

## Introduction

Daniel 1-6 and 7-12 are 2 distinct sections that convey very different messages. Although there are signs and wonders in each part, the meanings of things in the 1<sup>st</sup> section are clearly explained, while those of the 2<sup>nd</sup> section are not. The first half of Daniel is really 6 situations that portray examples of believers interacting with others. In each example there are God's witnesses (Believers), non-believers, a sign, and a spiritual result. The message in the first half of Daniel is really about being used by God to reach men's hearts in the "End Times", in Daniel's case as Israel has been taken into captivity by Babylon.

*[Note: If you're leading a study and everyone has read Daniel 1-6 prior to going through this study, then discussion can concentrate on the questions provided for each chapter and the reading of each chapter can be reduced/eliminated.]*

<sup>1</sup>In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. <sup>2</sup>The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

<sup>3</sup>Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, <sup>4</sup>youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. <sup>5</sup>The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. <sup>6</sup>Now

among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. <sup>7</sup>Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

<sup>8</sup>But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.

<sup>9</sup>Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, <sup>10</sup>and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king."

<sup>11</sup>But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, <sup>12</sup>"Please test your servants for ten

days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. <sup>13</sup>Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

<sup>14</sup>So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. <sup>15</sup>At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. <sup>16</sup>So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables. <sup>17</sup>As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.

<sup>18</sup>Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup>The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered

the king's personal service. <sup>20</sup>As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king

consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his

realm. <sup>21</sup>And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

### **Read Daniel 1**

**Q: Who are the non-believers in this passage?**

A: Ashpenaz and Nebuchadnezzar

**Q: Who are the believers – or witnesses – in this passage?**

A: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego

**Q: What is the issue at hand?**

A: Following the world's way or God's way.

**Q: What is the sign or miracle provided by God in this instance?**

A: Visibly superior appearance to the non-believers.

**Q: What was the spiritual result?**

A: Obedience to God made the believers stand apart as a visible, different example from the world's followers. Non-believers could tell that something was different – and superior – from the rest.

**Q: What is the application for us?**

- God can be revealed to others through our simple, personal obedience to God.
- Regardless of what all others are doing around us – even when vastly outnumbered – we're responsible to obey God's laws over man's.
- Our part is to obey Him – He will take care of the results.

**Point:** *It's important to note that this first example establishes the key application through all six scenarios: Personal obedience is all that's required on our part – God supplies the rest.*

<sup>1</sup>Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. <sup>2</sup>Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. <sup>3</sup>The king said to them, "I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream."

<sup>4</sup>Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: "O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation."

<sup>5</sup>The king replied to the Chaldeans, "The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the

dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap. <sup>6</sup>But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation."

<sup>7</sup>They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation."

<sup>8</sup>The king replied, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, <sup>9</sup>that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words

before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation."

<sup>10</sup>The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. <sup>11</sup>Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh."

<sup>12</sup>Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. <sup>13</sup>So the decree went forth

that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

<sup>14</sup>Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; <sup>15</sup>he said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent? Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter. <sup>16</sup>So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.

<sup>17</sup>Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, <sup>18</sup>so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

<sup>19</sup>Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; <sup>20</sup>Daniel said,

"Let the name of God be blessed  
forever and ever,  
For wisdom and power belong to  
Him.

<sup>21</sup>It is He who changes the times and  
the epochs;  
He removes kings and establishes  
kings;  
He gives wisdom to wise men  
And knowledge to men of  
understanding.

<sup>22</sup>It is He who reveals the profound  
and hidden things;  
He knows what is in the darkness,  
And the light dwells with Him.

<sup>23</sup>To You, O God of my fathers, I give  
thanks and praise,  
For You have given me wisdom and  
power;  
Even now You have made known to  
me what we requested of You,

For You have made known to us the  
king's matter."

<sup>24</sup>Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king."

<sup>25</sup>Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!"

<sup>26</sup>The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?"

<sup>27</sup>Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. <sup>28</sup>However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. <sup>29</sup>As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. <sup>30</sup>But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.

<sup>31</sup>"You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its

appearance was awesome. <sup>32</sup>The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup>its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup>You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. <sup>35</sup>Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

<sup>36</sup>"This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king.

<sup>37</sup>"You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; <sup>38</sup>and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

<sup>39</sup>"After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.

<sup>40</sup>"Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. <sup>41</sup>In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. <sup>42</sup>As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. <sup>43</sup>And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will

combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.

<sup>44</sup>“In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. <sup>45</sup>Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron,

the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

<sup>46</sup>Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. <sup>47</sup>The king answered Daniel and said, “Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able

to reveal this mystery.” <sup>48</sup>Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. <sup>49</sup>And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king’s court.

## **Read Daniel 2**

### ***Q: Who are the non-believers in this passage?***

A: Nebuchadnezzar and his magicians, conjurers and sorcerers.

### ***Q: Who are the believers – or witnesses – in this passage?***

A: Daniel and his companions.

### ***Q: What is the issue at hand?***

A: The king is seeking absolute, spiritual truth. (Notice how he innately knows that he is surrounded by false religious experts and how he seeks a true representative of God.)

### ***Q: What is the sign or miracle provided by God in this instance?***

A: Interpreting a dream not revealed by the one who dreamed it.

### ***Q: What was the spiritual result?***

A: The king experiences a personal revelation of the One True God.

### ***Q: What is the application for us?***

- God has chosen to reveal himself to men through men; we are His representatives.
- God sometimes reveals Himself supernaturally to others through us.
- Unlike the false religious leaders and experts, Daniel always pointed to God as the source as well as the ultimate destination.

***Point:*** Daniel never emphasizes the signs – they are just a tool to explain their real point that each person needs to submit their life to the One True God. The goal is not enhanced knowledge but changed faith.

<sup>1</sup>Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. <sup>2</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the

judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. <sup>3</sup>Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the

dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>4</sup>Then the herald loudly proclaimed: “To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, <sup>5</sup>that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute,

lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. <sup>6</sup>But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire."

<sup>7</sup>Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

<sup>8</sup>For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. <sup>9</sup>They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever! <sup>10</sup>You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image. <sup>11</sup>But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. <sup>12</sup>There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."

<sup>13</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. <sup>14</sup>Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? <sup>15</sup>Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of

the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

<sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. <sup>17</sup>If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup>But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

<sup>19</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. <sup>20</sup>He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire. <sup>21</sup>Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. <sup>22</sup>For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. <sup>23</sup>But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up.

<sup>24</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in

haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?"

They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king."

<sup>25</sup>He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"

<sup>26</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!"

Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. <sup>27</sup>The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them.

<sup>28</sup>Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup>Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way."

<sup>30</sup>Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.

## Read Daniel 3

**Q: Who are the non-believers in this passage?**

A: Nebuchadnezzar and his officials.

**Q: Who are the believers – or witnesses – in this passage?**

A: Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

**Q: What is the issue at hand?**

A: Whether or not to stay true to one's faith.

**Q: What is the sign or miracle provided by God in this instance?**

A: They are unharmed in a furnace heated 7 times hotter than usual.

**Q: What was the spiritual result?**

A: The king publicly acknowledges the power and sovereignty of the One True God of Israel.

**Q: What is the application for us?**

- God can be revealed to non-believers through our commitment to our faith. (And our obedience to Him during trials & persecution.)
- "Faith" trusts in God regardless of how He answers – in this case knowing He is capable of a miraculous rescue, but may choose not to – and just knowing that however He answers will work to His glory, not ours.
- A lifestyle of obedience (the three have consistently obeyed God from the beginning – they didn't just start here) prepares us in times of crisis.

**Point:** *Every situation – regardless of how hopeless or awful it looks – is a vehicle that can change lives for God's glory. The effect on the king's faith is more important than the three being saved from the effects of the furnace*

<sup>1</sup>Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound! <sup>2</sup>It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me.

<sup>3</sup>"How great are His signs  
And how mighty are His wonders!  
His kingdom is an everlasting  
kingdom  
And His dominion is from  
generation to generation.

<sup>4</sup>"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my

palace. <sup>5</sup>I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. <sup>6</sup>So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. <sup>7</sup>Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me. <sup>8</sup>But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god,

and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and I related the dream to him, saying, <sup>9</sup>"O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.

<sup>10</sup>"Now these were the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great.

<sup>11</sup>"The tree grew large and became strong  
And its height reached to the sky,

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And it was visible to the end of the whole earth.

<sup>12</sup>Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant,  
And in it was food for all.  
The beasts of the field found shade under it,  
And the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches,  
And all living creatures fed themselves from it.

<sup>13</sup>I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven.

<sup>14</sup>He shouted out and spoke as follows:  
“Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,  
Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit;  
Let the beasts flee from under it  
And the birds from its branches.  
<sup>15</sup>Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground,  
But with a band of iron and bronze around it  
In the new grass of the field;  
And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,  
And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth.  
<sup>16</sup>Let his mind be changed from that of a man  
And let a beast’s mind be given to him,  
And let seven periods of time pass over him.  
<sup>17</sup>This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers  
And the decision is a command of the holy ones,  
In order that the living may know  
That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind,  
And bestows it on whom He wishes  
And sets over it the lowliest of men.”

<sup>18</sup>“This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its

interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.’

<sup>19</sup>“Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, ‘Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.’

“Belteshazzar replied, ‘My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries!’<sup>20</sup>The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth<sup>21</sup>and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged—<sup>22</sup>it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth.<sup>23</sup>In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, “Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him,”<sup>24</sup>this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: <sup>25</sup>that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.<sup>26</sup>And in that

it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules.<sup>27</sup>Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.’

<sup>28</sup>“All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king.<sup>29</sup>Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon.<sup>30</sup>The king reflected and said, ‘Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?’<sup>31</sup>While the word was in the king’s mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you,<sup>32</sup>and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.’<sup>33</sup>Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.

<sup>34</sup>“But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever;

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

<sup>35</sup>All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,  
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven  
And among the inhabitants of earth;  
And no one can ward off His hand  
Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

<sup>36</sup>"At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. <sup>37</sup>Now I,

Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

#### **Read Daniel 4**

**Q: Who are the non-believers in this passage?**

A: Nebuchadnezzar

**Q: Who are the believers – or witnesses – in this passage?**

A: Daniel

**Q: What is the issue at hand?**

A: Nebuchadnezzar's pride. He's acknowledged God's working in Daniel and his companions but it has not completely changed his heart.

**Q: What is the sign or miracle provided by God in this instance?**

A: Journey into madness and back. (A type of spiritual deception.)

**Q: What was the spiritual result?**

A: Nebuchadnezzar's true salvation.

**Q: What is the application for us?**

- We can reveal God to others through His judgment on, and works within, non-believers.
- Our love for others must be accompanied with the truth of God's character and working so that they can understand spiritual consequences.
- God's punishment in this life is meant to bring us back to Him and, from eternity's perspective, ultimately provide salvation.

**Point:** *We cannot make others' choices for them, but must be personally responsible to communicate the truth in order that they may learn the right lesson from the experience.*

<sup>1</sup>Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. <sup>2</sup>When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. <sup>3</sup>Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and

his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup>They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

<sup>5</sup>Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. <sup>6</sup>Then the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together. <sup>7</sup>The king

called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, "Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom."

<sup>8</sup>Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. <sup>9</sup>Then King Belshazzar was greatly

alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed.

<sup>10</sup>The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen spoke and said, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale. <sup>11</sup>There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans and diviners. <sup>12</sup>This was because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation.”

<sup>13</sup>Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? <sup>14</sup>Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you. <sup>15</sup>Just now the wise men and the conjurers were brought in before me that they might read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not declare the interpretation of the message. <sup>16</sup>But

I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and wear a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will have authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.”

<sup>17</sup>Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him. <sup>18</sup>“O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father. <sup>19</sup>Because of the grandeur which He bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations and men of every language feared and trembled before him; whomever he wished he killed and whomever he wished he spared alive; and whomever he wished he elevated and whomever he wished he humbled. <sup>20</sup>But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken away from him. <sup>21</sup>He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like that of beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it

whomever He wishes. <sup>22</sup>Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, <sup>23</sup>but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and your ways, you have not glorified. <sup>24</sup>Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out.

<sup>25</sup>“Now this is the inscription that was written out: ‘MENĒ, MENĒ, TEKĒL, UPHARSIN.’ <sup>26</sup>This is the interpretation of the message:

“‘MENĒ’—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it.

<sup>27</sup>“‘TEKĒL’—you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient.

<sup>28</sup>“‘PERĒS’—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.”

<sup>29</sup>Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.

<sup>30</sup>That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. <sup>31</sup>So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.

## Read Daniel 5

**Q: Who are the non-believers in this passage?**

A: Belshazzar, his wise men, and his guests.

**Q: Who are the believers – or witnesses – in this passage?**

A: Daniel and possibly the queen.

**Q: What is the issue at hand?**

A: Judgment for sin and blasphemy.

**Q: What is the sign or miracle provided by God in this instance?**

A: The meaning of the supernatural handwriting is explained by God through Daniel.

**Q: What was the spiritual result?**

A: The king has understanding but dies in his refusal to repent.

**Q: What is the application for us?**

- Not everyone that God is revealed to through us will accept His message; but the example of our obedient life to God is also an example to non-believers so that they are without excuse for their own choices.
- We have a responsibility to communicate the Gospel regardless of whether or not it is accepted or rejected.
- All things prophetic will be clearly explained by God **PRIOR** to their fulfillment, but only according to God's timing.

**Point:** Knowledge never makes up for lack of obedience – in fact, it brings greater conviction and judgment from God because we know better but decisively choose to rebel and go our own way even though we know the consequences. There's a difference between temporarily straying and permanently leaving.

<sup>1</sup>It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, <sup>2</sup>and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. <sup>3</sup>Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. <sup>4</sup>Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. <sup>5</sup>Then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God."

<sup>6</sup>Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the

king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever! <sup>7</sup>All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den. <sup>8</sup>Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." <sup>9</sup>Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

<sup>10</sup>Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. <sup>11</sup>Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication

before his God. <sup>12</sup>Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?"

The king replied, "The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked."

<sup>13</sup>Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."

<sup>14</sup>Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him. <sup>15</sup>Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

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<sup>16</sup>Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you." <sup>17</sup>A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel. <sup>18</sup>Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.

<sup>19</sup>Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. <sup>20</sup>When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve,

been able to deliver you from the lions?"

<sup>21</sup>Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! <sup>22</sup>My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime."

<sup>23</sup>Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

<sup>24</sup>The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

<sup>25</sup>Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land: "May your peace abound! <sup>26</sup>I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel;

For He is the living God and enduring forever,

And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed,

And His dominion will be forever.

<sup>27</sup>He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders

In heaven and on earth,

Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."

<sup>28</sup>So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

### **Read Daniel 6**

***Q: Who are the non-believers in this passage?***

A: The officials.

***Q: Who are the believers – or witnesses – in this passage?***

A: Daniel and Darius.

***Q: What is the issue at hand?***

A: The deceitfulness of wicked men against the righteous.

***Q: What is the sign or miracle provided by God in this instance?***

A: Safety in the lion's den.

***Q: What was the spiritual result?***

A: Salvation of a nation.

***Q: What is the application for us?***

- God can be revealed to non-believers through the treatment and interaction of believers.
- Persecution will come but cannot overcome God's will, sovereignty, or power.
- The activities of spiritual persecution clearly reveal who is affiliated with which side.

***Point:*** As in every example, Daniel allowed God to be the chief witness. Notice that although Daniel clearly saw the entrapment that he made no attempt to explain it to the king. Daniel only speaks when God directs him to speak – otherwise Daniel knows that God will speak for Himself.

## Overall Application

**Point #1:** In reality there are 3 people/kings: Nebuchadnezzar in chapters 1-4, Belshazzar in chapter 5, and Darius in chapter 6. For Nebuchadnezzar the sequence goes:

- Chapter 1: Believers enter Nebuchadnezzar's life and he notices something different about them from all others.
- Chapter 2: Nebuchadnezzar is personally exposed to the sovereignty and power of God.
- Chapter 3: Nebuchadnezzar personally accepts God as king and savior.
- Chapter 4: Recovery from backsliding by returning to God.

Belshazzar is the type of person who permanently rejects Christ, Darius the type who immediately accepts Christ, and Nebuchadnezzar the type for whom it takes a series of events to finally come to Christ.

This could be characterized as a model of the salvation experience, the theme in each phase for believers being to "witness" simply by remaining personally obedient to God in everyday life.

**Point #2:** We have no record of **ANYONE** "coming to the Lord" or experiencing a spiritual awakening from the visions Daniel receives from God later in life as outlined in chapters 7-12, the second half of the book of Daniel. But in these first 6 chapters, during the mainstay of his life and service, we have examples of works greater than the visions: Changed lives. One of the signs of a true prophet is that his ministry results in changed lives and that the greater portion of their teaching concerns returning to God. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, for instance, spend far more time preaching repentance than providing End Times prophecy.

**Point #3:** The visions that are revealed in the first 6 chapters of Daniel are all clearly understood because their meaning is provided. Those in the latter half are subject to much debate because their precise meaning is not given, but promised for a later time. Daniel speaks of a final 7 years split evenly into 2 halves where it seems that in the first half spiritual awakening is still possible but not in the second half when final judgment is executed. Is it a coincidence that this mirrors the structure of the book of Daniel itself? The first half are examples of God still trying to reach hearts, whereas the last half appears to be devoted to final judgment.

**Point #4:** The real gem of spiritual understanding in Daniel is that we have no responsibility to act on visions or prophecy – God will reveal them clearly according to His own schedule. Our responsibility is to be personally obedient and allow God to communicate through us to non-believers at every opportunity under every circumstance. Everything else takes care of itself. Remember Jesus' own words in Luke 18:8, "...However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" He doesn't ask if He'll find people with

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knowledge or even fully cognizant of the signs of the End Times – He asks if He'll find *faith*.

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