

DANIEL'S PROPHECY —

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

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We started looking last week at the Book of Daniel — “The Manual For The End Times”.

The story starts around 600 BC when Babylon invades Judah. Daniel was one of the first to be taken to Babylon as a captive — round about 605 BC.

He ends up as a trained advisor to King Nebuchadnezzar.

In Daniel Chapter 2 we have one of the key prophecies of the whole Bible. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great statue — which reveals the course of history right down to our day ... today.

Depending on how you interpret the meaning of the 4th Empire — the Iron Legs — you end up with a very different understanding of God's message.

The Roman Empire is very popular. It leads to people looking to Europe for a Resurrected Roman Empire — led by Germany with an alliance with the Roman Catholic Church?

But Daniel 2:40 shows us **the 4th Empire must pulverise ... break in pieces ... fragment — all of the Empires that come before it.**

Rome never did! It fails the Biblical test!

However — **Islam does fit!**

In which case ... we're more likely to be watchful of developments in the Middle East and Arab Countries.

Daniel 3:1-2, 6

1 **Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits.** He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. *(A 90' high obelisk?)*

2 And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counsellors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, *(the lofty, elite — parasites)* to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

6 and **whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.**"

Daniel 3:8-18

8 **Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.**

9 They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!

10 **You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;**

11 **and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.**

12 **There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.**"

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.

14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, **"Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?"**

15 Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But **if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"**

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.

18 But if not, (if you don't throw us into the fiery furnace) let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego are charged and threatened. These 3 men are committed to being faithful — even when facing martyrdom. NO COMPROMISE!!

Remember: THIS IS THE MANUAL FOR THE END TIMES.

Daniel 3:19-25

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

20 And he commanded certain mighty men of valour who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

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

22 Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

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

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counsellors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." (Aramaic: "A Son of God" or "A Son of the Gods".)

The furnace was probably shaped like a dome. There was a ramp leading up to an opening on the top. And a door at the side to remove the ashes? So ... you can see through it.

Perhaps the fiery furnace is like the fiery trial of the Great Tribulation? Jesus will be with His people.

Or ... even a picture of the Fires of Hell? Deliverance is possible — if you are faithful to God.

Daniel 3:26-30

26 **Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here.”** Then

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.

27 And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counsellors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

28 **Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him,** and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, **that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!**

29 **Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.”**

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar exalts the name of the True God across the whole of his Empire!

Daniel 4:1-3

1 **Nebuchadnezzar the king,**

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

2 **I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.**

3 **How great are His signs,
And how mighty His wonders!
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And His dominion is from generation to generation.**

This entire chapter of the Bible was written by a Gentile King! And — written to the whole world!

Aramaic was the common language of most people.

Nebuchadnezzar praises the True God. Quite an “endorsement”? !

It also explains to the Empire where he’s been for the past few years!

Daniel 4:4-18

4 **I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace.**

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

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

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

8 **But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him,** saying:

9 **“Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.**

10 “These were the visions of my head while on my bed:

**I was looking, and behold,
A tree in the midst of the earth,
And its height was great.**

11 **The tree grew and became strong;**
Its height reached to the heavens,
And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

12 Its leaves were lovely,
Its fruit abundant,
And in it was food for all.
The beasts of the field found shade under it,
The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches,
And all flesh was fed from it.

13 **"I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and**
there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from
heaven.

14 He cried aloud and said thus:
Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,
Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.
Let the beasts get out from under it,
And the birds from its branches.

15 **Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth,**
Bound with a band of iron and bronze,
In the tender grass of the field.
Let it be wet with the dew of heaven,
And let him graze with the beasts
On the grass of the earth.

16 **Let his heart be changed from that of a man,**
Let him be given the heart of a beast,
And let seven times pass over him. (7 years?)

17 **'This decision is by the decree of the watchers,**
And the sentence by the word of the holy ones,

In order that the living may know
That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men,
Gives it to whomever He will,
And sets over it the lowest of men.'

18 "This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. **Now you,**
Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise
men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the
interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy
God is in you."

Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great tree to be chopped down.

Daniel 4:19-27

19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished (dismayed) for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.”

Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!

20 “The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth,

21 whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home—

22 it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.

23 “And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him’;

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

25 They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

26 “And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules.

27 Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

Daniel interprets the dream. He calls on Nebuchadnezzar to change — to repent!

Daniel 4:28-37

28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.

29 At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon.

30 The king spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?”

31 While the word was still in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!

32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”

33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.

34 And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever:

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.

35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven
And among the inhabitants of the earth.

No one can restrain His hand

Or say to Him, “What have You done?”

36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendour returned to me. My counsellors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.

37 **Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice.**

And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

(Nebuchadnezzar was a living witness. As we know: “God resists the proud” and “Pride goes before destruction”).

Nebuchadnezzar may well have been “converted” now? He praises and extols the True God.

God had already referred to him as “My servant”. He had identified him as the Head of Gold of the Great Statue of Daniel 2. He had intervened several times in Nebuchadnezzar’s life.

It looks like Nebuchadnezzar may have repented? (Better place than King Solomon ... who ended his life in sin and rebellion).

There are 6 chapters (chapters 2 to chapter 7) in “Aramaic Daniel” — **Daniel 4:37 is “the central verse” — Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice.**

No doubt the faithfulness and example of Daniel played a big part in the story of Nebuchadnezzar. It indicates perhaps that believers can influence those around them by their conduct — even wicked rulers?

Daniel 4 is quite a contrast to Daniel 5. Chapter 5 tells of another king — who receives a strange vision — which Daniel interprets — but where the king is set in his pride and rebellion — and dies.

So. Chapters 4 and 5 have a similar theme — but opposite outcomes. Side by side for a reason.

Daniel 5:1-4

1 **Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand.**

2 **While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his forefather Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.** *(Bad move!!)*

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

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

Belshazzar ... the last king of Babylon. Probably co-regent with his father Nabonidus — who was about 1,000 miles away in Arabia.

About 23 years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. Now 539 BC.

A drunken party. Very disrespectful of the Temple items. Almost insulting and mocking the God of Heaven. Utterly ignoring the stories that his grandfather (Nebuchadnezzar had written down!! It would be common knowledge).

Belshazzar should have been more cautious?

Daniel 5:5-9

5 In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

6 Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.

7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

8 Now all the king's wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation.

9 Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.

Similar to Nebuchadnezzar's first vision? The wise men of Babylon can't help.

Daniel 5:10-12

10 The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change.

11 There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your forefather, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your forefather—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.

12 Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.”

The Queen Mother to the rescue!

Daniel 5:13-29

13 Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, “Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah?”

14 I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.

15 Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing.

16 And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

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

18 O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor.

19 **And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him.** Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down.

20 **But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.**

21 **Then he was driven from the sons of men,** his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, **till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.**

22 **“But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this.**

23 **And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven.** They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. **And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know;** **and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.**

24 Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written.

25 **“And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.**

26 This is the interpretation of each word. **MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;**

27 **TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;**

28 **PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”**

29 **Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.**

Daniel was quite harsh — dismissive — with Belshazzar? The king knew better. He had no excuses!

Daniel 5:30

30 **That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.**

Belshazzar died that night. October 539 BC.

Historically ... it seems that the Persian King Cyrus had been besieging Babylon for months. Belshazzar and the nobles were confident that they were impregnable — hence time to party and feast.

The outer walls were about 300' high ... 25' thick ... with over 250 towers rising about 450' high.

But the city eventually fell in one night. King Cyrus diverted the River Euphrates upstream. As the water level dropped ... they were able to wade along the river where it went under the walls.

And the great gates which went deep into the river were unlocked.

This was prophesied 200 years earlier!





