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THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

OLD TESTAMENT

BOOK 27

DANIEL



Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's Dream by Mattia Preti

SUMMARY

Chapter 1: In approximately the year 605 BC Jerusalem is besieged by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Judah is defeated and vessels of the house of God are carried back to the land of Shinar along with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

As educated youths of noble heritage, in whom was no blemish, but well-favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and endued with knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace.

They are placed under the care of the master of the eunuchs to be trained in the way of the Chaldeans, that is to interpret oracles for the king. They are given new names by the master of the eunuchs, unto Daniel he gave the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-Nego.

The king decrees that they should receive a portion of the food and wine from his table for three years and then they should be brought before him. Daniel refuses to be defiled by the Kings food and wine and asks the master of the eunuchs if he may eat only vegetables and water. The master feels kindly towards Daniel but is worried the king will have his head if the young men do not thrive under his care.

Daniel convinces the master of eunuchs to allow them ten days to prove they will not suffer and indeed after ten days, they are fairer and fatter of flesh than the other boys who had eaten the kings' food. Daniel and his friends are allowed to continue with their meager diet, remaining undefiled.

Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. When the three years had passed and the trainees were brought before Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were found to be ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm.

Chapter 2: Sometime later, King has dreams that he cannot remember upon waking that are troubling him and making him unable to sleep. He calls in the magicians, and the enchanters, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams.

But the interpreters cannot help him if he cannot remember the dream and protest that what he asks is known only to the gods. The king is furious and orders them all killed. Daniel convinces the king that if he will give him some time, he will give the interpretation.

The King agrees and Daniel shares the problem with his companions. They pray to God to reveal the secret so they will not be killed. Daniel is given a vision during the night and the next morning he is brought before the king to reveal the meaning.

Daniel tells him that none of his wise men, enchanters, magicians, nor soothsayers could solve this problem but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets. He tells the king that his dream was of a giant statue, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay.

SUMMARY Continued

He hits the clay and iron feet with a rock and the statue crumbles to dust which is carried away by the wind. The stone which struck the statue becomes a great mountain which fills the whole earth.

Daniel explains that Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold and he will be followed by an inferior kingdom, then another which will rule over the entire earth. This will be followed by a fourth kingdom which will be as strong as iron but fractured and broken.

During these times, God will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Daniel assures the King that the dream and its meaning are certain. The king is so impressed with Daniel's revelation that declares your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets.

He promotes Daniel to be governor of all of Babylon and chief of all its wise men. Daniel takes care to see his companions are given prestigious positions in the city, but Daniel remains a close confidant of the king.

Chapter 3: King Nebuchadnezzar made himself a giant statue of gold and summoned all the officials and rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the statue. He commanded that everyone should fall down and worship the statue or be thrown into a fiery furnace. Most of the people did as he commanded but The Chaldeans complained to the King that the companions of Daniel refused to worship their gods or his statue.

Nebuchadnezzar ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego brought before him and asks if he has them killed for refusing to worship the statue, will their god deliver them from the fiery furnace? The companions answer that if it is Gods will they will be delivered but they will not worship his gods or his image either way. The king is furious and orders the furnace to be stoked and the men tossed in.

The furnace was so hot that the men who brought Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to it were killed by the heat. The companions fell into the flames but Nebuchadnezzar was astonished to see four men walking in the fire.

He asked if they hadn't thrown but three men in. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods.

The king called to them and they came out of the fire, unharmed. Even their clothing was not burnt. Nebuchadnezzar declared, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and have yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

The king decreed that death would be the penalty for anyone who spoke against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego because no other god could perform such miracles. The king then promoted them all.

SUMMARY Continued

Chapter 4: Nebuchadnezzar has another troubling dream which his cadre of soothsayers and magicians cannot interpret. Finally Daniel is brought before the king and he tells him of his dream.

The King sees a huge tree, which seemed to reach as high as heaven and filled the ends of the earth. Animals and birds made their homes there and the great tree provided food for all. The king sees a watcher and a holy one come down from heaven and command that the tree be cut down but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven.

Daniel is shocked and unable to speak for a moment. He then explains to the king that he is the mighty tree which will be cut down. He will lose his mind and wander the fields, eating grass like oxen with the heart and mind of an animal.

This madness will last until seven times pass over him (seven years), and he realizes that the Most-High rules in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The tree stump left in the ground means he will be restored to his kingdom after he has learned his lesson that the heavens do rule...this is the will of the watchers and the holy ones.

Daniel advises him to behave righteously and show mercy to the poor in hopes that he may forestall this terrible fate. But a year later as the king was walking through Babylon, he bragged that he had built this great city by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty.

As the words were in his mouth, God struck him mad and he was driven from the world of men. He spent seven years eating grass and wandering with the beasts. Finally, his senses returned to him and he raised his eyes to heaven and praised the everlasting God.

His power and kingdom are restored to him and declares, Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all his works are truth, and his ways justice; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Chapter 5: King Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar throws a great party for a thousand of his lords. He commands that the vessels which were taken from the house of God in Jerusalem be brought out and the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines, drank from them and they raised a toast to the gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

Suddenly a hand appeared and wrote a strange message on the wall of the king's palace. The king was terrified and called for his soothsayers and enchanters. The king offered wealth and a position, third highest in the kingdom, for any who could reveal their meaning.

None could interpret the writing on the wall. The queen told the king of Daniel who had served Nebuchadnezzar, his father. He had been of high renown as the greatest interpreter of dreams and that the spirit dwelt within him.

SUMMARY Continued

Daniel is brought before the king and offered wealth and power if he can explain the meaning of the words. Daniel says he has no interest in the wealth or power but will read the message for the king. He reads: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN."

This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

The king rewarded Daniel as he had promised, but that night the king was killed and the kingdom was received by Darius the Mede.

Chapter 6: Darius gave Daniel a high-ranking position in his kingdom and Daniel was promoted to rule over the whole realm. Some of the other king's men were jealous of Daniel and tried to find some fault with him but because of his faithfulness, no error could be found. But they knew of his devotion to his god and devised a plan to use it against him.

Some counselors convinced the king to sign a decree that for one month, no man could pray to any god or petition any man but to Darius, the king. Daniel refused to obey, and with his windows open wide, prayed three times a day, facing Jerusalem.

The conspirators complained to the king that Daniel was breaking the king's law and must be punished. The king wanted to protect Daniel, but the lords insisted the king's law could not be changed.

So, reluctantly, the king ordered Daniel to be locked into a den of lions overnight. As they rolled a heavy stone over the mouth of the den and it was sealed, the king remarked, Thy God whom thou serve continually, he will deliver thee.

Heavy hearted, the king returned to his palace and passed the troubled night without sleeping. He rose early and hurried to the lions' den and called out to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou serve continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? and Daniel answered, My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me.

Daniel is brought out of the lion den, unharmed and the king ordered that the men who had accused him, and their families be thrown into the den of lions. They are all killed. Darius writes a letter to all peoples of the earth saying, I make a decree, that in all the dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God, and steadfast forever, his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed; and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivers and rescues, and he works signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

Chapter 7: During king Belshazzar's first year, Daniel had a vision which he wrote down: Daniel sees the four winds of heaven blow upon the great sea. He sees four beasts rise up from the sea. The first was like a lion with eagle wings. The wings were plucked and it stood on two feet and became a man with a man's heart.

SUMMARY Continued

The second beast looked like a bear, raised up on one side. In his mouth were three rib bones. It is told, Arise, devour much flesh. The third beast looked like a leopard which had four wings and four heads and dominion was given to it. The fourth beast was terrible and powerful with iron teeth that devoured all and stamped the residue with his feet. It also had ten horns.

Daniel studies the horns and sees a small horn which forces out three others by the roots. The small horn had eyes like a man and a mouth which spoke great things. Thrones were brought out and an ancient one sat.

His clothes and hair were pure white and his throne was of flames with wheels of burning fire and thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

The beast is slain, it's body destroyed and burned. The rest of the beasts lost their power but lived for a season and a time.

Then, Daniel sees coming with the clouds of heaven, one like the son of man, as in the ancient days, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel is troubled and asks the truth concerning all he has seen. He is told the four beasts are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. But they will lose their kingdoms to the Saints of the Most-High who will possess the kingdom forever and ever.

Daniel asks about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others. Which had the iron teeth and nails of brass. He asked about the little horn with eyes and mouth which spoke great things and which three horns fell out before it.

Daniel is told that the fourth beast is a fourth kingdom on the earth which is different from the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth and tread it down and break it into pieces. The ten horns represent ten kings which will rise from this kingdom and another will rise after them, different from the rest and will establish three kings.

He will speak against God and wear out the saints. He will seek to change the times and the laws. And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time (three and a half years).

But in the end, his kingdom will be destroyed and he will be judged. Then the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most-High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Daniel is changed after this vision and although troubled, keeps the matter in his heart.

SUMMARY Continued

Chapter 8: Daniel has another vision in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar. He sees himself in the palace of Shushan, in the province of Elam near the river of Ulai. Beside the river stood a ram with two horns, but another, higher horn rose. The ram pushes west, north and south and concurs all other beasts before him. He does as he will and his power and arrogance grow.

Suddenly, a male goat comes from the west. He seems to cover the whole earth and his feet do not touch the ground. This goat had a horn between his eyes and approached the ram which stood near the river. He attacks the ram and breaks his two horns. The ram is powerless against the goat and he is trampled under his feet.

The goat grows strong and the great horn is broken. In its place grew four horns toward the four winds of heaven. Out of one of the four grows another small horn which grows exceedingly great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the glorious land.

It grew so large it cast down some stars and host of heaven to the ground and trampled them. It continued to grow until it overwhelmed the prince of the host and knocked over the burnt offerings and cast down the sanctuary.

Even truth is cast down to the ground. The holy ones wonder how long this can go on, and he said unto me, "Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Gabriel speaks to Daniel to help him understand what he has seen. He tells him these are visions of the end times. He says that the ram with two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. The he-goat is the king of Greece. The great horn between his eyes is the first king. The broken horn which four grew back represents four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not with his power.

Toward the end of the kingdoms days a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. This king will be a destroyer of the mighty and the holy. His arrogance will kill many and he will attempt to stand against the Prince of Princes but will finally be broken.

Daniel knows these visions are of some future time. He faints and is sick for several days but recovers and returns to doing the kings business. "I wondered at the vision, but none understood it."

Chapter 9: In the first year of Darius's reign over the Chaldeans, Daniel is familiar with the prophecy of Jeremiah and knows the Hebrews' seventy years period of exile is coming to an end. He is fasting and praying for the forgiveness for the sins of Israel and a return to Jerusalem. While he prays, Gabriel returns to him to bring wisdom and understanding.

He tells him that seventy weeks of exile will be required to atone for the transgressions of Israel and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

SUMMARY Continued

He reveals that the length of time from the commandment to build and restore Jerusalem until the arrival of the anointed one, the Prince, would be seven weeks and the city would be rebuilt in sixty-two weeks, even in troublesome times. After sixty two weeks the anointed one will be cut off, and shall have nothing. The people will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Wars will rage until the end comes with a flood.

He will make a firm promise to many which will last one week. During that week, there will be no sacrifices or obligations and on the wing of abominations shall come one that make desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate.

Chapter 10: In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia Daniel has another vision during a time of mourning and fasting. On the twenty fourth day he is beside the river Tigris and saw a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with pure gold of Uphaz.

His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as flaming torches, and his arms and his feet like unto burnished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Then men with Daniel did not see the vision, but they were afraid so they ran away, leaving Daniel alone. He is told he will fight the prince of Persia and after he leaves, the prince of Greece will come. The archangel Michael will help them prevail.

Chapter 11: Daniel is told there will be three more kings of Persia. The fourth will be far richer than the others and grow strong and stir up trouble against Greece. A later king will rule with great dominion. His kingdom will be broken but not his family and they will return to power.

The daughter of the king of the south will marry the king of the north. She and her family will perish, but from her, a son will be born who will rise up and prevail against the king of the north and carry away their gods and vessels to Egypt.

Generations of kings of the north and south wage war. Kingdoms earned through battle, flattery and corruption rise and fall. And as for both these kings, their hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table: but it shall not prosper.

The king of the north defeats the south and forsakes the holy covenant. He profanes the sanctuary, removes the offerings and sets up a false god. Despite his wickedness, the people know their God is strong and will perform miracles.

There is a long period of trial and cleansing until the appointed time. The kings of the north and south gather their great armies for battle. The north will arrive like a whirlwind and conquer many countries, including Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia and the glorious land. But he will not prevail against Edom, Moab or Ammon.

This mighty northern king hears rumors from the east and north that trouble him so he sets out with his armies. His plan fails however, and he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

SUMMARY Continued

Chapter 12: During that time there will be great trouble, such as never seen before, but His people, who are written in the book, will be delivered. Many of the dead will rise. Some to everlasting life, others to everlasting shame and contempt.

Daniel is told to shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end. He sees two men on either side of the river. One man, clothed in linen, asks the other how long shall it be before the end of these wonders? The other raises his hands to heaven and swears it shall be for a time, times, and a half, and after they have finished breaking up the power of the holy people.

Daniel asks What shall be the issue of these things? He is told to go his way for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end. The godly will continue to purify themselves and the wicked will be wicked.

He is told that from the time the burnt-offerings are removed and the false god installed in the sanctuary, there shall be a thousand and two hundred and ninety days...But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and shalt stand in thy lot, at the end of the days.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 4:27** Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.
- 6:26** I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end.
- 6:27** He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

CHARACTER Definitions

DANIEL - In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were among the young Jewish nobility carried off to Babylon following the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

The four are chosen for their intellect and beauty to be trained in the Babylonian court and are given new names. Daniel is given the Babylonian name Belteshazzar, while his companions are given the Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

Daniel and his friends refuse the food and wine provided by the king of Babylon to avoid becoming defiled. They receive wisdom from God and surpass all the magicians and enchanters of the kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a giant statue made of four metals with feet of mingled iron and clay, smashed by a stone from heaven.

Only Daniel is able to interpret it: the dream signifies four kingdoms, of which Babylon is the first, but God will destroy them and replace them with his own kingdom.

CHARACTERS Continued

Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a great tree that shelters all the world and of a heavenly figure who decrees that the tree will be destroyed; again, only Daniel can interpret the dream, which concerns the sovereignty of God over the kings of the earth.

When Nebuchadnezzar's son King Belshazzar uses the vessels from the Jewish temple for his feast, a hand appears and writes a mysterious message on the wall, which only Daniel can interpret; it tells the king that his kingdom will be given to the Medes and Persians, because Belshazzar, unlike Nebuchadnezzar, has not acknowledged the sovereignty of the God of Daniel.

The Medes and Persians overthrow Nebuchadnezzar and the new king, Darius the Mede, appoints Daniel to high authority. Jealous rivals attempt to destroy Daniel with an accusation that he worships God instead of the king, and Daniel is thrown into a den of lions, but an angel saves him, his accusers are destroyed, and Daniel is restored to his position.

In the third year of Darius, Daniel has a series of visions. In the first, four beasts come out of the sea, the last with ten horns, and an eleventh horn grows and achieves dominion over the Earth and the Ancient of Days (God) gives dominion to one like a son of man.

An angel interprets the vision. In the second, a ram with two horns is attacked by a goat with one horn; the one horn breaks and is replaced by four. A little horn arises and attacks the people of God and the temple, and Daniel is informed how long the little horn's dominion will endure. In the third, Daniel is troubled to read in holy scripture (the book is not named but appears to be Jeremiah) that Jerusalem would be desolate for 70 years.

Daniel repents on behalf of the Jews and requests that Jerusalem and its people be restored. An angel refers to a period of 70 sevens (or weeks) of years. In the final vision, Daniel sees a period of history culminating in a struggle between the "king of the north" and the king of the south in which God's people suffer terribly; an angel explains that in the end the righteous will be vindicated and God's kingdom will be established on Earth.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR – Nebuchadnezzar II, sometimes alternately spelled Nebuchadrezzar, was king of Babylonia from approximately 605 BC until approximately 562 BC. He is considered the greatest king of the Babylonian Empire and is credited with the construction of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned by name around 90 times in the Bible, in both the historical and prophetic literature of the Hebrew Scriptures. Nebuchadnezzar receives the most attention in the book of Daniel, appearing as the main character, beside Daniel, in chapters 1–4.

In biblical history, Nebuchadnezzar is most famous for the conquering of Judah and the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem in 586 BC. Judah had become a tribute state to Babylon in 605 BC but rebelled in 597 BC during the reign of Jehoiachin and then again in 588 BC during the reign of Zedekiah.

CHARACTERS Continued

Tired of the rebellions and seeing that Judah had not learned its lesson when he invaded, conquered, and deported Judah in 597, Nebuchadnezzar and his general, Nebuzaradan, proceeded to completely destroy the temple and most of Jerusalem, deporting most of the remaining residents to Babylon. In this, Nebuchadnezzar served as God's instrument of judgment on Judah for its idolatry, unfaithfulness, and disobedience.

Secular history records Nebuchadnezzar as a brutal, powerful, and ambitious king, and the Bible, for the most part, agrees. However, the book of Daniel gives additional insight into his character. Daniel chapter 2 records God giving Nebuchadnezzar a dream about what kingdoms would arise after his own.

In the dream, Nebuchadnezzar was a "head of gold" on a statue, with the descending parts of the body, comprised of silver, bronze, iron, and iron mixed with clay, representing the less powerful kingdoms that would come after him. Nebuchadnezzar demanded the astrologers and wise men to interpret his dream without him telling it to them and, when they were unable to, Nebuchadnezzar ordered all of the astrologers and wise men to be killed.

Daniel spoke up and, through a miracle from God, interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The king then promoted Daniel to be one of his most influential advisors. Interestingly, when Daniel interpreted his dream, Nebuchadnezzar declared, Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.

In Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar created a gold statue of himself and required all the people to bow down to it whenever the music played. Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, refused, and the king had them thrown into a blazing furnace.

Miraculously, God protected them, and when they came out of the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.

In Daniel chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar is given another dream by God. Daniel interpreted the dream for Nebuchadnezzar and informed him that the dream was a warning to the king to humble himself and recognize that his power, wealth, and influence were from God, not of his own making.

Nebuchadnezzar did not heed the warning of the dream, so God judged him as the dream had declared. Nebuchadnezzar was driven insane for seven years. When the king's sanity was restored, he finally humbled himself before God.

CHARACTERS Continued

In Daniel 4:3, Nebuchadnezzar declares, How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Nebuchadnezzar continued in Daniel 4:34–37, For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’.

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

The exclamations of Nebuchadnezzar recorded in the book of Daniel have led some to consider the possibility that Nebuchadnezzar became a believer in the one true God. History records Nebuchadnezzar being a follower of the Babylonian gods Nabu and Marduk.

Is it possible that Nebuchadnezzar renounced these false gods and instead only worshipped the one true God? Yes, it is possible. If nothing else, Nebuchadnezzar became a henotheist, believing in many gods but worshipping only one God as supreme. Based on his words recorded in Daniel, it definitely seems like Nebuchadnezzar submitted himself to the one true God.

Further evidence is the fact that God refers to Nebuchadnezzar as “my servant” three times in the book of Jeremiah. Was Nebuchadnezzar saved? Ultimately, this is not a question that can be answered dogmatically. Whatever the case, the story of Nebuchadnezzar is an example of God’s sovereignty over all men and the truth that the king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He will.

BELSHAZZAR – Belshazzar was the last king of ancient Babylon and is mentioned in Daniel 5. Belshazzar reigned for a short time during the life of Daniel the prophet. His name, meaning “Bel protect the king,” is a prayer to a Babylonian god; as his story shows, Bel was powerless to save this evil ruler.

Belshazzar ruled Babylon, a powerful nation with a long history and a long line of powerful kings. One of those kings was Nebuchadnezzar, who had conquered Judah, bringing the temple treasures to Babylon along with Daniel and many other captives. Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson through his daughter Nitocris. Belshazzar calls Nebuchadnezzar his “father” in Daniel 5:13, but this is a generic use of the word father, meaning “ancestor.”

During his life, King Nebuchadnezzar had encountered the God of Israel’s power and was humbled by Him, but twenty years after Nebuchadnezzar’s death, his grandson Belshazzar praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

One fateful night in 539 BC, as the Medes and the Persians lay siege to the city of Babylon, King Belshazzar held a feast with his household and a thousand of his noblemen.

CHARACTERS Continued

The king demanded all the gold and silver cups and vessels plundered from the Jewish temple be brought to the royal banquet hall. They filled the vessels with wine and drank from them, praising their false gods.

The use of the articles from the Jewish temple was a blasphemous attempt for Belshazzar to relive the glory days of his kingdom, to recall the time when Babylon was conquering other nations instead of being threatened with annihilation from the Persians outside their walls.

As the drunken king reveled, God sent him a sign: a human hand appeared, floating near the lampstand and writing four words in the plaster of the wall: "MENE MENE TEKEL PARSIN." Then, the hand disappeared.

The king paled and was extremely frightened; he called his wise men and astrologers and enchanters to tell him what the writing meant, promising that whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom. But none of the wise men of Babylon could interpret the words.

Hearing a commotion in the banquet hall, the queen (possibly Nitocris or even Nebuchadnezzar's widow) came to investigate. She remembered Daniel as one whose wisdom Nebuchadnezzar had trusted, and she told Belshazzar to summon the Jewish prophet.

Daniel was brought before the king, but he refused the gifts Belshazzar offered him, the kingdom was not his to give, as it turned out. Daniel rebuked Belshazzar's pride: although the king knew the story of how God humbled his grandfather, he did not humble himself. Instead, he dishonored God by drinking from the sacred items of the temple.

Then, Daniel interpreted the words on the wall. Mene means God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end. Tekel means you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Parsin means your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Daniel never revealed what language those words belong to.

That night, the Persians invaded. Cyrus the Great, king of Medo-Persia, broke through the supposedly impenetrable wall of Babylon by cleverly diverting the river flowing into the city so that his soldiers could enter through the river duct.

Historical records show that this invasion was made possible because the entire city was involved in a great feast—the feast of Belshazzar mentioned in Daniel 5. That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom.

BIBLE TIMELINE

605 BC	Daniel Refuses the King's Portion	Daniel 1
604 BC	Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar Dream	Daniel 2
585 BC	Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego	Daniel 3
582 BC	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream	Daniel 4
539 BC	Daniel Interprets Handwriting on the Wall	Daniel 5
539 BC	Daniel Survives the Lions' Den	Daniel 6
539 BC	Daniel's Vision of Four Beasts	Daniel 7
539 BC	Daniel's Vision of the Ram and Goat	Daniel 8
539 BC	Daniel's Prayer and Gabriel's Answer	Daniel 9
539 BC	Daniel Comforted by the Angel	Daniel 10
539 BC	Daniel Prophecies Overthrow of Persia	Daniel 11
539 BC	Daniel Prophecies Deliverance for Israel	Daniel 12

MAP REFERENCES

