

DANIEL ONE

1 Chapter one serves much like a prologue to give the background of the man Daniel, and also the scope of his ministry (1:21).

1.1 “Jehoiachim did not regard God nor man” — *Antiquities* X:5,6

The **date is 605**. For explanations of reconciling this reckoning with Jer. 25:1; 46:2, see Introductory notes.

1.2 “Lord” = **Adonai** = common in Daniel. Note that Yaweh is used only in the covenantal context of Daniel 9 (e.g., vv. 2,3,14,20)

The mention of the pilfering of the **temple vessels** sets the theme that, despite the apparent weakness of His people suffering oppressive judgment, the sovereign God will vindicate Himself in the message of the book, climaxing in chpt. 5 when the vessels are being polluted at Belshazzar’s orgy.

1.3 **Royal hostages** are taken to ensure payment of tribute to the suzerain (Josephus says they were of the family of Zedekiah).

These natural leaders likely are emasculated (“court officials” is from a word defined in other biblical refs. as impotence-Is 56:3; Jer. 38:7; Esther 2:3; although the married Potiphar is also called “court official”) to neutralize them as a source of potential trouble. Isaiah 39:7 and Matt. 19:12 may shed light on the lot of these four Hebrew youths.

Is. 39:7 ‘And they shall take away *some* of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ “

Matt. 19:12 “For there are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.

1.4

- 1.5 Xenophon notes that the Persians, (who inherited much Babylonian tradition), trained their royal youth for a period of three years, ending around the age of 17.
Food fit for a king, probably something like Solomon's (I Kings 4:22,23).
- 1.6 **Hebrew names** exalted the true God. As part of the effort to assimilate them into Babylonian culture, new names were given, which incidentally supplanted pagan deities in their identity (v.7).
- Daniel = God is my judge
Hananiah = Jah is gracious
Mishael = Who is what God is?
Azariah = Jah has helped
- 1.7 Belteshazzar = Bel, protect his life (cf. 4:8)
Bel, the sun god, was the same as Marduk
Shadrach = (phps) the command of Aku (or phps a variant form of Marduk)
Aku was an Elamite moon god
Meshech = (phps) Who is what Aku is?
Abednego = servant of (prob.) Nebo
Nebo, the god of the waters, was the son of Marduk and the father of Baal
- 1.8 **“Resolved”** Heb. = “and he placed on his heart”
- Defile** by non-kosher foods which were not within the dietary laws of Leviticus and Dt. 14; one big concern was that the food may have been polluted, having first been offered to idols since the wine is also refused. (Cf. I Cor. 10:20) It became a matter of conscience (Acts 5:29).
- 1Cor. 10:20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons
- 1.9 **“Favor”** = *chesed*, mutual trust and commitment implied here. Cf. Joseph with Potiphar or with the jail warden (Gen 39:4; 39:21).
- 1.10 (cf. Neh 2:1-3: no glum faces before the king)
- 1.11
- 1.12 **Pulse**, *ze-ro'im* = vegetables and herbs, a good diet for acne prone youth. Probably included legumes for protein over the three year period. Ctr. general diet in 10:3

1.13

1.14

1.15

1.16

1.17 **Learning.** The Babylonians had access to the great Assyrian library of Assurbanipal (ca. 650).

Dream interpretations (oneiromancy) are from God only (2:21,27,28).

1.18 Archer asks whether a Maccabean author would have cast Daniel as undergoing a pagan education.

1.19

1.20 Heb. = “**Ten hands**” better than any others

1.21 First year of Cyrus = 539; Daniel was God’s man on the scene to safeguard the interests of His people during the entire captivity+ (cf. 10:1).

CHAPTER TWO

Excursus on Aramaic

1. Brief summary of the Aramaic language
 - a. North(western) Semitic language
 - i. Centrally located to let the simplicity of its grammar and script impact the surrounding Semitic language groups.
 - ii. Aram was largely bedouin and rural, and did not easily withstand the invading Assyrians. When Assyria conquered Aram (Syria), Aramaic finished its conquest of Assyria.
 - iii. Because of its versatility and simplicity, Aramaic became the *lingua franca* of the ancient middle east, especially in matters of commerce and in the legal system.
2. In the days of Isaiah, only Jewish diplomats spoke Aramaic (II Kings 18:26). 250 years later in the days of Nehemiah (8:8), the common people spoke only Aramaic.
 - a. By Daniel's time, the Hebrew script borrowed from the Phoenicians began to die out and be replaced by Aramaic block script. Only a few inscriptions in ancient script survive, like the Siloam inscription, the Gezer Calendar (earliest at 925), the Moabite stone, and some DSS.

The Maccabees tried to resurrect the ancient Hebrew script as evidenced by some Maccabean coins.
 - b. There are several other Aramaic passages in the OT: Gen. 31:47; Jer. 10:11; Ezra 4:8–6:18; 7:12-26. The next extant Jewish use of Aramaic is the Elephantine papyri (400s), which was the same imperial Aramaic as Ezra and Daniel.
3. The Aramaic of Daniel
 - a. Vocabulary — 9/10 of the words have been dated to the VI and V cents. but not from the time of the Maccabees. There are Hebraisms in Daniel's Aramaic, besides Old Persian loan words ante-dating Alexander the Great. The LXX was not able to translate many of the Old Persian terms!
 - b. Grammar and Syntax — see Introduction
 - c. Conclusion: the Aramaic of Daniel is Imperial Aramaic which flourished from 600-330 b.c.

4. Bottom line: the purpose of Daniel's using Aramaic, the international language, was to deliver a message to the nations of the world. By contrast the things that pertain to the Jews especially are written in Hebrew; some things were to be sealed up (12:9).

Aramaic Language and Grammar

Biblical Hebrew (BH) and Biblical Aramaic (BA) share many words in common, and more with slight differences in vocalization (vowel pointing) or in single letters.

Hebrew Letter	Often Replaced in Aramaic by	Word Example
ז	ד	דָּהָב
שׁ	ת	תּוֹב

While there are many common roots, plurals and constructs in BA look very different from BH. An emphatic form can represent the vocative ("O, King") or definiteness ("the king").

Gender	Singular	Plural	Sing. Construct	Plural Construct
Masc.	מֶלֶךְ	מַלְכֵי	מֶלֶךְ	מַלְכֵי
Fem.	מַלְכָּה	מַלְכֵי	מַלְכָּה	מַלְכֵי

Singular Emphatic	Plural Emphatic
מֶלֶךְ אֵל	מַלְכֵי אֵל
מַלְכָּה אֵל	מַלְכֵי אֵל

The word **דָּ** is used frequently. It stands in the place of **אֲשֶׁר** and serves as a relative pronoun (who, that, which), a conjunction (so that, because...), and the sign of the genitive (of, from).

The key demonstrative pronouns are

	Masc. Singular	Fem. Singular	Common Pl.
Proximate: this	דָּהָא	דָּהָא	אֵלֵּי אֵלֵּהּ
Remote: that	הָאֵלֵּי	הָאֵלֵּי	אֵלֵּי

VERBS

The Perfect and Imperfect tenses are found as expected.

However, the derived stems that indicate voice and intensity, while still named after forms of the verb **פָּעַל**, have different names because the stems are pointed differently than BH, and may have different prefixes.

BA has no parallel forms to the BH Niphal or Pual.

Statives will have variant vowel pointings as in BH.

Stem Use	BH Perfects	BA Perfects		
Simple Active	Qal	Pe-al	קָטַל	
Simple Passive	Niphal	Pe-il	קָטַל	
Simple Reflexive	Hithpiel	Hithpe-el	הִתְקַטַּל	
Intensive	Piel	Pa-el	קָטַל	
Causative	Hiphil	Haphel	הִקְטַל	Shaphel שִׁקְטַל Aphel
Causative Passive	Hophal	Hophal	הִקְטַל	
Causative Reflexive	X	Hishtaphal	הִשְׁתַּקְטַל	

The simple (Pe-al) imperfect and imperative forms have a qibbuts in the second position of the root: **יִקְטַב** / **יִקְטַב**

CHAPTER 2

2 For an excellent discussion of the psychology and divine implications of dreams, see R.J. Rushdoony in *Thy Kingdom Come*.

Rushdoony posits that Nebz's angry challenge to the wisemen stemmed from his frustrations and cynicism about the vanity of mortal life, and that his nihilistic frustrations were vented against those who publicly claimed to know the answers to the riddle of life.

2.1 "Second year of Nebz" — Daniel, though still in his three year training period, was included with his friends in the college of the wisemen. The second year of Nebz (accession reckoning) probably would have placed Daniel in his third year of training.

2.2 **Four types of wisemen**

—magicians; able to bring supernatural powers into play

—enchanters; formulas and incantations used to predict the future

—sorcerers; used potions and charms of witchcraft to predict the future

—Chaldeans; wisemen steeped in the lore and ancient magic of Babylonian religious tradition (for their identity, see R.D. Wilson, I, pp. 319-66)

2.3 "my spirit is anxious to understand the dream"

"...wherever man aspires to be as God, and to assert an absolute freedom, dreams are a terror in that they are a reminder of creaturehood, culpability, and condemnation. The terror of dreams, therefore, is the terror of mortality and guilt, and the desperation of mutability" (Rushdoony, p. 11). "Man's unconscious witnesses in dreams to his burden of guilt concerning the past, his impotence in the present, and his ignorance and dread of the future. *** Nebz, impelled by a desire to expose the pretentiousness of man's autonomous knowledge, forced the issue on terms requiring a surrender by man, or an acknowledgment of the omnipotence of terror and death. Having known futility, he would tolerate no hope and no [self-deception of] knowledge" (p. 13).

In Daniel's interpretation and its preamble (esp. vv. 21,22), is the meaning that Nebz was searching for. "In this expression [of the true God's personal sovereignty] lies a challenge to the fatalism of the Babylonian astral religion, a feature which in its influence long survived in the Graeco-Roman world" (Montgomery in the *ICC*).

Mutability is by the design of God Almighty Who is leading everything in history toward its climax in Paradise Restored.

2.4—Chpt. 7 This portion may have been written before the Hebrew section at the end of the book, and circulated among Daniel's acquaintances.

- 2.5 A challenge to their gods as well as to them as professionals.
- “...thing is gone from me...” —based on a reading of 𐤒𐤓𐤏, KJV follows LXX and Vulgate.
Should be based on 𐤏𐤒𐤓 “...the matter is firm...” —per MacRae
- 2.6
- 2.7
- 2.8
- 2.9 The king probably remembered the gist of his dream, ctr. AV v. 5, as indicated by his distrust of their conspiratorial *modus operandi*.
- 2.10
- 2.11
- 2.12
- 2.13
- 2.14
- 2.15
- 2.16 More time; Daniel appears to have been on favorable terms with the king himself (1:18; ctr. 2:8)
- 2.17 Two or three gathered together in His name
- 2.18 “God of heaven” is the preferred appellation for God in the post-exilic period (cf. Ezra and Nehemiah) in contrast to the pagans whose gods were the created objects of heaven, e.g., sun and moon and stars.
- 2.19 Pagans generally receive revelations through dreams (cf. 4:5,13); God’s people often receive through conscious visions.
- 2.20 God’s exclusive claim to two key attributes, wisdom and power (*geburta’*, from *geber*, “warrior”)
- 2.21
- 2.22 Truth and understanding must come from the God of truth, the God of light and revelation.
- 2.23 “God of our fathers” — Awareness of the stream of sacred history as the outworking of the covenants (covenant language of opening of chpt. 9)
- 2.24
- 2.25 “I have found...”
- 2.26
- 2.27 Confirmation of wisemen’s statement in vv. 10,11

2.28 Superiority of the true God over the patron gods of Babylon

“**latter days**,” = direct Aramaic translation of the Hebrew phrase in the prophets, “in the latter days.” It generally, though not always (Dt. 31:29), refers to the days of the coming of Messiah, e.g., Gen. 49:1 (first occurrence), Is. 2:2, Ezk. 38:16, Joel 2:28-32. See also Dan. 10:14 and ctr. 12:4.

2.29 Nebz had been contemplating his personal future and the monument to his greatness, his empire.
2.30

2.31-35 The Dream

One large, monolithic image signifying one satanic empire in its various parts.
(Note Eph. 2:2, II Cor. 4:4, John 16:11.)

2.32 Greek Hesiod (ca 800 B.C.) used gold, silver, copper, and iron to depict four eras of history, as did the Roman Ovid after the time of Daniel (Miller, p. 93).

2.33

2.34 Non-human origin of the stone

2.35 Cf. Mt. 21:42-44 cites message of “rejected stone” of Ps. 118: we must fall on the stone and be humbled, or it will fall on us and crush us
Luke 20:18 allusion

2.36-45 The Dream’s Interpretation

2.37 King of kings set up by the Creator Potentate (ctr. I Tim. 6:15)

2.38 Nebz is the head of gold. See Jer. 27:5-7 where Nebz is called God’s servant whom He set up.

2.39 “Inferior kingdom” — not inferior in grandeur or power, but in morals as the vices of men go more and more unchecked (see Calvin)

2.40 “Strong as iron” Note how the kingdoms (metals) increase in strength as they decrease in intrinsic value.

Christ will rule with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15) and dash his enemies like a potter’s vessel (Mal. 3).

2.41 Wood sees a time gap between vv. 41 and 42, largely on the basis of historical reasons, although he believes the description is repeated in vs. 42 to describe a new, but similar situation. The feet of strength and weakness will be manifested in the latter days before the coming again of Messiah as a *renewed Roman empire*.

2.42 Young unsuccessfully argues against the 10 toes having any significance. The parallel 10 horns in Daniel 7 and Rev 13:1 & 17:12 do imply the meaning of the 10 toes.

2.43 The co-mingling of the iron with pottery depicts the looseness of the final confederation; there is breadth in the ecumenical alliance (“seed of men”), but little strength as shown by the crumbly presence of the pottery.

The whole image is top-heavy (decreasing specific gravity of each metal) on top of a most unstable foundation.

2.44 See Dan. 7:24 which confirms 10 contemporaneous petty kings. Young believes these are the four thrones of the four empires.

2.45

2.46

2.47

2.48

2.49 No false modesty keeps Daniel from acting wisely

Identity of the Four Successive Kingdoms

—in Palestine	Neo-Babylon	605
—no mixture of elements till the last	Medo-Persia	539
	Greece	333
	Rome	63
—first three rapidly replaced while the last disintegrates		

—see introductory notes for problems for Modernist/Maccabean scheme of dividing the Medo-Persian kingdom to exclude Rome

Summary Conclusions about the dream image:

1. Though manifested through several phases, one world dominion is in view in the form of a man who exalts himself against God. The image of this man proves to be ultimately fallen and pseudo-messianic.
2. There is no mixture of the succeeding elements until the last. The representative world empires radically displace the preceding one, but the last empire is already disintegrating (crumbling) when it, too, is radically replaced.
3. The head of the system becomes the recognized epitome of anti-christendom (Rev. 14:4; 16:19; 18:2).
4. There is a progressive decentralization of power decreasing from the head on down: tyranny —> more republican rule of law of Medes and Persians —> more democratic Greeks —> division of jurisdiction under Romans to final mobocracy.
5. There may be a progressive deterioration of the character of the throne (rulers):
 - declining worth of metals
 - reduction in specific gravity of metals
 - from top to bottom
 - vs 39
6. There is a progressive strengthening of the empires in the way they are able to yield unchallenged power.

Summary Conclusions about Messiah's Kingdom (see Wood)

1. It is a divine kingdom from above.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."
2. Yet, inasmuch as it is somewhat parallel to the foregoing empires which it displaces, it must have some earthly aspects. (It fills the whole earth, vs. 35.)
3. Historically,
 - a. the last kingdom to fall was Rome in 476, and that to the infidel Turks (or 1453 to the infidel Goths).

- b. the toes (better the “ten horns” of chpt. 7 and Rev) have no historical precedent yet
4. The advent of the Kingdom is not quiet and imperceptible, but rather, cataclysmic and in totality (“not a trace remained” vs. 35).
 5. The fact that Messiah’s kingdom grows into a huge mountain (cf. Is. 2:2) without rival necessitates a future, exclusive, messianic kingdom.

CHAPTER 3

3 Theme of persecution.

The events of this chpt are undoubtedly after chpt 2. No date is given although the LXX (actually, our extant Greek version is that of Theodotian, a revision of the LXX) says the 18th year of Nebz (= fall of Jerusalem; ctr. 19th year of II Kgs. 25:8). The timing of the fall of Jerusalem is not a likely event that Nebz would commemorate by the dedication of this image. The timing is probably close to the beginning of his reign (just after the dream of the golden head in chpt 2): it is a test of allegiance, much like the Persian test in chpt. 6.

Hippolytus (fl. 250 a.d.) was the first to suggest that the gold statue was the deified Nebz based upon his dream of chpt 2; Archer thinks the image was of Nebo, his patron god. Nebz appears to have believed that if he could control the substance of the idol image, he could control his destiny.

Bear in mind that Daniel’s three friends had already been exalted by Nebz and were known by him, which makes it obvious (3:15) that he had forgotten the power of the true God (2:47).

Daniel is not in the story, which leads the critics to say this independent saga was blended into the book. If this were a pseudepigraphal book, Daniel most likely would have been included. Daniel may have been out of the area on king’s business (cf. 8:2; 10:4), ill, or just too favored by the king (Calvin). Probably he had remained in the city as the king’s executor (2:48).

3.1 Gold plated (Is. 40:19); even tabernacle furniture was plated, not solid.

—60 X 6 = 10:1 proportion; the normal bodily proportion is about 4 X 1.

—Significantly, Babylon was on a sexigesimal system, the number of man (cf. Rev. 13:18), not a decimal system. This is another accurate incidental detail. (See Montgomery’s Commentary, *ICC*, p. 196)

—the grotesque proportion suggests that the image was on a high pedestal, or that it was not in the form of a man, or that it was an obelisk

—**Plain of Dura** is a place name that frequently occurs in Babylonian archaeological finds; Miller suggests it is 16 miles south of the city. “Dura” is not found in the Greek historians nor would it have been familiar in Palestine.

Dura means “enclosing wall,” a fitting name for this flood plain surrounded by hills. Any tall image would have been most conspicuous here.

3.2 List of eight officers gathered at the beginning of Nebz’s reign to pledge their fealty. Many of these terms were unfamiliar to the Alexandrian Jews of the III & II.

—satrap (Persian loan word) = “kingdom guardian,” the most imp’t official as protector of the king’s interest in the large satrapies

—deputy/prefect (semitic) = superintendent, phps lieut. govr

—governor = ruler of part of a satrapy (cf. Mal. 1:8 for govr of Judah)

—judges = chief arbitrator (phps chief soothsayers)

—treasurer (Arian) = official of financial matters

—counsellors (Old Persian) = “guardian of the law,” a scribe or lawyer

—sheriffs (semitic) = minor judicial office

—ruler of provinces = minor provincial rulers; bureaucrat

3.3

3.4

3.5 Musical instruments; it appears that music was an important part of Babylonian culture (Ps. 137:2,3; Is. 14:11)

Ps. 137:2 We hung our harps Upon the willows in the midst of it. 3 For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, And those who plundered us *requested* mirth, *Saying*, "Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion!"

For an answer to the critics on the use of Greek instruments, see Yamauchi, “The Greek Words in Daniel in the Light of Greek Influence in the Near East” in *New Perspectives on the OT*, pp. 170ff.

—coronet = small horn, metal or animal horn (קַרְנָא)

—flute

—harp (Grk. *kitharis*) = lyre קִיְתָרִים

—sackbut (Grk. *sambuke*’) = trigon, triangular stringed instrument סַבְכָא

—psaltery (Grk. *psalterion*; Heb = *psanterin*) פְּסַלְתֵּי־רִין

—dulcimer or perhaps a tambour (Grk. *sumphonia*) (“bagpipe” idea abandoned, per Yamauchi)

NRSV follows music antiquarian Mitchell who believes the *sumphonia* was a type of drum that he calls a tambour (see *Bible Review*, December 1999, pp. 32-37, for his description and photos of the various instruments in Daniel 3).

3.6 Fiery furnace used for gold smelting. This punishment was exclusive to the Babylonians and would not have been used by Antiochus IV (he did like slow roasting on a spit, decapitation, tongue extraction, and cliff jumping) or the Persians (to whom fire was sacred).

Compare the designs of antichrist in Rev. 13:11-18: idolatrous worship enforced by a death penalty with the number 6 used in conjunction with the worship; not to mention that the saints resist.

3.7

3.8 Chaldeans are ethnic group ctr. to the Jews. “Accused” literally is “ate to pieces.”

אָכְלוּ קִרְצֵי־הוֹן

3.9 cf. parallel to Daniel’s chiastic response in 6:21

3.10 6:12

3.11

3.12

3.13

3.14 Nebz apparently overlooks the charges of disregard for his majesty, having known their past loyalty

Modern scholarship has discovered the meaning of **הֲצַדִּיק** *hatsda’* to be “Is it true”—not “is it reason” (KJV) nor “is it purpose” (BDB)

3.15 Challenge to the God of Israel (cf. Ex. 5:2; Is 36:20). There is no apodasis following the protasis, since it is implied.

For the three to have buckled would have been to repudiate their whole past testimony regarding their superior God.

3.16

3.17 No apodasis again, but it is rhetorically understood

3.18 Compare Isaiah 43:2 (and “How Firm A Foundation”)

Is. 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I *will be* with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. 3 For I *am* the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;

- 3.19 “Seven times hotter” — before thermostats; hence meant to the ultimate, although it could have been stoked with 7 X the fuel.
- 3.20ff. Note the superlatives in this contest challenging the true God.
- 3.21 Translators are still unsure of the different articles of clothing due to ancient technical terms.
- 3.22 Haste makes waste
- 3.23 It is at this point that the RC Bible includes the “Prayer of Azariah” from the midst of the furnace requesting deliverance and punishment for enemies, and the 40 verse “Song of the Three Children,” which has the laudatory refrain, “Sing His praise and highly exalt Him forever!”
- 3.24
- 3.25 The Angel of the Lord(?) appears to deliver his own (cf. Sodom deliverance); phps same angel as in 6:22.
“Son of the gods” is prob. best translation for Nebz’s pagan perspective.
- 3.26
- 3.27
- 3.28
- 3.29
- 3.30

Conclusion: Dying words of Mattathias (I Maccabees 2:59) and Hebrews 11:34

59 Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael, for their fidelity, were saved from the flame. 60 Daniel for his singleness of heart was rescued from the lion's jaws. 61 Know then that, generation after generation, no one who hopes in him will be overcome.

CHAPTER 4

4 This chapter apparently is a formal declaration (vv. 1-4,34,37) drawn up by Daniel and signed by Nebz giving glory to the true God. Daniel's involvement in its composition is evident from the 1) Jewish style and content, and 2) the allusion in vs. 3 to Ps. 145:13.

4.1

4.2

4.3 Kingdom here is not Messianic but is in reference to God's universal sovereignty as in Ps. 145:13. Otherwise, Daniel's kingdom refs. are generally Messianic.

Ps. 145:13 Your kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion *endures* throughout all generations.

4.4

4.5

4.6

4.7

4.8 "Finally..." Daniel comes last of all the wisemen. Calvin and Young think because the king had not forgotten the dream interp of chpt. 2, and Nebz knew that Daniel's interps generally forbode ill (cf. I Kgs. 22:7,8). Wood thinks that Daniel came last of his own choice to impress the inevitable upon Nebz.

"Spirit of the Holy God" = a recurring phrase in this chapter. Young and Montgomery think it should be singular as in AV, unlike NIV, NASB, because of Daniel's influence on the document and Nebz's maturing understanding of the true God.

4.9

4.10 Tree symbolism; the tree is a positive symbol of the vast empire embodied in its ruler (v. 22). This Jewish symbol is also used in Ezk. 31 of Assyria which is compared to a mighty cedar of Lebanon.

Nebz's tree represents a *counterfeit* tree of life.

4.11

4.12

4.13 "Watcher" (נִצְרָה) = hapax legomenon, tho used in Genesis Apocryphon cf. 1 Cor 10:11

4.14

4.15 "Spare the stump" L. Wood thinks this is a protective fence, but probably it was an iron band to preserve the stump (the vestige of the empire in the person of its emperor) from splitting or

especially rotting due to water absorption. [Perhaps the band would also prevent premature sprouting.] Compare a similar figure for the true kingdom being preserved in the One Messianic heir of the nation, the Branch of Is. 10:34, 11:1, after the tree has been decapitated, leaving only the stump with life in its roots. (Cf. Mt. 3:7-12; Is. 9:14.)

An alternate interp for the band is given by Keil and by Young who take Nebz's madness as a picture of imprisonment since it meant his loss of self-determination. Because the tree, however, was inanimate, it might be better to take the band as preserving instead of imprisoning; the felling of the tree better depicts the loss of glory and life for Nebz.

4.16 Nebz's madness

Some in the early church felt it was a physical change:

- Cedrenus: "half lion and half ox"
- Justin Martyr: Nebz like "one of the creatures of Ezk 1"
- Augustine (*City of God*): felt Nebz went insane due to wine, women, and potions
- Origen: "this refers to the fall and restoration of Satan"

Miscellaneous: "madness was a proof of Satanic possession"

Arno Gabelein: "the madness for 7 seasons is emblematic of the age of the Gentiles undergoing its death throes during the Great Tribulation"

Naturalistic Interp: "Nebz fell victim to a conspiracy; he was exiled and led a miserable life"

It must be concluded that God affected his mind so that he lived in a fantasy world, thinking himself to be an animal. The psychological term is "zoanthropy," and more specifically here, "boanthropy." See Pusey on Daniel or R.K. Harrison *IOT* for further information on this kind of madness.

"A beast's mind for that of a man;" ctr. 7:4.

"Seven times"

How long is an "appointed time" or "season"?

Hippolytus: one of the four annual seasons

Theodoret: a Persian season of 6 months

LXX: year

—7:25 & 12:7 use the same term and can easily mean "year," especially when compared with the chronology of Revelation (11:2,3; 12:6,14; 13:5). Seven calendar years is probably the meaning, which must yield at least 5+ full years of incapacitation.

Rev. 12:14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

4.17 cf. James 4:6 "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble"

4.18

4.19 Daniel's tact and respect for Nebz as opposed to treatment of Belshazzar (5:17ff.)

4.20

4.21

4.22 These verses which describe the loftiness and grandeur of the Babylonian empire in the person of Nebz also imply that he was trying to displace God in His preeminence (v. 20 — “reached to the sky;” cf. Gen. 11:4 and Is. 14:13,14f.) and in His role as Provider/Redeemer; compare the paradise motif of the tree of life (Rev. 22:2).

Is. 14:13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

“Whenever mere mortals, be they rulers or not, aspire to become God, they cease to be even human and become mere animals.” –Russell, *Daniel: An Active Volcano*, p. 55

4.23

4.24

4.25

4.26

4.27 Daniel’s firmness. “Break off” — Jerome’s translation misses the essence when he interprets that Nebz may atone for his sins by almsgivings. See Young’s helpful remarks: the term is used for the breaking of a yoke (Gen. 27:40).

Dan. 4:27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor: perhaps he will forgive thy offences. –RC Douay-Rheims Version

4.28

4.29 Date? LXX suggests the vision came the year of the destruction of Jerusalem; judgment a year later (vs. 29) would mean that his humbling was in retribution for the debasement of the Judea.

When might this period of madness have overtaken Nebz?

R.D. Wilson likes 585-579.

Archer likes **582-75** when there were no major campaigns; Tyre was besieged (Ezk. 26:7) around 573.

Quite a few commentators opt for the end of his reign since he seems to have had a real change of heart which might have complicated his pagan rule. Nebz invaded Egypt in 568 and died in 562, leaving us with the workable dates of **567-62**.

Supportive of the biblical record that Nebz was ill at the end of his reign are two ancient sources preserved through Josephus and Eusebius. Josephus (*Contra Apion*, I:20) quotes **Berosus**, a Chaldean priest of the time of Alexander the Great who returned to Greece as teacher. He reputedly said, “After beginning the wall of which I have spoken, Nabuchodonosor fell sick and died, after a reign of forty-three years.”

Berosus' Greek student was Abydenus (early III bc). He wrote a history of Babylon and Assyria which was cited by Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica*, IX:41), saying that Nebz was "possessed by some god," and that he disappeared after predicting his own demise. Wood summarizes the ancient secular witnesses to this time in Nebz's life:

- 1) a statement about a "Persian mule" wandering in the desert might reflect Nebz's boanthropy;
- 2) in ancient times, mental illness was viewed as possession by the gods; (phps Nebz may have been demon possessed);
- 3) the king is in his palace in the beginning of the secular account
- 4) Nebz suddenly disappears;
- 5) this happens at the end of his reign.

4.30 Babylon the Great! Surrounded by two walls, the outer one being 17 miles long and broad enough on top for two chariots to pass. His terraced hanging gardens were designed for his Median wife and considered by the Greeks as a wonder of the world. There were temples galore and a processional street of 1000 yards up to the ziggurat and Temple of Marduk.

4.31

4.32

4.33 See LXX: Nebz was "wet" (*bapto βαπτω*) with the dew of heaven from Aramaic **עֲצִטְרָע** found in BDB, p. 1109

4.34 Omnipotence in Sovereignty

4.35 "Who can strike His hand?" Keil thinks this refers to the action of slapping a child's hand found going for the cookie jar.

4.36 New life springs from the stump

4.37 The head of gold bows to his Sovereign.

Was Nebz saved?

Pro (Wood, Young):

- 1) the public statement is remarkable in view of Nebz's pagan background;
- 2) Daniel liked him (4:19; 5:21,22);
- 3) phps God saved him at the end to spare him from further vanity and temptations.

Con (Calvin, Keil):

- 1) no recognition of God's mercies;
 - 2) at most, he was a syncretist (vs. 8!)
 - 3) Bel was his god (48)
- Archer believes he was not saved, but see his development of Nebz's spiritual pilgrimage (p. 59, *EBC*, VII).

DANIEL 5

5 Belshazzar's feast: spitting into the wind. This chpt makes plain that PRIDE was at the end of the Babylonian throne as well as at the beginning, Chapter 4.

5.1 Phps a show of confidence to bolster morale after being driven from the field of battle.

1,000 lords; cf. Esther 1:3 for Xerxe's 180 day pep rally; also, Isaiah 22:12-14 for the revelry in Babylon the night of its capture (cf. Is. 21:5,9).

5.2 "Nebz his father" (2,11,13,18,22)

Belshazzar was not the direct son of Nebz (Evalmerodach was) as Keil tried to prove. Belshazzar was the son of the usurper Nabonidus who had his courtiers call him "the son of Nebz," a tradition that Belshazzar apparently maintained (emphasis in 5:11). Hence, "father/son" mean "progenitor/descendent." The definitive work on the identity of Belshazzar is R.P. Dougherty's *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, 1929; (Young's *Commentary* has an excellent summary also). See *ANET*, pp. 313, 309-310, 315.

Nabonidus may have been a son by a concubine, and it is assumed that he cemented his claim to the throne by marrying Nitocris (mentioned by Greek historians), a legitimate daughter of Nebz.

Finally, Daniel, familiar with Jeremiah (per 9:2 citing Jer. 25), would not have contradicted the statement of fact in Jer. 52:31 that Evalmerodach was the son/successor of Nebz.

5.3 The wine, undoubtedly offered to idols, desecrated the sacred temple vessels.

Critics like Russell note that Antiochus' forces pillage temple vessels in Maccabean times, I Mac. 1:21ff.

5.4 God's timing was right to answer this blatant challenge.

5.5 King's palace: Koldeway was the archaeologist who unearthed the Babylonian palace; this banquet room measured 55 X 169 feet and its walls were plastered with lime.

5.6 Knocking knees: the king knew a bad omen when he saw one.

5.7 This group has been mentioned in most every chapter; this is their third summons.

The tri-fold reward shows the urgency: the necklace (cf. Joseph in Pharaoh's court, Gen. 41:42), as well as the purple, indicates royalty. **Third** in the kingdom accords with the simple facts of the situation that Belshazzar was the crown prince after his father the king.

- 5.8 “Could not read” Either were not familiar with the script, or with the meaning of the words.
- 5.9
- 5.10 The Queen, who is here familiar with previous days which the crown prince is not, is the Queen Mother, probably Nitocris. Also, she was not present with the wives in vs. 2. See Harrison, *IOT*. Wood thinks she might have known the true God through Daniel.
- 5.11
- 5.12 Literally, “...resolving of dark sayings and dissolving of knots”
- אֲחִידָן וּמְשָׁרָא קְטָרִין הַשְּׁתַּכַּחַת בֵּהּ בְּדַנְיָאֵל
- 5.13 Daniel may have been deposed as chief of the wisemen at the death of Nebz or in the turmoil of the following reigns. But see 8:1, 27
- 5.14
- 5.15
- 5.16
- 5.17 Daniel’s denial of the reward. Probably Daniel’s old age, and Belshazzar’s reputation of impudence, plus the profanation of the temple vessels make Daniel a bit curt. The impending doom also enables Daniel to speak objectively.
- 5.18 As usual, Daniel takes the opportunity to preach a sermon, duty to God, before fulfilling his duty to the king.
Belshazzar should have been aware of Nebz’s humiliation from the public document of the affair (chpt 4), and that it was the true God Who had humbled him (vs 23).
- 5.19
- 5.20
- 5.21
- 5.22
- 5.23
- 5.24
- 5.25 The pointed conciseness is part of the impact of the message. All three forms are passive ptc. in an intensive stem and are related to pieces of money.

5.26 *Men'e* up front is repeated (although not in LXX or Josephus) perhaps to indicate the dual meaning of each term.
men'e = passive ptc. for “numbered”
<— *menah*, to count, number, reckon (a *manah* was a weight worth about 60 Babylonian shekels)
Interpretation: “Your kingdom has been numbered by God and your days and have been reckoned at an end”

5.27 *Tekel* = passive ptc. for “been weighed”
<— related to niphal of *qalal*, “to be light” (the shekel was derived from *tekel*)
Interpretation: “You have been weighed and found too light”

5.28 *Peres* = passive ptc. for “been divided, broken” (See Perez in Gen 38:29 – “breach”)

<— *paras*, to divide, break, destroy; cf. the noun *paras*, which is the spelling for Persian. (the *peres* may have been half a *manah*, 25 shekels, or possibly a half shekel, which would then give a riddle of three monetary units in decreasing worth: cf. the dream image of chpt. 2)
Interpretation: “your kingdom is separated from you and given to the Persians (and Medes)”

This is the first reference to the “Medes and Persians” (cf. 6:8; 5:28); in a few years time, the Persians will be dominant and Esther cites the inverted “law of the Persians and Medes” (Esther 1:19).

5.29

5.30 Cf. the Rich Man of Luke 12:20 whose soul was required that night

5.31 Fall of Babylon predicted: Isaiah 14:1-23; chpt. 21; 44:28-45:4; 46:1,2; 47:1-5; Jeremiah 50 (note vss 38,43); 51 (note vss. 32,36,39,57).

Date of Capture: October 12, 539 b.c.

“Nabonidus Chronicle” (Persian document published 1880): “the city fell the 16th of Tishri,” a time when kings and armies had usually retired, giving Belshazzar some hope.

Method of Capture: diverting of waters to the canal system for Babylon. It is thought that a siege would not have taken the city in 20 years. Herodotus and Xenophon say that the invaders entered under the city wall by night during a certain festival.

There long was confusion over which general captured the city. Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* says that Gobryas (Greek pronunciation for Gubaru) captured the city and then reigned for fourteen more years. Persian documents that later came to light (Nabonidus Chronicle) apparently were mistranslated

by Theophilus Pinches (1882) so that Gobryas captured the city, then set up sub-governors, and then immediately died.

John Whitcomb (*Darius the Mede*) reviewed the Persian records and found a discrepancy in the cuneiform writings that could account for the misunderstanding. There were **two** separate players involved: Ugbaru captured the city and died shortly thereafter, while Gubaru governed the city. The Greeks confused the two as one Gobryas which misdirected the interpreters of the Nabonidus Chronicle.

For an alternate conservative interpretation on the identity of Darius the Mede, see D.J. Wiseman in the *New Bible Dictionary*. He takes Darius the Mede as another name for Cyrus the Great. Contrast Dan. 9:1, however, that calls Darius the Mede the “ruler.” B.E. Colless in the December ‘92 *Journal for the Study of the OT*, “Cyrus the Persian as Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel,” 56:113, also summarizes Wiseman and the other views.

CHAPTER 6

Compare chpt. 6 with chpt. 3. Both are at the beginning of two great empires. An angel is sent both times to deliver God's saints from persecution. After deliverance, the saints' enemies are warned not to blaspheme the God of Israel.

6.1 5:31 should actually go with this chpt.

Nabonidus Chronicle confirms that Gubaru set up sub-rulers.

>XX substitutes "Artaxerxes" for "Darius"

6.2

6.3

6.4 Racist Medo/Persians; cf. vs. 13

6.5 Critics see an allusion to religious persecution in Maccabean era

6.6 For a pagan, it would not be difficult to refrain from doing homage to his idols, especially if he could direct his attention to the king as representative of the gods. This 30 day test of allegiance appealed to Darius since it would secure the loyalty of the people and help ferret out any traitors who could not pay allegiance to the king.

6.7 Lions fits the penalties of Persia, but not Babylon or Syria.

In 1937, the archaeologist, Dulafoy, discovered an inscription on a vault in Babyon: "where the enemies of the king are cast..."

6.8 "Law of Medes and Persian" = beginning of constitutional authority; the phrase incidentally and accurately reflects the dominance of the Medes at that time, as opposed to 50 years later under Esther (1:19).

6.9

6.10 Daniel continued in a normal mode of devotional operation. 9:1 may explain part of his conviction about the urgency of prayer; he believed the promises of restoration in Jer. 29:10,14.

"Toward Jerusalem" — (cf. I Kings 8:29,33); the Shekinah was no longer there, but it was the place of his heart's affection as he prayed for his people's return home.

I Kings 8:29 "that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. v. 33 " When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple,

“Three times daily” — cf. Didache 8: after allusions to Matthew 6 about hypocrites’ prayers, there is a charge to pray the Lord’s prayer.... “Three times in the day pray ye so.”

Ps. 55:17 Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice.

6.11

6.12 *Ps. 94:20* Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?

6.13

6.14

6.15

6.16 Darius may have heard of Daniel’s interpreting the hand-writing and the dreams.

6.17

6.18

6.19

6.20

6.21

6.22 cf. Angelic Deliverer in 3:25

"Earthly princes lay aside their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy to be reckoned among the number of mankind. We ought, rather, to spit upon their heads than to obey them." –John Calvin (*Commentary on Daniel*, Lecture XXX Daniel 6:22)

6.23 Note Hebrews 11:33

Heb. 11:33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

6.24 “maliciously accused” = literally, “eaten to pieces,” a fate as bad as being given to a pride of ravenous lions.

Cf. OT law in *Dt. 19:18,19*: anyone found bringing false accusation would suffer the same punishment intended for the victim. Yet OT law forbade the punishing of the family for the sins of the father. Here the families may have conspired with the perpetrators, or more likely, this was a harsh Persian penalty; Archer suggests it was to protect Daniel’s executioner against revenge(?). See *Herodotus III:19* (p. 189 in the Tudor edition), where Darius the Great slays a father with all his sons.

- 6.25 Another decree of acquiescence by God’s rival, an autonomous kosmos.
- 6.26 (As opposed to earlier decree)
- 6.27
- 6.28 Wiseman translates, “This Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius, even in the reign of Cyrus the Persian” (cf. I Chron. 5:26). But note 9:1: Darius had been “appointed”

Parallels between Daniel’s Persecution and Jesus’ persecution
 (first suggested by Dennis Piwowarczyk, 10/00; starred additions by Steve Brinegar, 3/06)

Excellent Spirit, vs. 3	
Daniel’s accusers: Dan 6:24: “maliciously accused” = “ate him to pieces”	Jesus’ enemies around the cross: Ps. 22:13,21 They gaped upon me <i>with</i> their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.
Rivals’ conspiracy vs. innocent man	Conspiracy vs. Jesus, (John 11:47,53)*
charged based on his religious beliefs, vs. 4	Charges vs. claims of deity (John 8:59; 10:31)*
Accusers manipulate and fawn over the gov’r, vv. 12,7	Jewish manipulation of Pilate*
Decree signed, v. 9	Pilate issues decree above cross
Devotion in upper room before trial	Last supper in upper room before trial*
Prayer posture: on knees	Jesus kneels in the garden
Arrested after prayer	Jesus arrested in garden of prayer
Silent submission in the face of his accusers	“Lamb before shearers is dumb” (Is. 53)*
Put into the pit	Jesus put into the tomb
Pit sealed	Tomb sealed
Darius found no rest	Pilate’s wife found no rest
Early a.m. visit to the pit	Sympathetic women visit the tomb
Angel appears at death site	Angels appear at the tomb*
Taken up out of pit	cf. raised out of the earth*
Delivered through innocence, v. 22	Delivers others thru His innocence (Is 53: 10,11)*
Daniel honors the king	Christ honors the Father (John 17, etc.)
Enemies cast to destruction	Judas falls to destruction

Jesus is familiar with Daniel 6 since he cites Dan. 7 at His trial before Caiaphas