside of legal contexts. [§] **11:36** “Do whatever he wants”: see 8:4 and 11:3 and 11:16. * **11:39** Whether these are his fortresses or those he attacks is not clear.

⁴⁰ At the time of the end the king of the south will attack him. But the king of the north will retaliate with force like a storm, with chariots and horsemen and many ships. He will advance, sweeping through many lands. ⁴¹ He will invade the Beautiful Land[†] and kill many people there. However, Moab, Edom, and most of the Ammonites will escape his power. ⁴² He will extend his attacks against different countries—even the land of Egypt will not be able to escape. ⁴³ He will acquire the gold and silver and riches of Egypt, ruling over them and also the Libyans and Ethiopians.

⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north will alarm him, and in a furious rage he will set out to destroy and exterminate many people. ⁴⁵ He will set up his royal camp between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain. But he will die with no one to help him.

12

¹ At that time Michael the great prince, the protector of your people, will stand up and there will be a time of trouble like never before, since nations first existed. But at that time your people will be saved, all whose names are written in the book. ² Millions* sleeping in the ground in death will awake, some to eternal life, and some to eternal shame and disgrace. ³ Those who are

[†] **11:41** Referring to Israel. * **12:2** “Millions”: the usual translation of “many” seems inappropriate here. It really signifies “a great number” which in modern-day idiom would be “millions.”

wise will shine as bright as the sky; those who have shown many the right way to live will shine as bright as the stars forever and ever.

⁴ But as for you, Daniel, keep this message secret, and seal the book closed until the time of the end. Many will search this way and that way,[†] and knowledge will grow greater and greater.”

⁵ Then I, Daniel, noticed two others, each standing on opposite sides of the river. ⁶ One of them asked the man dressed in linen[‡] who was above the river's waters, “How long before these outrageous things[§] come to an end?” ⁷ The man dressed in linen, who was above the river's waters, lifted both hands to heaven made a solemn promise by the One who lives eternally. I heard him say, “It will last for a time, times, and half a time. When the scattering* of the power of the holy people has come to an end, then all these things will also come to an end.”

⁸ I heard the answer, but I didn't understand it. So I asked, “My lord, what's the final result of all this?”

⁹ “Daniel, you can go on your way now,” he replied, “for this message is secret and kept sealed until the time of the end.

¹⁰ Many will be purified and cleansed and refined,[†] but the wicked will go on being wicked.

[†] **12:4** Theodotion in his Greek translation render this as “peruse carefully,” which would then mean that the increase in knowledge would refer to an increased understanding of the prophecy. [‡] **12:6** See 10:4. [§] **12:6** See 11:36. ^{*} **12:7** “Scattering”: or, “shattering.” [†] **12:10** See 11:35.

None of the wicked will understand, but the wise will understand. ¹¹ From the time the continual ministry is stopped[‡] in order to set up the idolatry that causes devastation[§] will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. ¹² Blessed are those who patiently wait for and reach the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

¹³ But as for you, go your way until your life ends, and then rest. You will rise to receive your reward at the end of time.”

[‡] **12:11** See 8:11, 11:31. [§] **12:11** See 9:27, 11:31.

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