

## Daniel

The goal of this Bible Class is to give the students a working knowledge of the whole book of Daniel. It is based on an expository approach to teaching the Bible, preparing the students for the worship of our Savior. The various lessons are to be viewed by the teacher as thematic suggestions to help with preparation. While the lessons are not intended to be read to the class word for word, the main ideas should be the substance of what is taught. The teacher, in preparation for the class, should consider reading through the whole curriculum before beginning the class, as well as the book of Daniel several times. This will provide the instructor with a broad and comprehensive understanding of Daniel as it is being taught. At the end of the course, the class will be concluded with a Bible Knowledge Evaluation. The instructor should be sure to review the material sufficiently that the students are able to correctly answer the questions on the evaluation at the end of the course.

It is important that the instructor be not only knowledgeable about the material, but also able to teach it with enthusiasm and conviction. Students best learn from teachers that are themselves excited about the scriptures. The use of maps, diagrams, white boards etc. is extremely helpful. Some of these have been provided in the curriculum. It is suggested that the class be conducted in an interactive manner. This can be accomplished by having them read short portions of the scripture texts, asking them questions, and wholeheartedly encouraging them to ask questions. All students should be encouraged to bring a Bible to class.

The inclusion of the Westminster Shorter Catechism as part of the curriculum is designed to help the students acquire a broad understanding of Christian doctrine along with the specific Bible teaching. The Elders of the church will coordinate the specific questions and answers to be used in the class.

It will become evident to the teacher that this course curriculum, while not dealing with every verse and concept in the book of Daniel, is comprehensive and deeply theological. It is designed to help the students understand the book of Daniel in its wider biblical context, with emphasis on its place in the redemptive history of God's covenant people. The students will be confronted with and asked to understand and remember fairly difficult concepts. It should be remembered that children are able to comprehend much more than we often give them credit for. While this class will be a challenge for both the teacher and the students, the rewards for the efforts of those in the class will be surprising and exciting.

In preparation for these lessons, it would be helpful to consult the following:

Jordan, James B., *Commentarie Upon the Book of the Prophecies of Daniel*, (Niceville, FL: Biblical Horizons, 1999). Also Jordan's as yet unpublished notes and revised commentary to be published by Canon Press.

Leithart, Peter, *A House for My Name: A Survey of the Old Testament*, (Moscow, ID, Canon Press, 2000), pp. 225-229.

## Week One: A Theological Introduction To Daniel

### ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

#### **Hebrew Intro (1)**

- I. Daniel & Three Friends faithful to THE God (1)  
No other gods

#### **Aramaic Sections (2-7)**

- II. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream & Daniel's Interpretation (2)  
No Images
- III. Daniel's Three Friends (3)  
Yahweh's Name
- IV. Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity  
& Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh
- V. Belshazzar's Feast (5)  
Father/Son
- VI. Daniel saved from lions (6)  
Murder
- VII. Vision of four kingdoms (7)  
Spiritual Adultery

#### **Hebrew Section (8-12)**

- VIII. Vision of two kingdoms (8)  
Stealing
- IX. Vision of seventy weeks (9)  
Faithful witness
- X. Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12)  
No coveting

We are beginning with the book of Daniel this week. This is an important book of the Bible because it provides a divine insight into the course of history between the time when Israel is fully a nation in the land with the temple, and when Jesus comes to establish His Kingdom in the world. While several of the Old Testament stories that we are all familiar with are in the book of Daniel, it contains my dreams and visions that are very difficult to understand. While Daniel is thought by many to be one of the hardest books of the Bible to comprehend, it is important for us

to study it so that we are able to understand other parts of the Bible (particularly other Old Testament prophetic books and the book of Revelation).

We will begin our first two weeks (of the twelve-week course) by reviewing the biblical history and theology of Israel. This will give us a good background that will enable us to understand what God is doing with Israel in the book of Daniel.

Whenever you begin a study of a book of the Bible it is helpful to begin by looking back to the beginning of God's revelation to see how the theology would help you understand what you are reading. This is particularly true of the book of Daniel.

In the Garden of Eden God commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply and have dominion over the earth. The idea of dominion is an important concept in the book of Daniel. God established the pattern for world dominion in the garden of Eden, which Adam was to take out into the rest of the world. Adam was to live in obedience and faith in God, and teach the righteousness of faith to his children. After the fall, God promised that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent, but because of their sin they were sent out of the garden. They driven out (exiled) and cherubim were placed at the **EAST** of the garden with a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life, which Adam sought

impatiently apart from obedience to the Lord. Remember: to move spatially to the east means in biblical language to move away from the presence of God. After Cain killed his brother Abel he was cursed by God and cast out of the presence of the Lord in the land and dwelt EAST of Eden. After this a new and godly line of men arose, the Sethites, from which came Noah (Gen. 4:25-5:32). Noah walked with God, but the earth was corrupted by the violence of men (even the line of Seth was corrupted by the intermarriage of the sons of God and the daughters of men, see Gen. 6:1-13). Noah was a prophet sent to preach righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5) to the world, but men would not hear and were cast out of the world. [Use the charts on the handout at the end of this lesson to illustrate the spread of sin and death.]

### **The Spread of Sin and Death**

<b>Place</b>	<b>Sinner</b>	<b>Sin</b>	<b>Judgment</b>	<b>Virtue</b>
Garden	Adam	Eats fruit	Cast out of Garden	Patience
Land	Cain	Kills Brother	Cast out of land	Brotherly kindness
World	Sons of God	Marry Unbelievers	Cast out of World	Holiness

(Peter Leithart, *House For My Name*, p. 56)

The flood is the end of the old world, and the beginning of a new world, with Noah being a new Adam. But just as sin ruined the old world, so now sin continued to ruin the world. But as we saw the grace and mercy of God to Adam, there is hope in the new world. Noah was given the same command to be fruitful and multiply on the earth, and a new covenant was established with him (Gen. 9:1-17). From Noah, the descendents of Shem became the new and righteous line, from which the Messiah would eventually come. What we see next (Gen. 10) is a list of the 70 nations of the new world. In chapter 11 we see another fall of man at the tower of Babel, which is key to our understanding of the book of Daniel. At that time there was only one language on the earth. Nimrod (of the unrighteous line of Ham) settled in the EAST and built his kingdom of Babel. The righteous line of Shem joined Nimrod on the plain of Shinar to build a tower at Babel. This tower was a *temple* to connect heaven and earth. But this tower is a sign of rebellion against God because they were seeking to reach up to heaven and make a name for themselves, lest they be scattered throughout the world. Instead of taking on the name of God and obey His command to “fill the earth,” they wanted to stay together in one place. The tower, which they thought was so great and mighty, reaching up into heaven, is in reality so far from heaven that God has to “come down” to see it. When God does come down to see it, He brings His judgments against man by confusing their language so that they are scattered even more widely throughout the world than they were before. The name “Babylon” means “Gate of God” (which is where Babel was originally), but this effort to build a house/temple that reaches to God is only confusion and foolishness. God will later in history use this city in His plan for Israel. It is to Babylon that Yahweh takes His people into exile, and where much of the book of Daniel takes place.

The story of mankind does not end with the fall at Babel, of course. The line of Shem continued on, and in Genesis 11:27ff we see that God raises up another new Adam, Abraham. God made another new covenant with Abraham, and makes Him the father of the righteous line from which the Messiah would come. He made three promises to Abraham: 1) A seed/a great nation (remember Gen. 3 where God promised to provide a seed that would crush the head of the serpent); 2) A land (which would later be the promised land); 3) The nations would be blessed. These covenant promises were repeated to Isaac and Jacob. Wherever they went, these fathers of the faith build altars and worshipped God faithfully throughout the land. When Jacob was leaving the land to escape from his brother he saw a vision of a “ladder” reaching to heaven with angels going up and down on it (Gen. 28). Unlike the tower that the men at Babel tried to build, the ladder was made by God. Jacob called the place the “gate of heaven,” which reminds us of the Babylonian “Gate of God.” Jacob later renamed the place “Bethel,” which means “house of God.” At Bethel, Yahweh revealed His answer to Babel: He will build a way to connect earth and heaven; He will build it in the land through Jacob’s descendents.

Eventually, Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob, is taken to Egypt by the wickedness of his brothers. Through the providence of God, Joseph became the ruler of the Egypt after the conversion of Pharaoh (see Gen. 37:2; 41:46-47; 45:6). God gave Joseph the ability to interpret visions and dreams, which caused him to be exalted before men, and was eventually used by God to rule the world and prepared a place for his brothers, who arrived about twenty years later. This is of course an important background story to the book of Daniel. Daniel was taken off to Babylon and by his ability to interpret visions and dreams is exalted to the second place of leadership in Babylonian under the king of Babylon, and helped prepare a place for the Jews when they were dragged into the fullness of exile twenty years later. Daniel is a new and greater Joseph.

Eventually, the Hebrews grew into a great nation while they were under the care of the Egyptians (they were fruitful and multiplied, according to the covenant promise, Gen. 12:1-13; cf. Ex. 1:7). After more than 400 years, there arose a Pharaoh that did not remember Joseph, and he oppressed and enslaved the Hebrews. [This same thing happens to Daniel with the new bad ruler, Belshazzar (Dan. 5).] The suffering of the people of God was so great that God remembered His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and raised up another deliverer: Moses, who grew up in the court of the Egyptian king. God powerfully delivered His enslaved people so that they could worship Him and return to the land promised to them. Yahweh judged Egypt for enslaving God’s people and for failing to let them go. In the book of Exodus we see that God not only delivered them from Egypt, but also gave them His law and the tabernacle. The law taught them how to live as the people of the covenant. By making covenant with the people at Sinai, Yahweh made Israel His bride. In order to remain faithful to her Husband, Israel needed to keep His law and worship Him alone at the tabernacle.

After being given these blessings of the law and tabernacle, Yahweh led them to the Promised Land. But Israel rebelled against the Lord, and Yahweh judged them by causing them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. During this wilderness wandering the rebellious people died, preparing a new Israel to enter the land under Joshua.

As we will see next week, before the Babylonian exile, Jerusalem and the whole land of Judah had become so wicked that it had become like Egypt. Looked at from one perspective, the people were taken into exile as a judgment for their sins of idolatry and enslaving their brethren. Looked at from another perspective, the godly of the land were delivered from the oppression of the new Egypt/Judah/Jerusalem. Babylon became a new wilderness wandering experience. Daniel then can be seen as a new Moses leading God's people through the wilderness of Babylon; just as he could also be seen as a new Joseph serving the emperor. During his time in Babylon Daniel wrote prophecies that can be seen as relating to the Ten Words (Ten Commandments), demonstrating that he was a new Moses.

After the wilderness wandering for 40 years the people crossed over the Jordan River **FROM THE EAST**, signifying that they were moving away from the world and into the favor and presence of the Lord again. After Israel had gone into the land, they conquered the land under the leadership of Joshua and renewed covenant with Yahweh in the land. The tabernacle was erected as the central place of worship in Shiloh, by direction from Yahweh. Israel was commanded by Yahweh to utterly destroy the inhabitants of the land so that they would not take up their way of life and begin to worship the gods of the land. But as the book of Judges demonstrates, they did not remain faithful to Yahweh and began to live *with* the inhabitants of the land and worshipped the gods of the pagans. Israel committed spiritual adultery by worshipping the gods of the land. And so Yahweh repeatedly brought invaders in to enslave Israel again. Each time the people repented of their sin, God sent judges ("Spirit-Empowered Deliverers") to deliver them again. The cycle of sin, judgment, repentance and deliverance was repeated over and over again to teach Israel to be faithful to Her Husband Yahweh.

What we see in this short review of the history of Israel is that God had called a special people to be His Bride. From the beginning of the world, He was building a house for His name, a house made up of His people. As they were faithful to Him, He blessed them. But when they sinned and rebelled against Him, He judged them. This is why, as we will see next week, God eventually sent His people into exile in Babylon. They had not kept His law nor remained faithful to Him. They became so wicked and sinful that they were described by God (through the prophets) as a new Egypt. Israel had become Egypt by the time of the exile so that God saved His faithful people by bringing them out of the land of oppression and taking them to Babylon. They were not slaves in Babylon, but were given a place to live and grow under the care of the Babylonians (just as they had been when they originally went to Egypt under Joseph).

<b>Creation</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Initial Judgment</b>	<b>Decline</b>	<b>Final Judgment</b>	<b>Recreation</b>
Creation	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Gen. 3</b>	<b>Gen. 4</b>	<b>Flood</b>	<b>Noah</b>
Exodus	<b>Kadesh</b>	<b>No Entry</b>	<b>40 Years</b>	<b>Death 1<sup>st</sup> Generation</b>	<b>Conquest</b>
Conquest	<b>Failure to Conquer Solomon</b>	<b>Nations Remain</b>	<b>Judges</b>	<b>Capture of Ark</b>	<b>Return of Ark</b>
David/Solomon		<b>Division</b>	<b>Divided Kingdom</b>	<b>Exile</b>	<b>Return</b>
Return	<b>Jews Reject Jesus</b>	<b>Turn to Gentiles</b>	<b>Jews Reject Apostles</b>	<b>Jerusalem, A.D. 70</b>	<b>Church</b>

(Peter Leithart, *House For My Name*, p. 38)

What we are to learn from this is that we need to take care to remain faithful to the Lord. God is merciful and gracious to all those who repent of their sin. He is even slow to anger, but when His wrath is kindled, it is a most terrible thing to fall under His judgments. We do not want to become like the wicked Israelites that rebelled against Him and were judged. Rather, in a time when the Church and the world around us is unwilling to submit to Jesus and live for Him in His Kingdom, we need to be like faithful Daniel. We should trust the Lord who is King over all the kings of the earth, and works all things for the good of His people.

[Much of the material from this lesson came from Peter Leithart, *House For My Name*.]

**Homework assignment:** Read the whole book of Daniel.

# The Book of Daniel

The name Daniel means “God is my Judge”

“The book of Daniel was written to demonstrate Yahweh’s supremacy and control over all earthly powers and to establish that in His omnipotence He is able to protect His people wherever they may be.” (Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*)

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III.	Daniel’s Three Friends (3) Yahweh’s Name
IV.	Nebuchadnezzar’s Insanity & Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh
V.	Belshazzar’s Feast (5) Father/Son
VI.	Daniel saved from lions (6) Murder
VII.	Vision of four kingdoms (7) Spiritual Adultery
<b>Hebrew Section (8-12)</b>	
VIII.	Vision of two kingdoms (8) Stealing
IX.	Vision of seventy weeks (9) Faithful witness
X.	Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12) No coveting

## ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism



## The Spread of Sin and Death

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## Week 2: The Exile and the Book of Daniel

### ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

### ❖ Review

Last week we did a brief review of the history of Israel from the book of Genesis through the Judges. Of significance were the first three falls of man. 1) In the Garden of Eden we

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see that Adam impatiently and sinfully ate of the forbidden fruit, and God's responded by providing a bloody sacrifice for man and the promise that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden to the east of Eden. 2) The murder of Abel by his brother Cain and Cain's further move east away from the Lord. 3) The intermarriage of the godly lines of the sons of God (the Sethites) and the daughters of men. The result of this was the corruption of the world and the necessity of God to destroy the world in the judgment of the flood. But out of this judgment God

recreated the world and established a new covenant with a new Adam: Noah. Yahweh repeated His covenant commands to Noah to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 9:7). What follows in Genesis 10 is the Table of 70 Nations, demonstrating that mankind did multiply. But in Chapter 11 we see that there was another fall at Babel. This time we see that men did not want to fill the earth in obedience to God, but wanted to avoid being scattered. Not only so, they built a temple to connect heaven and earth by reaching up to heaven. God judged that foolishness by confusing the language of men, scattering them as He had commanded.

What follows is the account of God's call of Abraham out of Ur (which was near where the Tower of Babel was). God promised Abraham what three things? [A seed/great nation, a land, and that Abraham would be a blessing to the nations.] This promise was repeated to Isaac and Jacob. Through the line of Abraham, God would bring salvation to the nations. This was in part illustrated in the life of Joseph, would become a ruler over the world in Egypt. While in Egypt, God fulfilled the promise to make them a great nation (about 2 million people left Egypt).

When God remembered His covenant people in slavery in Egypt, God brought them out with a mighty hand under Moses. God made Israel His Bride by making covenant with them and gave them His law and the tabernacle. But because of their sin, the first generation was made to wander in the wilderness and died. But the second generation was led by Joshua to conquer the land. But after the first generation of faithful conquerors died off, the people became unfaithful to Yahweh by getting along with the inhabitants of the land (instead of destroying them) and worshipped the idols of the people of the land. Because of this sin, Yahweh judged the people by enslaving them to invading nations. God, the King of His people, used the judges [Spirit-empowered deliverers] to save the people from their enemies. The period of the judges was largely a time of unbelief and rebellion because the priests and Levites failed to properly guard the worship of God and teach the people the law of God.

### **I. The Rise of the Kingdom in Israel**

Turn to 1 Samuel 8, where we see that Samuel's sons were much like the sons of Eli. They were judges in the land, but v. 3 tells us that "they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice." The result was that the people were unhappy with the government of Israel, and asked for a king in Israel to judge them, *like all the nations* (v. 5). The people came to believe that their problems with the nations around them was because they didn't have a king, when in reality, the problem was that they repeatedly refused to obey Yahweh their true King. Had they remained faithful to Him, He would not have sent invaders to trouble them. Now they were engaging in the sin of political idolatry, thinking that Yahweh had not been a good enough King. They wanted a human king. God granted them their request – as a judgment against them. Because of their rejection of God as their King (v. 7), they would be oppressed (as they were during the judges), but this time not by Egypt, Ammon or Philistia, but by one of their brethren, the king they chose. Samuel explained in vv. 11-18 that the king would take their sons and daughters as his servants, the produce of their lands, and even take a tenth of what they owned (a tithe equal to God's). They would become like slaves in their own land under their own king. But Israel insisted on having a king to go out and fight their battles for them. Having a king in Israel was not necessarily a bad thing. In Deuteronomy 17 God established laws that governed the kings in Israel. The kings were not to multiply gold, wives or chariots. God intended to give Israel kings when they had matured enough to have them. But they were seeking a king for the wrong reasons: to be like the nations. Israel was to be different from the nations, a holy nation of priests before the Lord.

Eventually Saul was anointed king. But Saul was not a godly man and did not obey the Lord. The kingdom was taken away from Him and given to David. As we all know, David was a man after God's own heart. God established a covenant with the house of David, and promised that his kingly line (his house) and kingdom would be established forever, and David's son (Solomon) would build a temple (house) for Yahweh (2 Sam. 7). The Messiah,

Jesus, was of the line of David, and His Kingdom would endure forever. Under the rule of David, the enemies of Israel were subdued, and Israel prospered.

After the death of David, Solomon was made king of Israel. Solomon loved Yahweh and walked in the ways of his father David (1 Kings 3). He asked God for wisdom to rule His people according to the knowledge of good and evil. Solomon, as a new a better Adam was given wisdom and was given the ability to discern good and evil. During Solomon's reign, God kept his promises to Abraham and David. Solomon is a blessing to the nations (1 Kings 5:7; 10:9, 23-25). During his reign the people dwell in the land in peace and safety, with the borders of Israel extending to the places promised to Abraham (1 Kings 4:21; cf. Gen. 15:18). The people of Israel was a great nation, as numerous as the sand by the sea (1 Kings 4:20). Most importantly, Solomon built the temple (1 Kings 6-8). After the temple was completed and dedicated, God appeared to Solomon again and told him that if he would keep the word of the Lord, Yahweh would establish his throne forever as promised to David (1 Kings 9:1-5). But if his sons turn from the Lord and do not obey and worship other gods, then Israel will be cut off from the land (be exiled), and the temple (the house of God) will be cast out of His sight. If this happens, when the nations ask why this happened, they will answer that it was because they had forsaken Yahweh and embraced other gods. If Israel became unfaithful to her Husband and was not a good witness to the nations around them; God would destroy them as a witness to the nations that Yahweh is the righteous God in Israel.

## II. The Fall of the Kingdom in Israel

Although Solomon began well as a righteous and wise man, he became foolish and sinful. Solomon did the three things kings were command not to do: he multiplied for himself gold, chariots and wives who turned his heart from Yahweh to idols (Deut. 17:14-20 cf. 1 Kings 10:14-29; 11:1-8). Because of His sin, Yahweh punished Solomon and Israel by tearing the kingdom in two (1 Kings 11:9-13, 26-40). "Although both David and Solomon were great, there must be some greater King coming, a King who would sit on David's throne forever ruling in faithfulness, a King who will truly bring rest to His people, and a King who will build a temple that would never be destroyed. Both in his glory and in his failures, Solomon points us to the greater Son of David, Jesus Christ" (Leithart, *A House for My Name*, p. 157). [Give and briefly use the map provided at the end of this lesson.]

Because of Solomon's sin, Yahweh divided the nation into the Northern Kingdom of *Israel* and the Southern Kingdom of *Judah*. During the next three hundred years, both kingdoms go back to Canaanite and Egyptian worship. Eventually, both Israel and Judah are driven out of the land. In 722 BC, the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and 117 years later, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, captured Jerusalem, destroyed the temple and took many from Judah to Babylon. The books of Kings tell this story, and the books of Chronicles tell the same story with an emphasis on the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

During this time Israel and Judah fought against one another, as well as those from outside of the land. Most of the kings in both Israel and Judah were bad. Only a few of those in Judah walked in the ways of their father David and did what was right in the sight of the Lord. In both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah we see a slow and downward slide away from the Lord and into the worship of false gods and social injustice. Throughout this period God sent His prophets as covenant lawyers to convict Israel and Judah of their sins and to preach repentance to them. But these prophets of God were almost universally ignored and persecuted because the kings and the people did not want to repent. They continued to decline until finally God sent Israel into permanent exile by the Assyrians. God gave Judah one last chance by giving them a godly king named Josiah, whose chief advisor was the prophet Jeremiah (also the prophets Zephaniah and Habakkuk). But Judah became more oppressive socially, keeping people in perpetual slavery, which was forbidden in the law. Jeremiah said that God would bring Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians to conquer Judah because Israel had become Egypt (cf. Jer. 34). Nebuchadnezzar would be in charge for a long time (70 years) and that they should submit to him because this was good.

At the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign he conquered Jerusalem and took some smart young guys to study in the university in Babylon (Daniel/Belteshazzar, Hannaniah/Shadrach, Mishael/Meshach and Azariah/Abed-Nego). But Jerusalem rebelled, and Nebuchadnezzar came back and conquered Jerusalem again several years later and took a whole bunch more people, including Ezekiel and a number of the nobility. In both of these cases, people are being delivered from Egypt because the nobility were enslaving the people (like Pharaoh) and persecute the prophets (treating Jeremiah terribly).

Jeremiah is old, but had a Sabbath school class with Daniel and Ezekiel (both about 18-20 when Daniel is taken, 7 years later Ezekiel is taken). Five years later Ezekiel began his prophetic ministry. 20 years after Nebuchadnezzar first conquers Jerusalem the people rebel again and he destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and takes the vessels of the temple and drags everyone into exile. Daniel has been his right hand man for 20 years (Daniel 2-3). Nebuchadnezzar was converted by this time. Daniel would have been viewed as a traitor. Daniel must have supported/encouraged the conquest because of Judah's sin. Ezekiel's prophecies were sent to Jerusalem and to Jeremiah, and was not popular. Jeremiah was thrown in jail.

During the exile it was a time of wilderness wandering (after coming out of Israel/Egypt) where the people were delivered. **Jeremiah 34** tells us that the primary reason for the exile is that they were keeping people in perpetual slavery. V. 8f tells us that the people were to proclaim "liberty" to the captives, no longer keeping their Hebrew slaves in perpetual slavery. They repented after this prophecy, but then went back to their sin of slavery. When they repented, Nebuchadnezzar had a problem with Egypt and went off to fight them. Israel

took back the slaves, then God sent Nebuchadnezzar back to take them off to Babylon because Jerusalem had become Egypt. Nebuzaradan, the Babylonian general, got Jeremiah out of prison and freed the slaves and gave their land back. For the faithful, this was deliverance.

The chronology (i.e. order of events) of the exile is this:

Daniel and friends are taken, then

Ezekiel 7 years later,

20 years after first time is the destruction of Jerusalem,

70 after first point Ezra/Nehemiah return to the land,

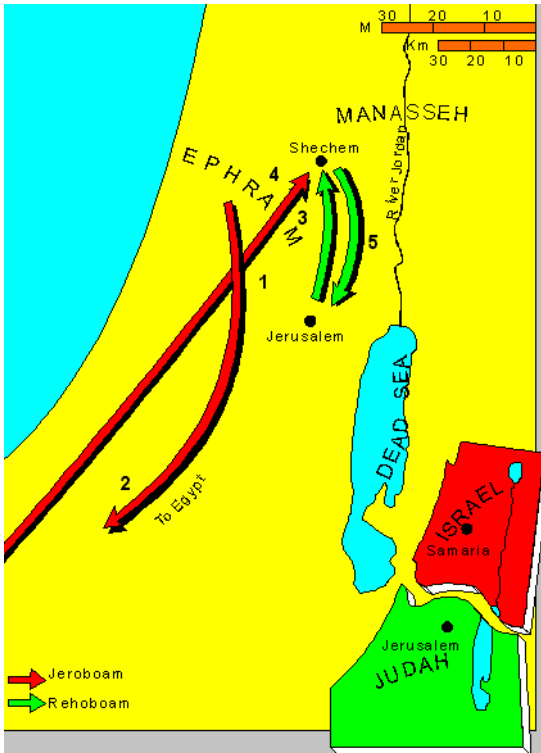
20 years later in the reign of Darius the temple is rebuilt.

Thus: 70 years after exile begins the people return to the land; 70 years after the destruction of the temple, it is rebuilt. This involves a new conquest period. The book of Daniel can be viewed as *not* taking place in a new Egypt or captivity. It is taking place in the *new wilderness* situation after deliverance and before they came back into the land. Out of Jerusalem/Egypt and into the wilderness and then into the promise land. The first wilderness was for 40 years, this time it is 70 years, then back into the land.

What the book of Daniel shows us is that fact that the True King of Israel, Yahweh, is jealous to keep His Bride faithful to Him. He will not allow His Bride to remain unfaithful and disgrace Him before the nations. Rather, Yahweh delivered His faithful people and takes them to Babylon to be protected from the wicked people in Judah. While there, Yahweh blesses the nations through His people and demonstrates that He is the Lord of all nations and all of history. By the end of the book of Daniel, the people are ready to go back into the Land, and they are given the announcement that the coming of the Messiah would finally establish His Kingdom in the world.

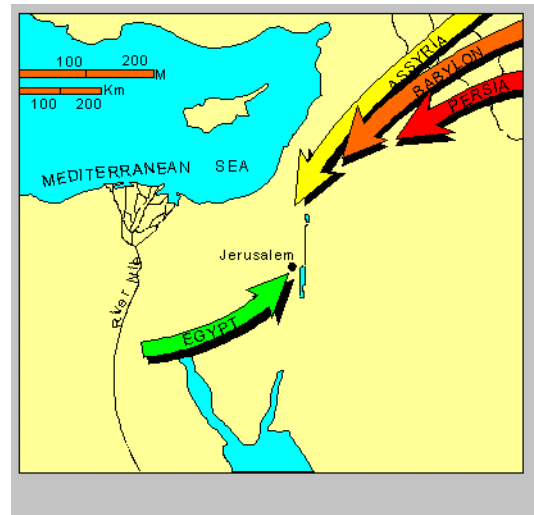
**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 1.

# The Kingdom Divided & World Empires

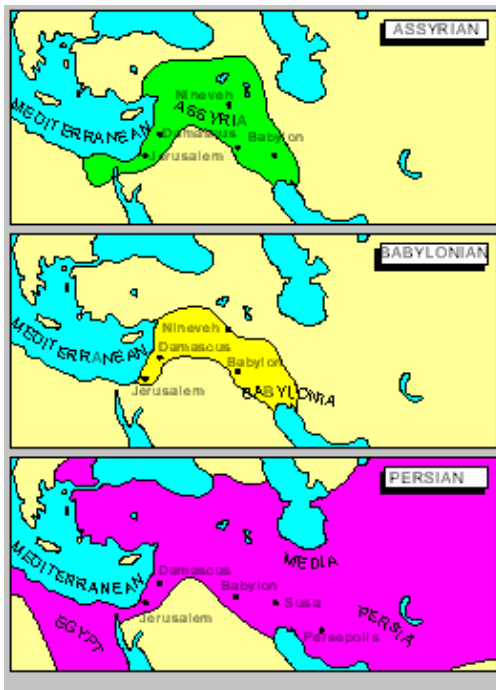


Solomon's kingdom is broken in two.

- 1 Jeroboam, an official of Solomon's (in charge of slave labor), is met by a prophet. He is told that he will become ruler of the 10 northern tribes.
- 2 Jeroboam either plans a coup against Solomon, or is suspected of it. Solomon tries to kill him, and he flees to Egypt.
- 3 Solomon dies. His son Rehoboam travels to Shechem to be proclaimed king.
- 4 Jeroboam arrives in Shechem and leads a northern revolt against Rehoboam.
- 5 Rehoboam sends a messenger to Jeroboam but he is stoned to death. Rehoboam runs for his life back to Jerusalem. He plans for war against the northern tribes, but never attempts it.
- 6 **Inset Left:** The northern tribes become Israel; the southern tribes, Judah.



During the period of the Old Testament, 6 superpowers turned their unwelcome attention on Palestine:



**Egypt** The great southern power in the Old Testament, Egypt was in gradual decline. This was occasionally halted by a number of powerful kings, some of whom invaded Palestine and challenged the northern superpowers. Judah and Israel were often tempted to form alliances with Egypt against the north.

**Assyria.** The Assyrians were the first of a succession of empires that swallowed up parts of Palestine. They exiled Israel and subdued Judah. The empire collapsed when Nineveh fell to the Babylonians in 612 BC.

**Beginning with the Exile of the Southern Kingdom  
The Jews were under the control and oversight of 4 Gentile Empires**

**Babylon.** The Babylonian Empire took over where the Assyrians left off in 605 BC. They took Judah into exile and successfully invaded Egypt. But their power was eroded by a series of weak rulers. In 539 BC Cyrus the Persian took over the empire with little opposition.

**Persia.** The Persian Empire was larger than the empires before it. It was also more humane in returning exiles (Judah among them) to their homelands. The Persian Empire was overrun by Alexander the Great around 331 BC. Alexander's **Greek** Empire was followed by the **Roman** Empire of New Testament times.

**Week 3: The Victory of the servants of THE God**  
**Story 1: Daniel and friends in Nebuchadnezzar's court**  
**Daniel 1**

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Review**

The book of Daniel is a transition for the old world to a new world; it is about new beginnings. As we have seen, there have been several new beginnings. The biblical theme of creation – fall/death – recreation/resurrection is repeated throughout the Bible. With each recreation God provided man with a new beginning and revealed more clearly how He

intended to save the world through His chosen people, and finally through the last Adam, Jesus Christ. After the creation mankind fell into sin, but was given a new beginning with the line of Seth. We see it in the fall of man before the flood, where God raised up a new Adam in Noah and the development of the line of Shem. Man fell again at the Tower of Babel, and God raised up another new Adam in Abraham and the establishment of the Hebrews. The Hebrews were brought out of the death of slavery in Egypt and into a new beginning at Sinai with another new Adam in Moses.

<b>Hebrew Intro (1)</b>	
I.	<b>Daniel &amp; Three Friends faithful to THE God (1)</b> No other gods
<b>Aramaic Sections (2-7)</b>	
II.	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream & Daniel's Interpretation (2) No Images
III.	Daniel's Three Friends (3) Yahweh's Name
IV.	Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity & Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh
V.	Belshazzar's Feast (5) Father/Son
VI.	Daniel saved from lions (6) Murder
VII.	Vision of four kingdoms (7) Spiritual Adultery
<b>Hebrew Section (8-12)</b>	
VIII.	Vision of two kingdoms (8) Stealing
IX.	Vision of seventy weeks (9) Faithful witness
X.	Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12) No coveting

Through Moses God renewed covenant with His people and gave them His law and the tabernacle to enable them to live and worship Him according to His Word.

Today we will begin to look at the book of Daniel to see how God would take His people through another new beginning. Because of their sins of idolatry and social injustice, the people had fallen and were being judged. Daniel 1:1-2 tells us that the Lord gave Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, the city of Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoiakim, King of Judah. This happened in 605 BC. He took the king, some of the people (including Daniel and other young men) and some of the articles of worship from the temple in Jerusalem back to the land of Shinar. [Notice that Daniel used the word "Shinar" instead of Babylon to cause us to remember the failed temple/tower of Babel in Gen. 11]. In the book of Daniel we see that God will raise them up again [from the fall/ death/judgment –



recreation/resurrection.] This would be the final age before the coming of the Messiah, and would extend from the exile to the coming of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

[Teacher: Give to the students the handout on the last page of this lesson.]

- A Introduction: Judah conquered by (in first year of Neb's reign)
- B Daniel and three friends chosen for three years
- C Special diet test – Rejection of the kings food
- D Climax: Success! Healthier**
- C' Special diet continued, God's favor
- B' Daniel and three friends chosen at the end of three years
- A' Conclusion: Daniel continues in service until first year of Persian King

As we have said before, Daniel is like a new Moses, leading the people in the new wilderness wandering in Babylon. Because the people had sinned so badly in the land, Israel had become like Egypt, oppressing and perpetually enslaving the people. God was delivering His faithful people from the wicked of the land by taking them to Babylon. While in Babylon, Daniel wrote his prophecies with the Ten Words (Ten Commandments) as a basic outline. Today we will look at Daniel 1, which corresponds to the first Word,

“I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.  
“You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Ex. 20:2-3)

Daniel 1 deals with the question of whether “The God” or Nebuchadnezzar will direct and control the lives of the four young Jews (who represent the nation of Israel). The first word commands God's people not to allow any other *Elohim* [the Hebrew word for God] or powers to be considered equal to God, who is the *Supreme Elohim*. The four young men are biblically willing to serve Nebuchadnezzar (as the people had been commanded through the prophets to do), but not to place him in a place of equality to God. And so a contest between **The God** and the gods of Babylon begins the book of Daniel as one of its themes. It is a contest also between the house of God and the house of Nebuchadnezzar's god (1:2).

The contest begins right away in v. 2, where Daniel wrote that “My Master” (a more literal translation than “the Lord”) took the king of Judah and some articles from the house of **THE GOD** (a more literal rendering of the Hebrew). Daniel stressed by his use of words that his God is the only true God, over against the false gods of Babylon and later Persia. By taking some of the gold and silver articles of worship from the temple in Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar symbolized that he had conquered the God of Israel. This reminds us of when the Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant into the Temple of their god Dagon, as a trophy (1 Sam. 4-6). The next morning, however, Dagon had fallen prostrate before the Ark. The Philistines put Dagon back up again, but the next day they found Dagon broken in pieces before the Ark, and eventually plagues broke out among the Philistines and the Ark was returned to Israel with much spoil of gold. It is a dangerous thing to try to take God (or

His people) into captivity. He will wage war against those who seek to conquer Him! We will see this taken up again in Daniel 5. What we see in this is that God allowed Himself to be taken captive and abused for the sake of His people. He allowed His faithful servants the privilege of going into captivity and be abused along with Him. Over the course of time, God and His servants defeat the gods and servants of the wicked by converting them or destroying them, and emerging victorious.

Nebuchadnezzar instructed Ashpenaz, his important official (like Potiphar under Egypt, linking this story to Joseph), to bring some of the young Jewish men to be trained to be advisors to the king. Daniel was about 18-20 years old at this time. Nebuchadnezzar did not intend to destroy all of the people of Israel (although he could have), but to bring them into Babylonian culture and use their knowledge and wisdom to his benefit. He wanted them to become good Babylonians. But Daniel and his three friends determined that they would serve God first, and Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon second. The way that they demonstrated their primary allegiance to God was by the food they were willing to eat. V. 5 literally says that “The King appointed for them provision daily according to its day from the king’s supply, and from the wine he drank, and to increase them for three years...” What this means is that Nebuchadnezzar provided food for them as a symbol of his being their master. The daily provision “according to the day” probably referred to food that corresponded to the religious ceremonies of Babylonian worship. To eat this food could have symbolized observing the Babylonian religious festivals, which Daniel and his three friends were unwilling to do. They did not want to be incorporated into the culture and false worship of Babylon as those that were owned and controlled by the king. Daniel did not reject the king’s food because he feared any kind of Levitical defilement according to the law, and there was nothing wrong with the food per se [because we see later in 10:3 that Daniel was accustomed to eating and drinking good food and wine]. Rather, eating the same food as other people, and with them at the same meal, means becoming one with them. To eat from the king’s table was to become wholly owned by the king and to live according to his way of life (which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah did, cf. 2 Kings 25:27-30). This they were unwilling to do, although they were willing to serve him faithfully.

The intention of the Babylonians to *convert* these four young men into good Babylonians is symbolized also by the new names that were given to them. The Babylonian names had similar but twisted meanings to show their incorporation into the Babylonian culture. [Teacher: refer to chart on handout.]

Hebrew Name	Hebrew Meaning	Babylonian Name	Babylonian Meaning
Dani-El	God is my Judge	Belteshazzar	Protect his life
Hanan-Yah	Yahweh is gracious	Shadrach	Command of Auk
Misha-El	Who is what God is?	Meshach	Who is what Aku is?
Azar-Yah	Yahweh has helped	Abed-nego	Servant of Nego

V. 9-10 tells us that **THE GOD** gave Daniel favor with Ashpenaz. But Ashpenaz was worried that Daniel's refusal to eat the king's food would be viewed a rebellion against the king, his master (note the contrast between Daniel who calls God "his master" in v. 2 and Ashpenaz who calls Nebuchadnezzar "his master" in v. 10). The word translated "worse" can also mean, "discontented." He is concerned not only that the four Jewish young men would look bad physically, but also that they would be setting their face in rebellion against the king. Daniel wisely proposed a test to prove that they were not being rebellious against the king and that God would provide for their physical wellbeing. Ashpenaz agreed to give them only seeds and water for ten days, and then to examine them in comparison to those who had eaten from the king's table. After ten days, Daniel and his friends were healthier than those who ate from the king's table. Apparently, Ashpenaz was satisfied that Daniel and his friends would be faithful servants to the king and continued their education for the next three years. V. 17 tells us that God gave them "knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." God uses even the ungodly of this world to build us up and make us more useable for His service. We cannot avoid all contact with or the influences of the world around us. But if we remain faithful to the Lord our God (the first commandment), He will use the world for our good and for the building of the Kingdom of God.

At the end of the three years of training, the king himself interviewed the graduates, including the four Jewish young men. V. 20 says, "And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm." It is interesting that they were tested by Ashpenaz for ten days, and at the end of their training they were ten times better than all of the other wise men in the kingdom. God indeed had been with these young men and was ready to use them. Daniel 1 ends with the statement that Daniel was used in the courts of the Babylonians for the next 63 years, until the coming of their deliverer, Cyrus the Mede in 539 BC (Is. 44:28ff).

In all of this we learn that faithfulness to **THE GOD** is the way to blessing and success in the world. God used the Babylonians not only to judge Israel, but to train Daniel for greater works in the world than he would have ever had in Israel. God used Daniel not only as a prophet for His people, but also to convert kings to faith in **THE GOD** of Israel. God, the supreme ruler of all the nations and kings of the earth, would also be with His people while they were in captivity. He is worthy of their faith and trust. May we too place our faith in The God to protect us in all things and to use us in this world for His glory!

**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 2.

**Week 3: The Victory of the servants of THE God**  
**Story 1: Daniel and friends in Nebuchadnezzar's court**  
**Daniel 1**

Daniel and his three friends remain faithful to THE God, which relates to the first commandment.

- A Introduction: Judah conquered by (in first year of Neb's reign)
- B Daniel and three friends chosen for three years
- C Special diet test – Rejection of the kings food
- D Climax: Success! Healthier**
- C' Special diet continued, God's favor
- B' Daniel and three friends chosen at the end of three years
- A' Conclusion: Daniel continues in service until first year of Persian King

Hebrew Name	Hebrew Meaning	Babylonian Name	Babylonian Meaning
Dani-El	God is my Judge	Belteshazzar	Protect his life
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**Week 4: The Establishment of God's New Empire**  
**Story 2: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Daniel's Interpretation**  
**Daniel 2**

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Review**

As we have seen so far in our studies in the book of Daniel, the Lord exiled His people from breaking covenant with Him. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into exile by the Assyrians, and now the Southern Kingdom of Judah was being taken because of two primary sins. What were these sins? [Idolatry and social injustice (keeping their fellow

Hebrews in perpetual slavery).] Israel had become a new Egypt, and the covenant keeping God was faithful to bring His covenant judgments against His people for their sins (Deut. 28). Now, as before, God delivered His faithful from Egypt/Jerusalem by taking them out of the land of bondage and bringing them into a new wilderness situation in Babylon. This new wilderness situation is a new beginning for Israel, whom God intended to bring back to the land and use to establish His glorious Kingdom in the world.

<b>Hebrew Intro (1)</b>	
I.	Daniel & Three Friends faithful to THE God (1) No other gods
<b>Aramaic Sections (2-7)</b>	
II.	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream & Daniel's Interpretation (2) – No Images
III.	Daniel's Three Friends (3) Yahweh's Name
IV.	Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity & Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh
V.	Belshazzar's Feast (5) Father/Son
VI.	Daniel saved from lions (6) Murder
VII.	Vision of four kingdoms (7) Spiritual Adultery
<b>Hebrew Section (8-12)</b>	
VIII.	Vision of two kingdoms (8) Stealing
IX.	Vision of seventy weeks (9) Faithful witness
X.	Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12) No coveting

The new beginning for Israel in Babylon requires that the people again must understand the necessity of keeping God's law and worship Him in faithfulness. Thus, Daniel may have structured his book according to the Ten Commandments. As we saw last week in Daniel 1, it was important for Daniel and his three friends to remain faithful to THE God who brought them out of Egypt, which echoes the first commandment.

Today, in Daniel 2, we will see that God gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream of a great image. The second commandment forbids man's setting up any kind of image for worship purposes. No image can help man understand God or worship Him better – except those that God establishes. Certainly the tabernacle/temple were images of the heavenly worship that the people of God were to enter into (Heb. 8-9). But these earthly images of heavenly worship were established by God and were important for His people to understand that they

were to enter into heavenly worship as the way of their earthly life. At the center of that temple image was the law in the Ark of the Covenant where the glory of God was in the Holiest place. Jesus would later be revealed as the fullest expression of the image of God in man, and as the Word of God, the great covenant keeper, God would establish the Kingdom of His Son in the world. Thus, the image that Nebuchadnezzar had in his dream was a revelation from God of the coming of Jesus as the greatest ruler in the Kingdom of God. The image God gave was a picture of the coming of the Kingdom of God beginning with this period of history. During this time, God will work with His people through the four great empires, until the coming of His Image, Jesus Christ, the Stone cut “without hands.”

Daniel 2 closely parallels the story of Joseph in Egypt. Just as Pharaoh had nightmares that prepared him to receive the word of Joseph the prisoner (Gen. 41), so too Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that prepared him to hear the words of the captive Daniel. Joseph was imprisoned under the “captain of the bodyguard” Potiphar (Gen. 39-40), so too Daniel had to deal with the “captain of the bodyguard” Arioch to save the lives of the wise men and to get an audience with Nebuchadnezzar.

### **I. Speaking in Tongues**

Daniel 2 begins in Nebuchadnezzar’s second year, meaning that these events happened early in Daniel’s captivity (shortly after he finished his training from the wise men). The king had a troubling dream, and could not sleep anymore. He called for the wise men of Babylon (i.e. the Chaldeans) and told them that he wanted them to interpret the dream for him.

V. 4 says that they spoke to the king in Aramaic. This is not surprising from one perspective because this is the language that they spoke. But what is surprising is that Daniel, writing to the people of Israel, wrote the whole section from 2:4-7:28 in Aramaic. He was obviously trying to make a point. This calls to mind the fact that the Jews had been brought to the land of Shinar (Dan. 1:2), which is the same place that God confused the languages of men at the Tower of Babel. God was demonstrating that the people of Israel were under the judgment of God by speaking to them in a strange language. Jeremiah 5:15 says,

Behold, I will bring a nation against you from afar, O house of Israel,” says the LORD. “It is a mighty nation, It is an ancient nation, A nation whose language you do not know, Nor can you understand what they say.

More importantly, in the days of Isaiah, God had told His people that they would hear the good news of the kingdom proclaimed to them in a strange language (Is. 28:11). The good news that Babylon would be judged and that the Kingdom would eventually be given to the Son of Man (Jesus) are written in Aramaic, and found in Daniel 2-7. The good news that the Jews would be returned to Palestine and be allowed to rebuild the Temple is found in Ezra 4:8-6:18, and is written in Aramaic as well. The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 14:21 that the ultimate fulfillment of this promise came at Pentecost, when Jews from every nation

heard the good news of the gospel not in Hebrew but in many languages (Acts 2). Thus, the prophecies of Daniel 2-7, written in Aramaic, should have been read by the people that God would keep His promise to bring the people back into the land, and that the Messiah would rule the Kingdom of God. God is in control of the flow of history, and His Son would bring salvation to the nations pictured in these chapters.

## II. The Conflict of the Old Order

[Teacher: Give the students the handout at the end of this lesson.]

- A Introduction: Nebuchadnezzar dream
- B Magicians fail to recount and interpret dream
- C Daniel and Arioch: Daniel goes to king with proposal
- D Climax: God reveals and interprets Nebs dream**
- C' Daniel and Arioch: Daniel goes to king with answer
- B' Daniel succeeds: recounts and interprets the dream
- A' Conclusion: Nebuchadnezzar glorifies God and promotes Daniel

As we saw last week, Daniel and his three friends were willing to serve Nebuchadnezzar, so long as it was clear that they did so under the authority of THE God. Daniel 2 makes it clear that by not serving the God of Israel, the wise men of Babylon were worthless. It was only THE God that can reveal both the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had and its interpretation. When this is what Nebuchadnezzar demanded (2:4-9), the Chaldeans said in v. 10-11 that no man on earth can do it, only the *gods*. This infuriated the king and commanded that all the wise men be killed, including Daniel and his friends (vv. 12-13). The way of the old order under the Chaldean wisdom leads to death. But as we will see, the new way of wisdom under God is the way of life.

Daniel spoke to the captain of the bodyguard, Arioch, with counsel and wisdom. Daniel asked the king for time, and that he would give the king the interpretation of his dream. As we saw last week, God gave Daniel wisdom and knowledge and understanding in all visions and dreams (1:17, 20). The king already esteemed the wisdom of Daniel (1:19-20) and granted his request. It was a great act of faith on Daniel's part to say that he could reveal the dream and its interpretation, but Daniel knew that God would use him in Babylon. He was convinced that God would save him and his friends, and so they prayed and thanked the God of heaven for revealing it (vv. 17-23). Just as the Chaldeans had said in v. 11 that only the *gods* could know both the dream and the interpretation, so now, THE God revealed the deep and secret things to His faithful servants.

Daniel went to Arioch and asked him not to kill the wise men of Babylon because he could reveal to the king the interpretation of his dream. Daniel was identified with the Chaldeans in v. 2 by the use of his Babylonian name (Belteshazzar = "protect his life"). Daniel said that the wise men were not able to reveal the secret (including himself, v. 20). But in vv. 28-29 he declared that there is a God in heaven, the Revealer of secrets, and He had made known what would happen in the latter days (the days beginning at this point).

The king had seen a great image. [Teacher: Use the chart below and in the student handout to explain the dream and its interpretation.]

Head	Gold	Nebuchadnezzar Babylon	The Tabernacle/ Temple
Chest & Arms	Silver	Persia	Between the Tabernacle/Temple and the courtyard
Belly & Thighs	Bronze	Greece	Courtyard Furniture
Legs	Iron	Rome	Outer Gates
Feet	Iron & Clay	Mixture of Rome and Jews	

It was the image of a man, made of various elements. While Nebuchadnezzar watched, a stone was cut out without hands that struck the image on its feet and broke it to pieces. The whole image was crushed by the stone and was blown away by the wind so that the various parts could not be found. The stone that struck the image grew to become a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel gave the interpretation of the dream to Nebuchadnezzar in vv. 36-45. The image represented the four great empires of the earth beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon and ending with the coming of Jesus and the Kingdom of God. These same four empires are dealt with again with more details in Daniel 7. God gave this dream to show Nebuchadnezzar that he had a place in God's plan for the world. It is THE God who rules the kingdoms of men, and represents the establishment of His Empire in the world through His Son. God was in charge of the empire, and if the Jews were to survive as God's priestly people, they needed to move into God's empire. In both Daniel and Esther we learn how God's priestly nation of Israel was supposed to deal with the His new world empires. They were to bear witness to God and to be faithful to Him. They were not to compromise and become part of the empire, but to serve God within it. They were to speak God's prophetic Word to the empire and to keep it in line with God's plan. This is what we see Daniel doing. At the coming of Jesus, the Jews had compromised with the empire of Rome (the mixture of iron and clay in the image), and had weakened their witness to the world and the strength of the empire. Because of their failure to remain faithful to God and to witness to the world for Him, they rejected the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, when He came. Because of this God brought His judgement against this mixture of Israel and Rome at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The destruction of all of these empires would result in the establishment of the Kingdom of the Son of Man, and its growth into the whole world through the Church.

The story of Daniel 2 ends in vv. 44-45 with Daniel saying that "The great God" had made known to Nebuchadnezzar what would happen in the history of the world beginning with him to the coming of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. Because of this message given through Daniel, in v. 46-48 Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and presented him with a



Tribute Offering (see Lev. 2) as one who was an ambassador/servant of The God in heaven. He confessed that Daniel's God is the God of gods (meaning the highest of the gods) because He revealed the secret. This is not a confession that God is the ONLY God, but is a step toward the salvation of Nebuchadnezzar that we will study in the next two weeks. Because of Daniel's faithful witness, we see that God gives life. The old way (the way of the Chaldeans) leads to death. But the new way of wisdom under THE God of heaven leads to life. The life that God gives to Daniel is shared by him with all the other wise men. As a result of his service to Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel is promoted to rule over the province of Babylon (the empire was very large, but Daniel ruled the capitol province of Babylon), and the chief administrator over the wise men.

God is the ruler of all the history of men. All nations and peoples, all kingdoms and governments are under the authority and control of God. They are established for His purposes for them to prosper they must submit to King Jesus, who is now the ruler of the world.

As members of His Kingdom, we in the church must be faithful to witness and declared the Word of God to the world, just as Daniel did. As we do so, the influence of the Kingdom will continue to grow in the world until "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Rev. 11:15). If we are faithful to Him, God will promote us to various places of leadership in the world so that we can influence the world as Christians for Him. We must use that influence to save the world, just as Daniel saved the Chaldeans. The end result of our activities in the world will be to see men and nations brought to a saving knowledge of Christ the King (as Nebuchadnezzar was).

**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 3.

**The Establishment of God's New Empire**  
**Story 2: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Daniel's Interpretation**  
**Daniel 2**

The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream relates to the second commandment.

- A Introduction: Nebuchadnezzar dream
- B Magicians fail to recount and interpret dream
- C Daniel and Arioch: Daniel goes to king with proposal
- D Climax: God reveals and interprets Nebs dream**
- C' Daniel and Arioch: Daniel goes to king with answer
- B' Daniel succeeds: recounts and interprets the dream
- A' Conclusion: Nebuchadnezzar glorifies God and promotes Daniel

**The Image Seen In Nebuchadnezzar's Dream**

Head	Gold	Nebuchadnezzar Babylon	The Tabernacle/ Temple
Chest & Arms	Silver	Persia	Between the Tabernacle/Temple and the courtyard
Belly & Thighs	Bronze	Greece	Courtyard Furniture
Legs	Iron	Rome	Outer Gates
Feet	Iron & Clay	Mixture of Rome and Jews	

**Week 5: False Worship Defeated**  
**Story 3: Daniel's three friends in the furnace**  
**Daniel 3**

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Review**

As we have discussed, the book of Daniel is about new beginnings for the Jews. The *former days* (from Sinai to the exile) had passed away, the *latter days* were beginning (the period from the exile to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70). God gave Daniel (and the kings

that he served) insight to into the course of history during the coming age and how God would establish His Kingdom in the world. [Briefly review the outline to this point.] In order for the Jews to live prosperously under the new world empires, they needed to live in obedience to God's law and serve the empires as a priestly people properly representing THE God to the world. They must remain faithful to THE Most High God, and worship Him only. This was the first battle that Daniel and His three friends won in the first chapter, which relates to the first commandment. The second

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IV.	Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity & Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh
V.	Belshazzar's Feast (5) Father/Son
VI.	Daniel saved from lions (6) Murder
VII.	Vision of four kingdoms (7) Spiritual Adultery
<b>Hebrew Section (8-12)</b>	
VIII.	Vision of two kingdoms (8) Stealing
IX.	Vision of seventy weeks (9) Faithful witness
X.	Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12) No coveting

commandment forbids making and worshipping any carved images. In chapter 2 the Lord revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream of a great image that there would be four great world empires, of which his would be the first. Nebuchadnezzar was shown that the God of Israel was the one in control of the empires of the world. Because Daniel was able to interpret the dream, he was made the ruler of the province of Babylon and the chief administrator of the wise men of Babylon (2:48).

Chapter 3 should probably begin with the last verse in chapter 2 (v. 49), which says that Daniel's three friends were also made government officials in Babylon, while Daniel sat in the gate of the king. What follows in chapter 3 does not involve Daniel, but his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who were serving in a different place than Daniel. Chapter 3 deals with being faithful to the Lord and worshipping Him alone, and relates to the third commandment. Daniel 3 continues the theme of the Daniel 2 (and the

second commandment) because Nebuchadnezzar set up an image and demanded that it be worshipped. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused to bow to the image and were condemned to die. After God saved His three faithful servants from the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar's judgment, the king said in Daniel 3:28-29:

***“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! 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.”***

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had not taken the name of the Lord their God in vain, but remained faithful to Him, even in the face of persecution. By refusing to worship the image, they refused to lift up God's name in an empty fashion. By identifying themselves as worshippers of Yahweh their God. By the way they lived their lives and the way they spoke, they were identified to the world as servants of the Lord. For them to worship the image, they would have taken the name of Yahweh in vain, which would have been inconsistent with their previous confession of Yahweh as THE God. By not taking the name of the Lord in vain, they were miraculously saved and brought the name of Yahweh to the whole empire.

Turn now to Daniel 3:1. Shortly after the events of Chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold and required everyone to bow down to it. He probably got the idea for this image from Daniel's interpretation of the image in his dream. Nebuchadnezzar figured that although his empire was not going to be permanent, for the present he was God's agent on the earth. He probably hoped that he would be able to create his own everlasting kingdom. The worship of the golden image may have been understood as worship of Nebuchadnezzar as God's appointed image on earth. He saw himself as the priestly leader of Babylonian worship, which was the role of the Jews in his empire. The Jews were to be the priestly people that would lead the nations into the worship of Yahweh within the new kingdom God was setting up in the world.

This worship of the image took place in “the plain of Dura” in Babylon. Does this remind you of any other biblical stories? It should remind us of the Tower of Babel in the plain of Shinar, which was referred to in Daniel 1:2 (cf. Gen. 11:2). In the story of the original tower of Babel we see certain unfaithful Hebrews that journeyed east and joined the unbelieving Gentiles to build the tower as a means of false worship. The refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to participate in the new Babel is what destroyed the new false worship. In the new era, the Restoration Covenant period after the exile, the sin of intermarriage is an important theme. To remain faithful to Yahweh, believers should not marry unbelievers who will cause them to stumble into false worship. Those who are faithful to God will minister within the empire, but will not join with the idolaters in their worship.

In Genesis 11:1 we see that the entire world was of one “lip” and one “set of words” (literally in the Hebrew). The term “lip” does not mean language, but refers to having one religious confession of faith. There was one religion for the tower, and one language for the city. Throughout Daniel 3 we see references to the “peoples, nations and languages” of the Babylonian empire (vv. 4, 7, 29) being called upon to bow down and worship the image made by Nebuchadnezzar. There were many languages at this time (because of the judgment of God at the original tower of Babel), but all languages and cultures were supposed to be united in one false religion. By the end of this story, the command was given to be united in the true religion, or at least to tolerate and speak well of it. Just as the original tower of Babel failed as a true means of worshipping God (Babel means “Gate of God”), so too, Nebuchadnezzar’s worship was false and was to be refused. It was the Jews that would lead the peoples, nations and languages to worship God properly when they returned to Jerusalem. Unlike the original tower of Babel, the faithful Hebrews refused to cooperate with the unbelievers/false worshippers. Instead of scattering and destroying the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar because of the false worship, God chose to transform it by establishing true worship.

[Teacher: Give the students the handout at the end of this lesson.]

A Introduction: Golden image to be worshipped

B Enemies speak against Daniel’s friends

C Friends thrown into furnace

**D Climax: Friends unharmed**

C’ Friends emerge from furnace

B’ King praises Daniel’s friends and their God (no one to speak against)

A’ Conclusion: Promotion of the three Jews

Daniel 3:8-12 tells us that some of the Chaldeans (the wise men, the mighty men of Babylon) spoke against the Jews before the king. They accused Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, whom the king had made rulers in Babylon (see the envy in their accusation), of not giving proper respect to Nebuchadnezzar. Notice in v. 12 how they enrage the king by their use of the words “you” and “your”: “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.” Nebuchadnezzar takes the refusal of the Jews as a personal rejection, and responds in vv. 14-15 by referring to “my gods” which “I have set up” and in which “I have made good,” and warned the Jews that they would be cast into the fiery furnace of his judgment. Nebuchadnezzar issued a challenge by asking “who is the god who will deliver you from *my hands*?” He asserted that there is no god powerful enough to save them from him. Certainly this was spiritual pride, a sin that will be dealt with by God in the next chapter.

In vv. 17-18, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego responded by declaring their faith in their God, who indeed was able to deliver them from the hand of the king and from his judgment. What an incredible statement of faith! They were not taking the name of the Lord in vain, but placed their lives in the hands of Yahweh who is able to save. Whether God chose to save them or not, they would not serve or worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar

set up. Because they took the name of the Lord upon themselves in faith, rejecting the gods of Nebuchadnezzar, the king became full of anger and ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than normal. It was so hot that the men that threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego into the furnace were killed. The climax of the story is that they were saved! God sent an angel into the fire with them, one like the Son of God (or “a son of the gods”). Nebuchadnezzar could not deny the power of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Yahweh is indeed powerful enough to save them from him, and demonstrated Himself to be unlike any other gods. He is the “Most High God” (v. 26). Because of this great demonstration of the power of God to save His people, Nebuchadnezzar ordered that no one from his empire (any people, nation or language) should speak anything against the God of the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar also promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to great places of influence in the empire. In Chapter 6 we will see that Daniel was saved in a similar way because of his faithfulness to God.

By remaining faithful to God, and by confessing His name with their lives, they caused the name of God to be respected in the whole empire. This confession of God through the way we live is the work that God has called us to. Do you think that you would be willing to confess the name of God even at the cost of your life? Are you willing to sacrifice your life and reputation in the world because you are known as a Christian? If not, you would be taking the name of the Lord in vain and submitting to the false gods of our day. You may indeed be called upon to confess Christ before the world at a very high cost to you. This story helps us to remain faithful to God because in it we see that He is able to deliver us from those who seek to destroy our Christian witness in the world. Not only so, God uses our sacrificial confession of His name in the world to cause the world to know Him. By the end of Chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar is probably not yet a believer. But the consistent and faithful witness of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego is being used by God to prepare him receive the Lord in faith. May God also use us to faithfully witness to the world, thereby seeing Him establish His kingdom. Take courage and be strong in the Lord, and He will do great things through you.

**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 4.

**False Worship Defeated**  
**Story 3: Daniel's three friends in the furnace**  
**Daniel 3**

Remaining faithful to THE God of Israel means that the people of God will worship Him only and live in terms of His law. Their confession of Yahweh as the Lord whom they serve required them to refuse to worship other gods. Thus, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego demonstrate that they are unwilling to take the name of the Lord in vain, in obedience to the third commandment.

- A Introduction: Golden image to be worshipped
- B Enemies speak against Daniel's friends
- C Friends thrown into furnace
- D Climax: Friends unharmed**
- C' Friends emerge from furnace
- B' King praises Daniel's friends and their God (no one to speak against)
- A' Conclusion: Promotion of the three Jews

**Week 6: King of kings**  
**Story 4: Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity and Salvation (4)**  
**Daniel 4**

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Review**

What are the linguistic/language divisions of the book of Daniel? [Hebrew (1); Aramaic (2-7); Hebrew (8-12)] How are these three sections then divided again by Daniel? [Ten parts corresponding to the Ten Commandments] We have seen that Judah was judged by God for idolatry and social injustice in the land, having become a new Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar was

<b>Hebrew Intro (1)</b>	
I.	<b>Daniel &amp; Three Friends faithful to THE God (1)</b> No other gods
<b>Aramaic Sections (2-7)</b>	
II.	<b>Nebuchadnezzar's Dream &amp; Daniel's Interpretation (2) – No Images</b>
III.	<b>Daniel's Three Friends (3)</b> Yahweh's Name
IV.	<b>Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity &amp; Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh</b>
V.	Belshazzar's Feast (5) Father/Son
VI.	Daniel saved from lions (6) Murder
VII.	Vision of four kingdoms (7) Spiritual Adultery
<b>Hebrew Section (8-12)</b>	
VIII.	Vision of two kingdoms (8) Stealing
IX.	Vision of seventy weeks (9) Faithful witness
X.	Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12) No coveting

sent by God as His servant not only to judge Israel and deliver His people, but also to establish the new empire of God in the world. This empire would be finally established under Jesus Christ. The Jews were taken by God into exile not only as a deliverance from oppression in the land, but as God's prophets and priests to the nations as God built His new kingdom in the world. Yahweh had commanded the Jews to work for the peace and prosperity of Babylon while they were in captivity. By so doing, they would be serving God as they served the empire. The end of the

old world (known as the former days) meant the beginning of the new world (known as the latter days) beginning with the exile and extending to the coming of Jesus the Messiah. The Jews would serve the nations by being the true prophets and priests of THE God.

In Daniel 1 we saw that the Daniel and his friends were the new seed of the new kingdom of God. They would faithfully serve Nebuchadnezzar, but only in submission to THE God. In Daniel 2 we saw who the true *prophets* God were (the Jews), sent to proclaim His will to the king concerning His plans for the world. By God's revelation of the image in Daniel 2, we learned that God was going to building His kingdom by successive empires until the coming of the Son of Man. Daniel 3 established who the true *priests* of the new kingdom were going to be (the Jews), promoting true worship and defeating the false Babylonian worship by refusing to participate in their idolatry.



Now in Daniel 4, a true and godly King is established in submission to God. Nebuchadnezzar himself wrote Daniel 4, which is a letter to the world. It describes his humiliation before God and his full conversion. It both opens and closes with a statement of praise to God, telling the whole world that he praises and extols and honors the King of heaven (vv. 2-3, 37). Nebuchadnezzar calls God by the gentile name “God Most High,” and speaks of Daniel as on who has the “Spirit of Holy God.” Clearly, Nebuchadnezzar is a changed man, and faithfully ruled his empire as a believing servant of the God of Israel.

As we study this chapter, we should be careful to see that Daniel has included it not only to show that (1) Nebuchadnezzar was converted, but also that (2) God, through Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, was showing the influence of Nebuchadnezzar in the history of world. At this time, God had already shown Nebuchadnezzar that his kingdom was the first among several empires that He would establish as His New Kingdom, with the Jews among them as God’s prophets and priests to guide them. God had clearly told Nebuchadnezzar that he would be the head of the empire for a time, but his kingdom would not last. Nebuchadnezzar thought that he had built his great kingdom by his own mighty power and for his own honor (v. 30). But God intended to show Nebuchadnezzar that his empire was built by God and for God’s honor.

Once again, Nebuchadnezzar called for the wise men of Babylon to interpret the dream, but they were unable to do so. Finally in vv. 8-9, Nebuchadnezzar called upon Daniel to interpret the dream. Nebuchadnezzar refers to Daniel as Belteshazzar because he had given Daniel the name according to the name of *his* god (v. 8), indicating that he was still holding to his false gods. Nebuchadnezzar recognized that the “Spirit of the Holy God” was with Daniel, indicating that he probably thought Daniel’s God was the highest of the gods.

## **I. The Tree of Knowledge**

The dream included “a tree in the midst of the earth” (v. 10), which was “lovely” and in it was “food” for all (v. 12). Does this tree sound familiar? It should remind us of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden. This tree was a real tree, but was also a symbol of the rule and kingship of Adam. Adam and Eve in their *immaturity* were invited to eat of the Tree of Life. Had they remained faithful to the word of God, and *matured* in wisdom, eventually they would have been given the opportunity to eat of the forbidden Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil also. Adam and Even already knew the difference between good and evil. But they would have matured in their understanding of right and wrong by obeying God by not eating of the forbidden fruit. By learning to say “no” to themselves about something that is “a delight to the eyes and good for food” (the same thing said about the tree in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream), they would grow in maturity and ability to understand what good and evil are. They would be able to make right judgments about things in the world around them and rule for God in righteousness. To be given the right to eat of the Tree of knowledge meant the ability to rule for God. Solomon,

as a wise and godly ruler/king, prayed to be given “an understanding heart to judge Your people, to discern between good and evil” (1 Kings 3:9). Thus, the Tree of Knowledge does not primarily teach us about moral *knowledge* of good and evil, but primarily has to do with the *ability and maturity* to rule and make judicial decisions concerning good and evil in the Kingdom under God. The Tree of Knowledge is for the man who has matured to the point of being granted the authority to rule under God.

The tree that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was a symbol of being mature enough to rule under God according to his word. *Nebuchadnezzar is pictured as the tree*. At this point in history, God had given the tree of authority and rule to Nebuchadnezzar, making him the king of the world. His kingdom had grown strong and high enough that the whole world could see it. It was a kingdom that was beautiful and provided food and protection for the world (vv. 10-12). But Nebuchadnezzar did not believe that he had received rule and authority from God; he thought he had gotten it by his own power. V. 14 says that the tree would be cut down. The tree of authority and rule would be removed from him, until he confessed that rule and authority come from God alone. Nebuchadnezzar needed to come to see that the God of Israel, God Most High, was the King of all earthly kings, and that they must rule under Him if they are to be successful. V. 17 says, “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.”

## II. Nebuchadnezzar’s Conversion and Sabbath Rest

When Daniel hears the dream, he is astonished (literally, “motionless”) and troubled for a time. This happens in two other places in the book of Daniel (7:28; 8:27). He was troubled by the visions he saw because they meant the persecution of God’s people by wicked men. In this case, Daniel knew that Nebuchadnezzar would not only go insane and be driven from men (because he acted like a beast) for a period of time, but that in all likelihood, he would be replaced temporarily by men that would persecute the Jews. Not only so, as Nebuchadnezzar’s friend and counselor, Daniel was probably sympathetic toward Nebuchadnezzar for the judgment that was coming upon him. In v. 27 Daniel counseled Nebuchadnezzar to repent of his sinful pride and act in righteousness.

But twelve months later Nebuchadnezzar was walking about the royal palace of Babylon and congratulating himself for having built such a great kingdom by his mighty power and for his own honor. At that moment a voice from heaven declared the judgment concerning his kingdom:

“The kingdom has departed from you!” 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.” (Vv. 31-32).

We do not know whether the seven times means seven weeks, months or years, but we do know that it was God's appointed time period to accomplish His purposes in Nebuchadnezzar's life. It was a long enough period of time for his hair to grow out and appear to be like eagles feathers and his nails to grow out and be like bird's claws. In this description he is pictured as an eagle, which appearance should remind us of the four faces of the cherubim (Ezek. 1:10; Rev. 4:7). One of these face is that of an eagle, which represented in biblical symbolism the emperor (Dan. 7:4; Ezek. 17:3; Hosea 8:4). God was preparing Nebuchadnezzar to rule as His emperor/eagle to rule for Him.

During the time God had appointed for his humiliation, Nebuchadnezzar was covered with the dew of heaven. This does not simply refer to getting wet with dew, but being sprinkled with the baptismal water of heaven. God was working in Nebuchadnezzar's heart while he was being judged and humbled. At the end of the time, Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes to heaven in faith, and his understanding returned to him and in vv. 34-35 said that "blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom *is* from generation to generation. 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?"

Because Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself before God and acknowledged that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives authority to rule to whomever He chooses, God restored the kingdom to him. God is indeed the Lord over all the earth, and accomplishes all of His holy will in the affairs of men. God gives grace to the humble, but opposes the proud.

The 4<sup>th</sup> commandment requires Sabbath-keeping on the *seventh* day. After Nebuchadnezzar suffered under the judgment of God for *seven times*, he was given salvation and rest from his labors and the judgements against him.

This story would have given a great deal of comfort to Daniel and the Jews. God was ruling them through a human king that was under His authority. They were being protected from harm, even though they were in exile. They were being shown that the kingdom of God was extending to the entire world and that they would be cared for until it was time for God to return them to the land. They had the assurance that things were going according to the plan of God, and that in the fullness of time, the true King, the Messiah would be revealed. We too have the assurance that God is continuing to build His kingdom through His Son.

1 Peter 5:5 says that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. May you avoid the judgments of God because of sinful pride by being humbly thankful for all that God has given to, and done for you.

**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 5.

**King of kings**  
**Story 4: Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity and Salvation (4)**  
**Daniel 4**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment - Sabbath-Keeping

- A Introduction: King offers praise of God's eternal Kingdom and dominion
- B Nebuchadnezzar prospers in his palace – Dream – Seeks interpretation
- C Daniel interprets dream – seven periods of insanity – Daniel entreats Nebuchadnezzar to repent
  - D Climax: God's message comes true –  
Nebuchadnezzar insane**
- C' Nebuchadnezzar repents after seven periods of insanity – sanity restored
- B' Nebuchadnezzar returns to palace in even greater prosperity  
Sought out by advisers
- A' Conclusion: Nebuchadnezzar offers closing praise of God, the “King of Heaven”

**Week 7 The Kingdom Taken from an Unfaithful Son**  
**Story 5: Belshazzar's Feast (5)**  
**Daniel 5**

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Review**

What are the linguistic/language divisions of the book of Daniel? [Hebrew (1); Aramaic (2-7); Hebrew (8-12)] How are these three sections then divided again by Daniel? [Ten parts corresponding to the Ten Commandments]

<b>Hebrew Intro (1)</b>	
I.	<b>Daniel &amp; Three Friends faithful to THE God (1)</b> No other gods
<b>Aramaic Sections (2-7)</b>	
II.	<b>Nebuchadnezzar's Dream &amp; Daniel's Interpretation (2) - No Images</b>
III.	<b>Daniel's Three Friends (3)</b> Yahweh's Name
	<b>IV. Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity &amp; Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh</b>
	<b>V. Belshazzar's Feast (5)</b> Father/Son
VI.	Daniel saved from lions (6) Murder
VII.	Vision of four kingdoms (7) Spiritual Adultery
<b>Hebrew Section (8-12)</b>	
VIII.	Vision of two kingdoms (8) Stealing
IX.	Vision of seventy weeks (9) Faithful witness
X.	Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12) No coveting

Today we will look at Daniel 5, which corresponds to the fifth commandment. The fifth commandment requires that we honor our father and mother, that it may go well with us and we will live long on the earth. Nebuchadnezzar is repeatedly called the “father” of Belshazzar in Daniel 5 (though he is really his grandfather). Belshazzar has not honored his father by being humble before the Most High God, as his “father” Nebuchadnezzar had been after being humbled before the Lord who rules in the

kingdoms of men (Daniel 4). Had Belshazzar honored his father he would have forsaken idols and placed his faith in THE God Most High, as his father had instructed him (Dan. 5:22).

**I. The Kingdom of THE God**

The image in Daniel 2 of the kingdom of God through the empires to the coming of Jesus the Messiah revealed to Nebuchadnezzar and to all of Babylon that the God of the Jews in control of history. Daniel 3 demonstrated that it was God alone that should be worshipped, and it was the Jews that were to speak prophetically for God to the empire, and to serve as priests for the nations before the Lord. Daniel had been promoted by Nebuchadnezzar to a very high level of leadership in the Babylonian government, and was the chief advisor to Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar had not honored his father by continuing to keep Daniel as his chief advisor. The queen, Belshazzar's mother, reminded him of this, and urged him to bring Daniel back into the court because he was a man in whom was the Spirit of the Holy

God, and who had served his father so faithfully (see 5:10-12 and note the repetition of the word “father”).

God’s Holy Empire Kingdom – Dan. 2	Belshazzar’s Idolatrous Kingdom – Dan. 5
Gold	Gold
Silver	Silver
Bronze	Bronze
Iron	Iron
Clay	Wood & Stone

**II. The vessels of gold and silver from the house of THE God.**

Lampstand (probably from the temple) – a stylized almond tree, which in Hebrew is a “watcher” tree (Ex. 25:31-40) that burned in the holy place in the temple. It was positioned beside the golden table of showbread, watching over the twelve loaves. It symbolized that God watched over the twelve tribes of Israel, who were the kingdom of God in the former days. Now, in the latter days, God’s kingdom is the empire, which He has set up in Daniel 2. As God watched over the tribes in the days of the Tabernacle and Temple, so now He watches over His empire. And Just as God’s oversight involved bringing judgments upon Israel for her sins in the former days, so His oversight involves bring judgements in the latter days as well. Through the lampstand, God brought judgment upon His empire, and then restored.

Belshazzar made a great “bread” feast (literally in Aramaic) for a thousand his lords to drink wine with him. The language of bread and wine is often linked in scripture (especially with kings), and points forward to the Lord’s Supper. But Belshazzar’s feast is a counterfeit feast. [James B. Jordan suggests that what lays behind this story also includes the *inspection of jealousy* ritual of Numbers 5. The woman suspected of adultery by her husband is to bring grain (bread) in her hand as a memorial before God, to call God’s attention to her (Num. 5:27). Then words of judgement were written with ink on a scroll, and washed off into water that she drank (Num. 5:19-24). If she was guilty, her abdomen would swell and her thigh waste away in judgment (Num. 5:27). According to 1 Corinthians 11:29-30, “he who eats and drink, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body [of the church] rightly; and for this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.” Those who partake of the Lord’s Supper are, in effect, inviting God to take a look at them in judgment. If they eat in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the bread and the wine will nourish them unto eternal life. But those who partake of the Lord’s Supper while despising God’s kingdom are no at Jesus’s feast, but Belshazzar’s, for at Belshazzar’s feast it was the Lord’s cups that were used for the wine before the lampstand of the temple.

### III. Handwriting on the wall. vv. 24-29

The three words used in the message refer to weights in scales, particularly counting money. “Mene” means to be “paid out” (see Jer. 25:14; 50:29; 51:6, 24, 56; Ps. 137:8). God had calculated the weight or value of the Babylonian kingdom and would pay her back for her sins. “Tekel” means that you have been weighed in the balances and you have been found to be too light. “Peres” does not mean “divide” as is translated in many Bibles. Rather it means to be “assessed” or “extended.” The Babylonian empire would be taken from Belshazzar and given to the Medes and Persians to be extended into an even greater empire, so that the kingdom of God would be spread into even more of the world.

When Belshazzar asked Daniel to interpret the meaning of the handwriting, Daniel rejected the gifts that were offered to him because Belshazzar was not honoring the true God. But because it was his prophetic calling, Daniel would declare the words of God to the king. After Daniel explained the meaning of the words written on the wall, Belshazzar did not reject Daniel’s words. He had begun by trying to humiliate Daniel, but in the end submitted to Daniel’s words, and honored him. The fact that Daniel in the end does accept the gifts and honor indicates that Belshazzar had repented and turned to the Lord, even though it would mean his physical death. Surely, this was an answer to his mother’s prayers, who clearly was a believer and longed for her son to be converted and live forever (vv. 10-12).

- A Introduction: Belshazzar in prosperity – feast and mockery of Yahweh and use of temple vessels
  - B Hand writing on the wall
    - C Magicians summoned – failure of the magicians to interpret
      - D Climax: Daniel remembered**
    - C’ Daniel summoned - failure of the magicians recounted
  - B’ Handwriting on the wall interpreted by Daniel
- A’ Conclusion: Daniel is honored – Belshazzar’s kingdom overthrown

Be a true son. Come before the feast of the Lord with humility and faith.

**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 6.

**The Kingdom Taken from an Unfaithful Son**  
**Story 5: Belshazzar's Feast (5)**  
**Daniel 5**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment – Honor father and mother.

- A Introduction: Belshazzar in prosperity – feast and mockery of Yahweh and use of temple vessels
- B Hand writing on the wall
- C Magicians summoned – failure of the magicians to interpret
- D Climax: Daniel remembered**
- C' Daniel summoned - failure of the magicians recounted
- B' Handwriting on the wall interpreted by Daniel
- A' Conclusion: Daniel is honored – Belshazzar's kingdom overthrown

God's Holy Empire Kingdom – Dan. 2	Belshazzar's Idolatrous Kingdom – Dan. 5
Gold	Gold
Silver	Silver
Bronze	Bronze
Iron	Iron
Clay	Wood & Stone



## Week 8 The Beginning of a New Exodus

### Story 6: Daniel in the Lion's Den (6) Daniel 6

#### ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

#### ❖ Review

It is important to remember when we study a book of the Bible, such as Daniel, that we are not merely reading a collection of stories, or a history of God's people. Rather, we are given

#### Hebrew Intro (1)

- I. Daniel & Three Friends faithful to THE God (1)  
No other gods

#### Aramaic Sections (2-7)

- II. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream & Daniel's Interpretation (2) – No Images  
III. Daniel's Three Friends (3)  
Yahweh's Name  
IV. Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity & Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh  
V. Belshazzar's Feast (5)  
Father/Son  
VI. Daniel saved from lions (6)  
Murder

- VII. Vision of four kingdoms (7)  
Spiritual Adultery

#### Hebrew Section (8-12)

- VIII. Vision of two kingdoms (8)  
Stealing  
IX. Vision of seventy weeks (9)  
Faithful witness  
X. Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12)  
No coveting

a prophetic word from God through His prophet. Through the book of Daniel God reveals *Himself* and His *relationship to His people in the midst of the nations*. It is the Kingdom of God that is the focus of this prophecy. God reveals Himself to be sovereign (to be in control or to rule) over all the kingdoms of men. God ruled over His people, but because of their sins they were sent into another part of His kingdom – Babylon. This exile/exodus was a salvation for those who were oppressed in the land, but it was also a judgment upon those who were the idolatrous oppressors. This was a warning to the nations that to

oppress God's people was to kindle His wrath and judgment against them. Yahweh God is God Most High – the Highest of all gods. He will do all that He wants in the affairs of men. With each confrontation between the kings/leaders of Babylon and God's representatives it became increasingly clear that Yahweh is "the great God" in heaven (Dan. 2:28, 45), "the Most High God" who delivers His people and whose kingdom is everlasting, ruling over the kingdom of men (Dan. 3:26, 29; 4:2-3; 17, 24, 34-35; 5:21). Today we will see that God revealed Himself as the "living God" (Dan. 6:20, 26). Several times the kings in charge of the kingdom made proclamations to the world concerning this great God of the Jews (Dan. 3:29; 4:1-3f, 6:25-27). God placed His representative in places of influence in the kingdom under the kings as prophets and priests, leading the nations by their faithful witness.

Turn in your Bibles to Daniel 5:30-31. You remember from last week we saw that Belshazzar, although he repented, was killed for his rebellion against God. He had refused to live according to the word of His [grand]father Nebuchadnezzar, and instead of worshipping Yahweh, Belshazzar worshipped the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood

and stone. The very night he was killed he held a great feast of bread and wine, using the vessels taken from the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem. With the judgment of the king came the transfer of the Babylonian empire into the hands of the next king who would rule over the kingdom God had established in Daniel 2: Darius the *Mede*. Not long after, the empires of the Medes and Persian were combined and Darius was known as *Cyrus* the Persian. The fall of Babylon would lead directly to a new exodus of the Jews back into the Promised Land to rebuild the temple with the decree of Cyrus (Dan. 1:21; Is. 13:17; 44:28ff; Jer. 51:11, 28; 2 Chron. 36:22ff; Ezra 1:1; 3:7; 4:3; 5:13; 6:3, 14).

- A Introduction: Daniel exalted in the Persian government
- B Daniel's enemies plot his death
- C Daniel with lions because of faith – King distraught
- D Climax: Daniel is unharmed**
- C' Daniel brought out of lion's den' his faith – King delighted
- B' Daniel's enemies put to death in his place
- A' Conclusion: Further exaltation of Daniel and his God

When Darius received the kingdom, Daniel had been well known throughout the Babylonian empire, and most probably to the Medes and Persians as well. In fact, you will remember that Daniel had been made the third ruler in the kingdom of Babylon before Darius conquered it (Dan. 5:29). Thus, Daniel 6:1-3 says that Daniel was made one of three governors over the Medo-Persian Empire, with Daniel being the being the chief among these. God had placed in a position of prominence so that He could be a faithful witness in the kingdom. Daniel was associated in the minds of the people with his God. Daniel 6:4 tells us that the other rulers of the kingdom sought to find something to accuse him of. We are not told why. When they decided that they could find no fault in the way Daniel performed his duties in the empire, they determined to get at him by attacking his God and his religion directly.

To do this, these men (the other rulers of the empire) pressured the king in vv. 6-9 to sign a decree that said that for 30 days anyone that makes a petition (i.e. makes a request or prayer) to any god or man other than the king would be cast into the den of lions. This is certainly an odd declaration to make, is it not? When we take into account the fact that Darius is concerned about Daniel and is willing to recognize Yahweh as the living God, this decree is probably not just an attempt to seek his own honor for 30 days. The reason for this decree was probably because all of the images of the gods of the conquered cities had been brought to Babylon by Nabonidus (Belshazzar's father, the son of Nebuchadnezzar) to protect the capitol city. Worshippers could not go to see them in their various temples or pray to them there because the gods had been taken to Babylon. Apparently, Cyrus returned these images to their original place some time later (according to the Nabonidus Chronicle). Darius probably thought that he, as the leader of the world, could carry the petitions of the nations to their gods, since the gods were in Babylon. This would cause the people to more readily submit to his authority as the rule of the new empire.

V. 8 tells us that this decree was made according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be changed. This is important to the story because it is only the laws and decrees of God that do not change. In the end, Darius does change his decree, in submission to the higher law and will of God.

Daniel, did not obey the decree of the king, which the wicked rulers of the empire knew he would not. V. 10 tells us that when Daniel knew that the decree had been signed, he went home and began praying in his upper room with his windows open toward Jerusalem. Three times he knelt down and prayed, as he normally did since his youth. Daniel was not praying toward Jerusalem because he thought that was where presence of God was. He knew that God's presence had moved out of Jerusalem and had come with to be with the exiles (see Ezek. 8-11). Rather, the windows were open to Jerusalem because Daniel was praying *for* the city and for the rebuilding of the Temple. Daniel knew that the 70 years were over and that the people would be returned to the land to rebuild the Temple (see Dan. 9). The open windows enabled the other rulers of the empire to see him praying [it is hard to imagine that Daniel had not intended for them to see him.]

When the charges were brought before Darius, he was greatly distress and worried all day. He desired to deliver Daniel, but because of the decree that he had made (being unchangeable) he was forced to have Daniel thrown to the lions. Why a den of lions? Why not just kill him with the sword or by hanging? Daniel 7:4 pictures Babylon as a lion. The Babylonian captivity is a captivity in a lion's den. Daniel's being thrown into a lion's den is a symbol of the whole preceding 70 years, and his coming out is a symbol of the exodus from Babylon that is about to take place. The question is, will Darius be like the first Pharaoh and not let the people go, or will he submit to the decree of God? Daniel 6:16 says that Darius spoke to Daniel hopefully, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." This is a new Pharaoh for the new exodus.

After sending Daniel to the lions, Darius worried all night and fasted. He could not sleep. This passing of the night in frustration and worry recalls the Passover before the exodus from Egypt. Also, the fact that the lion's den was sealed pointed forward to the seal on Jesus' tomb (Matt. 27:66). In both cases, murderous enemies of God's man sought to secure their murderous plans against them. Daniel's coming out of the den points back to the exodus from Egypt when the people came out of bondage, to the present exodus from Babylon back to the promised land, and forward to the resurrection of Jesus.

Early the next morning the king went quickly to the lion's den, and with a sorrowful and frightened voice, called out to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Daniel's response was, Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut

the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

The center of this story is that Daniel was unharmed. The king was glad because no injury whatever was found on him "because he believed in his God" (6:23). To believe in God and to trust Him in all things is the way of salvation. God is in control of all things and is not only able to save those who trust in Him, but to make justice prevail in all situations. Exodus 21:23-26 and Leviticus 24:20 give us the law of God concerning justice: the *lex talionis* (Latin, meaning the "law of retribution" or vengeance). It is an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth law. It means that justice requires that however someone commits wrong, it will be paid back to him in the same way. Just as the wicked rulers sought to have Daniel wrongfully put to death, justice demanded that they would be put to death in the same way. God secured justice through His servant Darius by casting the would-be murderers into the lion's den.

What is the sixth commandment? ["You shall not murder"] Here in Daniel 6 we have see the sixth commandment being violated by the wicked and murderous leader of the empire. But those who believe in God can trust Him to protect them and save them. This would stand as a lesson for the people of Israel on into the future. Darius wrote another decree in vv. 25-27 that people in all of his kingdom should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel because He is the living God whose kingdom shall not be destroyed and delivers His people (see Daniel 2:44-45).

Like Daniel 3 – God's people are brought to trial because of their faithful witness, are persecuted and almost destroyed, but ultimately delivered. This sequence is displayed as a characteristic of the 70 years of captivity. In Daniel 7-12, this same sequence will be displayed as a characteristic of the 70 weeks of years leading down to the Messiah. Daniel will be distressed to learn that the coming exodus will not result in a new Solomonic glory and peace for Israel. But rather, the faithful witness of God's people all over the world will call forth direct persecution of a kind never before manifested, but with ultimate vindication and triumph.

As members of the final kingdom of Christ, we too will face persecution at the hands of wicked men. Daniel's example of believing in God should give us confidence that He will use us to advance His kingdom.

**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 7. Try to determine what the four beasts represent, and who the "one like the Son of Man" is.

**The Beginning of a New Exodus**  
**Story 6: Daniel in the Lion's Den**  
**Daniel 6**

- A Introduction: Daniel exalted in the Persian government
- B Daniel's enemies plot his death
- C Daniel with lions because of faith – King distraught
- D Climax: Daniel is unharmed**
- C' Daniel brought out of lion's den' his faith – King delighted
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**Week 9 The Kingdom of God Given to the Son of Man**  
**Vision of the four kingdoms (in images of beasts) (7)**  
**Daniel 7**

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Review**

Daniel is a book of prophecy (one of the *Major Prophets*: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel) written to help God’s people understand what God is doing with them at that time, and how He will deal with them in the future. The exile was not only a covenant judgment against Israel for her sins of idolatry and social oppression, but also an exodus-salvation out of bondage and social injustice and into a New Covenant situation.

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<b>Aramaic Sections (2-7)</b>	
II.	Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream & Daniel’s Interpretation (2) No Images
III.	Daniel’s Three Friends (3) Yahweh’s Name
IV.	Nebuchadnezzar’s Insanity & Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh
V.	Belshazzar’s Feast (5) Father/Son
VI.	Daniel saved from lions (6) Murder
VII.	Vision of four kingdoms (7) Spiritual Adultery
<b>Hebrew Section (8-12)</b>	
VIII.	Vision of two kingdoms (8) Stealing
IX.	Vision of seventy weeks (9) Faithful witness
X.	Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12) No coveting

The *former days* (from the Mosaic through the Kingdom period) were over at the exile. The *latter days* were the period beginning with the exile and going through to the coming of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of Man. The period beginning with the return of the exiles into the land and the rebuilding of the temple all the way through to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 is the *Restoration Covenant* or *Restoration Era*. The prophecies of Daniel in chapters 7-12 deal with the Kingdom of God during the latter days and extend through the Restoration Era to the coming of the Son of Man and the destruction of Jerusalem.

Today we will look at the final chapter in the Aramaic section of Daniel (Ch. 7). Remember, the reason that this section of the book of Daniel is written in Aramaic is that God had told the people that the goodnews of their salvation and restoration to the land would be spoken to them in “tongues” (a foreign language). Daniel 7 concludes the Aramaic section, which tells six stories that are arranged chiastically. This structure helps us to see what sections are related to one another. [Teacher: Give the students the handout at the end of this lesson.]

- (2) Prophecies of the Four World Empires
  - (3) Test of Faith: The Fiery Furnace
  - (4) Judgment and Conversion of Nebuchadnezzar
  - (5) Judgment and (Repentance) Death of Belshazzar
  - (6) Test of Faith: The Lion's Den
- (7) Prophecies of the Four World Empires

Clearly, chapter 2 is related to chapter 7. Remembering this helps us to better understand what God intended to do through the world empires to build His international Kingdom on the earth. The goodnews (written in Aramaic to the Jews) is that God is in control of all of the nations of the world, and that He is using them to build His Kingdom until the coming of Jesus the Messiah. The chart comparing Daniel 2 and 7 helps us to see this movement of the Kingdom for the next 500 years. We will look at the four beasts of Daniel 7 in more detail as we go through the text.

Daniel 2: Four Empires	Daniel 7: Four Empires	Historical Interpretation
The Image made /w various materials representing kings in the Kingdom of God	Four Beasts representing kings in the Kingdom of God	
Golden head	Lion with eagle's wings	Babylon
Silver chest and arms	Bear with 3 ribs in mouth	Persia
Bronze belly and thighs	Leopard with four wings	Greece
Iron legs	Different beast with iron teeth devouring, with 10 horns	Rome
Iron and Clay feet	Little horn of Herod/Jews and Judaizers	Rome & Jews mixed
Stone Cut without hands	One like the Son of Man	Jesus the Messiah

Daniel 7 involves a dream that Daniel had in the first year of Belshazzar, which was four years before Cyrus took over and allowed the Jews return to Jerusalem. In the dream Daniel saw the “four winds of heaven...stirring up the Great Sea” (v. 2). The “Great Sea” is symbolic of the Gentile world. The “four winds of heaven” represent the people of God (see Zech. 2:6). As the Jews stir up the Gentile world through their evangelistic witness, there is a response from the various kingdoms represented in the image of Daniel 2 and the beasts in Daniel 7. God used the Gentile nations as protectors for the Jews. As long as these nations responded in faith to the witness of the Jews, they served God by protecting His people from their enemies. When the Babylonians stopped protecting the church (Dan. 5), God brought in the righteous Cyrus. When the Persians stopped protecting the church, God brought in Alexander the Great (of Greece) as a deliverer (Zech. 9). When the Greeks stopped protecting the church, God brought in the Romans (Dan. 11). The Romans are seen protecting the church throughout the book of Acts, but in Revelation 13, Satan seduces the beast to turn against God's people.

As the people of God faithfully witness to the nations about Yahweh, God converts some. But others reject their witness and begin to persecute the church. Instead of being protectors, the Gentile kings become beasts-monsters that persecute the Church for her witness. Men hate God, and so when a witness proclaims the Kingdom of God, they react

wickedly. These monsters must be dealt with by God, and calls them forth through the witness of the Jews. If the monsters are not called out into the open, they cannot be slain. Thus, when the Kingdom of Christ comes in the New Testament, the mystery of sin and rebellion in the world is also revealed, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit the Church can overcome the world and inherit the Kingdom of God. In Daniel 7, God is calling upon the Jews to be faithful in their witness

[Read or refer to Dan. 7:4-8.] The *first* beast was a lion and had eagle's wings, but it was given a man's heart. This beast represented Babylon, and the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar. The *second* beast was like a bear with three ribs in its mouth, and the angels called upon it to devour much flesh. This represented Media/Persia, which made more and more conquests until finally Persia exhausted its ability to do so when it tried to conquer Greece. The *third* beast like a leopard with four wings on its back, and dominion was given to it. This represented the empire of Greece, started by Alexander the Great, which broke up into four separate dominions. The *fourth* beast is not described in detail, except that Daniel saw claws, teeth and horns. The beast was terrible in its power to destroy. This beast represented Rome, and the ten horns of the beast correspond to the ten toes of Rome in the image in Daniel 2. Daniel saw a small horn grow up among the ten horns, which had eyes like a man and a mouth speaking great boasts. This small horn represented **Herod the Great**, which was the visible head of the Roman beast to the Jews.

Immediately following the description of these beasts, Daniel saw the seating of "the Ancient of Days." Who was this? It was God seated on His throne with His thousands upon thousands of angelic servants (vv. 9-12). The books were opened to signify that God is in control of all that was going on. Even the boastful speaking of Herod the Great was silenced by his death. V. 12 says that all of the beasts had their dominion taken away from them. The times and seasons of the lives of kings and their kingdoms are under the control of God. As Daniel continued to watch, he saw in vv. 13-14 a vision of the coming of "the Son of Man" to the Ancient of Days to receive the Kingdom of God in the fullness of glory. Who was this? This is Jesus, the Messiah. After the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, from where He now rules all peoples, nations and languages. His kingdom is not like the other four kingdoms that were destroyed. His is an everlasting kingdom that will not be destroyed.

Daniel knew about the first beast because he lived in the Babylonian kingdom and understood the image given in Daniel 2. But He could now see that the progress of the kingdom would be slow and difficult. He was very grieved and concerned about the future. Daniel asked one of the angelic attendants there about what he had seen, who told him that the four beasts were four kings which would arise on the earth. But the angel assured Daniel that the saints would receive the kingdom of God, and possess it forever (vv. 16-18). This must have been very encouraging to Daniel. But Daniel was most curious about the fourth beast because it was after this kingdom that the Son of Man would receive the Kingdom. As



he watched, Daniel saw that the little horn (which represented Herod) was making war against the saints until the Ancient of Days saved the Church. The angel again in vv. 23-27 gave Daniel an interpretation of what he had seen. The angel said that the fourth beast would be the most powerful, having devoured the whole earth. This kingdom would be divided into ten parts and given to ten kings. The little horn would be in charge of three of the kingdoms, and would speak pompous/boastful words *against the Most High*. Herod, representing the Roman empire, would make war against God Himself by attacking the people of God. He would try to stop the giving of the Kingdom to the Son of Man. But God, who is sovereign in the affairs of men, would prevail and destroy this proud king and give the Kingdom to the Son of Man and to the saints. All of the greatness of the kingdoms of the world will be given to the saints, and the Kingdom of God will stand forever. The kings of the earth will all eventually obey Him!

At the end of this vision, Daniel was greatly troubled because he knew that the people of God would be persecuted before the Kingdom of God was established and given to them. He understood that there was yet a long history of struggle ahead for the people of God. Part of the struggle that they would experience is the fact that there was a mixture of Roman and Jewish persecution of the saints in the fourth kingdom.

7<sup>th</sup> Commandment against adultery. Daniel 7 deals with the spiritual adultery of God's people that leads to the fierce jealousy of God for His bride, the Church. The Ancient of Days is pictured as enthroned in fire (v. 10; cf. Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 29:20; Ps. 79:5). The little horn of v. 8 represents the Jews and the Judaizers, who preferred Caesar to Christ. Because of their spiritual adultery (idolatry and mixed allegiance to God), the Jews incited the Romans (along with apostate Christians, the Judaizers) to persecute the church (see the book of Acts). It is the persecution of the true members of Christ's Kingdom by the Romans mixed with the Jews and Judaizers that calls forth the judgments of God on the fourth kingdom. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 represents the final judgment of God upon these four kingdoms.

The Kingdom of God has now been given to the Son of Man. Jesus rules the world from His throne at the right hand of the Father in heaven. We, the saints, have been given the Kingdom and now go forth into history to take dominion over the world for Christ. As we do so, we know that our labors and struggles in the world will bring down all dominions and powers in the world into submission to the everlasting King. Even though our activities in the world may be resisted by the world, we have confidence that God is establishing His everlasting Kingdom. Understanding this gives us faith and confidence that what we do in life today will have a real impact on the world around us. We know that history is progressing according to the plan and purposes of God.

It is important for us to learn how to understand the book of Daniel. It not only strengthens our faith in God, but helps us to see what God is doing in history. Not only so, by learning

to properly interpret Daniel 7-12, we will be able to understanding other parts of the Bible. These strange visions of beasts and images and animals and men are part of what has been called *apocalyptic* literature, generally dealing with dramatic historical judgments in the world. This same type of literature is found in Ezekiel, Zechariah and the book of Revelation. It is a style of prophetic writing that is sometimes hard to understand. But since God has chosen to use this way of revealing Himself, we must learn to understand it. By doing so, we will be able to understand what God is saying to us and obey Him in faith. The visions of Daniel are essential for our ability to understand the book of Revelation as well as various parts of the Gospels. The “Son of Man” language in the Gospels (particularly in Matthew and Luke) comes from Daniel 7 (see also Ezekiel). May God give us all eyes to see, and ears to hear what the Spirit says to us.

**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 8.

**The Kingdom of God Given to the Son of Man**  
**Vision of the four kingdoms (in images of beasts) (7)**  
**Daniel 7**

- (2) Prophecies of the Four World Empires
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<b>Daniel 2: Four Empires</b>	<b>Daniel 7: Four Empires</b>	<b>Historical Interpretation</b>
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Iron and Clay feet	Little horn of Herod/Jews and Judaizers	Rome & Jews mixed
Stone Cut without hands	One like the Son of Man	Jesus the Messiah

**Week 10 – Judgment for Compromise and Abomination**  
**Vision of two kingdoms (Persia and Greece – 2 Sacrificial Animals)**  
**Daniel 8**

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

❖ **Review**

Throughout the book of Daniel, we have seen that God is the sovereign ruler over the entire world. The Jews were sent out by God among the nations to be prophets and priests to lead the Gentile nations into an ever-increasing knowledge and faith in Yahweh. If God’s people remained faithful to Him, God would not only protect them (as He did in Daniel 1, 3, 5 & 6), but would use them to build His Kingdom on the earth. The prophecies of Daniel clearly

demonstrated that God was setting up His Kingdom in history, with the goal of giving the Kingdom to the “Son of Man” and to the saints (Dan. 7:13-14, 26-27).

The success of the Kingdom, and the place of the nations in that Kingdom are determined by the actions of God’s people. During the early period of the Jewish kings (under David and Solomon) Israel had developed good relations with the nations around her. But as the people of God began again to go after other gods, Yahweh sent other nations to harass Israel. Because of her sins of idolatry and social oppression, God sent the

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people into exile. As long as Israel was faithful as true witnesses and priests among the nations, God would take care of His people. But if Israel compromised with the nations around her, God would again abandon His people and give her over to the oppression of the nations. This happened continually, as we will see in the last chapters of Daniel, until the coming of Jesus, the Son of Man.

Last week in Ch. 7 we saw that Daniel had a dream of four beasts representing the four great empires of the Kingdom of God. These visions were given to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar’s reign. This week we will look at the vision of Daniel 8, given to Daniel in the third year of Belshazzar (v. 1). At this time, Daniel may have been visiting the court of the Medes in Susa (your Bible may read “Shushan”)(Dan. 8:2, cf. Neh. 1:1; Esther 1:2; 2:8),

or it may have been that just he was there in his vision. In either case, the fact that Daniel recognized Susa and the Ulai River indicates that he had visited there in the past and was familiar with the place. As a high Babylonian official, he probably got to know Cyrus on such visits, which helps explain why Daniel was favored by “Darius the Mede” in Dan. 6. The place of the vision was by the River Ulai in Media. The importance of this comes in v. 15, when Daniel sees the Lord over the river. Just as the Spirit hovered over the waters to create the world in Genesis 1, so now the Lord is over the waters to direct history. The water is a Gentile stream, and represents the Gentile world. God directs the course of Gentile history from above the waters, and now shows the course of history to Daniel.

The fact that Daniel was in Susa and by the River Ulai means that God is no longer with the Babylonians. He is now raising up the Medes to attack and conquer Babylon. Thus, God is at Susa and brings Daniel to Himself to receive the communication about what He is going to be doing in the world. Two years earlier God had visited Daniel in Babylon; now God is at Susa, and Daniel must go there to hear from Him.

In his vision, Daniel saw two animals. They are not beasts this time, but sacrificial animals: a ram (male sheep) and a goat. These represent the Medes/Persia and Greece (see vv. 20-21). Each morning in the temple Israel would offer a lamb as a sacrifice. This becomes important in the vision to explain why Persia and Greece are pictures as flock animals.

The first animal was the **ram** with two horns, one larger than the other. The first horn represents Media, the second Persia. The ram conquered to the west, north, and south, and was so powerful that no one could stand against it. God gave everything to the ram, and let it rule the world (vv. 3-4, 20).

The second animal was a **male goat** with a great/notable horn, and came from the west. The goat attacked the ram with great rage and the goat was completely victorious. The goat’s swift advance represents the incredible progress of the conquests of Alexander the Great, who is the great horn. But the horn is broken off because Alexander died at the young age of 30. Then four new horns arose and took over Alexander’s empire in four directions. This is in fact what happened, as Alexander’s generals divided the empire between themselves (vv. 5-8, 21-22).

Then a little horn grew up out of their midst. This little horn represented Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the ruler of the northern part of Alexander’s broken empire. Antiochus’s oppression of the saints is then described (vv. 9-14, 23-26). We know from biblical prophecy and history that the Jews were returned to the land of Israel during the Persian period. Antiochus grew very great and took control of Israel, “the Glorious Land” (v. 9). The full career of this little Horn, Antiochus, is described in more detail in Daniel 11 and we will look at it in more detail later. Here, in Daniel 8, it is those aspects of his dealings with God’s people that are highlighted, and that caused Daniel so much distress (v. 27).

Antiochus would assault the “host of heaven,” and cause some of the “host” to be cast down and some of the “stars” to be trampled down (v. 10). The host refers to the Jews in the land, and the stars referred to the leaders of the people (compare Gen. 1:16, where stars are said to be rulers).

In v. 11, Antiochus made himself equal to the Prince of the host, the Lord. Antiochus removed the continual offerings and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. The cause of this is given in v. 12, where we see that a transgression was committed by the host, and caused God to give them into Antiochus’s hand. Later in Daniel 11 we will see more clearly that Jews committed the sin of abomination that caused God to desolate (remove Himself from) His sanctuary of the temple that the Jews rebuilt after the exile. The result of this abomination that makes the temple desolate is that God used Antiochus to punish His people again.

Historically, what happened was that Antiochus removed the regular and lawful high priest, Onias III from office, and was eventually murdered. Antiochus, because of a bride, had appointed Menelaus in Onias’s place. Menelaus took some of the treasures from the temple to pay the bride. As we have already seen, the removal of the gold and treasures of the Temple (Babylon; cf. Dan. 1:2; 5:2-3). This robbery of God’s house by one who was set up as a high priest was an abomination to God, which cause Him to desolate or abandon His House, just as He had done before the Babylonian captivity. For six years the sacrifices were stopped in the temple following the desolation of the temple. The Jews at Jerusalem, angered by the murder of their lawful high priest and by the robbery of the temple treasures by Menelaus, began a civil war in Israel between the followers of Menelaus and the patriotic Jews. This was the first was between the friends of Antiochus and the Jews that wanted to remain faithful to the Hebrew laws.

The 8<sup>th</sup> commandment forbids stealing. The paying of the bribe to Antiochus out of the temple treasury was stealing from God. This robbery was initiated by Antiochus, who is described as seducing the saints through deceit (vv. 23-25). By deceiving some of the people, he sought to steal the kingdom from God Himself. But God will not be mocked, and Antiochus would be broken in the end (v. 25). We will look at the career of Antiochus again when we get to Daniel 11.

Israel was set up to serve as a priestly nation to the other nations. Her sacrifices were never for herself alone, but also for the sins of the whole world. This became especially true during the Restoration era. During this phase of Israel’s history, the Jews were spread out as the four winds among all the nations, to minister to them as prophets and priests. Cyrus directed that the Temple be restored as a house of prayer on behalf of all nations (2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:1-4; Dan. 6:26-27). Thus, the sacrifices mentioned in Daniel 8 were being performed *for* the ram and the goat, among others. The lambs, bulls, rams and goats sacrificed were in the place of the ram and the goat in Daniel 8. The apostasy of the Jewish

priesthood and God's abandonment/desolation of His Temple, and the cessation of the actual sacrifices threatened the entire world. The Kingdom of God comes as His people faithfully witness to the world about the True God, Yahweh, and remain faithful to Him. When the church fails in her witness, and compromises with the world around her, God abandons His people. If we desire to see the Kingdom of God come on earth as it is in heaven, we will not compromise with the world in any way. We must resist the temptation to seek our security and prosperity by doing things in cooperation with the world around us. Rather, we will trust the Lord to keep us safe, and to give us success in the world. This will only happen as we obey Him, and worship Him according to His Word.

Daniel was sick for several days following this vision, after which time he arose and went about the king's business (v. 27). The king referred to was Belshazzar. From Daniel 5:13 we saw that Belshazzar was not personally familiar with Daniel, although Daniel had been a member of the Babylonian court, probably doing work for the empire in other places. [Remember that Belshazzar had not walked according to the manner of his father Nebuchadnezzar. He had not honored Yahweh, nor had he continued honor Daniel.] The reason that attention is called to Daniel's continued service is that though Gentile rulers will oppress God's people for a time, the proper response is to be good citizens, serve the kings, and wait for the Ancient of Days to give the kingdom to His people when He is ready (Dan. 7:9, 13, 22).

**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 9.

## Week 11 Vision of the seventy “Weeks” (9) **Daniel 9**

### ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

### ❖ Review

Last week, in Daniel 8:13 we saw that there is a transgression/sin that causes God to desolate (to leave) His Temple. This often translated in various parts of the Bible as the “abomination of desolation” (Dan. 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14). The abomination of desolation would more correctly be translated, the “abomination that causes desolation.” When Israel (especially the priests or High Priest) committed a sin against God in the sanctuary (Tabernacle or Temple), it would cause God to become particularly angry and to leave the sanctuary (to desolate or to leave it empty of His presence). For God to

leave the sanctuary meant that He was leaving them and would send His judgments against them and His sanctuary because it had been defiled. This happened with Aaron and the Golden Calf, and God moved outside of the camp. It happened when the two sons of Eli wickedly served in the Tabernacle as priests, and God desolated the Tabernacle, and allowed Himself to be removed by the Philistines. The Temple was desecrated by the sins of Israel before the exile, and God sent the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple as He desolated or left the Temple.

#### **Hebrew Intro (1)**

- I. Daniel & Three Friends faithful to THE God (1)  
No other gods

#### **Aramaic Sections (2-7)**

- II. Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream & Daniel’s Interpretation (2)  
No Images

- III. Daniel’s Three Friends (3)  
Yahweh’s Name

- IV. Nebuchadnezzar’s Insanity & Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh

- V. Belshazzar’s Feast (5)  
Father/Son

- VI. Daniel saved from lions (6)  
Murder

- VII. Vision of four kingdoms (7)  
Spiritual Adultery

#### **Hebrew Section (8-12)**

- VIII. Vision of two kingdoms (8)  
Stealing

- IX. Vision of seventy weeks (9)  
Faithful witness

- X. Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12)  
No coveting

For God to desolate His Temple means to remove Himself and His favor from His people in judgment. In Jeremiah 25 God said that He had repeatedly sent prophets to warn His people to repent of their sins of idolatry and social oppression, but they refused to hear and obey. For their sins, God told them in Jeremiah 25:8-11 that He would bring His servant Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to destroy them and make a desolation of the land. V. 11 says that this desolation would continue for 70 years.

[Teacher: Give the students the handout at the end of this lesson.]



## **I. 70 Years of Desolations of Jerusalem Accomplished (vv. 1-2)**

Turn to Daniel 9:1-2. Daniel had now been in captivity for almost 70 years. Because Daniel understood the prophecy of Jeremiah, and that now that the time of the Babylonian empire was over (it was the first year of Darius the Mede), and that the 70 years was almost up, He knew that the desolation of Jerusalem would come to an end. God always keeps His word.

## **II. Prayer of Confession for the Covenant People (vv. 3-19)**

Because Daniel was a man that understood the times in which He lived, and because He was painfully aware of why Jerusalem had been desolated by God, Daniel began to pray. His prayer in vv. 4-19 was a confession of the sins of the people of Israel. He began his prayer by remembering that God is great and awesome (inspiring fear and reverence) because He is a covenant-keeping and merciful God with those who love Him and keep His commandments. Daniel went on to confess the sins of Israel (i.e. rebellion, departing from the Word of God, not listening to and obeying the prophets, all Israel had sinned, not turned from their sin to understand truth, done wickedly). Daniel confessed that the Lord was righteous in His judgments, and that Israel deserved the shame she had experienced.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment forbids bearing false witness. In Daniel 9, Daniel in confessing the sins of Israel, was a true witness to the righteousness of God and sin that led to the judgment and desolation of Jerusalem and the Temple. Instead of denying or covering up sin, Daniel faithfully told the truth in humility before God. Not only so, Gabriel was sent from God to Daniel to bear witness to him that God would restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

In vv. 16-19 Daniel called upon Yahweh to turn away from His anger against Jerusalem and His people. Daniel asked the Lord to hear his prayer of confession on behalf of His people, and to again shine His face of favor upon His sanctuary. He asked God to turn away from His desolation of His Temple, and for the sake of the glory of His name, restore the city of Jerusalem and to again inhabit the sanctuary. V. 19 says, O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

Daniel’s prayer is a good example of how we should pray. It is characterized by honest confession of sin and humility (not in any way justifying himself or the people). Rather, he tells the truth about their sin and the justice of God for His judgments. Often times people confess their sins, but do not do so fully, honestly and with a heart of true repentance. We must be careful not to confess our sins merely so that we can be relieved of God’s judgments, but primarily for God’s sake, so that the world will know that our God is merciful and loving to His people. He prayed not only to be forgiven, but also that God would again restore Israel, and that He would inhabit His holy mountain, the Holy City, the Temple. Daniel longed to see Israel again be a part of the Kingdom of God. We too should pray for the Church, and her place in the Kingdom.

### III. The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy (vv.20-27)

In vv. 20-23, while Daniel was still praying, God sent the angel Gabriel to him to help him understand that God had heard his prayer and to help him understand what would happen in answer to His prayer. [Gabriel was sent when Daniel began to pray, indicating that God knew what Daniel would pray and that He would answer immediately because of His love for him, just as God loves us and answers our prayers.] What follows is the prophecy of what will happen over the next 490 years. This the Seventy-Weeks Prophecy. V. 24 speaks of a literal block of seventy weeks of years (490 years). This prophecy is concerned to reveal what God had decreed (determined to happen) for the people of God and for their “holy city.” Daniel 9:24 has six parts as follows:

1. Perfect transgression, which is sacrilege against the Most Holy
2. Seal up sins.
3. Atonement for iniquity
4. Establish righteousness
5. Seal the promises.
6. The anointing of the Most Holy (Jesus the Messiah).

1. To finish or complete the transgression. The word transgression has to do with rebellion. In Daniel, transgressions are sacrilegious sins that cause God to desolate His people and Temple (Dan. 8:12, 13, 23).

2. To make an end of sins or literally, to seal up sins. The idea of sealing up something is to confirm and apply the thing being sealed.

3. To make atonement for iniquity/sin. Jesus made atonement for the sins of humanity by His death on the cross, and:

4. Brought in everlasting righteousness.

5. To seal up the vision and the prophet. Everything in the Old Testament is in one way or another a prophecy of the coming of Jesus. The coming of Jesus represented God’s fulfilling everything He had said in the Old Testament. He is the seal on all God’s revelation. Everything was fulfilled with the coming of Jesus.

6. Anointing the Most Holy One. At His baptism Jesus was anointed the Messianic priest. But most importantly, at His ascension into the heaven to His throne at the right hand of the Father, He was anointed the Messianic King.

The prophetic time frame is given in v. 25. It is a period of time from the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince – a period of 490 years. These years are divided in the prophecy into a block of seven weeks of years and a block of 62 weeks of years. The first block of seven weeks (49 years) runs historically from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple through the time of Nehemiah. The second block of 62 weeks (434 years) is the period from the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple to Christ. The history of this period is laid out in the last vision of Daniel, in Daniel 11. Daniel is assured in v. 25 that Jerusalem will be rebuilt. God will again favor His people. This is also an assurance that God has forgiven the sins of Israel that led to their being sent into exile. Daniel’s prayer has been answered according to all that had been prophesied! This period of

time was completed in the 3 ½ years following the death of Jesus. This 490 years prophecy was fulfilled exactly from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple through the beginning of the ministry of the Apostles.

V. 26 says that after the 62 weeks, the Messiah would be “cut off.” This cutting off does not refer directly to His death, but His being excommunicated when He was condemned unjustly by the Jewish Sanhedrin. Jesus had likened Himself to the temple, and said in John 2:19-21 that if the temple of His body were destroyed, He would raise it up again in three days. Because of the rebellion of the people of Israel during His ministry and their refusal to believe in Him as Messiah, Jesus would take upon Himself the sins of the people. Because Jesus took upon Himself the desolation of the temple (of His body), God desolated Him, forsook Him (Matt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34), cut Him off. He was cut off, not for Himself (His own sins), but for the sake of His people.

V. 26 goes on to say that “the people of the prince” will destroy the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. Just as the Assyrian and Babylonian armies were God’s armies to bring judgment against Israel in previous times, so the Roman armies would come as the people that Messiah the Prince would use bring His judgments against her again (Lk. 21:20-24). This happened in history during the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Titus in AD 70. The end of v. 26 says that “desolations are determined.” Daniel had just prayed that God would removed the desolations of Jerusalem and return to Her. This prophecy says that God will return, and that Jerusalem would be rebuilt. The desolations would again come to Israel because of Her refusal to accept the Messiah when He came. This was an abomination committed before the face of God that would require that that He desolate the Holy City and His Temple again.

V. 27 goes on to explain the abomination that will make God desolate the Temple again. Messiah the Prince (Jesus) would confirm or establish the New Covenant with “many” of His people (cf. Matt. 26:28). The “many” are the Jews that responded to His ministry in faith as He came preaching, healing and cleansing them. The death of Jesus was the last sacrifice, which meant that there was no longer any need for animal sacrifices. Animal sacrifices never took away sin. They were “memorials” offered up before the Lord to show Him that the people rusted in Him, and that they knew they deserved to die but were gratefully accepting His offer of a substitute for their death. Once the Son had died, men no longer needed to offer animal sacrifices. Jesus became the sacrifice for sin, and death for us is memorialized in the Lord’s Supper.

With the final sacrifice for sins and the movement of the Apostles into the world, the Kingdom of Messiah the Prince would be established. The True Temple of God was now the people of God. In the early chapters of the book of Acts, we see the desecration of the true Temple (the people of God, Christians) when the high priests and chief priests lay hands on the vessels of the true Temple, the saints. The priests arrested and threatened Peter

and John in Acts 4:1-3, 6, 21. The high priest threw the apostles in jail, but God let them out. They were arrested again and questioned by the high priest, and then they were beaten (Acts 5:17, 27, 40). The greatest of these abominations/desecrations of the true Temple (the Church, the people of God) came in Acts 7, when the high priest puts Stephan on trial and then puts him to death. These acts of persecution against the saints, who are now the true Temple, are abominations that cause God to bring in the Roman armies to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70.

The lessons of Daniel 9 include:

- 1) It is important to know our Bibles and to understand the times in which we live. Just as Daniel knew the prophecies of Jeremiah and applied them to his time, we need to know how to apply our knowledge of the Bible in the world around us. There is no excuse for being ignorant of what the Bible says or how we should apply it.
- 2) We must continually offer prayers of confession of our sins honestly and humbly. We do so knowing that God loves us and is eager to forgive and restore us to Him.
- 3) We must remain faithful to Him. Just as God desolated His sanctuary because of the sins of His people in the past, so too, He will not allow the Church to dishonor Him by false teaching or the sinful actions of His people. We must be careful not to tolerate such things in the church, but must carefully exercise church discipline against any that willfully sin against the Lord. We can expect that those churches or people in churches that do wickedly before the Lord will persecute the faithful. But we have the assurance of biblical history that God will judge those who do so.

**Homework assignment:** Read Daniel 10-12

## Vision of the Seventy “Weeks” Daniel 9

**I. 70 Years of Desolations of Jerusalem Accomplished (vv. 1-2)**

**II. Prayer of Confession for the Covenant People (vv. 3-19)**

**III. The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy (vv.20-27)**

Seventy periods of seven years – 490 Years from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of Christ.

Daniel 9:24

1. Perfect transgression, which is sacrilege against the Most Holy
2. Seal up sins.
3. **Atone for iniquity**
4. **Establish righteousness**
5. Seal the promises.
6. The anointing of the Most Holy (Jesus the Messiah).

Daniel 9:25

Jerusalem will be rebuilt, until the time of Messiah the Prince (Jesus)

Daniel 9:26

Messiah will be “cut off” for the people

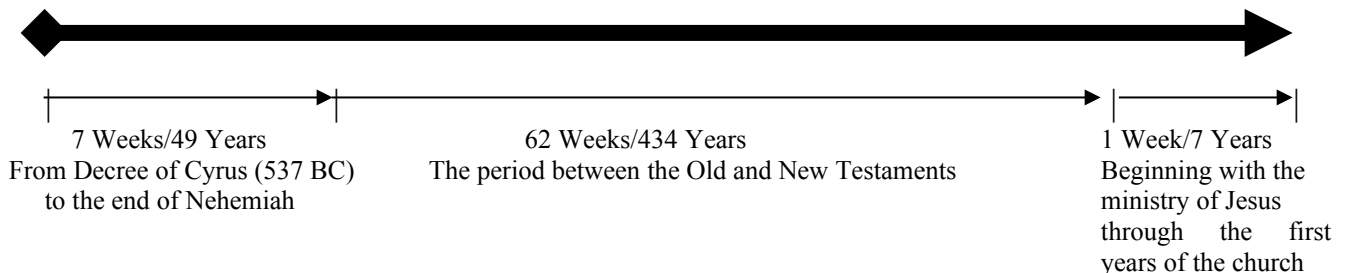
Roman armies will be used by God to judge Israel for rejecting the Messiah

Daniel 9:27

The New Covenant confirmed – The final sacrifice for sins

The persecution of Christians is the desecration of the True Temple, which is an abomination that causes God to desolate or abandon Israel.

490 Years



## Week 12 Vision of two kingdoms **Daniel 10-12**

### ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

### ❖ Review

As we have seen throughout the book of Daniel, with the transition from the *former days* (the period of Israel's history from Moses through the Kings) to the *latter days* (the period of Israel's history from the exile to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70), Israel is no longer the exclusive center of God's attention. Beginning with this period of history, God

began to deal with the nations in a special way. It is the period of *empire* building. The Kingdom of God would grow and develop into a great international empire, with the Messiah as the True King of kings, whose Kingdom and dominion will last forever. Each of the various kings of the various empires leading up to Christ would be a type of Christ, or like Christ in that they would be rulers that would move the Kingdom of God ahead towards its future glory under the Son of Man. As long as the Jews were faithful to THE God and were true witnesses to Him (as Daniel and his three friends were),

#### **Hebrew Intro (1)**

- I. Daniel & Three Friends faithful to THE God (1)  
No other gods

#### **Aramaic Sections (2-7)**

- II. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream & Daniel's Interpretation (2)  
No Images
- III. Daniel's Three Friends (3)  
Yahweh's Name
- IV. Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity  
& Salvation (4) – Rest in Yahweh
- V. Belshazzar's Feast (5)  
Father/Son
- VI. Daniel saved from lions (6)  
Murder
- VII. Vision of four kingdoms (7)  
Spiritual Adultery

#### **Hebrew Section (8-12)**

- VIII. Vision of two kingdoms (8)  
Stealing
- IX. Vision of seventy weeks (9)  
Faithful witness
- 

they would be protected and nurtured inside of these kingdoms. But if the Jews became unfaithful to God and refused to witness, God would judge them.

The last section of the book of Daniel (Ch. 8-12) was written in Hebrew to explain to the Jews the course of history following the exile. This period of time from the end of the exile to the coming of Christ we have called the *Restoration Period*, or the *Restoration Covenant*. This section is not only a prophecy, but also a warning to the Jews to be faithful to Yahweh while living under the empires that were to come. God had sent the Jews as the four winds into the world, and then the world empires to the Jews, to witness to the nations about Yahweh God. They were to faithfully worship God and to teach the nations that He is the Most High God.

In chapter 8 we saw the "Vision of the two kingdoms" of Persian and Greece. In Chapter 9 we saw the "Vision of the Seventy Weeks" that went from the decree of Cyrus of Persia to

rebuild Jerusalem and the temple to the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. Daniel 10-12 is one long vision and revelation from God to Daniel about the course of history during the Restoration Period to the coming of Christ.

10<sup>th</sup> commandment forbids covetousness. The constant fighting between the kings of the North and of the South for the Beautiful Land demonstrate that they were coveting the taxes, plunder, spoil and riches, gold and silver, and all the precious things of the Jews (Dan. 11: 20, 24, 28, 33, 38-39).

Daniel 10 begins saying that the vision took place in the third year of Cyrus the Persian. We know that the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple took place in his first year as king. Daniel referred to himself by his Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, because the captivity and exile was yet continuing. Daniel was mourning because he knew that the temple had not yet been rebuilt. God had gone into exile with His people. At the time of this vision, God was still in exile because the temple had not yet been rebuilt. Ezra 4 tells us that after the first year of Jew's return from exile, opposition to the rebuilding of the Temple arose among the people then living in the land. They hired representatives to go to the Persian court to put a stop to the rebuilding of the Temple. We are told that they were able to successfully stop the project for awhile.

Daniel 10 is a strange passage that represents the angel fighting the Prince of Persia for 21 days (vv. 13 & 20), which was the period of Daniel's mourning (10:2-3). But Michael, the Prince of Israel came to help the angel, and gained a small victory. [James Jordan believes that Michael the Archangel is Jesus, cf. Jude 9 & Zech. 3:1-2; Rev. 12:7.] The angel said that he would return to fight the prince of Persia, and that eventually the prince of Greece would come. The vision that Daniel saw was so overwhelming for him that he was bowed to the ground and could not speak until the angel touched his lips, strengthening and encouraging him. This is important for us to see because we too need God's help to understand His Word. We receive that help from both human teachers and pastors (often spoken of in scripture as "angels") and the Holy Spirit. This passage also teaches us that God sends His angels into the world to fight for our sakes to protect us and to ensure that God's will is manifested on the earth.

In Daniel 11, the angel had come to reveal to Daniel the course of history from his day to the coming of Christ. He mentioned the next four kings of Persia, the coming of Alexander the Great of Greece, and the breaking up of his kingdom (Dan. 11:1-4). In vv. 5-19 we read about wars between the North and the South, leading to the coming of Antiochus Epiphanes. The rule of Antiochus Epiphanes is described in some detail in vv. 20-35. This was a period in which the faithful Jews fought against Antiochus and his followers. These faithful Jews were the forerunners of the Pharisees. The compromisers with the Greek culture were those later became the Sadducees. And finally in vv. 36-45 we learn about the coming of Herod the Great and the Romans.

In Daniel 12:1-3 we see that, at the time of Herod, Michael will arise, and many will be raised to life again (which refers to the coming of the gospel), and there will be a great tribulation (which refers to the events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70). Daniel was told to seal up the book of this revelation until the time of the end (Dan. 12:4). What this means is that everything after the coming of Michael is under a seal, and would not be revealed until later. The events that are sealed are those that happen from the beginning of the Church after the ascension of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. These events are described in Revelation 5-8. The seal of the book is broken open by Christ, revealing the contents of the book as the time of great distress mentioned by Daniel in 12:1. The same prophetic language is used in the book of Revelation that was used by Daniel in his visions. Daniel asked how long the period of his visions would be (12:6). The Lord answered by saying that it would be “time, times and half a time.” The “time” is that of Persia. The “times” are those of Alexander and those who follow after him, including Antiochus Epiphanes. The “half a time” refers to Herod and the Romans, who are broken off by the coming of the Messiah.

V. 8 tells us that Daniel did not understand what had been revealed to him. Daniel was reassured by the fact that many would be “purified, made white and refined” during this time. God will not abandon His people. Rather He will continue to save and protect the righteous who remained faithful to Him. Daniel is also told that the wicked will be judged, and that as the events of these prophecies unfold, the wise will understand what God was doing in history. We can understand much of his visions because we have the benefit of knowing how history progressed through this period.

The final verses of Daniel 12 (vv. 11-13) provide hope. After the time that the wicked Jews drive God away from the rebuilt Temple by committing the abomination of desolation, there will be an end to the troubles of God’s people. The Kingdom of the Messiah would put an end to the struggling of the nations against the Kingdom of God. Daniel is told that he will enter sabbath rest and rise again for his reward at the end of history. Daniel has served as an example to the Jews of how believers should live in the world empires. He faithfully served THE God his whole life and was exalted in the God world empires. He and his three friends refused to compromise with the world around them, but remained faithful to Yahweh through it all. They were faithful witnesses of Yahweh when called upon to testify about the Lord. In the end, regardless of the difficulties they endured in their lives, they would be blessed by God and could rest in the assurance that they would be raised again to life on the last day. This is the way that the Jews should live during the Restoration Period, trusting in God who was arranging history for the establishment of His Messianic Kingdom.

Daniel’s life is also an example to us in the New Covenant Church age. Jesus Christ is now the Emperor of His worldwide Kingdom. There are ups and downs for the Church in this final period of history, but the Kingdom of God will remain forever. We are called to



faithfully worship God alone, and to be His witnesses until the fullness of the Kingdom is manifested on the earth.

The book of Daniel is important for us to understand for a number of reasons.

- 1) It represents the transition from the former days to the latter days, and the coming of God's international Kingdom. The Jews will no longer be the exclusive center of God's attention. The Jews will serve God within an international context, and God's angels will be wrestling with other national powers, while God oversees and directs all of the affairs of history.
- 2) It gives us an understanding of the world at the time when Jesus began His ministry. The Jews were expecting the coming of the Messiah because they knew that Daniel's "Seventy Weeks" prophecy (Dan. 9) was due to be fulfilled, and that the events described in his vision had all come to pass (Dan. 10-12). They should have understood that the Messiah would come not simply to restore the Jewish culture, but was the King of the entire world. They should have known not to rebel against the Messiah when He came because Daniel had written that to do so would lead to the great tribulation and the final abomination that would cause God to desolate His people.
- 3) It helps us to understand the book of Revelation, which describes the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. The unsealing of the final part of God's revelation (sealed by Daniel in Ch. 12) is the final revelation of God's dealings with the Jews – Destruction and desolation.
- 4) It gives us a clear picture of how we are to live our lives in the New Covenant.

**Homework assignment:** Student Evaluation

# Daniel: Student Evaluation

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Hebrew Intro (Ch. 1)

- I. Daniel & Three Friends faithful to \_\_\_\_\_ (1)  
No other gods

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## Section (Ch. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_)

- II. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream & Daniel's Interpretation (2)  
No \_\_\_\_\_
- III. Daniel's Three Friends (3)  
Yahweh's Name
- IV. Nebuchadnezzar's \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ (4)  
Rest in Yahweh
- V. \_\_\_\_\_ Feast (5)  
Father/Son
- VI. Daniel saved from lions (6)  
No \_\_\_\_\_
- VII. Vision of \_\_\_\_\_ kingdoms (7)  
Spiritual Adultery

## Hebrew Section (Ch. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_)

- VIII. Vision of \_\_\_\_\_ kingdoms (8)  
Stealing
- IX. Vision of Seventy Weeks (9)  
Faithful \_\_\_\_\_
- X. Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12)  
No \_\_\_\_\_

What were the sins that led to the exile of Israel into Babylon?

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Only the priests of the Jews were able to commit the "abomination that makes the temple desolate." True or False (circle one)

What were the four world empires that were repeatedly referred to in the book of Daniel? (From the words on the right, list these in the order of history to the left).

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

Assyria	Rome	Gaul
Egypt	Byzantium	Babylon
Media/Persia	Carthage	Ethiopia
Hittites	Greece	Amorites
Edom	Phillistine	Shushan

Daniel’s “Seventy Weeks” prophecy in Daniel 9 deals with the period from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple to the coming of Christ, with a gap of time known as a “parenthesis” between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks. True or False (circle one)

The lesson the book of Daniel is that God is in control of the history of the world and is building His international Kingdom in the world. The New Covenant that began at this point in history is known as \_\_\_\_\_ Covenant.

# Daniel: Student Evaluation Answer Key

## Hebrew Intro (Ch. 1)

- XI. Daniel & Three Friends faithful to THE God (1)  
No other gods

## Aramaic Section (Ch. 2 - 7 )

- XII. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream & Daniel's Interpretation (2)  
No Images
- XIII. Daniel's Three Friends (3)  
Yahweh's Name
- XIV. Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity & Salvation (4)  
Rest in Yahweh
- XV. Belshazzar's Feast (5)  
Father/Son
- XVI. Daniel saved from lions (6)  
No Murder
- XVII. Vision of Four kingdoms (7)  
Spiritual Adultery

## Hebrew Section (Ch. 8 - 12 )

- XVIII. Vision of Two kingdoms (8)  
Stealing
- XIX. Vision of Seventy Weeks (9)  
Faithful Witness
- XX. Vision of two Kingdoms (10-12)  
No Covetousness

What were the sins that led to the exile of Israel into Babylon?

Idolatry

Social Injustices – Keeping Hebrew Slaves

Only the priests of the Jews were able to commit the “abomination that makes the temple desolate.” [True] or False (circle one)

What were the four world empires that were repeatedly referred to in the book of Daniel? (From the words on the right, list these in the order of history to the left).

1) **Babylon**

2) **Media/Persia**

3) **Greece**

4) **Rome**

Assyria	Rome	Gaul
Egypt	Byzantium	Babylon
Media/Persia	Carthage	Ethiopia
Hittites	Greece	Amorites
Edom	Phillistine	Shushan

Daniel’s “Seventy Weeks” prophecy in Daniel 9 deals with the period from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple to the coming of Christ, with a gap of time known as a “parenthesis” between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks. True or **[False]** (circle one)

The lesson the book of Daniel is that God is in control of the history of the world and is building His international Kingdom in the world. The New Covenant that began at this point in history is known as **Restoration** Covenant.