

Daniel

Daniel Finds Favor in Babylon

1:1 In the third¹ year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar² of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem³ and laid it under siege.⁴ **1:2** Now the Lord⁵ delivered⁶ King Jehoiakim of Judah into his power,⁷ along with some of the vessels⁸ of the temple of God.⁹ He brought them to the land of Babylonia¹⁰ to the temple of his god¹¹ and put¹² the vessels in the treasury of his god.

¹ **sn** The *third year of the reign of Jehoiakim* would be ca. 605 B.C. At this time Daniel would have been a teenager. The reference to Jehoiakim's third year poses a serious *crux interpretum*, since elsewhere these events are linked to his fourth year (Jer 25:1; cf. 2 Kgs 24:1; 2 Chr 36:5-8). Apparently Daniel is following an accession year chronology, whereby the first partial year of a king's reign was reckoned as the accession year rather than as the first year of his reign. Jeremiah, on the other hand, is following a nonaccession year chronology, whereby the accession year is reckoned as the first year of the king's reign. In that case, the conflict is only superficial. Most modern scholars, however, have concluded that Daniel is historically inaccurate here.

² **sn** King Nebuchadnezzar ruled Babylon from ca. 605-562 B.C.

³ **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

⁴ **sn** This attack culminated in the first of three major deportations of Jews to Babylon. The second one occurred in 597 B.C. and included among many other Jewish captives the prophet Ezekiel. The third deportation occurred in 586 B.C., at which time the temple and the city of Jerusalem were thoroughly destroyed.

⁵ **tn** The Hebrew term translated "Lord" here is אֲדֹנָי (*adonay*).

⁶ **tn** Heb "gave."

⁷ **tn** Heb "hand," which is often used idiomatically for one's power and authority. See BDB 390 s.v. יָד 2.

⁸ **tn** Or "utensils"; or "articles."

⁹ **tn** Heb "house of God."

¹⁰ **sn** The *land of Babylonia* (Heb "the land of Shinar") is another name for Sumer and Akkad, where Babylon was located (cf. Gen 10:10; 11:2; 14:1, 9; Josh 7:21; Isa 11:11; Zech 5:11).

¹¹ **tn** Or "gods" (NCV, NRSV, TEV; also later in this verse). The Hebrew term can be used as a numerical plural for many gods or as a plural of majesty for one particular god. Since Nebuchadnezzar was a polytheist, it is not clear if the reference here is to many gods or one particular deity. The plural of majesty, while normally used for Israel's God, is occasionally used of foreign gods (cf. BDB 43 s.v. אֱלֹהִים 1, 2). See Judg 11:24 (of the Moabite god Chemosh); 1 Sam 5:7 (of the Philistine god Dagon); 1 Kgs 11:33 (of the Canaanite goddess Astarte, the Moabite god Chemosh, and the Ammonite god Milcom); 2 Kgs 19:37 (of the Assyrian god Nisroch). Since gods normally had their own individual temples, Dan 1:2 probably refers to a particular deity, perhaps Marduk, the supreme god of Babylon, or Marduk's son Nabu, after whom Nebuchadnezzar was named. The name Nebuchadnezzar means "Nabu has protected the son who will inherit" (HALOT 660 s.v. נְבוּכַדְרֶצְצַר). For a discussion of how temples functioned in Babylonian religion see H. Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, 77-81.

¹² **tn** Heb "brought." Though the Hebrew verb "brought" is

1:3 The king commanded¹³ Ashpenaz,¹⁴ who was in charge of his court officials,¹⁵ to choose¹⁶ some of the Israelites who were of royal and noble descent¹⁷ – **1:4** young men in whom there was no physical defect and who were handsome,¹⁸ well versed in all kinds of wisdom, well educated¹⁹ and having keen insight,²⁰ and who were capable²¹ of entering the king's royal service²² – and to teach them the literature and language²³ of the Babylonians.²⁴ **1:5** So the king assigned them a daily ration²⁵ from his royal delicacies²⁶ and from the wine he himself drank. They were to be trained²⁷ for the next three years. At the end of that time they were to enter the king's service.²⁸ **1:6** As it turned out,²⁹ among these young men³⁰ were some from Judah:³¹ Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.³² **1:7** But the overseer of the court officials renamed them. He gave³³ Daniel the name Belteshazzar, Hananiah he named Shadrach,

repeated in this verse, the translation uses "brought...put" for stylistic variation.

¹³ **tn** Or "gave orders to." Heb "said to."

¹⁴ **sn** It is possible that the word *Ashpenaz* is not a proper name at all, but a general term for "innkeeper." See J. J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia), 127, n. 9. However, the ancient versions understand the term to be a name, and the present translation (along with most English versions) understands the word in this way.

¹⁵ **sn** The word *court official* (Hebrew *saris*) need not mean "eunuch" in a technical sense (see Gen 37:36, where the term refers to Potiphar, who had a wife), although in the case of the book of Daniel there was in Jewish literature a common tradition to that effect. On the OT usage of this word see HALOT 769-70 s.v. סָרִיס.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb "bring."

¹⁷ **tn** Heb "and from the seed of royalty and from the nobles."

¹⁸ **tn** Heb "good of appearance."

¹⁹ **tn** Heb "knowers of knowledge."

²⁰ **tn** Heb "understanders of knowledge."

²¹ **tn** Heb "who had strength."

²² **tn** Heb "to stand in the palace of the king." Cf. vv. 5, 19.

²³ **sn** The *language of the Chaldeans* referred to here is Akkadian, an East Semitic cuneiform language.

²⁴ **tn** Heb "Chaldeans" (so KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV). This is an ancient name for the Babylonians.

²⁵ **tn** Heb "a thing of a day in its day."

²⁶ **tn** Heb "from the delicacies of the king."

²⁷ **tn** Or "educated." See HALOT 179 s.v. נִדְרָל.

²⁸ **tn** Heb "stand before the king."

²⁹ **tn** Heb "and it happened that."

³⁰ **tn** Heb "among them"; the referent (the young men taken captive from Judah) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

³¹ **tn** Heb "the sons of Judah."

³² **sn** The names reflect a Jewish heritage. In Hebrew *Daniel* means "God is my judge"; *Hananiah* means "the Lord is gracious"; *Mishael* means "who is what God is?"; *Azariah* means "the Lord has helped."

³³ **tc** The LXX and Vulgate lack the verb here.

Mishael he named Meshach, and Azariah he named Abednego.¹

1:8 But Daniel made up his mind² that he would not defile³ himself with the royal delicacies or the royal wine.⁴ He therefore asked the overseer of the court officials for permission not to defile himself. **1:9** Then God made the overseer of the court officials sympathetic to Daniel.⁵ **1:10** But he⁶ responded to Daniel, “I fear my master the king. He is the one who has decided⁷ your food and drink. What would happen if he saw that you looked malnourished in comparison to the other young men your age?⁸ If that happened,⁹ you would endanger my life¹⁰ with the king!” **1:11** Daniel then spoke to the warden¹¹ whom the overseer of the court officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: **1:12** “Please test your servants for ten days by providing us with some vegetables to eat and water to drink. **1:13** Then compare our appearance¹² with that of¹³ the young men who are eating the royal delicacies;¹⁴ deal with us¹⁵ in light of what you see.” **1:14** So the warden¹⁶

agreed to their proposal¹⁷ and tested them for ten¹⁸ days.

1:15 At the end of the ten days their appearance was better and their bodies were healthier¹⁹ than all the young men who had been eating the royal delicacies. **1:16** So the warden removed the delicacies and the wine²⁰ from their diet²¹ and gave them a diet of vegetables instead. **1:17** Now as for these four young men, God endowed them with knowledge and skill in all sorts of literature and wisdom – and Daniel had insight into all kinds of visions and dreams.

1:18 When the time appointed by the king arrived,²² the overseer of the court officials brought them into Nebuchadnezzar’s presence. **1:19** When the king spoke with them, he did not find among the entire group²³ anyone like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, or Azariah. So they entered the king’s service.²⁴ **1:20** In every matter of wisdom and²⁵ insight the king asked them about, he found them to be ten times²⁶ better than any of the magicians and astrologers that were in his entire empire. **1:21** Now Daniel lived on until the first²⁷ year of Cyrus the king.

Nebuchadnezzar Has a Disturbing Dream

2:1 In the second year of his²⁸ reign Nebuchadnezzar had many dreams.²⁹ His mind³⁰ was

¹ **sn** The meanings of the Babylonian names are more conjectural than is the case with the Hebrew names. The probable etymologies are as follows: *Belteshazzar* means “protect his life,” although the MT vocalization may suggest “Belti, protect the king” (cf. Dan 4:8); *Shadrach* perhaps means “command of Aku”; *Meshach* is of uncertain meaning; *Abednego* means “servant of Nego.” Assigning Babylonian names to the Hebrew youths may have been an attempt to erase from their memory their Israelite heritage.

² **tn** *Heb* “placed on his heart.”

³ **tn** Or “would not make himself ceremonially unclean”; TEV “become ritually unclean.”

sn Various reasons have been suggested as to why such food would defile Daniel. Perhaps it had to do with violations of Mosaic law with regard to unclean foods, or perhaps it had to do with such food having been offered to idols. Daniel’s practice in this regard is strikingly different from that of Esther, who was able successfully to conceal her Jewish identity.

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “with the delicacies of the king and with the wine of his drinking.”

⁵ **tn** *Heb* “Then God granted Daniel loyal love and compassion before the overseer of the court officials.” The expression “loyal love and compassion” is a hendiadys; the two words combine to express one idea.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “The overseer of the court officials.” The subject has been specified in the translation for the sake of clarity.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* “assigned.” See v. 5.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Why should he see your faces thin from the young men who are according to your age?” The term translated “thin” occurs only here and in Gen 40:6, where it appears to refer to a dejected facial expression. The word is related to an Arabic root meaning “be weak.” See HALOT 277 s.v. חָזַק.

⁹ **tn** The words “if that happened” are not in the Hebrew text but have been added in the translation for clarity.

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* “my head.” Presumably this is an implicit reference to capital punishment (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT), although this is not entirely clear.

¹¹ **sn** Having failed to convince the overseer, Daniel sought the favor of the warden whom the overseer had appointed to care for the young men.

¹² **tn** *Heb* “let our appearance be seen before you.”

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “the appearance of.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “delicacies of the king.” So also in v. 15.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “your servants.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (the warden mentioned in v. 11) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “listened to them with regard to this matter.”

¹⁸ **sn** The number ten is sometimes used in the OT as an ideal number of completeness. Cf. v. 20; Zech 8:23; Rev 2:10.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* “fat of flesh”; KJV, ASV “fatter in flesh”; NASB, NRSV “fatter” (although this is no longer a sign of health in Western culture).

²⁰ **tn** *Heb* “the wine of their drinking.”

²¹ **tn** The words “from their diet” are not in the Hebrew text but have been added in the translation for clarity.

²² **tn** *Heb* “at the end of the days which the king said to bring them.”

²³ **tn** *Heb* “from all of them.”

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* “stood before the king.”

²⁵ **tc** The MT lacks the conjunction, reading the first word in the phrase as a construct (“wisdom of insight”). While this reading is not impossible, it seems better to follow Theodotion, the Syriac, the Vulgate, and the Sahidic Coptic, all of which have the conjunction.

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* “hands.”

²⁷ **sn** The Persian king Cyrus’ first year in control of Babylon was 539 B.C. Daniel actually lived beyond the first year of Cyrus, as is clear from 10:1. The purpose of the statement in 1:21 is merely to say that Daniel’s life spanned the entire period of the neo-Babylonian empire. His life span also included the early years of the Persian control of Babylon. However, by that time his age was quite advanced; he probably died sometime in the 530’s B.C.

²⁸ **tn** *Heb* “Nebuchadnezzar’s.” The possessive pronoun is substituted in the translation for stylistic reasons.

²⁹ **tn** *Heb* “dreamed dreams.” The plural is used here and in v. 2, but the singular in v. 3. The plural “dreams” has been variously explained. Some interpreters take the plural as denoting an indefinite singular (so GKC 400 §124.o). But it may be that it is describing a stream of related dreams, or a dream state. In the latter case, one might translate: “Nebuchadnezzar was in a trance.” See further, J. A. Montgomery, *Daniel* (ICC), 142.

³⁰ **tn** *Heb* “his spirit.”

disturbed and he suffered from insomnia.⁴ 2:2 The king issued an order² to summon the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and wise men³ in order to explain his dreams to him.⁴ So they came and awaited the king's instructions.⁵

2:3 The king told them, "I have had a dream,⁶ and I am anxious to understand the dream." 2:4 The wise men replied to the king: [What follows is in Aramaic⁸] "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will disclose its⁹ interpretation." 2:5 The king replied¹⁰ to the wise men, "My decision is firm.¹¹ If you do not inform me of both the dream and its interpretation, you will be dismembered¹² and your homes reduced to rubble! 2:6 But if you can disclose the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts, a reward, and considerable honor. So disclose to me the dream and its interpretation!" 2:7 They again replied, "Let the

king inform us¹³ of the dream; then we will disclose its¹⁴ interpretation." 2:8 The king replied, "I know for sure that you are attempting to gain time, because you see that my decision is firm. 2:9 If you don't inform me of the dream, there is only one thing that is going to happen to you.¹⁵ For you have agreed among yourselves to report to me something false and deceitful¹⁶ until such time as things might change. So tell me the dream, and I will have confidence¹⁷ that you can disclose its interpretation."

2:10 The wise men replied to the king, "There is no man on earth who is able to disclose the king's secret,¹⁸ for no king, regardless of his position and power, has ever requested such a thing from any magician, astrologer, or wise man. 2:11 What the king is asking is too difficult, and no one exists who can disclose it to the king, except for the gods – but they don't live among mortals!"¹⁹

2:12 Because of this the king got furiously angry²⁰ and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 2:13 So a decree went out, and the wise men were about²¹ to be executed. They also sought²² Daniel and his friends so that they could be executed.

2:14 Then Daniel spoke with prudent counsel²³ to Arioch, who was in charge of the king's executioners and who had gone out to execute the wise men of Babylon. 2:15 He inquired of Arioch the king's deputy, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?"²⁴ Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter. 2:16 So Daniel went in and²⁵ requested the king to grant him time, that he might disclose the interpretation to the king. 2:17 Then Daniel went to his home and informed his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the matter. 2:18 He asked them to

¹ tn Heb "his sleep left (?) him." The use of the verb *הָיָה* (*hayah*, "to be") here is unusual. The context suggests a meaning such as "to be finished" or "gone." Cf. Dan 8:27. Some scholars emend the verb to read *נִדְּחָה* (*nad'edah*, "fled"); cf. Dan 6:19. See further, DCH 2:540 s.v. הָיָה I Ni.3; HALOT 244 s.v. הָיָה Niph.2.

² tn Heb "said." So also in v. 12.

³ tn Heb "Chaldeans." The term *Chaldeans* (Hebrew *כַּשְׁדִּיִּים*, *kasdim*) is used in the book of Daniel both in an ethnic sense and, as here, to refer to a caste of Babylonian wise men and astrologers.

⁴ tn Heb "to explain to the king his dreams."

⁵ tn Heb "stood before the king."

⁶ tn Heb "I have dreamed a dream" (so KJV, ASV).

⁷ tn Heb "my spirit."

⁸ sn Contrary to common belief, the point here is not that the wise men (Chaldeans) replied to the king in the Aramaic language, or that this language was uniquely the language of the Chaldeans. It was this view that led in the past to Aramaic being referred to as "Chaldee." Aramaic was used as a *lingua franca* during this period; its origins and usage were not restricted to the Babylonians. Rather, this phrase is better understood as an editorial note (cf. NAB) marking the fact that from 2:4b through 7:28 the language of the book shifts from Hebrew to Aramaic. In 8:1, and for the remainder of the book, the language returns to Hebrew. Various views have been advanced to account for this change of language, most of which are unconvincing. Most likely the change in language is a reflection of stages in the transmission history of the book of Daniel.

⁹ tn Or "the."

¹⁰ tn Aram "answered and said," a common idiom to indicate a reply, but redundant in contemporary English.

¹¹ tn It seems clear from what follows that Nebuchadnezzar clearly recalls the content of the dream, although obviously he does not know what to make of it. By not divulging the dream itself to the would-be interpreters, he intends to find out whether they are simply leading him on. If they can tell him the dream's content, which he is able to verify, he then can have confidence in their interpretation, which is what eludes him. The translation "the matter is gone from me" (cf. KJV, ASV), suggesting that the king had simply forgotten the dream, is incorrect. The Aramaic word used here (*אָזְדָּא*, '*azda*') is probably of Persian origin; it occurs in the OT only here and in v. 8. There are two main possibilities for the meaning of the word: "the matter is promulgated by me" (see KBL 1048 s.v.) and therefore "publicly known" (cf. NRSV; F. Rosenthal, *Grammar*, 62-63, §189), or "the matter is irrevocable" (cf. NAB, NIV, TEV, CEV, NLT; HALOT 1808 s.v. *אָזְדָּא*; cf. also BDB 1079 s.v.). The present translation reflects this latter option. See further E. Vogt, *Lexicon linguae aramaicae*, 3.

¹² tn Aram "made limbs." Cf. 3:29.

¹³ tn Aram "his servants."

¹⁴ tn Or "the."

¹⁵ tn Aram "one is your law," i.e., only one thing is applicable to you.

¹⁶ tn Aram "a lying and corrupt word."

¹⁷ tn Aram "I will know."

¹⁸ tn Aram "matter, thing."

¹⁹ tn Aram "whose dwelling is not with flesh."

²⁰ tn Aram "was angry and very furious." The expression is a hendiadys (two words or phrases expressing a single idea).

²¹ tn The Aramaic participle is used here to express the imminent future.

²² tn The impersonal active plural ("they sought") of the Aramaic verb could also be translated as an English passive: "Daniel and his friends were sought" (cf. NAB).

²³ tn Aram "returned prudence and counsel." The expression is a hendiadys.

²⁴ tn The Aramaic word *מִתְהַקְחִים* (*m^hhakhtim^fah*) may refer to the severity of the king's decree (i.e., "harsh"; so HALOT 1879 s.v. *הִקְחָה*; BDB 1093 s.v. *הִקְחָה*), although it would seem that in a delicate situation such as this Daniel would avoid this kind of criticism of the king's actions. The translation above understands the word to refer to the immediacy, not harshness, of the decree. See further, F. Rosenthal, *Grammar*, 50, §116; E. Vogt, *Lexicon linguae aramaicae*, 67.

²⁵ tc Theodotion and the Syriac lack the words "went in and."

pray for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that he⁴ and his friends would not be destroyed along with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. **2:19** Then in a night vision the mystery was revealed to Daniel. So Daniel praised² the God of heaven, **2:20** saying,³

“Let the name of God⁴ be praised⁵ forever and ever,

for wisdom and power belong to him.

2:21 He changes times and seasons, deposing some kings and establishing others.⁶

He gives wisdom to the wise; he imparts knowledge to those with understanding;⁷

2:22 he reveals deep and hidden things.

He knows what is in the darkness, and light resides with him.

2:23 O God of my fathers, I acknowledge and glorify you,

for you have bestowed wisdom and power on me.

Now you have enabled me to understand what I⁸ requested from you.

For you have enabled me to understand the king’s dilemma.”⁹

2:24 Then Daniel went in to see¹⁰ Arioch (whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon). He came¹¹ and said to him, “Don’t destroy the wise men of Babylon! Escort me¹² to the king, and I will disclose the interpretation to him!”¹³

2:25 So Arioch quickly ushered Daniel into the king’s presence, saying to him, “[¹⁴ have found a man from the captives of Judah who can make known the interpretation to the king.”

2:26 The king then asked Daniel (whose name was also Beltshazzar), “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I saw, as well as its interpretation?” **2:27** Daniel replied to the king, “The mystery that the king is asking about is such that no wise men, astrologers, magicians, or

diviners can possibly disclose it to the king. **2:28** However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries,¹⁵ and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the times to come.¹⁶ The dream and the visions you had while lying on your bed¹⁷ are as follows.

2:29 “As for you, O king, while you were in your bed your thoughts turned to future things.¹⁸

The revealer of mysteries has made known to you what will take place. **2:30** As for me, this mystery was revealed to me not because I possess more wisdom¹⁹ than any other living person, but so that the king may understand²⁰ the interpretation and comprehend the thoughts of your mind.²¹

2:31 “You, O king, were watching as a great statue – one²² of impressive size and extraordinary brightness – was standing before you. Its appearance caused alarm. **2:32** As for that statue, its head was of fine gold, its chest and arms were of silver, its belly and thighs were of bronze. **2:33** Its legs were of iron; its feet were partly of iron and partly of clay.²³ **2:34** You were watching as²⁴ a stone was cut out,²⁵ but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its iron and clay feet, breaking them in pieces. **2:35** Then the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold were broken in pieces without distinction²⁶ and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors that the wind carries away. Not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the statue became a large mountain that filled the entire earth. **2:36** This was the dream. Now we²⁷ will set forth before the king its interpretation.

Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

2:37 “You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has granted you sovereignty,

¹⁵ **tn** *Aram* “a revealer of mysteries.” The phrase serves as a quasi-title for God in Daniel.

¹⁶ **tn** *Aram* “in the latter days.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Aram* “your dream and the visions of your head upon your bed.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Aram* “your thoughts upon your bed went up to what will be after this.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Aram* “not for any wisdom which is in me more than [in] any living man.”

²⁰ **tn** *Aram* “they might cause the king to know.” The impersonal plural is used here to refer to the role of God’s spirit in revealing the dream and its interpretation to the king. As J. A. Montgomery says, “it appropriately here veils the mysterious agency” (*Daniel* [ICC], 164-65).

²¹ **tn** *Aram* “heart.”

²² **tn** *Aram* “an image.”

²³ **sn** *Clay* refers to baked clay, which – though hard – was also fragile. Cf. the reference in v. 41 to “wet clay.”

²⁴ **tn** *Aram* “until.”

²⁵ **tc** The LXX, Theodotion, and the Vulgate have “from a mountain,” though this is probably a harmonization with v. 45.

²⁶ **tn** *Aram* “as one.” For the meaning “without distinction” see the following: F. Rosenthal, *Grammar*, 36, §64, and p. 93; E. Vogt, *Lexicon linguae aramaicae*, 60.

²⁷ **tn** Various suggestions have been made concerning the plural “we.” It is probably the editorial plural and could be translated here as “I.”

¹ **tn** *Aram* “Daniel.” The proper name is redundant here in English, and has not been included in the translation.

² **tn** Or “blessed.”

³ **tn** *Aram* “Daniel answered and said.”

⁴ **sn** As is often the case in the Bible, here the name represents the person.

⁵ **tn** Or “blessed.”

⁶ **tn** *Aram* “kings.”

⁷ **tn** *Aram* “the knowers of understanding.”

⁸ **tn** *Aram* “we.” Various explanations have been offered for the plural, but it is probably best understood as the editorial plural; so also with “me” later in this verse.

⁹ **tn** *Aram* “the word of the king.”

¹⁰ **tc** The MT has *על* *al* (“he entered upon”). Several medieval Hebrew MSS lack the verb, although this may be due to haplography.

¹¹ **tc** The LXX and Vulgate, along with one medieval Hebrew MS, lack this verb.

¹² **tn** *Aram* “cause me to enter.” So also in v. 25.

¹³ **tn** *Aram* “the king.”

¹⁴ **sn** Arioch’s claim is self-serving and exaggerated. It is Daniel who came to him, and not the other way around. By claiming to have found one capable of solving the king’s dilemma, Arioch probably hoped to ingratiate himself to the king.

power, strength, and honor. **2:38** Wherever human beings,¹ wild animals,² and birds of the sky live – he has given them into your power.³ He has given you authority over them all. You are the head of gold. **2:39** Now after you another kingdom⁴ will arise, one inferior to yours. Then a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule in all the earth. **2:40** Then there will be a fourth kingdom, one strong like iron. Just like iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything, and as iron breaks in pieces⁵ all of these metals,⁶ so it will break in pieces and crush the others.⁷ **2:41** In that you were seeing feet and toes⁸ partly of wet clay⁹ and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom. Some of the strength of iron will be in it, for you saw iron mixed with wet clay.¹⁰ **2:42** In that the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, the latter stages of this kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile. **2:43** And¹¹ in that you saw iron mixed with wet clay, so people will be mixed¹² with one another¹³ without adhering to one another, just as¹⁴ iron does not mix with clay. **2:44** In the days of those kings the God of heaven will raise up an everlasting kingdom that will not be destroyed and a kingdom that will not be left to another people. It will break in pieces and bring about the demise of all these kingdoms. But it will stand forever. **2:45** You saw that a stone was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands; it smashed the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold into pieces. The great God has made known to the king what will occur in the future.¹⁵ The dream is certain, and its interpretation is reliable.”

2:46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar bowed down with his face to the ground¹⁶ and paid homage to Daniel. He gave orders to offer sacrifice and incense to him. **2:47** The king replied to Daniel, “Certainly your God is a God of gods

and Lord of kings and revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery!” **2:48** Then the king elevated Daniel to high position and bestowed on him many marvelous gifts. He granted him authority over the entire province of Babylon and made him the main prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. **2:49** And at Daniel’s request, the king¹⁷ appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the administration of the province of Babylon. Daniel himself served in the king’s court.¹⁸

Daniel’s Friends Are Tested

3:1¹⁹ King Nebuchadnezzar had a golden²⁰ statue made.²¹ It was 90 feet²² tall and nine feet²³ wide. He erected it on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. **3:2** Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent out a summons to assemble the satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates,²⁴ and all the other authorities of the province to attend the dedication of the statue that he²⁵ had erected. **3:3** So the satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the other provincial authorities assembled for the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar

¹⁷ *tn* *Aram* “and Daniel sought from the king and he appointed.”

¹⁸ *tn* *Aram* “was at the gate of the king.”

¹⁹ *sn* The LXX introduces this chapter with the following chronological note: “in the eighteenth year of.” Such a date would place these events at about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (cf. 2 Kgs 25:8). However, there seems to be no real basis for associating the events of Daniel 3 with this date.

²⁰ *sn* There is no need to think of Nebuchadnezzar’s image as being solid gold. No doubt the sense is that it was overlaid with gold (cf. Isa 40:19; Jer 10:3-4), with the result that it presented a dazzling self-compliment to the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar’s achievements.

²¹ *sn* According to a number of patristic authors, the image represented a deification of Nebuchadnezzar himself. This is not clear from the biblical text, however.

²² *tn* *Aram* “sixty cubits.” Assuming a length of 18 inches for the standard cubit, the image would be 90 feet (27.4 m) high.

²³ *tn* *Aram* “six cubits.” Assuming a length of 18 inches for the standard cubit, the image would be 9 feet (2.74 m) wide.

sn The dimensions of the image (ninety feet high and nine feet wide) imply that it did not possess normal human proportions, unless a base for the image is included in the height dimension. The ancient world knew of other tall statues. For example, the Colossus of Rhodes – the huge statue of Helios which stood (ca. 280-224 B.C.) at the entrance to the harbor at Rhodes and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world – was said to be seventy cubits (105 ft or 32 m) in height, which would make it even taller than Nebuchadnezzar’s image.

²⁴ *sn* The specific duties of the seven types of officials listed here (cf. vv. 3, 27) are unclear. The Aramaic words that are used are transliterations of Akkadian or Persian technical terms whose exact meanings are uncertain. The translations given here follow suggestions set forth in BDB.

²⁵ *tn* *Aram* “Nebuchadnezzar the king.” The proper name and title have been replaced by the relative pronoun (“he”) in the translation for stylistic reasons.

¹ *tn* *Aram* “the sons of man.”

² *tn* *Aram* “the beasts of the field.”

³ *tn* *Aram* “hand.”

⁴ *sn* The identity of the first *kingdom* is clearly Babylon. The identification of the following three kingdoms is disputed. The common view is that they represent Media, Persia, and Greece. Most conservative scholars identify them as Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

⁵ *tc* Theodotion and the Vulgate lack the phrase “and as iron breaks in pieces.”

⁶ *tn* The Aramaic text does not have this word, but it has been added in the translation for clarity.

⁷ *tn* The words “the others” are supplied from the context.

⁸ *tc* The LXX lacks “and toes.”

⁹ *tn* *Aram* “potter’s clay.”

¹⁰ *tn* *Aram* “clay of clay” (also in v. 43).

¹¹ *tc* The present translation reads the conjunction, with most medieval Hebrew MSS, LXX, Vulgate, and the *Qere*. The *Kethib* lacks the conjunction.

¹² *sn* The reference to people being *mixed* is usually understood to refer to intermarriage.

¹³ *tn* *Aram* “with the seed of men.”

¹⁴ *tc* The present translation reads הֵךְ דִּי (hekh diy) rather than the MT הֵךְ כְּדִי (he-khēdi). It is a case of wrong word division.

¹⁵ *tn* *Aram* “after this.”

¹⁶ *tn* *Aram* “fell on his face.”

had erected. They were standing in front of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had erected.¹

3:4 Then the herald² made a loud³ proclamation: “To you, O peoples, nations, and language groups, the following command is given:⁴ **3:5** When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither,⁵ trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, you must⁶ bow down and pay homage to the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has erected. **3:6** Whoever does not bow down and pay homage will immediately⁷ be thrown into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire!” **3:7** Therefore when they all⁸ heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes,⁹ and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations, and language groups began bowing down and paying homage to the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had erected.

3:8 Now¹⁰ at that time certain¹¹ Chaldeans came forward and brought malicious accusations against¹² the Jews. **3:9** They said¹³ to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever!¹⁴ **3:10** You have issued an edict, O king, that everyone must bow down and pay homage to the golden statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music. **3:11** And whoever does not bow down and pay homage must be thrown into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. **3:12** But there are Jewish men whom you appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon – Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abednego – and these men¹⁵ have not shown proper respect to you, O king. They don’t serve your gods and they don’t pay homage to the golden statue that you have erected.”

3:13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in a fit of rage¹⁶ demanded that they bring¹⁷ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego before him. So they brought them¹⁸ before the king. **3:14** Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you don’t serve my gods and that you don’t pay homage to the golden statue that I erected? **3:15** Now if you are ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, you must bow down and pay homage to the statue that I had made. If you don’t pay homage to it, you will immediately be thrown into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. Now, who is that god who can rescue you from my power?”¹⁹ **3:16** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to King Nebuchadnezzar,²⁰ “We do not need to give you a reply²¹ concerning this. **3:17** If²² our God whom we are serving exists,²³ he is able to rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire, and he will rescue us, O king, from your power as well. **3:18** But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we don’t serve your gods, and we will not

¹ **tc** The LXX and Theodotion lack the words “that Nebuchadnezzar had erected.”

² **tn** According to BDB 1097 s.v. כְּרוּ the Aramaic word used here is a Greek loanword, but other scholars have argued instead for a Persian derivation (HALOT 1902 s.v. כְּרוּ*).

³ **tn** *Aram* “in strength.”

⁴ **tn** *Aram* “they are saying.”

⁵ **sn** The word *zither* (Aramaic קִיטָרוֹס [*qitaros*]), and the words for *harp* (Aramaic כְּסָתֵרִין [קְסָטֵרִין] [*ksanterim*]) and *pipes* (Aramaic סוּפוֹנְיָה [*sumponyah*]), are of Greek derivation. Though much has been made of this in terms of suggesting a date in the Hellenistic period for the writing of the book, it is not surprising that a few Greek cultural terms, all of them the names of musical instruments, should appear in this book. As a number of scholars have pointed out, the bigger surprise (if, in fact, the book is to be dated to the Hellenistic period) may be that there are so few Greek loanwords in Daniel.

⁶ **tn** The imperfect Aramaic verbs have here an injunctive nuance.

⁷ **tn** *Aram* “in that hour.”

⁸ **tn** *Aram* “all the peoples.”

⁹ **tc** Though not in the Aramaic text of BHS, this word appears in many medieval Hebrew MSS, some LXX MSS, and Vulgate. Cf. vv. 5, 10, 15.

¹⁰ **tc** This expression is absent in Theodotion.

¹¹ **tn** *Aram* “men.”

¹² **tn** *Aram* “ate the pieces of.” This is a rather vivid idiom for slander.

¹³ **tn** *Aram* “answered and said,” a common Aramaic idiom that occurs repeatedly in this chapter.

¹⁴ **sn** *O king, live forever!* is a comment of typical court courtesy that is not necessarily indicative of the real sentiments of the speaker. Ancient oriental court protocol could sometimes require a certain amount of hypocrisy.

¹⁵ **sn** Daniel’s absence from this scene has sparked the imagination of commentators, some of whom have suggested that perhaps he was unable to attend the dedication due to sickness or due to being away on business. Hippolytus supposed that Daniel may have been watching from a distance.

¹⁶ **tn** *Aram* “in anger and wrath”; NASB “in rage and anger.” The expression is a hendiadys.

¹⁷ **tn** The Aramaic infinitive is active.

¹⁸ **tn** *Aram* “these men.” The pronoun is used in the translation to avoid undue repetition.

¹⁹ **tn** *Aram* “hand.” So also in v. 17.

²⁰ **tc** In the MT this word is understood to begin the following address (“answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar!’”). However, it seems unlikely that Nebuchadnezzar’s subordinates would address the king in such a familiar way, particularly in light of the danger that they now found themselves in. The present translation implies moving the *atnach* from “king” to “Nebuchadnezzar.”

²¹ **tn** *Aram* “to return a word to you.”

²² **tc** The ancient versions typically avoid the conditional element of v. 17.

²³ **tn** The Aramaic expression used here is very difficult to interpret. The question concerns the meaning and syntax of אִתַּי (*itay*, “is” or “exist”). There are several possibilities. (1) Some interpreters take this word closely with the participle later in the verse יָכִיל (*yakhil*, “able”), understanding the two words to form a periphrastic construction (“if our God is... able”; cf. H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, 365, §111b). But the separation of the two elements from one another is not an argument in favor of this understanding. (2) Other interpreters take the first part of v. 17 to mean “If it is so, then our God will deliver us” (cf. KJV, ASV, RSV, NASB). However, the normal sense of *itay* is existence; on this point see F. Rosenthal, *Grammar*, 45, §95. The present translation maintains the sense of existence for the verb (“If our God...exists”), even though the statement is admittedly difficult to understand in this light. The statement may be an implicit reference back to Nebuchadnezzar’s comment in v. 15, which denies the existence of a god capable of delivering from the king’s power.

pay homage to the golden statue that you have erected.”

3:19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage, and his disposition changed¹ toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He gave orders² to heat the furnace seven times hotter than it was normally heated. **3:20** He ordered strong³ soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. **3:21** So those men were tied up while still wearing their cloaks, trousers, turbans, and other clothes,⁴ and were thrown into the furnace⁵ of blazing fire. **3:22** But since the king’s command was so urgent, and the furnace was so excessively hot, the men who escorted⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were killed⁷ by the leaping flames.⁸ **3:23** But those three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell into the furnace⁹ of blazing fire while still securely bound.¹⁰

God Delivers His Servants

3:24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was startled and quickly got up. He said to his ministers, “Wasn’t it three men that we tied up and threw¹¹ into¹² the fire?” They replied to the king, “For sure, O king.” **3:25** He answered, “But I see four men, untied and walking around in the midst of the fire! No harm has come to them! And the appearance of the fourth is like that of a god!”¹³ **3:26** Then Nebuchadnezzar approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire. He called out,¹⁴ “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the most high God, come out! Come here!”

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego emerged from the fire.¹⁵ **3:27** Once the satraps, prefects, governors, and ministers of the king had gathered around, they saw that those men were physically¹⁶ unharmed by the fire.¹⁷ The hair of their heads was not singed, nor were their trousers damaged. Not even the smell of fire was to be found on them!

3:28 Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed,¹⁸ “Praised be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent forth his angel¹⁹ and has rescued his servants who trusted in him, ignoring²⁰ the edict of the king and giving up their bodies rather than²¹ serve or pay homage to any god other than their God! **3:29** I hereby decree²² that any people, nation, or language group that blasphemes²³ the god of Shadrach, Meshach, or Abednego will be dismembered and his home reduced to rubble! For there exists no other god who can deliver in this way.” **3:30** Then Nebuchadnezzar²⁴ promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

4:1 (3:31)²⁵ “King Nebuchadnezzar, to all peoples, nations, and language groups that live in all the land: Peace and prosperity!²⁶ **4:2** I am delighted to tell you about the signs and wonders that the most high God has done for me.

4:3 “How great are his signs!
How mighty are his wonders!
His kingdom will last forever,²⁷
and his authority continues from one generation to the next.”

¹ *tn* *Aram* “the appearance of his face was altered”; cf. NLT “his face became distorted with rage”; NAB “[his] face became livid with utter rage.”

² *tn* *Aram* “he answered and said.”

³ *tn* This is sometimes taken as a comparative: “[some of the] strongest.”

⁴ *sn* There is a great deal of uncertainty with regard to the specific nature of these items of clothing.

⁵ *tn* *Aram* “into the midst of the furnace.” For stylistic reasons the words “the midst of” have been left untranslated.

⁶ *tn* *Aram* “caused to go up.”

⁷ *tn* The Aramaic verb is active.

⁸ *tn* *Aram* “the flame of the fire” (so KJV, ASV, NASB); NRSV “the raging flames.”

⁹ *tn* *Aram* “into the midst of the furnace.” For stylistic reasons the words “the midst of” have been left untranslated.

¹⁰ *sn* The deutero-canonical writings known as The Prayer of Azariah and The Song of the Three present at this point a confession and petition for God’s forgiveness and a celebration of God’s grace for the three Jewish youths in the fiery furnace. Though not found in the Hebrew/Aramaic text of Daniel, these compositions do appear in the ancient Greek versions.

¹¹ *tn* *Aram* “we threw...bound.”

¹² *tn* *Aram* “into the midst of.”

¹³ *sn* The phrase *like that of a god* is in Aramaic “like that of a son of the gods.” Many patristic writers understood this phrase in a christological sense (i.e., “the Son of God”). But it should be remembered that these are words spoken by a pagan who is seeking to explain things from his own polytheistic frame of reference; for him the phrase “like a son of the gods” is equivalent to “like a divine being.”

¹⁴ *tn* *Aram* “answered and said.”

¹⁵ *tn* *Aram* “from the midst of the fire.” For stylistic reasons the words “the midst of” have been left untranslated.

¹⁶ *tn* *Aram* “in their bodies.”

¹⁷ *tn* *Aram* “the fire did not have power.”

¹⁸ *tn* *Aram* “answered and said.”

¹⁹ *sn* The king identifies the “son of the gods” (v. 25) as an angel. Comparable Hebrew expressions are used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible for the members of God’s angelic assembly (see Gen 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Pss 29:1; 89:6). An angel later comes to rescue Daniel from the lions (Dan 6:22).

²⁰ *tn* *Aram* “they changed” or “violated.”

²¹ *tn* *Aram* “so that they might not.”

²² *tn* *Aram* “from me is placed an edict.”

²³ *tn* *Aram* “speaks negligence.”

²⁴ *tn* *Aram* “and the king.” The proper name has been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

²⁵ *sn* Beginning with **4:1**, the verse numbers through **4:37** in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Aramaic text (*BHS*), with **4:1** ET = **3:31** AT, **4:2** ET = **3:32** AT, **4:3** ET = **3:33** AT, **4:4** ET = **4:1** AT, etc., through **4:37** ET = **4:34** AT. Thus Dan 3:31-33 of the Aramaic text appears as Dan 4:1-3 in the English Bible, and the corresponding verses of ch. 4 differ accordingly. In spite of the division of the Aramaic text, a good case can be made that 3:31-33 AT (= 4:1-3 ET) is actually the introduction to ch. 4.

²⁶ *tn* *Aram* “May your peace increase!”

²⁷ *tn* *Aram* “his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.”

Nebuchadnezzar Dreams of a Tree Chopped Down

4:4 (4:1)¹ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was relaxing in my home,² living luxuriously³ in my palace. 4:5 I saw a dream that⁴ frightened me badly. The things I imagined while lying on my bed – these visions of my mind – were terrifying me. 4:6 So I issued an order⁵ for all the wise men of Babylon to be brought⁶ before me so that they could make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 4:7 When the magicians, astrologers, wise men, and diviners entered, I recounted the dream for them. But they were unable to make known its interpretation to me. 4:8 Later Daniel entered (whose name is Belteshazzar after the name of my god,⁷ and in whom there is a spirit of the holy gods). I recounted the dream for him as well, 4:9 saying, “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, in whom I know there to be a spirit of the holy gods and whom no mystery baffles, consider⁸ my dream that I saw and set forth its interpretation! 4:10 Here are the visions of my mind⁹ while I was on my bed.

While I was watching,
there was a tree in the middle of the
land.¹⁰

It was enormously tall.¹¹

4:11 The tree grew large and strong.
Its top reached far into the sky;

¹ **sn** This verse marks the beginning of chap. 4 in the Aramaic text of Daniel (see the note on 4:1). The Greek OT (LXX) has the following addition: “In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign he said.” This date would suggest a link to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. In general, the LXX of chapters 4-6 is very different from the MT, so much so that the following notes will call attention only to selected readings. In Daniel 4 the LXX lacks sizable portions of material in the MT (e.g., vv. 3-6, 31-32), includes sizable portions of material not in the MT (e.g., v. 14a, parts of vv. 16, 28), has a different order of some material (e.g., v. 8 after v. 9), and in some instances is vastly different from the MT (e.g., vv. 30, 34). Whether these differences are due to an excessively paraphrastic translation technique adopted for these chapters in the LXX, or are due to differences in the underlying *Vorlage* of the LXX, is a disputed matter. The latter seems more likely. There is a growing trend in modern scholarship to take the LXX of chapters 4-6 much more seriously than was the case in most earlier text-critical studies that considered this issue.

² **tn** *Aram* “my house.”

³ **tn** *Aram* “happy.”

⁴ **tn** *Aram* “and it.”

⁵ **tn** *Aram* “and it.”

⁶ **tn** *Aram* “from me there was placed a decree.”

⁷ **tn** The Aramaic infinitive here is active.

⁸ **sn** This explanation of the meaning of the name *Belteshazzar* may be more of a paronomasia than a strict etymology.

⁹ **tc** The present translation assumes the reading *khazi*, “consider”) rather than the MT *khezvey*, “visions”). The MT implies that the king required Daniel to disclose both the dream and its interpretation, as in chapter 2. But in the following verses Nebuchadnezzar recounts his dream, while Daniel presents only its interpretation.

¹⁰ **tc** The LXX lacks the first two words (*Aram* “the visions of my head”) of the Aramaic text.

¹¹ **tn** Instead of “in the middle of the land,” some English versions render this phrase “a tree at the center of the earth” (NRSV); NAB, CEV “of the world”; NLT “in the middle of the earth.” The Hebrew phrase can have either meaning.

¹² **tn** *Aram* “its height was great.”

it could be seen¹² from the borders of all the land.¹³

4:12 Its foliage was attractive and its fruit plentiful;

on it there was food enough for all. Under it the wild animals¹⁴ used to seek shade,

and in its branches the birds of the sky used to nest.

All creatures¹⁵ used to feed themselves from it.

4:13 While I was watching in my mind’s visions¹⁶ on my bed,

a holy sentinel¹⁷ came down from heaven.

4:14 He called out loudly¹⁸ as follows:¹⁹

‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches!

Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit!

Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches!

4:15 But leave its taproot²⁰ in the ground, with a band of iron and bronze around it²¹ surrounded by the grass of the field.

Let it become damp with the dew of the sky,

and let it live with²² the animals in the grass of the land.

4:16 Let his mind²³ be altered from that of a human being, and let an animal’s mind be given to him, and let seven periods of time²⁴ go by for²⁵ him.

¹² **tn** *Aram* “its sight.” So also v. 17.

¹³ **tn** Or “to the end of all the earth” (so KJV, ASV); NCV, CEV “from anywhere on earth.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Aram* “the beasts of the field.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Aram* “all flesh.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Aram* “the visions of my head.”

¹⁷ **tn** *Aram* “a watcher and a holy one.” The expression is a hendiadys; so also in v. 23. This “watcher” is apparently an angel. The Greek OT (LXX) in fact has ἀγγελος (*angelos*, “angel”) here. Theodotion simply transliterates the Aramaic word (*ir*). The term is sometimes rendered “sentinel” (NAB) or “messenger” (NIV, NLT).

¹⁸ **tn** *Aram* “in strength.”

¹⁹ **tn** *Aram* “and thus he was saying.”

²⁰ **tn** *Aram* “the stock of its root.” So also v. 23. The implication here is that although the tree is chopped down, it is not killed. Its life-giving root is spared. The application to Nebuchadnezzar is obvious.

²¹ **sn** The function of the *band of iron and bronze* is not entirely clear, but it may have had to do with preventing the splitting or further deterioration of the portion of the tree that was left after being chopped down. By application it would then refer to the preservation of Nebuchadnezzar’s life during the time of his insanity.

²² **tn** *Aram* “its lot be.”

²³ **tn** *Aram* “its heart.” The metaphor of the tree begins to fade here and the reality behind the symbol (the king) begins to emerge.

²⁴ **sn** The *seven periods of time* probably refer to seven years.

²⁵ **tn** *Aram* “over” (also in vv. 23, 25, 32).

4:17 This announcement is by the decree of the sentinels; this decision is by the pronouncement of the holy ones, so that¹ those who are alive may understand that the Most High has authority over human kingdoms,² and he bestows them on whomever he wishes. He establishes over them even the lowliest of human beings.³

4:18 “This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its³ interpretation, for none of the wise men in⁴ my kingdom are able to make known to me the interpretation. But you can do so, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

4:19 Then Daniel (whose name is also Belteshazzar) was upset for a brief time;⁵ his thoughts were alarming him. The king said, “Belteshazzar, don't let the dream and its interpretation alarm you.” But Belteshazzar replied, “Sir,⁶ if only the dream were for your enemies and its interpretation applied to your adversaries! 4:20 The tree that you saw that grew large and strong, whose top reached to the sky, and which could be seen⁷ in all the land, 4:21 whose foliage was attractive and its fruit plentiful, and from which there was food available for all, under whose branches wild animals⁸ used to live, and in whose branches birds of the sky used to nest – 4:22 it is you,⁹ O king! For you have become great and strong. Your greatness is such that it reaches to heaven, and your authority to the ends of the earth. 4:23 As for the king seeing a holy sentinel coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its taproot in the ground, with a band of iron and bronze around it, surrounded by the grass of the field. Let it become damp with the dew of the sky, and let it live with the wild animals, until

seven periods of time go by for him’ – 4:24 this is the interpretation, O king! It is the decision of the Most High that this has happened to my lord the king. 4:25 You will be driven¹⁰ from human society,¹¹ and you will live¹² with the wild animals. You will be fed¹³ grass like oxen,¹⁴ and you will become damp with the dew of the sky. Seven periods of time will pass by for you, before¹⁵ you understand that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms and gives them to whomever he wishes. 4:26 They said to leave the taproot of the tree, for your kingdom will be restored to you when you come to understand that heaven¹⁶ rules. 4:27 Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you. Break away from your sins by doing what is right, and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps your prosperity will be prolonged.”¹⁷

4:28 Now all of this happened¹⁸ to King Nebuchadnezzar. 4:29 After twelve months, he happened to be walking around on the battlements¹⁹ of the royal palace of Babylon. 4:30 The king uttered these words: “Is this not the great Babylon that I have built for a royal residence²⁰ by my own mighty strength²¹ and for my majestic honor?” 4:31 While these words were still on the king's lips,²² a voice came down from heaven: “It is hereby announced to you,²³ King Nebuchadnezzar, that your kingdom has been removed from you! 4:32 You will be driven from human society, and you will live with the wild animals. You will be fed grass like oxen, and seven periods of time will pass by for you before²⁴ you understand that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms and gives them to whomever he wishes.”

4:33 Now in that very moment²⁵ this pronouncement about²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar came

¹ **tc** The present translation follows an unreading of עַל־דִּבְרָתָא (*al-divrat*, “so that”) rather than MT עַל־דִּבְרָתָא (*ad-divrat*, “until”).

² **tn** *Aram* “the kingdom of man”; NASB “the realm of mankind”; NCV “every kingdom on earth.”

³ **tc** The present translation reads פִּשְׁרֵהּ (*pishreh*, “its interpretation”) with the Qere and many medieval Hebrew MSS; the *Kethib* is פִּשְׁרָא (*pishra*, “the interpretation”); so also v. 16.

⁴ **tn** *Aram* “of.”

⁵ **tn** *Aram* “about one hour.” The expression refers idiomatically to a brief period of time of undetermined length.

⁶ **tn** *Aram* “my lord.”

⁷ **tn** *Aram* “its sight.”

⁸ **tn** *Aram* “the beasts of the field” (also in vv. 23, 25, 32).

⁹ **sn** Much of modern scholarship views this chapter as a distortion of traditions that were originally associated with Nabonidus rather than with Nebuchadnezzar. A Qumran text, the Prayer of Nabonidus, is often cited for parallels to these events.

¹⁰ **tn** The Aramaic indefinite active plural is used here like the English passive. So also in v. 28, 29, 32.

¹¹ **tn** *Aram* “from mankind.” So also in v. 32.

¹² **tn** *Aram* “your dwelling will be.” So also in v. 32.

¹³ **tn** Or perhaps “be made to eat.”

¹⁴ **sn** Nebuchadnezzar's insanity has features that are associated with the mental disorder known as boanthropy, in which the person so afflicted imagines himself to be an ox or a similar animal and behaves accordingly.

¹⁵ **tn** *Aram* “until.”

¹⁶ **sn** The reference to heaven here is a circumlocution for God. There was a tendency in Jewish contexts to avoid direct reference to God. Cf. the expression “kingdom of heaven” in the NT and such statements as “I have sinned against heaven and in your sight” (Luke 15:21).

¹⁷ **tn** *Aram* “if there may be a lengthening to your prosperity.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Aram* “reached.”

¹⁹ **tn** The word “battlements” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied from context. Many English versions supply “roof” here (e.g., NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV); cf. NLT “on the flat roof.”

²⁰ **tn** *Aram* “house.”

²¹ **tn** *Aram* “by the might of my strength.”

²² **tn** *Aram* “in the mouth of the king.”

²³ **tn** *Aram* “to you they say.”

²⁴ **tn** *Aram* “until.”

²⁵ **tn** *Aram* “hour.”

²⁶ **tn** Or “on.”

true.¹ He was driven from human society, he ate grass like oxen, and his body became damp with the dew of the sky, until his hair became long like an eagle's feathers, and his nails like a bird's claws.²

4:34 But at the end of the appointed time³ I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up⁴ toward heaven, and my sanity returned to me.

I extolled the Most High,
and I praised and glorified the one who
lives forever.
For his authority is an everlasting author-
ity,
and his kingdom extends from one gen-
eration to the next.

4:35 All the inhabitants of the earth are
regarded as nothing.⁵

He does as he wishes with the army of
heaven
and with those who inhabit the earth.
No one slaps⁶ his hand
and says to him, 'What have you done?'

4:36 At that time my sanity returned to me. I was restored⁷ to the honor of my kingdom, and my splendor returned to me. My ministers and my nobles were seeking me out, and I was reinstated⁸ over my kingdom. I became even greater than before. **4:37** Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, for all his deeds are right and his ways are just. He is able to bring down those who live⁹ in pride.

Belshazzar Sees Mysterious Handwriting on a Wall

5:1 King Belshazzar¹⁰ prepared a great banquet¹¹ for a thousand of his nobles, and he was

drinking wine in front of¹² them all.¹³ **5:2** While under the influence¹⁴ of the wine, Belshazzar issued an order to bring in the gold and silver vessels – the ones that Nebuchadnezzar his father¹⁵ had confiscated¹⁶ from the temple in Jerusalem¹⁷ – so that the king and his nobles, together with his wives and his concubines, could drink from them.¹⁸ **5:3** So they brought the gold and silver¹⁹ vessels that had been confiscated from the temple, the house of God²⁰ in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, together with his wives and concubines, drank from them. **5:4** As they drank wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

5:5 At that very moment the fingers of a human hand appeared²¹ and wrote on the plaster of the royal palace wall, opposite the lampstand.²² The king was watching the back²³ of the hand that was writing. **5:6** Then all the color drained from the king's face²⁴ and he became alarmed.²⁵ The joints of his hips gave way,²⁶ and his knees began knocking together. **5:7** The king called out loudly²⁷ to summon²⁸ the astrologers, wise men, and diviners. The king proclaimed²⁹ to the wise men of Babylon that anyone who could read this inscription and disclose its interpretation would be clothed in purple³⁰ and have a golden collar³¹

12 sn The king probably sat at an elevated head table.

13 tn *Aram* "the thousand."

14 tn Or perhaps, "when he had tasted" (cf. NASB) in the sense of officially initiating the commencement of the banquet. The translation above seems preferable, however, given the clear evidence of inebriation in the context (cf. also CEV "he got drunk and ordered").

15 tn Or "ancestor"; or "predecessor" (also in vv. 11, 13, 18). The Aramaic word translated "father" can on occasion denote these other relationships.

16 tn Or "taken."

17 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

18 sn Making use of sacred temple vessels for an occasion of reveling and drunkenness such as this would have been a religious affront of shocking proportions to the Jewish captives.

19 tc The present translation reads כֶּסֶף (v^h*khaspa*, "and the silver") with Theodotion and the Vulgate. Cf. v. 2. The form was probably accidentally dropped from the Aramaic text by homoioteleuton.

20 tn *Aram* "the temple of the house of God." The phrase seems rather awkward. The Vulgate lacks "of the house of God," while Theodotion and the Syriac lack "the house."

21 tn *Aram* "came forth."

22 sn The mention of the *lampstand* in this context is of interest because it suggests that the writing was in clear view.

23 tn While Aramaic כַּף (*pas*) can mean the palm of the hand, here it seems to be the back of the hand that is intended.

24 tn *Aram* "[the king's] brightness changed for him."

25 tn *Aram* "his thoughts were alarming him."

26 tn *Aram* "his loins went slack."

27 tn *Aram* "in strength."

28 tn *Aram* "cause to enter."

29 tn *Aram* "answered and said."

30 sn *Purple* was a color associated with royalty in the ancient world.

31 tn The term translated "golden collar" here probably refers to something more substantial than merely a gold chain (cf. NIV, NCV, NRSV, NLT) or necklace (cf. NASB).

1 tn *Aram* "was fulfilled."

2 tn The words "feathers" and "claws" are not present in the Aramaic text, but have been added in the translation for clarity.

3 tn *Aram* "days."

4 tn *Aram* "lifted up my eyes."

5 tc The present translation reads כְּלֵא (k^h*la*), with many medieval Hebrew MSS, rather than בְּלֵא (b^h*lah*) of BHS.

6 tn *Aram* "strikes against."

7 tc The translation reads הִחְדַּת (hadret, "I returned") rather than the MT הִחְדִּי (hadri, "my honor"); cf. Theodotion.

8 tc The translation reads הִתְקַנַּת (hotq^h*net*, "I was established") rather than the MT הִתְקַנַּת (hotq^h*nat*, "it was established"). As it stands, the MT makes no sense here.

9 tn *Aram* "walk."

10 sn As is clear from the extra-biblical records, it was actually Nabonidus (ca. 556-539 B.C.) who was king of Babylon at this time. However, Nabonidus spent long periods of time at Teima, and during those times Belshazzar his son was *de facto* king of Babylon. This arrangement may help to explain why later in this chapter Belshazzar promises that the successful interpreter of the handwriting on the wall will be made *third* ruler in the kingdom. If Belshazzar was in effect second ruler in the kingdom, this would be the highest honor he could grant.

11 sn This scene of a Babylonian banquet calls to mind a similar grandiose event recorded in Esth 1:3-8. Persian kings were also renowned in the ancient Near Eastern world for their lavish banquets.

placed on his neck and be third ruler in the kingdom.

5:8 So all the king's wise men came in, but they were unable to read the writing or to make known its¹ interpretation to the king. **5:9** Then King Belshazzar was very terrified, and he was visibly shaken.² His nobles were completely dumbfounded.

5:10 Due to the noise³ caused by the king and his nobles, the queen mother⁴ then entered the banquet room. She⁵ said, "O king, live forever! Don't be alarmed! Don't be shaken! **5:11** There is a man in your kingdom who has within him a spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, he proved to have⁶ insight, discernment, and wisdom like that⁷ of the gods.⁸ King Nebuchadnezzar your father appointed him chief of the magicians, astrologers, wise men, and diviners.⁹ **5:12** Thus there was found in this man Daniel, whom the king renamed Belteshazzar, an extraordinary spirit, knowledge, and skill to interpret¹⁰ dreams, solve riddles, and decipher knotty problems.¹¹ Now summon¹² Daniel, and he will disclose the interpretation."

5:13 So Daniel was brought in before the king. The king said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives of Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? **5:14** I have heard about you, how there is a spirit of the gods in you, and how you have¹³ insight, discernment, and extraordinary wisdom. **5:15** Now the wise men and¹⁴ astrologers were

brought before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation. But they were unable to disclose the interpretation of the message. **5:16** However, I have heard¹⁵ that you are able to provide interpretations and to decipher knotty problems. Now if you are able to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, you will wear purple and have a golden collar around your neck and be third¹⁶ ruler in the kingdom."

Daniel Interprets the Handwriting on the Wall

5:17 But Daniel replied to the king, "Keep your gifts, and give your rewards to someone else! However, I will read the writing for the king and make known its¹⁷ interpretation. **5:18** As for you, O king, the most high God bestowed on your father Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, greatness, honor, and majesty.¹⁸ **5:19** Due to the greatness that he bestowed on him, all peoples, nations, and language groups were trembling with fear¹⁹ before him. He killed whom he wished, he spared²⁰ whom he wished, he exalted whom he wished, and he brought low whom he wished. **5:20** And when his mind²¹ became arrogant²² and his spirit filled with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and his honor was removed from him. **5:21** He was driven from human society, his mind²³ was changed to that of an animal, he lived²⁴ with the wild donkeys, he was fed grass like oxen, and his body became damp with the dew of the sky, until he came to understand that the most high God rules over human kingdoms, and he appoints over them whomever he wishes.

5:22 "But you, his son²⁵ Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself,²⁶ although you knew all this. **5:23** Instead, you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven. You brought before you the vessels from his temple, and you and your nobles, together with your wives and concubines, drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone –

¹ **tc** Read *ufishreh* (אִשְׁרָה) with the *Qere* rather than *ufishra* (אִשְׁרָא) of the *Kethib*.

² **tn** *Aram* "his visage altered upon him." So also in v. 10.

³ **tn** *Aram* "words of the king."

⁴ **tn** *Aram* "the queen" (so NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV). In the following discourse this woman is able to recall things about Daniel that go back to the days of Nebuchadnezzar, things that Belshazzar does not seem to recollect. It is likely that she was the wife not of Belshazzar but of Nabonidus or perhaps even Nebuchadnezzar. In that case, "queen" here means "queen mother" (cf. NCV "the king's mother").

⁵ **tn** *Aram* "The queen." The translation has used the pronoun "she" instead because repetition of the noun here would be redundant in terms of English style.

⁶ **tn** *Aram* "[there were] discovered to be in him."

⁷ **tn** *Aram* "wisdom like the wisdom." This would be redundant in terms of English style.

⁸ **tc** Theodotion lacks the phrase "and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods."

⁹ **tc** The MT includes a redundant reference to "your father the king" at the end of v. 11. None of the attempts to explain this phrase as original are very convincing. The present translation deletes the phrase, following Theodotion and the Syriac.

¹⁰ **tc** The translation reads *mifshar* (מִפְשָׁר) rather than the MT *mefashar* (מִפְשָׁר) and later in the verse reads *mishre* (מִשְׁרָה) rather than the MT *mishra* (מִשְׁרָה). The Masoretes have understood these Aramaic forms to be participles, but they are more likely to be vocalized as infinitives. As such, they have an epexegetical function in the syntax of their clause.

¹¹ **tn** *Aram* "to loose knots."

¹² **tn** *Aram* "let [Daniel] be summoned."

¹³ **tn** *Aram* "there has been found in you."

¹⁴ **tn** The Aramaic text does not have "and." The term "astrologers" is either an appositive for "wise men" (cf. KJV, NKJV, ASV, RSV, NRSV), or the construction is to be understood as asyndetic (so the translation above).

¹⁵ **tn** The Aramaic text has also the words "about you."

¹⁶ **tn** Or perhaps "one of three rulers," in the sense of becoming part of a triumvir. So also v. 29.

¹⁷ **tn** Or "the."

¹⁸ **tn** Or "royal greatness and majestic honor," if the four terms are understood as a double hendiadys.

¹⁹ **tn** *Aram* "were trembling and fearing." This can be treated as a hendiadys, "were trembling with fear."

²⁰ **tn** *Aram* "let live." This Aramaic form is the *aphel* participle of *khayah* ("to live"). Theodotion and the Vulgate mistakenly take the form to be from *mekha* ("to smite").

²¹ **tn** *Aram* "heart."

²² **sn** The point of describing Nebuchadnezzar as *arrogant* is that he had usurped divine prerogatives, and because of his immense arrogance God had dealt decisively with him.

²³ **tn** *Aram* "heart."

²⁴ **tn** *Aram* "his dwelling."

²⁵ **tn** Or "descendant"; or "successor."

²⁶ **tn** *Aram* "your heart."

gods¹ that cannot see or hear or comprehend! But you have not glorified the God who has in his control² your very breath and all your ways! 5:24 Therefore the palm of a hand was sent from him, and this writing was inscribed.

5:25 “This is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE,³ TEQEL, and PHARSIN.⁴ 5:26 This is the interpretation of the words:⁵ As for *mene*⁶ – God has numbered your kingdom’s days and brought it to an end. 5:27 As for *teqel* – you are weighed on the balances and found to be lacking. 5:28 As for *peres*⁷ – your kingdom is divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.”

5:29 Then, on Belshazzar’s orders,⁸ Daniel was clothed in purple, a golden collar was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed third ruler in the kingdom. 5:30 And in that very night Belshazzar, the Babylonian king,⁹ was killed.¹⁰ 5:31 (6:1)¹¹ So Darius the Mede took control of the kingdom when he was about sixty-two years old.

Daniel is Thrown into a Lions’ Den

6:1 It seemed like a good idea to Darius¹² to appoint over the kingdom 120 satraps¹³ who would be in charge of the entire kingdom. 6:2 Over them would be three supervisors, one of whom was Daniel. These satraps were accountable¹⁴ to them, so that the king’s interests might not incur damage. 6:3 Now this Daniel was distinguishing himself above the other supervisors and the satraps, for he had an extraordinary

spirit. In fact, the king intended to appoint him over the entire kingdom. 6:4 Consequently the supervisors and satraps were trying to find¹⁵ some pretext against Daniel in connection with administrative matters.¹⁶ But they were unable to find any such damaging evidence,¹⁷ because he was trustworthy and guilty of no negligence or corruption.¹⁸ 6:5 So these men concluded,¹⁹ “We won’t find any pretext against this man Daniel unless it is²⁰ in connection with the law of his God.”

6:6 So these supervisors and satraps came by collusion²¹ to the king and said²² to him, “O King Darius, live forever! 6:7 To all the supervisors of the kingdom, the prefects, satraps, counselors, and governors it seemed like a good idea for a royal edict to be issued and an interdict to be enforced. For the next thirty days anyone who prays²³ to any god or human other than you, O king, should be thrown into a den of lions. 6:8 Now let the king issue a written interdict²⁴ so that it cannot be altered, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be changed.²⁵ 6:9 So King Darius issued the written interdict.

6:10 When Daniel realized²⁶ that a written decree had been issued, he entered his home, where the windows²⁷ in his upper room opened toward Jerusalem.²⁸ Three²⁹ times daily he was³⁰ kneeling³¹ and offering prayers and thanks to his

¹ tn Aram “which.”

² tn Aram “in whose hand [are].”

³ tc The Greek version of Theodotion lacks the repetition of מֵנֵי (*m^ene*, cf. NAB).

⁴ tc The Aramaic word is plural. Theodotion has the singular (cf. NAB “PERES”).

⁵ tn Or “word” or “event.” See HALOT 1915 s.v. מִקֵּה.

⁶ tn The Aramaic term מֵנֵי (*m^ene*) is a noun referring to a measure of weight. The linkage here to the verb “to number” (Aram. מָנָה, *m^enah*) is a case of paronomasia rather than strict etymology. So also with תֵּקֵל (*t^eqel*) and פָּרְסִין (*farsin*). In the latter case there is an obvious wordplay with the name “Persian.”

⁷ sn *Peres* (פָּרֶס) is the singular form of פָּרְסִין (*pharsin*) in v. 25.

⁸ tn Aram “Belshazzar spoke.”

⁹ tn Aram “king of the Chaldeans.”

¹⁰ sn The year was 539 B.C. At this time Daniel would have been approximately eighty-one years old. The relevant extrabiblical records describing the fall of Babylon include portions of Herodotus, Xenophon, Berossus (cited in Josephus), the Cyrus Cylinder, and the Babylonian Chronicle.

¹¹ sn Beginning with 5:31, the verse numbers through 6:28 in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Aramaic text (*BHS*), with 5:31 ET = 6:1 AT, 6:1 ET = 6:2 AT, 6:2 ET = 6:3 AT, 6:3 ET = 6:4 AT, etc., through 6:28 ET = 6:29 AT. Beginning with 7:1 the verse numbers in the English Bible and the Aramaic text are again the same.

¹² tn Aram “It was pleasing before Darius.”

¹³ tn This is a technical term for an official placed in charge of a region of the empire (cf. KJV, NLT “prince[s]”; NCV, TEV “governors”). These satraps were answerable to a supervisor, who in turn answered to Darius.

¹⁴ tn Aram “giving an account.”

¹⁵ tn Aram “looking to find.”

¹⁶ tn Aram “from the side of the kingdom.”

¹⁷ tn Aram “pretext and corruption.”

¹⁸ tn Aram “no negligence or corruption was found in him.” The Greek version of Theodotion lacks the phrase “and no negligence or corruption was found in him.”

¹⁹ tn Aram “were saying.”

²⁰ tn Aram “unless we find [it] against him.”

²¹ tn The Aramaic verb רָגַשׁ (*r^egash*) occurs three times in this chapter (vv. 7, 12, 16). Its meaning is widely disputed by commentators, and the versions vary considerably in how they render the word. The suggestion that it means “to come thronging” (BDB 1112 s.v.; cf. NAB) seems inappropriate, since it is unlikely that subordinates would enter a royal court in such a reckless fashion. The ancient versions struggled with the word and are not in agreement in their understanding of its meaning. In this chapter the word apparently means to act in agreement with other parties in the pursuit of a duplicitous goal, namely the entrapment of Daniel. Cf. NIV, NCV “went as a group”; NRSV “conspired and came to the king.”

²² tn Aram “thus they were saying.”

²³ tn Aram “prays a prayer.”

²⁴ tn Aram “establish a written interdict and inscribe a written decree.”

²⁵ tn Or “removed.”

²⁶ tn Aram “knew.”

²⁷ sn In later rabbinic thought this verse was sometimes cited as a proof text for the notion that one should pray only in a house with windows. See *b. Berakhot* 34b.

²⁸ map For the location of Jerusalem see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

²⁹ sn This is apparently the only specific mention in the OT of prayer being regularly offered three times a day. The practice was probably not unique to Daniel, however.

³⁰ tc Read with several medieval Hebrew MSS and printed editions הִוָּה (*havah*) rather than the MT הוּה (*hu*).

³¹ tn Aram “kneeling on his knees” (so NASB).

sn No specific posture for offering prayers is prescribed in the OT. Kneeling, as here, and standing were both practiced.

God just as he had been accustomed to do previously. **6:11** Then those officials who had gone to the king¹ came by collusion and found Daniel praying and asking for help before his God. **6:12** So they approached the king and said to him,² “Did you not issue an edict to the effect that for the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human other than to you, O king, would be thrown into a den of lions?” The king replied, “That is correct,³ according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be changed.” **6:13** Then they said to the king, “Daniel, who is one of the captives⁴ from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the edict that you issued. Three times daily he offers his prayer.”⁵

6:14 When the king heard this,⁶ he was very upset and began thinking about⁷ how he might rescue Daniel. Until late afternoon⁸ he was struggling to find a way to rescue him. **6:15** Then those men came by collusion to the king and⁹ said to him,¹⁰ “Recall,¹¹ O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no edict or decree that the king issues can be changed.” **6:16** So the king gave the order,¹² and Daniel was brought and thrown into a den¹³ of lions. The king consoled¹⁴ Daniel by saying, “Your God whom you continually serve will rescue you!” **6:17** Then a stone was brought and placed over the opening¹⁵ to the den. The king sealed¹⁶ it with his signet ring and with those¹⁷ of his nobles so that nothing could be changed with regard to Daniel. **6:18** Then the king departed to his palace. But he spent the night without eating, and no

diversions¹⁸ were brought to him. He was unable to sleep.¹⁹

God Rescues Daniel from the Lions

6:19 In the morning, at the earliest sign of daylight, the king got up and rushed to the lions’ den. **6:20** As he approached the den, he called out to Daniel in a worried voice,²⁰ “Daniel, servant of the living God, was your God whom you continually serve able to rescue you from the lions?”

6:21 Then Daniel spoke to²¹ the king, “O king, live forever! **6:22** My God sent his angel and closed the lions’ mouths so that they have not harmed me, because I was found to be innocent before him. Nor have I done any harm to you, O king.”

6:23 Then the king was delighted and gave an order to haul Daniel up from the den. So Daniel was hauled up out of the den. He had no injury of any kind, because he had trusted in his God. **6:24** The king gave another order,²² and those men who had maliciously accused²³ Daniel were brought and thrown²⁴ into the lions’ den – they, their children, and their wives.²⁵ They did not even reach the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

6:25 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and language groups who were living in all the land: “Peace and prosperity!²⁶ **6:26** I have issued an edict that throughout all the dominion of my kingdom people are to revere and fear the God of Daniel.

“For he is the living God;
he endures forever.
His kingdom will not be destroyed;
his authority is forever.²⁷
6:27 He rescues and delivers
and performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth.

¹ **tn** *Aram* “those men”; the referent (the administrative officials who had earlier approached the king about the edict) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

² **tc** The MT also has “about the edict of the king,” but this phrase is absent in the LXX and the Syriac. The present translation deletes the expression.

tn *Aram* “before the king.”

³ **tn** *Aram* “the word is true.”

⁴ **tn** *Aram* “from the sons of the captivity [of].”

⁵ **tn** *Aram* “prays his prayer.”

⁶ **tn** *Aram* “the word.”

⁷ **tn** *Aram* “placed his mind on.”

⁸ **tn** *Aram* “the entrances of the sun.”

⁹ **tc** Theodotion lacks the words “came by collusion to the king and.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Aram* “the king.”

¹¹ **tn** *Aram* “know”; NAB “Keep in mind”; NASB “Remember”; NIV, NCV “Remember.”

¹² **tn** *Aram* “said.” So also in vv. 24, 25.

¹³ **sn** The *den* was perhaps a pit below ground level which could be safely observed from above.

¹⁴ **tn** *Aram* “answered and said [to Daniel].”

¹⁵ **tn** *Aram* “mouth.”

¹⁶ **sn** The purpose of the den being sealed was to prevent unauthorized tampering with the opening of the den. Any disturbance of the seal would immediately alert the officials to improper activity of this sort.

¹⁷ **tn** *Aram* “the signet rings.”

¹⁸ **tn** The meaning of Aramaic דַּחְוָה (*dakhavah*) is a *crux interpretum*. Suggestions include “music,” “dancing girls,” “concubines,” “table,” “food” – all of which are uncertain. The translation employed here, suggested by earlier scholars, is deliberately vague. A number of recent English versions follow a similar approach with “entertainment” (e.g., NASB, NIV, NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT). On this word see further, *HALOT* 1849-50 s.v.; E. Vogt, *Lexicon linguae aramaicae*, 37.

¹⁹ **tn** *Aram* “his sleep fled from him.”

²⁰ **tn** *Aram* “The king answered and said to Daniel.” This phrase has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons; it is redundant in English.

²¹ **tn** *Aram* “with.”

²² **tn** *Aram* “said.”

²³ **tn** *Aram* “had eaten the pieces of.” The Aramaic expression is ironic, in that the accusers who had figuratively “eaten the pieces of Daniel” are themselves literally devoured by the lions.

²⁴ **tn** The Aramaic active impersonal verb is often used as a substitute for the passive.

²⁵ **tc** The LXX specifies only the two overseers, together with their families, as those who were cast into the lions’ den.

²⁶ **tn** *Aram* “May your peace be increased!”

²⁷ **tn** *Aram* “until the end.”

He has rescued Daniel from the power⁴ of the lions!’

6:28 So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and² the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Daniel has a Vision of Four Animals Coming up from the Sea

7:1 In the first³ year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had⁴ a dream filled with visions⁵ while he was lying on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream in summary fashion.⁶ 7:2 Daniel explained:⁷ “I was watching in my vision during the night as⁸ the four winds of the sky⁹ were stirring up the great sea.¹⁰ 7:3 Then four large beasts came up from the sea; they were different from one another.

7:4 “The first one was like a lion with eagles’ wings. As I watched, its wings were pulled off and it was lifted up from the ground. It was made to stand on two feet like a human being, and a human mind¹¹ was given to it.¹²

7:5 “Then¹³ a second beast appeared, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and there were three ribs¹⁴ in its mouth between its teeth.¹⁵ It was told,¹⁶ ‘Get up and devour much flesh!’

¹ *tn* *Aram* “hand.”

² *tn* Or perhaps “in the reign of Darius, even in the reign of Cyrus.” The identity of this Darius is disputed. Some take the name to be referring to Cyrus, understanding the following *vav* (ו, “and”) in an exegetical sense (“even”). Others identify Darius with a governor of Babylon known from extra-biblical records as Gubaru, or with Cambyses, son of Cyrus. Many scholars maintain that the reference is historically inaccurate.

³ *sn* The first year of Belshazzar’s reign would have been ca. 553 B.C. Daniel would have been approximately 67 years old at the time of this vision.

⁴ *tn* *Aram* “saw.”

⁵ *tn* *Aram* “and visions of his head.” The Aramaic is difficult here. Some scholars add a verb thought to be missing (e.g., “the visions of his head [were alarming him]”), but there is no external evidence to support such a decision and the awkwardness of the text at this point may be original.

⁶ *tn* *Aram* “head of words.” The phrase is absent in Theodotion. Cf. NIV “the substance of his dream.”

⁷ *tn* *Aram* “answered and said.”

⁸ *tn* *Aram* “and behold.”

⁹ *tn* Or “the heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heavens” or “sky” depending on the context.

¹⁰ *sn* The referent of the great sea is unclear. The common view that the expression refers to the Mediterranean Sea is conjectural.

¹¹ *tn* *Aram* “heart of a man.”

¹² *sn* The identity of the first animal, derived from v. 17 and the parallels in chap. 2, is Babylon. The reference to the plucking of its wings is probably a reference to the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s insanity (cf. chap. 4). The latter part of v. 4 then describes the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar. The other animals have traditionally been understood to represent respectively Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome, although most of modern scholarship identifies them as Media, Persia, and Greece. For a biblical parallel to the mention of lion, bear, and leopard together, see Hos 13:7-8.

¹³ *tn* *Aram* “and behold.”

¹⁴ *sn* The three ribs held securely in the mouth of the bear, perhaps representing Media-Persia, apparently symbolize military conquest, but the exact identity of the “ribs” is not clear. Possibly it is a reference to the Persian conquest of Lydia, Egypt, and Babylonia.

¹⁵ *tn* The LXX lacks the phrase “between its teeth.”

¹⁶ *tn* *Aram* “and thus they were saying to it.”

7:6 “After these things,¹⁷ as I was watching, another beast¹⁸ like a leopard appeared, with four bird-like wings on its back.¹⁹ This beast had four heads,²⁰ and ruling authority was given to it.

7:7 “After these things, as I was watching in the night visions²¹ a fourth beast appeared – one dreadful, terrible, and very strong.²² It had two large rows²³ of iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and anything that was left it trampled with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that came before it, and it had ten horns.

7:8 “As I was contemplating the horns, another horn – a small one – came up between them, and three of the former horns were torn out by the roots to make room for it.²⁴ This horn had eyes resembling human eyes and a mouth speaking arrogant²⁵ things.

7:9 “While I was watching, thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days²⁶ took his seat. His attire was white like snow; the hair of his head was like lamb’s²⁷ wool.

His throne was ablaze with fire and its wheels were all aflame.²⁸

7:10 A river of fire was streaming forth and proceeding from his presence.

Many thousands were ministering to him; Many tens of thousands stood ready to serve him.²⁹

The court convened³⁰ and the books were opened.

7:11 “Then I kept on watching because of the arrogant words of the horn that was speaking. I

¹⁷ *tn* *Aram* “this.” So also in v. 7.

¹⁸ *tn* *Aram* “and behold, another one.”

¹⁹ *tn* Or “sides.”

²⁰ *sn* If the third animal is Greece, the most likely identification of these four heads is the four-fold division of the empire of Alexander the Great following his death. See note on Dan 8:8.

²¹ *tn* The Aramaic text has also “and behold.” So also in vv. 8, 13.

²² *sn* The fourth animal differs from the others in that it is nondescript. Apparently it was so fearsome that Daniel could find nothing with which to compare it. Attempts to identify this animal as an elephant or other known creature are conjectural.

²³ *tn* The Aramaic word for “teeth” is dual rather than plural, suggesting two rows of teeth.

²⁴ *tn* *Aram* “were uprooted from before it.”

²⁵ *tn* *Aram* “great.” So also in vv. 11, 20.

²⁶ *tn* Or “the Ancient One” (NAB, NRSV, NLT), although the traditional expression has been retained in the present translation because it is familiar to many readers. Cf. TEV “One who had been living for ever”; CEV “the Eternal God.”

²⁷ *tn* Traditionally the Aramaic word נֶאֱמַר (*neq̄e*) has been rendered “pure,” but here it more likely means “of a lamb.” Cf. the Syriac *neq̄a* (“a sheep, ewe”). On this word see further, M. Sokoloff, “amar neq̄e,” *Lamb’s Wool* (Dan 7:9), *JBL* 95 (1976): 277-79.

²⁸ *tn* *Aram* “a flaming fire.”

²⁹ *tn* *Aram* “were standing before him.”

³⁰ *tn* *Aram* “judgment sat.”

was watching⁴ until the beast was killed and its body destroyed and thrown into² the flaming fire. 7:12 As for the rest of the beasts, their ruling authority had already been removed, though they were permitted to go on living³ for a time and a season. 7:13 I was watching in the night visions,

“And with⁴ the clouds of the sky⁵ one like a son of man⁶ was approaching. He went up to the Ancient of Days and was escorted⁷ before him.

7:14 To him was given ruling authority, honor, and sovereignty. All peoples, nations, and language groups were serving⁸ him. His authority is eternal and will not pass away.⁹ His kingdom will not be destroyed.¹⁰

An Angel Interprets Daniel's Vision

7:15 “As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed,¹¹ and the visions of my mind¹² were alarming me. 7:16 I approached one of those standing nearby and asked him about the meaning¹³ of all this. So he spoke with me and revealed¹⁴ to me the interpretation of the vision:¹⁵ 7:17 ‘These large beasts, which are four in number, represent four kings who will arise from the earth. 7:18 The holy ones¹⁶ of the Most High will

receive the kingdom and will take possession of the kingdom forever and ever.’

7:19 “Then I wanted to know the meaning¹⁷ of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others. It was very dreadful, with two rows of iron teeth and bronze claws, and it devoured, crushed, and trampled anything that was left with its feet. 7:20 I also wanted to know¹⁸ the meaning of the ten horns on its head, and of that other horn which came up and before which three others fell. This was the horn that had eyes¹⁹ and a mouth speaking arrogant things, whose appearance was more formidable than the others.²⁰ 7:21 While I was watching, that horn began to wage war against the holy ones and was defeating²¹ them, 7:22 until the Ancient of Days arrived and judgment was rendered²² in favor of the holy ones of the Most High. Then the time came for the holy ones to take possession of the kingdom.

7:23 “This is what he told me:²³

‘The fourth beast means that there will be a fourth kingdom on earth that will differ from all the other kingdoms.

It will devour all the earth and will trample and crush it.

7:24 The ten horns mean that ten kings will arise from that kingdom.

Another king will arise after them, but he will be different from the earlier ones.

He will humiliate²⁴ three kings.

7:25 He will speak words against the Most High.

He will harass²⁵ the holy ones of the Most High continually.

His intention²⁶ will be to change times established by law.²⁷

¹ **tc** The LXX and Theodotion lack the words “I was watching” here. It is possible that these words in the MT are a dithegory from the first part of the verse.

² **tn** *Aram* “and given over to” (so NRSV).

³ **tn** *Aram* “a prolonging of life was granted to them.”

⁴ **tc** The LXX has ἐπί (*epi*, “upon”) here (cf. Matt 24:30; 26:64). Theodotion has μετὰ (*meta*, “with”) here (cf. Mark 14:62; Rev 1:7).

⁵ **tn** Or “the heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heavens” or “sky” depending on the context.

⁶ **sn** This text is probably the main OT background for Jesus’ use of the term “son of man.” In both Jewish and Christian circles the reference in the book of Daniel has traditionally been understood to refer to an individual, usually in a messianic sense. Many modern scholars, however, understand the reference to have a corporate identity. In this view, the “son of man” is to be equated with the “holy ones” (vv. 18, 21, 22, 25) or the “people of the holy ones” (v. 27) and understood as a reference to the Jewish people. Others understand Daniel’s reference to be to the angel Michael.

⁷ **tn** *Aram* “they brought him near.”

⁸ **tn** Some take “serving” here in the sense of “worshiping.”

⁹ **tn** *Aram* “is an eternal authority which will not pass away.”

¹⁰ **tn** *Aram* “is one which will not be destroyed.”

¹¹ **tn** The Aramaic text includes the phrase “in its sheath,” apparently viewing the body as a container or receptacle for the spirit somewhat like a sheath or scabbard is for a knife or a sword (cf. NAB “within its sheath of flesh”). For this phrase the LXX and Vulgate have “in these things.”

¹² **tn** *Aram* “head.”

¹³ **tn** *Aram* “what is certain.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Aram* “and made known.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Aram* “matter,” but the matter at hand is of course the vision.

¹⁶ **sn** The expression *holy ones* is either a reference to angels or to human beings devoted to God.

¹⁷ **tn** *Aram* “to make certain.”

¹⁸ **tn** The words “I also wanted to know” are added in the translation for stylistic reasons.

¹⁹ **tc** The conjunction in the MT before “eyes” is odd. The ancient versions do not seem to presuppose it.

²⁰ **tn** *Aram* “greater than its companions.”

²¹ **tn** *Aram* “prevailing against” (KJV and ASV both similar); NASB “overpowering them”; TEV “conquered them.”

²² **tc** In the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate the verb is active, understanding “judgment” to be the object rather than the subject of the verb (i.e., “the Ancient of Days rendered judgment”). This presupposes a different vocalization of the verb (יָהָב [y^hhav] rather than the MT יָהָב [y^hhiv]).

²³ **tn** *Aram* “thus he said.”

²⁴ **tn** Or “subjugate”; KJV, NASB, NIV “subdue”; ASV, NRSV “put down.”

²⁵ **tn** *Aram* “wear out” (so KJV, ASV, NRSV); NASB, NLT “wear down.” The word is a *hapax legomenon* in biblical Aramaic, but in biblical Hebrew it especially refers to wearing out such things as garments. Here it is translated “harass...continually.”

²⁶ **tn** *Aram* “he will think.”

²⁷ **tn** *Aram* “times and law.” The present translation is based on the understanding that the expression is a hendiatys.

They will be delivered into his hand
For a time, times,⁴ and half a time.

7:26 But the court will convene,² and his
ruling authority will be removed –
destroyed and abolished forever!

7:27 Then the kingdom, authority,
and greatness of the kingdoms under all
of heaven
will be delivered to the people of the holy
ones³ of the Most High.

His kingdom is an eternal kingdom;
all authorities will serve him and obey
him.⁷

7:28 “This is the conclusion of the matter. As
for me, Daniel, my thoughts troubled me greatly,
and the color drained from my face.⁴ But I kept
the matter to myself.”⁵

Daniel Has a Vision of a Goat and a Ram

8:1⁶ In the third year⁷ of King Belshazzar’s
reign, a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after the
one that had appeared to me previously.⁸ **8:2** In
this⁹ vision I saw myself in Susa¹⁰ the cita-
del,¹¹ which is located in the province of Elam.
In the vision I saw myself at the Ulai Canal.¹²

¹ **sn** Although the word *times* is vocalized in the MT as a plural, it probably should be regarded as a dual. The Masorettes may have been influenced here by the fact that in late Aramaic (and Syriac) the dual forms fall out of use. The meaning would thus be three and a half “times.”

² **tn** *Aram* “judgment will sit” (KJV similar).

³ **tn** If the “holy ones” are angels, then this probably refers to the angels as protectors of God’s people. If the “holy ones” are God’s people, then this is an appositional construction, “the people who are the holy ones.” See 8:24 for the corresponding Hebrew phrase and the note there.

⁴ **tn** *Aram* “my brightness was changing on me.”

⁵ **tn** *Aram* “in my heart.”

⁶ **sn** Dan 8:1 marks the switch from Aramaic (= 2:4b-7:28) back to Hebrew as the language in which the book is written in its present form. The remainder of the book from this point on (8:1-12:13) is in Hebrew. The bilingual nature of the book has been variously explained, but it most likely has to do with the book’s transmission history.

⁷ **sn** The *third year of King Belshazzar’s reign* would have been ca. 551 B.C. Daniel would have been approximately 69 years old at the time of this vision.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “in the beginning.” This refers to the vision described in chapter seven.

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “the.”

¹⁰ **sn** Susa (Heb. שׁוּשַׁן, *shushan*), located some 230 miles (380 km) east of Babylon, was a winter residence for Persian kings during the Achaemenid period. The language of v. 2 seems to suggest that Daniel may not have been physically present at Susa, but only saw himself there in the vision. However, the Hebrew is difficult, and some have concluded that the first four words of v. 2 in the MT are a later addition (cf. Theodotion).

¹¹ **tn** The Hebrew word בִּירָה (*birah*, “castle, palace”) usually refers to a fortified structure within a city, but here it is in apposition to the city name Susa and therefore has a broader reference to the entire city (against this view, however, see BDB 108 s.v. 2). Cf. NAB “the fortress of Susa”; TEV “the walled city of Susa.”

¹² **tn** The term אֲוַיִל (*uvail* = “stream, river”) is a relatively rare word in biblical Hebrew, found only here and in vv. 3 and 6. The Ulai was apparently a sizable artificial canal in Susa (cf. NASB, NIV, NCV), and not a river in the ordinary sense of that word.

8:3 I looked up¹³ and saw¹⁴ a¹⁵ ram with two horns standing at the canal. Its two horns were both long,¹⁶ but one was longer than the other. The longer one was coming up after the shorter one. **8:4** I saw that the ram was butting westward, northward, and southward. No animal¹⁷ was able to stand before it, and there was none who could deliver from its power.¹⁸ It did as it pleased and acted arrogantly.¹⁹

8:5 While I was contemplating all this,²⁰ a male goat²¹ was coming from the west over the surface of all the land²² without touching the ground. This goat had a conspicuous horn²³ between its eyes.

8:6 It came to the two-horned ram that I had seen standing beside the canal and rushed against it with raging strength.²⁴ **8:7** I saw it approaching the ram. It went into a fit of rage against the ram²⁵ and struck it²⁶ and broke off its two horns. The ram had no ability to resist it.²⁷ The goat hurled the ram²⁸ to the ground and trampled it. No one could deliver the ram from its power.²⁹ **8:8** The male goat acted even more arrogantly. But no sooner had the large horn become strong than it was broken, and there

¹³ **tn** *Heb* “lifted my eyes.”

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “and behold.”

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “one.” The Hebrew numerical adjective occasionally functions like an English indefinite article. See GKC 401 §125.b.

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “high” (also “higher” later in this verse).

¹⁷ **tn** Or “beast” (NAB).

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “hand.” So also in v. 7.

¹⁹ **tn** In the Hiphil the Hebrew verb גָּדַל (*gadal*, “to make great; to magnify”) can have either a positive or a negative sense. For the former, used especially of God, see Ps 126:2, 3; Joel 2:21. In this chapter (8:4, 8, 11, 25) the word has a pejorative sense, describing the self-glorification of this king. The sense seems to be that of vainly assuming one’s own superiority through deliberate hubris.

²⁰ **tn** The words “all this” are added in the translation for stylistic reasons and for clarification.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “and behold, a he-goat of the goats.”

²² **tn** Or “of the whole earth” (NAB, ASV, NASB, NRSV).

²³ **tn** *Heb* “a horn of vision” [or “conspicuousness”], i.e., “a conspicuous horn,” one easily seen.

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* “the wrath of its strength.”

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* “him.”

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* “the ram.”

²⁷ **tn** *Heb* “stand before him.”

²⁸ **tn** *Heb* “he hurled him.” The referents of both pronouns (the male goat and the ram) have been specified in the translation for clarity.

²⁹ **sn** The goat of Daniel’s vision represents Greece; the large horn represents Alexander the Great. The ram stands for Media-Persia. Alexander’s rapid conquest of the Persians involved three battles of major significance which he won against overwhelming odds: Granicus (334 B.C.), Issus (333 B.C.), and Gaugemela (331 B.C.).

are complete, a rash¹ and deceitful² king will arise.³ **8:24** His power will be great, but it will not be by his strength alone. He will cause terrible destruction.⁴ He will be successful in what he undertakes.⁵ He will destroy powerful people and the people of the holy ones.⁶ **8:25** By his treachery⁷ he will succeed through deceit.⁸ He will have an arrogant attitude,⁹ and he will destroy many who are unaware of his schemes.¹⁰ He will rise up against the Prince of princes, yet he will be broken apart – but not by human agency.¹¹ **8:26** The vision of the evenings and mornings that was told to you is correct.¹² But you should seal up the vision, for it refers to a time many days from now.”

8:27 I, Daniel, was exhausted¹³ and sick for days. Then I got up and again carried out the king's business. But I was astonished at the vision, and there was no one to explain it.

Daniel Prays for His People

9:1 In the first year of Darius¹⁴ son of Ahasuerus,¹⁵ who was of Median descent and who had been¹⁶ appointed king over the Babylonian¹⁷ empire – **9:2** in the first year of his reign¹⁸ I, Daniel, came to understand from the sacred books¹⁹ that, according to the word of the LORD²⁰ disclosed to the prophet Jeremiah, the years for the fulfilling of the desolation of Jerusalem²¹ were seventy in number. **9:3** So I turned my attention²² to the Lord God²³ to implore him by prayer and requests, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.²⁴ **9:4** I prayed to the LORD my God, confessing in this way:

“O Lord,²⁵ great and awesome God who is faithful to his covenant²⁶ with those who love him and keep his commandments, **9:5** we have sinned! We have done what is wrong and wicked; we have rebelled by turning away from your commandments and standards. **9:6** We have not paid attention to your servants the prophets, who spoke by your authority²⁷ to our kings, our

While the MT is understandable (cf. NIV, “when rebels have become completely wicked”), the filling up of transgressions is a familiar OT expression (cf. Gen 15:16) and fits this context well. Cf. the LXX, Theodotion, the Vulgate, and the Syriac.

1 **tn** Heb “strong of face.”

2 **tn** Heb “understanding riddles.” Possible meanings include “double-dealing” (BDB 295 s.v. חִידָה; cf. TEV, CEV) and “with a good knowledge of intrigue” (HALOT 309 s.v. חִידָה; cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

3 **tn** Heb “stand” or “stand up.”

4 **tn** Heb “extraordinarily he will destroy.”

5 **tn** Heb “he will succeed and act.”

6 **tn** See the corresponding Aramaic expression in 7:27. If the “holy ones” are angels, then this probably refers to the angels as protectors of God's people. One could translate, “people belonging to (i.e., protected by) the holy ones.” If the “holy ones” are God's people, then this is an appositional construction, “the people who are the holy ones.” One could translate simply “holy people.” For examples of a plural appositional genitive after “people,” see 11:15, 32. Because either interpretation is possible, the translation has deliberately preserved the ambiguity of the Hebrew grammar here.

7 **tn** The Hebrew term has a primary meaning of “skill, insight,” but here it has the connotation “cunning, treachery.” See BDB 968 s.v. שָׂכַל, שָׂכֵל.

8 **tn** Heb “he will cause deceit to succeed by his hand.”

9 **tn** Heb “in his heart he will act arrogantly.”

10 **tn** Heb “in peace.” The Hebrew word used here is difficult. It may refer to the security felt by those who did not realize the danger of imminent attack, or it may refer to the condition of being unaware of the impending danger. The latter idea is reflected in the present translation. See further, BDB 1017 s.v. שָׁלוֹם.

11 **tn** Heb “with nothingness of hand.”

12 **tn** Heb “truth.”

13 **tn** The Hebrew word here is נִיחָיִיתִי (*nihyetyi*). Its meaning is not entirely clear. Hebrew חָיָה (*hayah*) normally has meanings such as “to be” or “become.” Here, however, it describes Daniel's emotional and physical response to the enigmatic vision that he has seen. It is parallel to the following verb, which refers to illness, and seems to refer to a state of utter exhaustion due to the amazing things that Daniel has just seen. The LXX lacks the word. On the meaning of the word see further, BDB 227-28 s.v. חָיָה. Niph.2; DCH 2:540 s.v. חָיָה I.Ni.3.

14 **sn** The identity of this *Darius* is a major problem in correlating the biblical material with the extra-biblical records of this period. Most modern scholars treat the reference as a mistaken allusion to Darius Hystaspes (ca. 522-486 B.C.). Others have maintained instead that this name is a reference to the Persian governor Gubaru. Still others understand the reference to be to the Persian king Cyrus (cf. 6:28, where the *vav* (ו) may be understood as *vav explicativum*, meaning “even”). Under either of these latter two interpretations, the first year of Darius would have been ca. 538 B.C. Daniel would have been approximately eighty-two years old at this time.

15 **tc** The LXX reads “Xerxes.” This is the reading used by some English versions (e.g., NIV, NCV, TEV, CEV). Most other English versions retain the Hebrew name “Ahasuerus.”

16 **tc** The present translation follows the MT in reading a Hophal (i.e., passive). Theodotion, the Syriac, and the Vulgate all presuppose the Hiphil (i.e., active). Even though this is the only occurrence of the Hophal of this verb in the Bible, there is no need to emend the vocalization to the Hiphil.

17 **tn** Heb “was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans.”

18 **tc** This phrase, repeated from v. 1, is absent in Theodotion.

19 **tn** The Hebrew text has “books”; the word “sacred” has been added in the translation to clarify that it is Scriptures that are referred to.

20 **sn** The tetragrammaton (the four Hebrew letters which constitute the divine Name, YHWH) appears eight times in this chapter, and nowhere else in the book of Daniel.

21 **map** For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

22 **tn** Heb “face.”

23 **tn** The Hebrew phrase translated “Lord God” here is אֲדֹנָי הָאֱלֹהִים (*adonay ha'elohim*).

24 **sn** When lamenting, ancient Israelites would fast, wear sackcloth, and put ashes on their heads to show their sorrow and contrition.

25 **tn** The Hebrew term translated “Lord” here and in vv. 7, 9, 15, 16, and 19 is אֲדֹנָי (*adonay*).

26 **tn** Heb “who keeps the covenant and the loyal love.” The expression is a hendiadys.

27 **tn** Heb “in your name.” Another option is to translate, “as your representatives.”

leaders, and our ancestors,¹ and to all the inhabitants² of the land as well.

9:7 “You are righteous,³ O Lord, but we are humiliated this day⁴ – the people⁵ of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far away in all the countries in which you have scattered them, because they have behaved unfaithfully toward you. **9:8** O LORD, we have been humiliated⁶ – our kings, our leaders, and our ancestors – because we have sinned against you. **9:9** Yet the Lord our God is compassionate and forgiving,⁷ even though we have rebelled against him. **9:10** We have not obeyed⁸ the LORD our God by living according to⁹ his laws¹⁰ that he set before us through his servants the prophets.

9:11 “All Israel has broken¹¹ your law and turned away by not obeying you.¹² Therefore you have poured out on us the judgment solemnly threatened¹³ in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against you.¹⁴ **9:12** He has carried out his threats¹⁵ against us and our rulers¹⁶ who were over¹⁷ us by bringing great calamity on us – what has happened to Jerusalem has never been equaled under all heaven! **9:13** Just as it is written in the law of Moses, so all this calamity has come on us. Still we have not tried to pacify¹⁸ the LORD our God by turning back from our sin and by seeking wisdom¹⁹ from your reliable moral standards.²⁰ **9:14** The LORD was mindful of the calamity, and he brought it on us. For the LORD our God

is just²¹ in all he has done,²² and we have not obeyed him.²³

9:15 “Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with great power²⁴ and made a name for yourself that is remembered to this day – we have sinned and behaved wickedly. **9:16** O Lord, according to all your justice,²⁵ please turn your raging anger²⁶ away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain. For due to our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors, Jerusalem and your people are mocked by all our neighbors.

9:17 “So now, our God, accept²⁷ the prayer and requests of your servant, and show favor to²⁸ your devastated sanctuary for your own sake.²⁹ **9:18** Listen attentively,³⁰ my God, and hear! Open your eyes and look on our desolated ruins³¹ and the city called by your name.³² For it is not because of our own righteous deeds that we are praying to you,³³ but because your compassion is abundant. **9:19** O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, pay attention, and act! Don’t delay, for your own sake, O my God! For your city and your people are called by your name.”³⁴

Gabriel Gives to Daniel a Prophecy of Seventy Weeks

9:20 While I was still speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and presenting my request before the LORD my God concerning his holy mountain³⁵ – **9:21** yes, while I was still praying,³⁶ the man Gabriel, whom I had seen previously³⁷ in a vision, was approaching me in my state of extreme weariness,³⁸ around the time of the evening offering.

¹ **tn** Heb “our fathers” (also in vv. 8, 16). The Hebrew term translated “father” can refer to more distant relationships such as grandfathers or ancestors.

² **tn** Heb “people.”

³ **tn** Heb “to you (belongs) righteousness.”

⁴ **tn** Heb “and to us (belongs) shame of face like this day.”

⁵ **tn** Heb “men.”

⁶ **tn** Heb “to us (belongs) shame of face.”

⁷ **tn** Heb “to the Lord our God (belong) compassion and forgiveness.”

⁸ **tn** Heb “paid attention to the voice of,” which is an idiomatic expression for obedience (cf. NASB “nor have we obeyed the voice of”).

⁹ **tn** Heb “to walk in.”

¹⁰ **tc** The LXX and Vulgate have the singular.

¹¹ **tn** Or “transgressed.” The Hebrew verb has the primary sense of crossing a boundary, in this case, God’s law.

¹² **tn** Heb “by not paying attention to your voice.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “the curse and the oath which is written.” The term “curse” refers here to the judgments threatened in the Mosaic law (see Deut 28) for rebellion. The expression “the curse and the oath” is probably a hendiadys (cf. Num 5:21; Neh 10:29) referring to the fact that the covenant with its threatened judgments was ratified by solemn oath and made legally binding upon the covenant community.

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “him.”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “he has fulfilled his word(s) which he spoke.”

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “our judges.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “who judged.”

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “we have not pacified the face of.”

¹⁹ **tn** Or “by gaining insight.”

²⁰ **tn** Heb “by your truth.” The Hebrew term does not refer here to abstract truth, however, but to the reliable moral guidance found in the covenant law. See vv 10-11.

²¹ **tn** Or “righteous.”

²² **tn** Heb “in all his deeds which he has done.”

²³ **tn** Heb “we have not listened to his voice.”

²⁴ **tn** Heb “with a powerful hand.”

²⁵ **tn** Or “righteousness.”

²⁶ **tn** Heb “your anger and your rage.” The synonyms are joined here to emphasize the degree of God’s anger. This is best expressed in English by making one of the terms adjectival (cf. NLT “your furious anger”; CEV “terribly angry”).

²⁷ **tn** Heb “hear.” Here the verb refers to hearing favorably, accepting the prayer and responding positively.

²⁸ **tn** Heb “let your face shine.” This idiom pictures God smiling in favor. See Pss 31:16; 67:1; 80:3, 7, 19.

²⁹ **tn** Heb “for the sake of my Lord.” Theodotion has “for your sake.” Cf. v. 19.

³⁰ **tn** Heb “turn your ear.”

³¹ **tn** Heb “desolations.” The term refers here to the ruined condition of Judah’s towns.

³² **tn** Heb “over which your name is called.” Cf. v. 19. This expression implies that God is the owner of his city, Jerusalem. Note the use of the idiom in 2 Sam 12:28; Isa 4:1; Amos 9:12.

³³ **tn** Heb “praying our supplications before you.”

³⁴ **tn** Heb “for your name is called over your city and your people.” See the note on this expression in v 18.

³⁵ **tn** Heb “the holy mountain of my God.”

³⁶ **tn** Heb “speaking in prayer.”

³⁷ **tn** Heb “in the beginning.”

³⁸ **tn** The Hebrew expression מְיָאֵף בְּיָנֶיךָ (*mu’af bi’af*) is very difficult. The issue is whether the verb derives from יָאֵף (*’uf*, “to fly”) or from יָאֵף (*’af*, “to be weary”). Many ancient versions and modern commentators take the first of these possibilities and understand the reference to be to the swift flight

9:22 He spoke with me, instructing me as follows:¹ “Daniel, I have now come to impart understanding to you. 9:23 At the beginning of your requests a message went out, and I have come to convey it to you, for you are of great value in God’s sight.² Therefore consider the message and understand the vision.³

9:24 “Seventy weeks⁴ have been determined concerning your people and your holy city to put an end to⁵ rebellion, to bring sin⁶ to completion,⁷ to atone for iniquity, to bring in perpetual⁸ righteousness, to seal up⁹ the prophetic vision,¹⁰ and to anoint a most holy place.¹¹ 9:25 So know and understand: From the issuing of the command¹² to restore and rebuild Jerusalem¹³ until an anointed one, a prince arrives,¹⁴ there will be a period of seven weeks¹⁵ and sixty-two weeks.

of the angel Gabriel in his coming to Daniel. The words more likely refer to the extreme weariness, not of the angel, but of Daniel. Cf. 7:28; 8:27; 10:8-9, 16-17; also NASB.

1 tñ Heb “he instructed and spoke with me.” The expression is a verbal hendiadys.

2 tñ Or “a precious treasure”; KJV “greatly beloved”; NASB, NIV “highly esteemed.”

3 tñ This sentence is perhaps a compound hendiadys (“give serious consideration to the revelatory vision”).

4 tñ Heb “sevens.” Elsewhere the term is used of a literal week (a period of seven days), cf. Gen 29:27-28; Exod 34:22; Lev 12:5; Num 28:26; Deut 16:9-10; 2 Chr 8:13; Jer 5:24; Dan 10:2-3. Gabriel unfolds the future as if it were a calendar of successive weeks. Most understand the reference here as periods of seventy “sevens” of years, or a total of 490 years.

5 tc Or “to finish.” The present translation reads the *Qere* (from the root תָּמַם, *tammam*) with many witnesses. The *Kethib* has “to seal up” (from the root חָתַם, *hatam*), a confusion with a reference later in the verse to sealing up the vision.

6 tc The present translation reads the *Qere* (singular), rather than the *Kethib* (plural).

7 tñ The Hebrew phrase לִבְיָהּ (‘*l^hkhal^hle*’) is apparently an alternative (metaplastic) spelling of the root כָּלָה (*kalah*, “to complete, finish”), rather than a form of כָּלָה (*kala’*, “to shut up, restrain”), as has sometimes been supposed.

8 tñ Or “everlasting.”

9 sn The act of sealing in the OT is a sign of authentication. Cf. 1 Kgs 21:8; Jer 32:10, 11, 44.

10 tñ Heb “vision and prophecy.” The expression is a hendiadys.

11 tñ Or “the most holy place” (NASB, NLT); or “a most holy one”; or “the most holy one,” though the expression is used of places or objects elsewhere, not people.

12 tñ Or “decree” (NASB, NIV); or “word” (NAB, NRSV).

13 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

14 tñ The word “arrives” is added in the translation for clarity.

15 tñ Heb “sevens” (also later in this line and in v. 26).

sn The accents in the MT indicate disjunction at this point, which would make it difficult, if not impossible, to identify the “anointed one/prince” of this verse as messianic. The reference in v. 26 to the sixty-two weeks as a unit favors the MT accentuation, not the traditional translation. If one follows the MT accentuation, one may translate “From the going forth of the message to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until an anoint-

ed one, a prince arrives, there will be a period of seven weeks. During a period of sixty-two weeks it will again be built, with plaza and moat, but in distressful times.

9:26 Now after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing.¹⁷

As for the city and the sanctuary, the people of the coming prince will destroy¹⁸ them.

But his end will come speedily¹⁹ like a flood.²⁰

Until the end of the war that has been decreed there will be destruction.

9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one week.²¹

But in the middle of that week he will bring sacrifices and offerings to a halt.

On the wing²² of abominations will come²³ one who destroys, until the decreed end is poured out on the one who destroys.”

An Angel Appears to Daniel

10:1²⁴ In the third²⁵ year of King Cyrus of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel (who was also called Belteshazzar). This message was true and concerned a great war.²⁶ He understood the message and gained insight by the vision.

ed one, a prince arrives, there will be a period of seven weeks. During a period of sixty-two weeks it will again be built, with plaza and moat, but in distressful times.” The present translation follows a traditional reading of the passage that deviates from the MT accentuation.

16 tñ Heb “it will return and be built.” The expression is a verbal hendiadys.

17 sn The expression *have nothing* is difficult. Presumably it refers to an absence of support or assistance for the anointed one at the time of his “cutting off.” The KJV rendering “but not for himself,” apparently suggesting a vicarious death, cannot be defended.

18 tc Some witnesses (e.g., the Syriac) understand a passive verb and the preposition *im* (“with”) rather than the noun *am* (“am, “people”), thus reading “the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed with the coming prince.”

19 tñ The words “will come speedily” are not in the Hebrew text but have been added in the translation for clarity.

20 sn *Flood* here is a metaphor for sudden destruction.

21 tñ Heb “one seven” (also later in this line).

22 tñ The referent of the Hebrew word כַּנְף (*k^hnaf*, “wing”) is unclear here. The LXX and Theodotion have “the temple.” Some English versions (e.g., NAB, NIV) take this to mean “a wing of the temple,” but this is not clear.

23 tñ The Hebrew text does not have this verb, but it has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

24 sn This chapter begins the final unit in the book of Daniel, consisting of chapters 10-12. The traditional chapter divisions to some extent obscure the relationship of these chapters.

25 tc The LXX has “first.”

sn Cyrus’ *third year* would have been ca. 536 B.C. Daniel would have been approximately eighty-four years old at this time.

26 tñ The meaning of the Hebrew word צָבָא (*tsava’*) is uncertain in this context. The word most often refers to an army or warfare. It may also mean “hard service,” and many commentators take that to be the sense here (i.e., “the service was great”). The present translation assumes the reference

10:2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three whole weeks.¹ **10:3** I ate no choice food, no meat or wine came to my lips,² nor did I anoint myself with oil³ until the end of those three weeks.

10:4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month⁴ I was beside the great river, the Tigris.⁵ **10:5** I looked up⁶ and saw a⁷ man⁸ clothed in linen,⁹ around his waist was a belt made of gold from Ufaz.¹⁰ **10:6** His body resembled yellow jasper,¹¹ and his face had an appearance like lightning. His eyes were like blazing torches;¹² his arms and feet had the gleam of polished bronze. His voice¹³ thundered forth like the sound of a large crowd.

10:7 Only I, Daniel, saw the vision; the men who were with me did not see it.¹⁴ On the contrary, they were overcome with fright¹⁵ and ran away to hide. **10:8** I alone was left to see this great vision. My strength drained from¹⁶ me, and my vigor disappeared;¹⁷ I was without energy.¹⁸

10:9 I listened to his voice,¹⁹ and as I did so²⁰ I fell into a trance-like sleep with my face to the ground. **10:10** Then²¹ a hand touched me and set me on my hands and knees.²² **10:11** He said to me, “Daniel, you are of great value.²³ Understand the words that I am about to²⁴ speak to you. So stand up,²⁵ for I have now been sent to you.” When he said this²⁶ to me, I stood up shaking. **10:12** Then he said to me, “Don’t be afraid, Daniel, for from the very first day you applied your mind²⁷ to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. I have come in response to your words. **10:13** However, the prince of the kingdom of Persia was opposing me for twenty-one days. But²⁸ Michael, one of the leading princes, came to help me, because I was left there²⁹ with the kings of Persia. **10:14** Now I have come to help you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to future days.”

10:15 While he was saying this to me,³⁰ I was flat on³¹ the ground and unable to speak. **10:16** Then³² one who appeared to be a human being³³ was touching my lips. I opened my mouth and started to speak, saying to the one who was standing before me, “Sir,³⁴ due to the vision, anxiety has gripped me and I have no strength. **10:17** How, sir, am I able to speak with you?³⁵ My strength is gone,³⁶ and I am breathless.” **10:18** Then the one who appeared to be a human being touched me again³⁷ and strengthened me. **10:19** He said to me, “Don’t be afraid, you who are valued.³⁸ Peace be to you! Be strong! Be really strong!” When he spoke to me, I was strengthened. I said, “Sir, you may speak

to be to the spiritual conflicts described, for example, in 10:16–11:1.

¹ **tn** Heb “three weeks of days.” The inclusion of “days” here and in v. 3 is perhaps intended to call attention to the fact that these weeks are very different in nature from those of chap. 9, which are “weeks of years.”

² **tn** Heb “mouth.”

³ **sn** Anointing oneself with oil (usually olive oil) was a common OT practice due to the severity of the Middle Eastern sun (cf. Ps 121:6). It was also associated with rejoicing (e.g., Prov 27:9) and was therefore usually not practiced during a period of mourning.

⁴ **sn** The *first month* would be the month of Nisan, during which Passover was observed.

⁵ **tn** The Hebrew text has הַדְּקֵל (*hiddaqel*). “Tigris” appears here in the LXX, since it is the Greek name for this river. Elsewhere in the OT “the great river” refers to the Euphrates (e.g., Gen 15:18; Josh 1:4), leading some interpreters to think that a mistake is involved in using the expression to refer to the Tigris. But it is doubtful that the expression had such a fixed and limited usage. The Syriac, however, does render the word here by “Euphrates” (Syr. *perat*) in keeping with biblical usage elsewhere.

⁶ **tn** Heb “I lifted up my eyes.”

⁷ **tn** Heb “one.” The Hebrew numerical adjective is used here like an English indefinite article.

⁸ **sn** The identity of the messenger is not specifically disclosed. Presumably he is an unnamed angel. Some interpreters identify him as Gabriel, but there is no adequate reason for doing so.

⁹ **tn** The Hebrew word בְּדִים (*baddim*) is a plural of extension. See GKC 396-97 §124.a, b, c and Joüon 2:500 §136.c.

¹⁰ **tn** The location of this place and even the exact form of the Hebrew name אֹפַז (*ufaz*) are uncertain. Apparently it was a source for pure gold. (See Jer 10:9.) The Hebrew word פָּז (*paz*, “refined gold” or “pure gold”) is more common in the OT than אֹפַז, and some scholars emend the text of Dan 10:5 to read this word. Cf. also “Ophir” (1 Kgs 9:28; Isa 13:12; Job 22:24; 28:16).

¹¹ **tn** The Hebrew word translated “yellow jasper” is תַּרְשִׁישִׁי (*tarshishi*); it appears to be a semiprecious stone, but its exact identity is somewhat uncertain. It may be the yellow jasper, although this is conjectural. Cf. NAB, NIV “chrysolite”; NASB, NRSV “beryl.”

¹² **tn** Heb “torches of fire.”

¹³ **tn** Heb “The sound of his words” (cf. v. 9).

¹⁴ **tn** Heb “the vision.”

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “great trembling fell on them.”

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “did not remain in.”

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “was changed upon me for ruin.”

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “strength.”

¹⁹ **tc** Heb “I heard the sound of his words.” These words are absent in the LXX and the Syriac.

²⁰ **tn** Heb “as I listened to the sound of his words.”

²¹ **tn** Heb “Behold.”

²² **tc** Theodotion lacks “and the palms of my hands.”

²³ **tn** Heb “on my knees and the palms of my hands.”

²⁴ **tn** Or “a treasured person”; KJV “a man greatly beloved”; NASB “man of high esteem.”

²⁵ **tn** The Hebrew participle is often used, as here, to refer to the imminent future.

²⁶ **tn** Heb “stand upon your standing.”

²⁷ **tn** Heb “spoke this word.”

²⁸ **tn** Heb “gave your heart.”

²⁹ **tn** Heb “and behold.”

³⁰ **tc** The Greek version of Theodotion reads “I left him [i.e., Michael] there,” and this is followed by a number of English translations (cf. NAB, NRSV, NLT).

³¹ **tn** Heb “speaking to me according to these words.”

³² **tn** Heb “I placed my face toward.”

³³ **tn** Heb “Behold.”

³⁴ **tc** So most Hebrew MSS; one Hebrew MS along with the Dead Sea Scrolls and LXX read “something that looked like a man’s hand.”

³⁵ **tn** Heb “my lord,” here a title of polite address. Cf. v. 19.

³⁶ **tn** Heb “How is the servant of this my lord able to speak with this my lord?”

³⁷ **tn** Heb “does not stand.”

³⁸ **tn** Heb “He added and touched me.” The construction is a verbal hendiadys.

³⁹ **tn** Heb “treasured man.”

now,¹ for you have given me strength.” **10:20** He said, “Do you know why I have come to you?² Now I am about to return to engage in battle with the prince of Persia. When I go, the prince of Greece is coming. **10:21** However, I will first tell you what is written in a dependable book.³ (There is no one who strengthens me against these princes,⁴ except Michael your⁵ prince. **11:1** And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I⁶ stood to strengthen him and to provide protection for him.) **11:2** Now I will tell you the truth.

The Angel Gives a Message to Daniel

“Three⁷ more kings will arise for Persia. Then a fourth⁸ king will be unusually rich,⁹ more so than all who preceded him. When he has amassed power through his riches, he will stir up everyone against¹⁰ the kingdom of Greece. **11:3** Then a powerful king¹¹ will arise, exercising great authority and doing as he pleases. **11:4** Shortly after his rise to power,¹² his kingdom will be broken up and distributed toward the four winds of the sky¹³—but not to his posterity or with the authority he exercised, for his kingdom will be uprooted and distributed to others besides these.

11:5 “Then the king of the south¹⁴ and one of his subordinates¹⁵ will grow strong. His subordinate¹⁶ will resist¹⁷ him and will rule a kingdom greater than his.¹⁸ **11:6** After some years have passed, they¹⁹ will form an alliance. Then the daughter²⁰ of the king of the south will come to the king of the north to make an agreement, but she will not retain her power,²¹ nor will he continue²² in his strength.²³ She, together with the one who brought her, her child,²⁴ and her benefactor will all be delivered over at that time.²⁵

11:7 “There will arise in his²⁶ place one from her family line²⁷ who will come against their army and will enter the stronghold of the king of the north and will move against them successfully.²⁸ **11:8** He will also take their gods into captivity to Egypt, along with their cast images and prized utensils of silver and gold. Then he will withdraw for some years from²⁹ the king of the north. **11:9** Then the king of the north³⁰ will advance against the empire of the king of the south, but will withdraw to his own land.

¹⁴ **sn** The *king of the south* is Ptolemy I Soter (ca. 323-285 B.C.). The following reference to *one of his subordinates* apparently has in view Seleucus I Nicator (ca. 311-280 B.C.). Throughout the remainder of chap. 11 the expressions “king of the south” and “king of the north” repeatedly occur. It is clear, however, that these terms are being used generically to describe the Ptolemaic king (i.e., “of the south”) or the Seleucid king (i.e., “of the north”) who happens to be in power at any particular time. The specific identity of these kings can be established more or less successfully by a comparison of this chapter with the available extra-biblical records that discuss the history of the intertestamental period. In the following notes the generally accepted identifications are briefly mentioned.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* “princes.”

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* “and he”; the referent (the subordinate prince mentioned in the previous clause) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “be strong against.”

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “greater than his kingdom.”

¹⁹ **sn** Here *they* refers to Ptolemy II Philadelphus (ca. 285-246 B.C.) and Antiochus II Theos (ca. 262-246 B.C.).

²⁰ **sn** The *daughter* refers to Berenice, who was given in marriage to Antiochus II Theos.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* “the strength of the arm.”

²² **tn** *Heb* “stand.” So also in vv. 7, 8, 11, 13.

²³ **tn** *Heb* “and his arm.” Some understand this to refer to the descendants of the king of the north.

²⁴ **tc** The present translation reads *יְלִידָהּ* (*yaldah*, “her child”) rather than the MT *יְלִידָהּ* (*yoʿdah*, “the one who begot her”). Cf. Theodotion, the Syriac, and the Vulgate.

²⁵ **sn** Antiochus II eventually divorced Berenice and remarried his former wife Laodice, who then poisoned her husband, had Berenice put to death, and installed her own son, Seleucus II Callinicus (ca. 246-227 B.C.), as the Seleucid king.

²⁶ **sn** The reference is to the king of Egypt.

²⁷ **tn** *Heb* “the stock of her roots.”

sn The reference to *one from her family line* is probably to Berenice’s brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes (ca. 246-221 B.C.).

²⁸ **tn** *Heb* “will deal with them and prevail.”

²⁹ **tn** The Hebrew preposition *מִן* (*min*) is used here with the verb *עָמַד* (“*amad*, “to stand”). It probably has a sense of separation (“stand away from”), although it may also be understood in an adversative sense (“stand against”).

³⁰ **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (the king of the north) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹ **tn** *Heb* “my lord may speak.”

² **sn** The question is rhetorical, intended to encourage reflection on Daniel’s part.

³ **tn** *Heb* “a book of truth.” Several English versions treat this as a title of some sort (cf. NIV, NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT), although the NAB’s rendering “the truthful book” regards “truth” as an attributive adjective, as does the present translation.

⁴ **tn** The word “princes” is supplied for clarity.

⁵ **tn** The pronoun is plural in Hebrew, suggesting that Michael is the angelic prince of Daniel and his people.

⁶ **sn** The antecedent of the pronoun “I” is the angel, not Daniel. The traditional chapter division at this point, and the presence of a chronological note in the verse similar to ones used elsewhere in the book to position Daniel’s activities in relation to imperial affairs, sometimes lead to confusion on this matter.

⁷ **sn** Perhaps these *three more kings* are Cambyses (ca. 530-522 B.C.), Pseudo-Smerdis (ca. 522 B.C.), and Darius I Hystaspes (ca. 522-486 B.C.).

⁸ **sn** This *fourth king* is Xerxes I (ca. 486-465 B.C.).

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “rich with great riches.”

¹⁰ **tn** The text is difficult. The Hebrew has here *עָרַת* (*ʿet*), the marker of a definite direct object. As it stands, this would suggest the meaning that “he will arouse everyone, that is, the kingdom of Greece.” The context, however, seems to suggest the idea that this Persian king will arouse in hostility against Greece the constituent elements of his own empire. This requires supplying the word “against,” which is not actually present in the Hebrew text.

¹¹ **sn** The *powerful king* mentioned here is Alexander the Great (ca. 336-323 B.C.).

¹² **tn** *Heb* “and when he stands.”

¹³ **tn** Or “the heavens.” The Hebrew term *שָׁמַיִם* (*shamayim*) may be translated “heavens” or “sky” depending on the context.

11:10 His sons¹ will wage war, mustering a large army which will advance like an overflowing river and carrying the battle all the way to the enemy's² fortress.³

11:11 "Then the king of the south⁴ will be enraged and will march out to fight against the king of the north, who will also muster a large army, but that army will be delivered into his hand. **11:12** When the army is taken away, the king of the south will become arrogant.⁵ He will be responsible for the death⁶ of thousands and thousands of people,⁷ but he will not continue to prevail. **11:13** For the king of the north will again muster an army, one larger than before. At the end of some years he will advance with a huge army and enormous supplies.

11:14 "In those times many will oppose⁸ the king of the south.⁹ Those who are violent¹⁰ among your own people will rise up in confirmation of¹¹ the vision, but they will falter. **11:15** Then the king of the north will advance and will build siege mounds and capture a well-fortified city.¹² The forces of the south will not prevail, not even his finest contingents.¹³ They will have no strength to prevail. **11:16** The one advancing against him will do as he pleases, and no one will be able to stand before him. He will prevail in the beautiful land, and its annihilation will be within his power.¹⁴ **11:17** His intention¹⁵ will be to come with the strength of his entire kingdom, and he will form alliances.¹⁶ He will give the king of the south¹⁷ a daughter¹⁸ in marriage in

order to destroy the kingdom, but it will not turn out to his advantage. **11:18** Then he will turn his attention¹⁹ to the coastal regions and will capture many of them. But a commander²⁰ will bring his shameful conduct to a halt; in addition,²¹ he will make him pay for his shameful conduct.²² **11:19** He will then turn his attention to the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall, not to be found again. **11:20** There will arise after him²³ one²⁴ who will send out an exactor²⁵ of tribute to enhance the splendor of the kingdom, but after a few days he will be destroyed,²⁶ though not in anger or battle.

11:21 "Then there will arise in his place a despicable person²⁷ to whom the royal honor has not been rightfully conferred. He will come on the scene in a time of prosperity and will seize the kingdom through deceit. **11:22** Armies²⁸ will be suddenly²⁹ swept away in defeat³⁰ before him; both they and a covenant leader³¹ will be destroyed.³² **11:23** After³³ entering into an alliance with him, he will behave treacherously; he will ascend to power with only a small force.³⁴ **11:24** In a time of prosperity for the most productive areas of the province he will come and accomplish what neither his fathers nor their fathers accomplished. He will distribute loot, spoils, and property to his followers, and he will devise plans against fortified cities, but not for long.³⁵ **11:25** He will rouse his strength and enthusiasm³⁶ against the king of the south³⁷ with a large army.

¹ **sn** The sons of Seleucus II Callinicus were Seleucus III Ceraunus (ca. 227-223 B.C.) and Antiochus III the Great (ca. 223-187 B.C.).

² **tn** *Heb* "his"; the referent (the enemy of the king of the north) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

³ **tn** *Heb* "and he will certainly come and overflow and cross over and return and be aroused unto a fortress." The translation has attempted to simplify the syntax of this difficult sequence.

⁴ **sn** This *king of the south* refers to Ptolemy IV Philopator (ca. 221-204 B.C.).

⁵ **tn** *Heb* "his heart will be lifted up." The referent (the king of the south) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁶ **tn** *Heb* "cause to fall."

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "of myriads."

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "stand against."

⁹ **sn** This was Ptolemy V Epiphanes (ca. 203-181 B.C.).

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "sons of violence." "Son(s) is sometimes used idiomatically in Hebrew to indicate that someone is characterized by a certain quality. So the expression "sons of violence" means that these individuals will be characterized by violent deeds.

¹¹ **tn** *Heb* "to cause to stand."

¹² **sn** This *well-fortified city* is apparently Sidon. Its capture from the Ptolemies by Antiochus the Great was a strategic victory for the Seleucid kingdom.

¹³ **tn** Or "choice troops" (BDB 104 s.v. *בְּבָרָה*), or "elite troops" (HALOT 542 s.v. *בְּבָרָה*).

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* "hand."

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "and he will set his face." Cf. v. 18, 19.

¹⁶ **tc** The present translation reads *מְשָׁרִים* (*mesharim*, "alliances") for the MT *וַיִּשְׁרָיִם* (*viysharim*, "uprightness").

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* "him"; the referent (the king of the south) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* "the daughter of the women."

sn The *daughter* refers to Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus, who was given in marriage to Ptolemy V.

¹⁹ **tn** *Heb* "his face." See v. 19 as well.

²⁰ **sn** The *commander* is probably the Roman commander, Lucius Cornelius Scipio.

²¹ **tn** The Hebrew here is difficult in that the negative *בְּלִיָּי* (*bilyiy*, "not") is used in an unusual way. The sense is not entirely clear.

²² **tn** *Heb* "his shameful conduct he will return to him."

²³ **tn** *Heb* "on his place."

²⁴ **sn** The *one who will send out an exactor of tribute* was Seleucus IV Philopator (ca. 187-176 B.C.).

²⁵ **sn** Perhaps this *exactor of tribute* was Heliodorus (cf. 2 Maccabees 3).

²⁶ **tn** *Heb* "broken" or "shattered."

²⁷ **sn** This *despicable person to whom the royal honor has not been rightfully conferred* is Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ca. 175-164 B.C.).

²⁸ **tn** *Heb* "arms."

²⁹ **tc** The present translation reads *הִשְׁתַּוֵּף* (*hishatof*), Niphal infinitive absolute of *שָׂתַף* (*shataf*, "to overflow"), for the MT *הִשְׁתַּף* (*hashtef*, "flood").

³⁰ **tn** The words "in defeat" are added in the translation for clarification.

³¹ **tn** *Heb* "a prince of the covenant."

³² **tn** *Heb* "broken" or "shattered."

³³ **tn** The preposition *בֵּן* (*bin*) is probably temporal here (so BDB 583 s.v. 7.c; cf. KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV), although it could also be understood here as indicating means (so J. Goldingay, *Daniel* [WBC], 279, n. 23a; cf. TEV, NLT).

³⁴ **tn** *Heb* "nation."

³⁵ **tn** *Heb* "and unto a time."

³⁶ **tn** *Heb* "heart."

³⁷ **sn** This *king of the south* was Ptolemy Philometer (ca. 181-145 B.C.).

The king of the south will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to prevail because of the plans devised against him. **11:26** Those who share the king's fine food will attempt to destroy him, and his army will be swept away;¹ many will be killed in battle. **11:27** These two kings, their minds² filled with evil intentions, will trade³ lies with one another at the same table. But it will not succeed, for there is still an end at the appointed time. **11:28** Then the king of the north⁴ will return to his own land with much property. His mind will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action, and then return to his own land. **11:29** At an appointed time he will again invade the south, but this latter visit will not turn out the way the former one did. **11:30** The ships of Kittim⁵ will come against him, leaving him disheartened.⁶ He will turn back and direct his indignation against the holy covenant. He will return and honor⁷ those who forsake the holy covenant. **11:31** His forces⁸ will rise up and profane the fortified sanctuary,⁹ stopping the daily sacrifice. In its place they will set up¹⁰ the abomination that causes desolation. **11:32** Then with smooth words he will defile¹¹ those who have rejected¹² the covenant. But the people who are loyal to¹³ their God will act valiantly.¹⁴ **11:33** These who are wise among the people will teach the masses.¹⁵ However, they will fall¹⁶ by the sword and by the flame,¹⁷ and they will be imprisoned and plundered for some

time.¹⁸ **11:34** When they stumble, they will be granted some help. But many will unite with them deceitfully. **11:35** Even some of the wise will stumble, resulting in their refinement, purification, and cleansing until the time of the end, for it is still for the appointed time.

11:36 "Then the king¹⁹ will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every deity and he will utter presumptuous things against the God of gods. He will succeed until the time of²⁰ wrath is completed, for what has been decreed must occur.²¹ **11:37** He will not respect²² the gods of his fathers – not even the god loved by women.²³ He will not respect any god; he will elevate himself above them all. **11:38** What he will honor is a god of fortresses – a god his fathers did not acknowledge he will honor with gold, silver, valuable stones, and treasured commodities. **11:39** He will attack²⁴ mighty fortresses, aided by²⁵ a foreign deity. To those who recognize him he will grant considerable honor. He will place them in authority over many people, and he will parcel out land for a price.²⁶

11:40 "At the time of the end the king of the south will attack²⁷ him. Then the king of the north will storm against him²⁸ with chariots, horsemen, and a large armada of ships.²⁹ He³⁰ will invade lands, passing through them like an overflowing river.³¹ **11:41** Then he will enter the

¹ **tc** The present translation reads יִשְׁחָטֶהָ (*yishatef*, passive) rather than the MT יִשְׁחָטֶהָ (*yishtof*, active).

² **tn** *Heb* "heart." So also in v. 28.

³ **tn** *Heb* "speak."

⁴ **tn** *Heb* "he"; the referent (the king of the north) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

⁵ **sn** The name *Kittim* has various designations in extra-biblical literature. It can refer to a location on the island of Cyprus, or more generally to the island itself, or it can be an inclusive term to refer to parts of the Mediterranean world that lay west of the Middle East (e.g., Rome). For *ships of Kittim* the Greek OT (LXX) has "Romans," an interpretation followed by a few English versions (e.g., TEV). A number of times in the Dead Sea Scrolls the word is used in reference to the Romans. Other English versions are more generic: "[ships] of the western coastlands" (NIV, NLT); "from the west" (NCV, CEV).

⁶ **sn** This is apparently a reference to the Roman forces, led by Gaius Popilius Laenas, which confronted Antiochus when he came to Egypt and demanded that he withdraw or face the wrath of Rome. Antiochus wisely withdrew from Egypt, albeit in a state of bitter frustration.

⁷ **tn** *Heb* "show regard for."

⁸ **tn** *Heb* "arms."

⁹ **tn** *Heb* "the sanctuary, the fortress."

¹⁰ **tn** *Heb* "will give."

¹¹ **tn** Or "corrupt."

¹² **tn** *Heb* "acted wickedly toward."

¹³ **tn** *Heb* "know." The term "know" sometimes means "to recognize." In relational contexts it can have the connotation "recognize the authority of, be loyal to," as it does here.

¹⁴ **sn** This is an allusion to the Maccabean revolt, which struggled to bring about Jewish independence in the second century B.C.

¹⁵ **tn** *Heb* "the many."

¹⁶ **tn** *Heb* "stumble."

¹⁷ **tn** Or "by burning."

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* "days."

¹⁹ **sn** The identity of this king is problematic. If vv. 36-45 continue the description of Antiochus Epiphanes, the account must be viewed as erroneous, since the details do not match what is known of Antiochus' latter days. Most modern scholars take this view, concluding that this section was written just shortly before the death of Antiochus and that the writer erred on several key points as he tried to predict what would follow the events of his own day. Conservative scholars, however, usually understand the reference to shift at this point to an eschatological figure, viz., the Antichrist. The chronological gap that this would presuppose to be in the narrative is not necessarily a problem, since by all accounts there are many chronological gaps throughout the chapter, as the historical figures intended by such expressions as "king of the north" and "king of the south" repeatedly shift.

²⁰ **tn** The words "the time of" are added in the translation for clarification.

²¹ **tn** *Heb* "has been done." The Hebrew verb used here is the perfect of certitude, emphasizing the certainty of fulfillment.

²² **tn** *Heb* "consider."

²³ **tn** *Heb* "[the one] desired by women." The referent has been specified in the translation for clarity.

²⁴ **tn** *Heb* "act against."

²⁵ **tn** *Heb* "with."

²⁶ **tn** Or perhaps "for a reward."

²⁷ **tn** *Heb* "engage in thrusting."

²⁸ **tn** The referent of the pronoun is most likely the king of the south, in which case the text describes the king of the north countering the attack of the king of the south.

²⁹ **tn** *Heb* "many ships."

³⁰ **tn** This most likely refers to the king of the north who, in response to the aggression of the king of the south, launches an invasion of the southern regions.

³¹ **tn** *Heb* "and will overflow and pass over."

beautiful land.¹ Many² will fall, but these will escape:³ Edom, Moab, and the Ammonite leadership. **11:42** He will extend his power⁴ against other lands; the land of Egypt will not escape. **11:43** He will have control over the hidden stores of gold and silver, as well as all the treasures of Egypt. Libyans and Ethiopians⁵ will submit to him.⁶ **11:44** But reports will trouble him from the east and north, and he will set out in a tremendous rage to destroy and wipe out many. **11:45** He will pitch his royal tents between the seas⁷ toward the beautiful holy mountain. But he will come to his end, with no one to help him.

12:1 “At that time Michael, the great prince who watches over your people,⁸ will arise.⁹ There will be a time of distress unlike any other from the nation’s beginning¹⁰ up to that time. But at that time your own people, all those whose names are¹¹ found written in the book, will escape. **12:2** Many of those who sleep in the dusty ground will awake – some to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting abhorrence.¹² **12:3** But the wise will shine like the brightness of the heavenly expanse. And those bringing many to righteousness will be like the stars forever and ever.

12:4 “But you, Daniel, close up these words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will dash about,¹³ and knowledge will increase.”

12:5 I, Daniel, watched as two others stood there, one on each side of the river.¹⁴ **12:6** One said to the man clothed in linen who was above the waters of the river, “When will the end of these wondrous events occur?” **12:7** Then I heard the man clothed in linen who was over the waters of the river as he raised both his right and left hands to the sky¹⁵ and made an oath by the one who lives forever: “It is for a time, times, and half a time. Then, when the power of the one who shatters¹⁶ the holy people has been exhausted, all these things will be finished.”

12:8 I heard, but I did not understand. So I said, “Sir,¹⁷ what will happen after these things?” **12:9** He said, “Go, Daniel. For these matters are closed and sealed until the time of the end. **12:10** Many will be purified, made clean, and refined, but the wicked will go on being wicked. None of the wicked will understand, though the wise will understand. **12:11** From the time that the daily sacrifice is removed and the abomination that causes desolation is set in place,¹⁸ there are 1,290 days. **12:12** Blessed is the one who waits and attains to the 1,335 days. **12:13** But you should go your way¹⁹ until the end.²⁰ You will rest and then at the end of the days you will arise to receive²¹ what you have been allotted.”²²

¹ **sn** The *beautiful land* is a cryptic reference to the land of Israel.

² **tn** This can be understood as “many people” (cf. NRSV) or “many countries” (cf. NASB, NIV, NLT).

³ **tn** *Heb* “be delivered from his hand.”

⁴ **tn** *Heb* “hand.”

⁵ **tn** Or “Nubians” (NIV, NCV); *Heb* “Cushites.”

⁶ **tn** *Heb* “Libyans and Cushites [will be] at his footsteps.”

⁷ **sn** Presumably seas refers to the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea.

⁸ **tn** *Heb* “stands over the sons of your people.”

⁹ **tn** *Heb* “will stand up.”

¹⁰ **tn** Or “from the beginning of a nation.”

¹¹ **tn** The words “whose names are” are added in the translation for stylistic reasons and for clarification.

¹² **sn** This verse is the only undisputed reference to a literal resurrection found in the Hebrew Bible.

¹³ **tn** Or “will run back and forth”; KJV “shall run to and fro”; NIV “will go here and there”; CEV “will go everywhere.”

sn *Many will dash about* is probably an allusion to Amos 8:12.

¹⁴ **tn** *Heb* “one to this edge of the river and one to that edge of the river.”

¹⁵ **tn** Or “to the heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heavens” or “sky” depending on the context.

¹⁶ **tc** The present translation reads יַדְנֹפֶטִין (*yad-nofets*, “hand of one who shatters”) rather than the MT נַפְיָדִי (*nappets-yad*, “to shatter the hand”).

¹⁷ **tn** *Heb* “my lord,” a title of polite address.

¹⁸ **tn** *Heb* “to give.”

¹⁹ **tn** The words “your way” are not in the Hebrew text, but are implied.

²⁰ **tc** The LXX lacks “until the end.”

²¹ **tn** The word “receive” is added in the translation for clarification.

²² **sn** The deuterocanonical writings known as the Story of Susanna and Bel and the Dragon appear respectively as chapters 13 and 14 of the book of Daniel in the Greek version of this book. Although these writings are not part of the Hebrew/Aramaic text of Daniel, they were popular among certain early communities who valued traditions about the life of Daniel.