
DANIEL

Lesson 33, Old Testament, Adult Religion Class, Tuesday, 1 May 2012

Study Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Daniel means ‘God is my judge,’ a good reflection of his bold independence from Babylonian and Persian culture and thinking; Daniel trusts in the Lord to vindicate and support him even as he defies the norms and expectations around him. Thus Daniel and his three Judean friends are heroes and models of faithfulness for Diaspora Jews.

The book falls naturally into two divisions: Chapters 1-6 are historical narrative, telling accounts of Daniel and his three friends in the kingdom of Babylon in the third-person. Chapters 7-12 shift to a mostly first-person apocalyptic genre, telling of four dramatic visions that Daniel experienced at different times in his life. This last section also includes a heartfelt prayer for Israel’s protection and deliverance. Daniel is the best example of an apocalyptic book in the Old Testament; parts of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Joel also fall into that category. The book is also unique in that it is written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic (starting at 2:4b, where it records the Chaldeans speaking to the king, through the end of chapter 7).

Daniel was well-known among the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls, where eight fragments were found, and among the New Testament Jews, who saw Messianic themes that pointed to Jesus’ post-mortal mission and his ultimate triumph at the end of days. Many teachings and expressions Jesus used during his mortal ministry echo themes in Daniel—son of man, seventy, coming in clouds of glory, and more.

Many ancient versions of Daniel include two more stories: 1) Susanna; and 2) Bel and the Dragon. These stories are part of the book of the Apocrypha that were routinely included in Bibles up to the early 1800s and still are in Catholic and some other Bibles

today. The first, Susanna, is the story of a righteous woman (Susanna) who was accosted by two lustful leaders while taking a bath in her garden who threatened to accuse of her an adulterous relationship if she did not lie with them. She refused and yelled out to get attention. They accused her falsely, as they said they would, but Susanna trusted in the Lord. Susanna declared her innocence before God and man, and Daniel, led by the Spirit, came to her defense. Questioning the men separately, Daniel asked them about the details of their story. When the two could not give the same details, the people recognized the lies of the men and killed them, vindicating Susanna’s innocence and establishing Daniel as a man of wisdom.

The second, Bel and the Dragon, is an encounter with Cyrus and Daniel. The king believes that the food offerings to the god Bel are consumed by the God but Daniel claims that he is not a living god but just an idol, therefore someone else is eating the food. Not wanting to disabuse the king of his ignorance, the priests propose a test—put food in the temple and the king himself should seal the door. If the food was done in the morning, it proved Daniel was wrong. But the priests had a secret entrance and snuck in to consume the food that night. The next day, the king broke the seal and found the food gone, but Daniel had wisely anticipated their trickery and put ashes on the floor the night before, so their footprints were all revealed. The king forced them to reveal how they got in. The priests were put to death and the statue of Bel and the temple were destroyed. Another god was a living snake (“dragon” in many texts). The king pointed out to Daniel that this god was indeed alive. Daniel said he could kill this snake/god without a club or sword, and with the king’s permission fed it a mixture of tar, fat, and hair,

which caused it to die. Feeling threatened by Daniel's destruction of their gods and priests, the Babylonians threw him in the lion's den for six days. The Lord miraculously fed him by bringing Habakkuk with bread and a bowl of stew to Babylon, then taking him back to Judea, and on the seventh day he emerged unharmed. Recognizing Israel's God, the king destroyed those who had tried to harm Daniel.

Daniel's position in the canon differs between the Christian and Jewish scriptures. Christians included him with the major prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel—because they saw in him prophecies of Christ. Perhaps in reaction to that, Jews determined that Daniel was only a seer, not a prophet, and that his words only applied to his own day and not a future time. They therefore included his book with the Writings—Psalms, Proverbs, etc.

Many scholars date Daniel very late, especially the apocalyptic chapters, such that it is often considered the last book of the Hebrew Bible chronologically. This is mainly due to the writing style, which was well-documented in many non-canonical apocalyptic books of that period. But Latter-day Saints see apocalyptic writings in earlier works, such as Enoch's visions in the Book of Moses or Nephi's vision in 1 Nephi 11-14, and are comfortable with Daniel having such experiences. That Daniel's book has undergone later editing is certain, reflected in the many historical details that are incorrect or problematic, but that doesn't take away from the examples of faith and the prophetic visions of the future that prepare us for the last days. Daniel's message is that God is sovereign and has power over the whole earth and that those who follow him are ultimately preserved and blessed with all that God has to offer.

OUTLINE

As explained in the Introduction, the book of Daniel breaks into two major parts, stories in the courts of Babylon, and apocalyptic visions.

1. Court Stories (1-6)
 - a. Four youth keep Jewish food laws (1)
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the nations (2)
 - c. The fiery furnace (3)
 - d. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree (4)
 - e. Belshazzar's feast (5)
 - f. Daniel in the lion's den (6)
2. Apocalyptic Visions (7-12)
 - a. Four beasts and the stone (7)
 - b. Animals (8)
 - c. Daniel's prayer (9)
 - d. Vision of the last days (10-12)

COURT STORIES (1-6)

The historical section of Daniel in these chapters takes Daniel and his three friends through their early years in Babylon to near the end of Daniel's life. Six specific stories are related that show how these Jews living among Gentiles can keep their covenants and faith and still be successful in positions of authority, even when suffering persecution. The stories are well-known and familiar, even to many who have never read the Bible.

FOUR YOUTH KEEP JEWISH FOOD LAWS (1)

1:1 ***In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim.*** If this were accurate, that would be 606 or perhaps 605 BC, but there is no known incident like this in Jewish or Babylonian records. More likely, this is a scribal error. The first recorded deportation took place in 597 BC when Nebuchadnezzar deposed Jehoiachin and replaced him with his uncle, Zedekiah.

1:3 ***bring certain of the children of Israel.*** Some of those taken captive caught the attention of the king's

men. These were called out for education and preparation that they might serve in the government.

1:5 **of the king's meat, and of the wine.** This was not just food and drink that were a gift from the king but was that first given to idols. The young Jews' resistance was thus not just because it was rich food or something but probably because it was a manner of worshipping those idols, and they wanted nothing to do with that. There is no indication that the food itself was contrary to the food laws of the Law of Moses. This practice prefigures challenges the early Church faced during the time of Peter and Paul, when Gentile converts struggled not to eat meat dedicated to pagan gods (Acts 15:28-29), because it was often their only source of meat.

1:5 **three years.** The time of the preparation of the young men. If they were deported in 597, as supposed, this would be 594 BC.

1:6 **Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.** We know Daniel's Hebrew name because he is called that through the book. But his three friends are rarely known by their Hebrew names (here) but rather by their adopted Babylonian names, given in verse 7: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Daniel's name became Belteshazzar in Babylon. The meanings of their names are below (the Babylonian ones are less certain):

- Daniel: 'God is my judge' – Belteshazzar: 'Bel guard his life'?
- Hananiah: 'YHWH has been gracious' – Shadrach: 'The great scribe'?
- Mishael: 'Who is what God is?' – Meshach: 'Guest of a king'?
- Azariah: "YHWH has helped" – Abed-nego: 'Servant of Nabu'?

1:12 **give us pulse to eat.** "Pulse" is more likely vegetables, as most modern translations render this phrase.

1:15 **their countenances appeared fairer and fatter.** Daniel and his friends were more healthy than their peers who ate the king's food and wine. This is not meant to teach the benefits of certain foods but the blessing of strict obedience to God's

laws—it was the Lord's hand that made them appear so to Ashpenaz.

1:21 **the first year of king Cyrus.** Cyrus conquered Babylon in October 539 (Zondervan 4:531). In other words, Daniel's ministry started with his stand for righteousness under Nebuchadnezzar and continued to Cyrus' reign many years later, making him 80 or more when he died.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM OF THE NATIONS (2)

2:1 **in the second year.** The second year of Nebuchadnezzar would be 603-602 BC (Zondervan 4:532). If the conclusion about the year of Daniel's arrival at Babylon being 597 is correct, this is more likely to be two years after that date instead, or 595 BC.

2:1 **Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams.** A dream was considered a prime way for the gods to communicate with man. The king's dream so troubled him that he could no longer sleep, so he called his potential dream-interpreters to join him in his insomnia.

2:4 **spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack.** "Syriack" is Aramaic, the language of Babylon. After this phrase, Daniel shifts to being written in Aramaic until the end of chapter 7.

2:5 **The thing is gone from me.** Meaning, his decision has been made (has 'gone from him') and is therefore unalterable. "This is what I have firmly decided" (NIV); The command from me is firm (NASB).

2:8 **ye would gain the time.** 'You are bargaining for more time.' The wise men were trying to stall the king but he was firm in his decree.

2:10 **no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things.** They could offer an interpretation (right or wrong) if they knew the dream, but to make them guess the dream first was unprecedented.

2:13 **they sought Daniel and his fellows.** Daniel and his three friends were not part of the contingent that was called to the palace during the night to interpret

the dream but they were part of the broader decree to kill all the king's advisors.

2:16 **give him time**. The king was not willing to give the other wise men time but was willing to give it to Daniel, perhaps because he promised an interpretation. Some believe that verses 13b-23 are a late interpolation that tie chapters 1 and 3 to this chapter (JPS, 1644). Verse 25 supports this as Arioch appears to be alerting the king for the first time that Daniel can interpret the dream, while 16 says that he had already personally approached the king.

2:19 **the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision**. Not the same as a dream, but a vision received in the night time after Daniel and his friends prayed (and likely fasted).

2:20 **Blessed be the name of God**. Daniel gave a doxology—praise of God—as a result of understanding how to approach the king.

2:28 **there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets**. Daniel doesn't use the Jewish name for God, YHWH, but a term familiar to the Babylonians, "God in heaven," something applied to other gods in the Near East. This was similar to how the Nephite missionaries used a common language about God when they went to teach the Lamanites (Alma 18:24-28). This was also Daniel's effort to make sure the king understood the source of his knowledge, though Nebuchadnezzar still ended up trying to worship Daniel at the end (2:46).

2:31 **a great image**. The king saw a large statue, an idol such as he would have been familiar with. It was a common motif in ancient dreams to see statues of gods who delivered messages to the recipients (Zondervan 4:533). However, this one appeared to trouble Nebuchadnezzar because the idol was composed uniquely of different materials and offered no message to the king but was destroyed in the end.

2:36 **we will tell the interpretation**. Daniel identifies Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom as the head of gold (2:38) but the other parts of the statue are only named as other kingdoms. Jewish and many Christian scholars tend to interpret them as Media, Persia, and Greece, with Jews seeing the fulfillment of this at the time of the Maccabees (second century

BC), while Christians identify the kingdom set up by Christ as the stone conquering all worldly kingdoms. Latter-day Saints consistently view the kingdoms as Babylon (gold), Persia/Media (silver), Greece (brass), and Rome/Constantinople (iron), with the feet of mixed iron/clay as the kingdoms that came out of the Roman world in the middle ages and into the modern age (Student Manual, 2:298-299). The detail of the interpretation is not important to Daniel's message, however. The dream portrays a succession of earthly kingdoms leading up to a final one set up by God which overpowers them all.

2:39 **inferior to thee**. Literally, 'closer to the ground,' which each of the kingdoms were in the statue, not 'of lesser importance or power.'

2:44 **the God of heaven set up a kingdom**. This is interpreted as the Church in our day (Student Manual, 2:299; see also D&C 65:2).

2:46 **worshipped Daniel**. The king was so amazed at Daniel's ability to recount and interpret his dream, that he fell down as if to worship him, including calling for food and incense as he would for a god. Though it's not stated, Daniel must have convinced him not to worship him because in the next verse, the king pays homage to God instead.

2:47 **your God is a God of gods**. While not dismissing the existence of other gods, the king nevertheless acknowledged the superiority of Daniel's God who had revealed this to him.

2:48 **made him ruler**. Like Joseph in Egypt, Daniel found favor with the king as a result of his interpretation and so was made a powerful leader in the kingdom. In his case, he also made sure his three friends, now called by their Babylonian names, were also given positions of authority. The mention of them serves as a good transition to the next chapter, from which Daniel is absent.

THE FIERY FURNACE (3)

3:1 **threescore cubits**. The statue was about 90 feet tall, though some of that was probably the base on which it sat. It doesn't say what the statue was but Herodotus, the Greek historian, mentioned a huge

status of Bel in ancient Babylon (JPS, 1647; Zondervan, 4:536).

3:1 **plain of Dura**. This location is unknown; “Dur-” means ‘a walled place’ in Akkadian (Zondervan, 4:536).

3:5 **hear the sound**. The instruments mentioned are subject to debate and are translated differently in various versions of the Bible. What is sure is that it is an ensemble of percussion, string, and wind instruments.

3:12 **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego**. In this second episode, Daniel is absent (traveling on business?), but his recently promoted friends are the heroes of the tale as Nebuchadnezzar learns another lesson about Jehovah, the God of Israel.

3:6 **a burning fiery furnace**. Some kilns or ‘furnaces’ have been found. They were tall like a smokestack, with an opening at the top into which coal was tossed to fuel the furnace. Another door would be at the bottom to open it up for airflow or to insert and remove the pottery or bread or whatever was being baked.

3:17 **seven times more**. Probably not literally seven times more but to mean exceedingly hotter than usual.

3:18 **But if not**. They had faith that God would deliver them, “but if not,” then they were still determined not serve the idols and false gods of Babylon.

Said Elder Dennis E. Simmons (*Ensign*, May 2004):

We must have the same faith as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

Our God will deliver us from ridicule and persecution, but if not. . . . Our God will deliver us from sickness and disease, but if not. . . . He will deliver us from loneliness, depression, or fear, but if not. . . . Our God will deliver us from threats, accusations, and insecurity, but if not. . . . He will deliver us from death or impairment of loved ones, but if not, . . . we will trust in the Lord.

Our God will see that we receive justice and fairness, but if not. . . . He will make sure that we are loved and recognized, but if not. . . . We will receive a perfect companion and righteous and obedient children, but if not, . . . we will have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that if we do all we can do, we will, in His time and in His way, be delivered and receive all that He has.

3:22 **the fire slew those men**. The heat of the fire killed the men throwing the three Jews into the fire, probably because they were above it when tossed them in the chimney-like opening. The king would have watched the whole thing from an opening on the side.

3:25 **like unto the Son of God**. Though the KJV translators capitalized this to tie it to Jesus Christ, there are no capitals in Hebrew or Aramaic. The Aramaic phrase here, *bar 'elāhîn*, is a word for ‘god’ but is typically used in ancient literature to express an angelic or divine visitor (see v. 28 where the visitor is called a *mal'ak* or angel).

NEBUCHADNEZZER'S DREAM OF THE TREE (4)

4:2 **I thought it good**. The story starts in the first person voice of Nebuchadnezzar the king and remains so until verse 19, then returns to first person in verses 34-37.

4:5 **I saw a dream**. The king has another dream that he doesn't understand, so calls for all his wise men, which includes Daniel (who enters only after all the others fail to interpret the dream).

4:8 **the spirit of the holy gods**. Nebuchadnezzar wasn't recognizing the Spirit or even the Lord but just that Daniel was clearly endowed with favor from ‘the holy gods.’

4:10 **I saw**. This time the king does not withhold the details of the dream he had.

4:19 **astonied**. Meaning ‘astonished’ or ‘bewildered.’ Daniel did not know how to answer for an hour—not that he didn't understand the dream but he wasn't sure he wanted to give the interpretation to the king because of what it said about him.

4:19 **the dream be to them that hate thee.** Or, 'may the dream apply to those that hate you.' Daniel doesn't wish on the king what the dream implies.

4:22 **It is thou, O king.** The tree represents Nebuchadnezzar himself.

4:23 **a watcher and an holy one.** A "watcher" is another name for a guardian angel; a "holy one" is either an 'angel' or a 'saint.'

4:33 **eat grass as oxen.** The story recounts how Nebuchadnezzar became like a wild animal that ate grass, grew out his hair like feathers and his nails like claws, living in the wild. This matches other Babylonian legends, such as Enkidu in the Epic of Gilgamesh. Sparse records of the end of Nebuchadnezzar's life leave open the possibility that this did indeed happen to him, though a fragmentary text from Qumran seems to attribute the event to a later king, Nabonidus.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST (5)

5:1 **Belshazzar.** In this chapter, it was October 539 BC, and the king was Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus (evidence indicates that Nabonidus was king but had made his son, Belshazzar, co-regent). Daniel had been in Babylon for almost sixty years, and was over seventy years old, probably forgotten by most at the court. But the Lord brought him right back into their attention, just in time for their destruction.

5:3 **the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple.** Here Belshazzar tries to vainly show that he is as great as the Jewish God by drinking from the temple cups. Non-Biblical accounts say also that the night Babylon was captured, the kingdom was throwing a party—perhaps the celebration of the moon god Sin.

5:5 **fingers of a man's hand.** Like the brother of Jared, the king only saw part of the hand writing on the wall (where we get the phrase, 'see the writing on the wall').

5:6 **the joints of his loins were loosed.** His legs became weak so that he could hardly stand.

5:10 **the queen.** Not Belshazzar's wife but his mother or perhaps even his grandmother, who remembered what happened before he was born.

5:11 **Nebuchadnezzar thy father.** Not literally, as Nabonidus was his father but in the sense of an ancestor.

5:17 **Let thy gifts be to thyself.** Daniel was not interested in a reward. The impatience in his voice nearly comes through in the account. Yet later, Daniel does accept the very rewards the king offered (5:29).

5:25 **Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.** These are common Aramaic words. The problem is not reading or understanding the words—everyone there could likely do that—but understanding their meaning in relation to the current circumstances.

5:26 **Mene.** 'A numbering.'

5:27 **Tekel.** A measure of weight.

5:28 **Peres.** The singular form of the plural 'Pharsin,' meaning 'a division'; the "U" is the word 'and.' It is also a play on words; the name of the conquering nation was Persia, or in their language Paras. (The only JST change in Daniel is this verse, where the prophet changed "Peres" to "Upharsin" to match the citation in 5:25.) Thus the full message was, 'A numbering, a numbering, a *tekel*, and divisions.' It took Daniel's inspired wisdom to interpret them and apply their meaning to Belshazzar and his court.

5:31 **Darius the Median took the kingdom.** The very night of the sign did "Darius" (really Cyrus; cf. 6:28, which could be translated 'Darius, even Cyrus the Persian,' showing that "Darius" could be a title) conquer Babylon and kill Belshazzar, ending the kingdom of Babylon forever. The story is that the Persian army dug a deep trench and diverted the Euphrates River. Then at night when the water dropped, they slipped in under the wall and conquered the city in one night. The date was 16 Oct 539 BC.

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN (6)

6:3 **Daniel was preferred.** Darius/Cyrus recognized Daniel's great abilities, even at his advanced age, and

determined to set him up as one of the regional rulers. But the others were jealous of him, and tried to get him out of the way, so they tricked the king into signing a law that would get Daniel killed. It was at this same time that Cyrus issued his decree that the Jews could return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple (Ezra 1). That Daniel influenced that decree is very likely, which explains at least partly the jealousy of the other courtiers.

6:10 **Daniel knew that the writing was signed.** Daniel knew full well the law and what would happen to him. He was publicly and intentionally flaunting the law and asking for a confrontation.

6:14 **he labored till the going down of the sun.** The king valued Daniel's life and immediately did everything he could to save him. But his ability to continue governing depended on him following his own laws, and he was defeated. God had to do what the king could not.

6:22 **God hath sent his angel.** Paralleling the experience of his friends many years earlier in the furnace, Daniel was now preserved by the hand of an angel.

6:25 **king Darius wrote.** Darius'/Cyrus' decree gave Jews a religious privilege that they would enjoy all through Roman times.

APOCALYPTIC VISIONS (7-12)

With this chapter we move from historical narrative to a full apocalyptic record. It also shifts to a first person narrative on Daniel's part from the third person accounts in chapters 1-6.

Apocalyptic literature has several common themes. It portrays 'end times' or events at the end of the current world. It shows the ultimate triumph of God and, by extension, those who follow him. God is in control of all things and is moving to make his will happen, even if unseen by human eyes. The vision is often accompanied by an angelic guide who interprets it for the prophet, because apocalyptic messages are often cryptic, full of images and metaphors that are neither obvious nor realistic. Daniel's visions are the best example of apocalyptic in the Old Testament, with Revelation being the example in the New Testament.

FOUR BEASTS AND THE STONE (7)

7:1 **the first year of Belshazzar.** A flashback to 553 B.C. Now it was Daniel's turn to have a dream.

7:2 **the great sea.** The Mediterranean, probably a sea Daniel had not seen since his youth, but the center of the civilizations Daniel would see in his dream.

7:3 **four great beasts.** The four beasts are: 1) A lion with eagle's wings, who stands upright like a man; 2) A bear with three ribs in its mouth; 3) A leopard

with four wings and four heads; 4) A beast with iron teeth and ten horns. Joseph Smith said that these are "spoken of to represent the kingdoms of the world, the inhabitants whereof were beastly and abominable characters; they were murderers, corrupt, carnivorous, and brutal in their dispositions. The lion, the bear, the leopard, and the ten-horned beast represented the kingdoms of the world" (*Teachings*, 289). He never got more specific, which follows Daniel's lead wherein that prophet was told to "shut up the words" (12:4) and did not even understand everything himself (12:8-9). The Prophet Joseph stated, "... where God ever gives a vision of an image, or beast, or figure of any kind, he always holds himself responsible to give a revelation or interpretation of the meaning thereof, otherwise we are not responsible or accountable for our belief in it" (*The Words of Joseph Smith*, 185; also *Teachings*, 291). Thus we cannot be more specific than what the Prophet said—they represent the kingdoms of the world. Which kingdoms are not clear, nor does it really matter (though some have found parallels in the beasts with the kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, as in chapter 2). The point of this chapter, as in chapter 2, is to look ahead to the coming kingdom of God that is greater than them all.

7:9 **the Ancient of days.** This is "the oldest man, our Father Adam, Michael, he will call his children together and hold a council with them to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man" (*Teachings*,

157; also D&C 116; for great details, see McConkie, *Millennial Messiah*, 578f).

7:13 **the Son of man**. Aramaic *bar ʿenash*, equivalent to Hebrew *ben ʿadam*, the same phrase used in Ezekiel so many times but here clearly not referring to a mortal man; it is in the sense that it is used in Daniel that Jesus likely applied the phrase to himself. Jesus referred to Daniel's language when he said he would come "in the clouds of heaven" (7:13, Matthew 24:30, and Luke 21:27). In the last days, this scripture is fulfilled when Christ will come to meet Adam and the assembled crowd (see D&C 116). Unlike the beastly kingdoms which get slain and their dominions taken away, the kingdom given to the Son of Man is ever lasting and will never be destroyed.

7:17 **four kings**. The interpretation Daniel received refers to four specific kings, not necessarily the kingdoms (though see v. 24 where the horns of the last beast are also kings).

7:19 **the truth of the fourth beast**. Daniel took a special interest in the fourth beast, perhaps because it was so unusual. The important lesson? It "made war with the Saints" (*qadishin*, the 'holy ones' in 7:21) and prevailed for a time, until Adam came, when the Saints will triumph. These kings will think they are in charge (7:25) but in the end the Saints are triumphant under the Son of Man (7:27).

7:28 **my cogitations much troubled me**. The vision troubled Daniel's thoughts, but he merely pondered it. This is the end of the Aramaic section of Daniel.

ANIMALS (8)

8:1 **In the third year**. Two years after the vision chapter 7, or 551 B.C.

8:2 **Shushan, in the palace, which is in the province of Elam**. A province of Babylon, about 250 miles east of Babylon, the city was called Susa by the Greeks. This was the capital of the Median/Persian empire which conquered Babylon (a future event at the time of this vision). Note that Daniel was not there in person, just in vision.

8:4 **the ram pushing westward**. The ram and goat are Persia and Greece, respectively, following the interpretation Daniel receives in 8:20-21. The symbols match what we know of the Greek conquest of Persia under Alexander the Great and the subsequent breakup of his kingdom upon his death to four smaller kingdoms run by his generals.

8:7 **moved with choler**. "Choler" means anger.

8:9 **a little horn**. This "little horn" appears to be the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who took away worship in the temple in Jerusalem and precipitated the Maccabean revolt (175-164 B.C.). However, we make that interpretation with some caution, given the language of 8:23-25. It may (also) refer to a more latter-day leader.

8:14 **two thousand and three hundred days**. The period of time (2,300 days) matches the period of Antiochus' persecution: 6 Sep 171 to 25 Dec 165.

8:16 **Gabriel**. Many angels are mentioned in the Old Testament but this is the first time one is mentioned by name. Joseph Smith taught that this was Noah (see BD, "Gabriel").

8:27 **I Daniel fainted**. Daniel was overcome by the vision and didn't fully understand, hence the events of chapter 9 many years later.

DANIEL'S PRAYER (9)

9:1 **the first year of Darius**. The story returns to the time of chapter 6, which was 539 BC.

9:2 **Jeremiah the prophet**. Reading Jeremiah, Daniel realized it had been seventy years, as that prophet had testified (see Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10). Interesting that Daniel would have Jeremiah's writings in faraway Babylon, when Jeremiah was in Judah and Egypt.

9:3 **to seek by prayer**. In verses 3-19, Daniel prayed for the house of Israel, seeking forgiveness for their collective sins.

9:21 **the man Gabriel**. Gabriel returned to give Daniel comfort and more information.

9:24 **Seventy weeks are determined.** The Hebrew phrase “Seventy weeks” really says ‘seventy sevens,’ a week being an example of a period of time divided into sevens. Some interpret this to be ‘seventy times seven’ or 490 years, which is approximately the period of time from the dedication of the Second Temple (515 BC) to the birth of the Messiah. But the interpretation of this is uncertain.

9:26 **Messiah be cut off.** Daniel saw the persecution of the Jews in his day but also that the city would be rebuilt. Then the Messiah would come, but be “cut off, but not for himself.” The Messiah would “finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,” referring to the power of the Atonement (9:24). After that, the temple would be destroyed again (by the Romans). The language of 9:27 was used by the Savior (Matthew 24:15).

VISION OF THE LAST DAYS (10-12)

10:1 **the third year of Cyrus.** This is the last recorded vision of Daniel, dating to 536 BC. The interpretation of this vision is sealed up until the end of times (12:4). Like some scriptures, we may not fully understand this until after it has happened. Daniel was perhaps close to eighty years old at this time.

10:4 **by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel.** After fasting for three weeks, Daniel was found by the Tigris river. He was not alone (10:7), but like Saul on the road to Damascus, he alone saw the vision, though the others fled, quaking in fear.

10:5 **a certain man.** Daniel’s vision of God uses language found in other similar visions (Ezekiel 1:26-28; Revelation 1:13-15; D&C 11:2-3).

10:8 **no strength in me.** Other prophets also felt drained after an encounter with the Lord (see references in the footnotes).

10:13 **Michael.** The angel is actually not Michael but is sent by Michael to deliver this last message to the faithful old man (see 10:21).

11:1 **a mighty king.** 11:1-4 shows the end of the Persian empire, Alexander’s conquest (the “mighty

king”), and the subsequent breakup of the Greek kingdom among Alexander’s generals (“not to his posterity,” 11:4).

11:5 **have dominion.** 11:5-45 portray a series of wars and conflicts between the southern (Ptolemaic) and the northern (Seleucid) kingdoms, ending when Rome stepped in and conquered them both. Great efforts have been made to map every verse here with historical events (the last 20 or so verses probably refer to Antiochus IV Epihanes, mentioned above), and the alignment is quite remarkable in terms of the prophecy, but not perfect or terribly relevant to the real message to us today. The real message is in chapter 12.

12:1 **And at that time.** After all of these things shall come the events of real significance in terms of God’s plan. This is an apocalyptic fulfillment of all of Daniel’s visions, the triumph of the Lord in the end.

12:1 **found written in the book.** The Book of Life.

12:2 **some to everlasting life, and some to shame.** Some will be resurrected to glory, some to condemnation.

12:3 **wise shall shine.** Reminds us of 1 John 3:2.

12:4 **shut up the words.** The true interpretation of this is shut it up until the end; perhaps only in retrospect will the Saints really understand Daniel’s message, or until another prophet reveals it.

12:7 **held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven.** In the attitude of prayer.

12:7 **time, times, and a half.** Many have interpreted this through the years and all have been wrong so far. It simply is not clear what is meant by this phrase. The Hebrew simply means ‘appointed time.’

12:8 **I understood not.** Daniel was not clear of the meaning of this vision. But the response was that he was not to worry about it for now, that it would be understood by the wise at the right time.

12:13 **thou shalt rest.** Daniel’s death was soon to come, but he would have rest and receive his reward in the resurrection (see footnote b).

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