

Daniel

Come Follow Me

Problems with Daniel 1

Daniel chapter 1 starts out making the following statement:

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. (Daniel 1:1-2)

There are a couple of problems with this statement. Jehoiakim reigned from 609 to 598 BCE. Jerusalem was besieged in 598 BCE, after Jehoiakim dies.¹ So we have this reference in Daniel that has the date wrong, as well as the wrong king on the throne at the time of the siege of Jerusalem. Also, if it was in “the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim,” it would have been 606-605, so this statement is off by 7 years.

Notes

1. Aaron P. Schade, “The Kingdom of Judah: Politics, Prophets, and Scribes in the Late Preexilic Period,” in *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem*, ed. John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jō Ann H. Seely. (Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, 2004).

When did Nebuchadnezzar lay siege to Jerusalem?

According to the Babylonian Chronicles, ¹ Jerusalem fell on 2 Adar (16 March) 597 BC. The Chronicles state:

The seventh year (of Nebuchadnezzar-598 BC.) in the month Chislev (Nov/Dec) the king of Babylon assembled his army, and after he had invaded the land of Hatti (Syria/Palestine) he laid siege to the city of Judah. On the second day of the month of Adar (16 March) he conquered the city and took the king (Jeconiah) prisoner. He installed in his place a king (Zedekiah) of his own choice, and after he had received rich tribute, he sent (them) forth to Babylon. ²

Notes

1. Geoffrey Wigoder, *The Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible* by Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. (2006)
2. No 24 WA21946, The Babylonian Chronicles, The British Museum.

What was the deal with the King's meat?

The term meat referred to the food that graced the king's table (compare Genesis 1:29). The reasons for Daniel's refusal to eat the food may have included the following: (1) some of the foods used by the Babylonians were likely among the items forbidden for consumption in the Mosaic law (see Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14); (2) Babylonians, like other heathens, ate beasts that had not been properly drained of blood (see Leviticus 3:17) and thereby violated the Mosaic law; and (3) the heathens consecrated the food of their feasts by offering up part of the food and drink as sacrifices to their gods. Consuming such food would be participating in the worship of false gods. Moreover, food was viewed as contaminated and unclean according to Jewish law when it was prepared by anyone considered unclean, such as the heathens (see Leviticus 7:19–21). Daniel was strictly loyal to the Lord and refused to be involved in any practice associated with anything unclean or idolatrous.

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Food and Table Communion in Context

There is nothing in [Leviticus 11](#) that prohibits the eating of food offered to idols; that prohibition arose later as Israelites found themselves living outside of their homeland and among idol worshippers. [Hosea 9:3–4](#) indicates that Gentile food is impure. After the Babylonian exile, diet was a key indicator of Jewish identity. (See [Tobit 1:10–11](#); [1 Maccabees 1:62–63](#); [Judith 10:5](#); [12:1–4](#); 2 Maccabees 6–7; [Greek Esther 14:17](#)) The issue of eating food sacrificed to idols also troubled the early Christian community; the Jerusalem Council settled the matter by urging Gentile converts to abstain from meat sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:29), and Paul encouraged Christians to use caution in partaking of it to protect the fragile faith of new converts. (1 Corinthians 8)



Daniel 2 The Dream of the King

Part	Material	2nd century B.C. context	LDS interpretation
Head	Gold	Babylon (2:38)	Babylon
Chest and arms	Silver	Medes (2:39a)	Medo-Persia
Thighs	Bronze	Persia (2:39b)	Macedonian Greece
Legs	Iron	Macedonian Greece (2:40)	Rome (divided into west and east)
Feet	Clay mixed with iron	The Diadochi, the four kingdoms that emerged when Alexander's empire disintegrated (2:41–43)	The European nations that emerged when the Roman Empire disintegrated
Stone cut without hands		God's kingdom, never to be destroyed (2:44–45)	God's kingdom, restored in the last days, never to be destroyed

HEAD OF GOLD
KINGDOM OF BABYLON

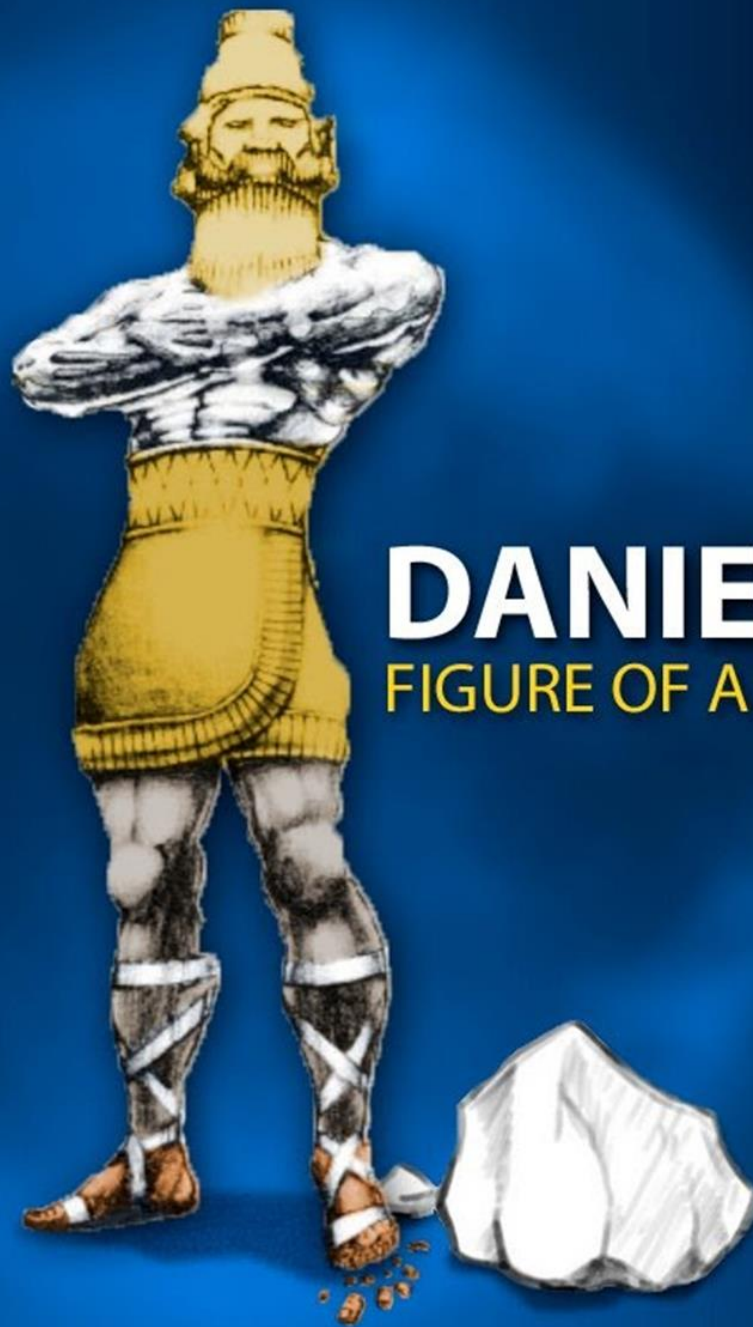
**CHEST & ARMS
OF SILVER**
KINGDOM OF MEDES
& PERSIANS

**BELLY & THIGHS
OF BRONZE**
KINGDOM OF
ANCIENT GREECE

LEGS OF IRON
KINGDOM OF
ANCIENT ROME

**FEET OF IRON
& CLAY**
KINGDOM OF
RESTORED ROME

CRUSHING ROCK
KINGDOM OF GOD



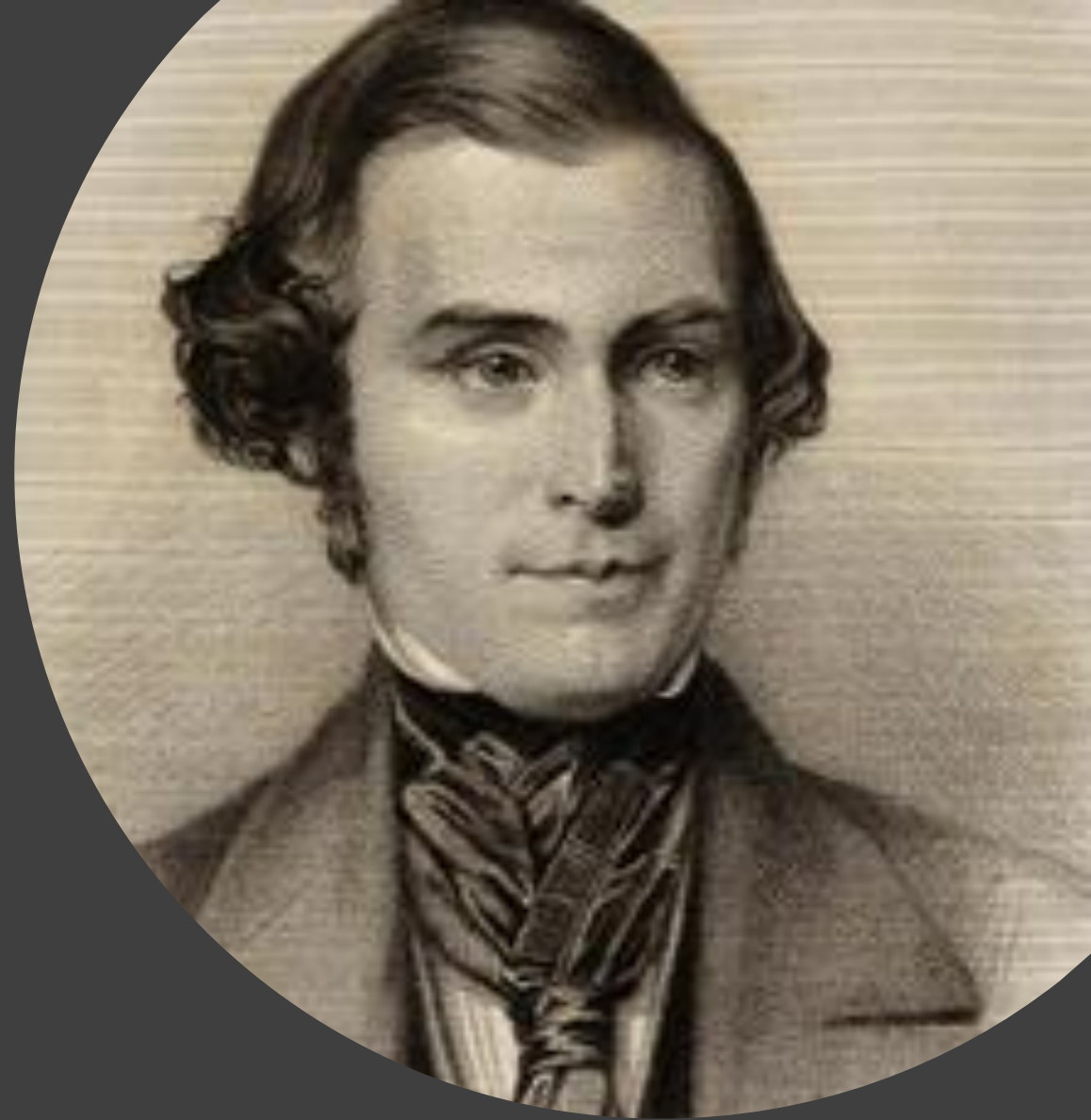
DANIEL 2

FIGURE OF A MAN

Daniel 2

This image has had varying interpretations over the years.

Elder Orson Pratt, in explaining why the toes were shown as being partly iron and partly clay, said that “the feet and toes were governments more modern to grow out of the iron kingdom [Roman Empire], after it should lose its strength. These are represented by the ten toes or ten kingdoms which should be partly strong and partly broken. They should not have the strength of the legs of iron, but they should be mixed with miry clay, indicating both strength and weakness.” (In *Journal of Discourses*, 18:337.)



The Stone Cut Without Hands

“**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** was restored in 1830 after numerous revelations from the divine source; and **this is the kingdom**, set up by the God of heaven, that **would never be destroyed nor superseded**, and the stone cut out of the mountain without hands that would become a great mountain and would fill the whole earth.” (In *Conference Report*, Apr. 1976, p. 10.)



The kingdom will continue to increase, to grow, to spread and prosper more and more. Every time its enemies undertake to overthrow it, it will become more extensive and powerful; instead of its decreasing, it will continue to increase, it will spread the more, become more wonderful and conspicuous to the nations, until it fills the whole earth.” (In *Journal of Discourses*, 1:202–3.)

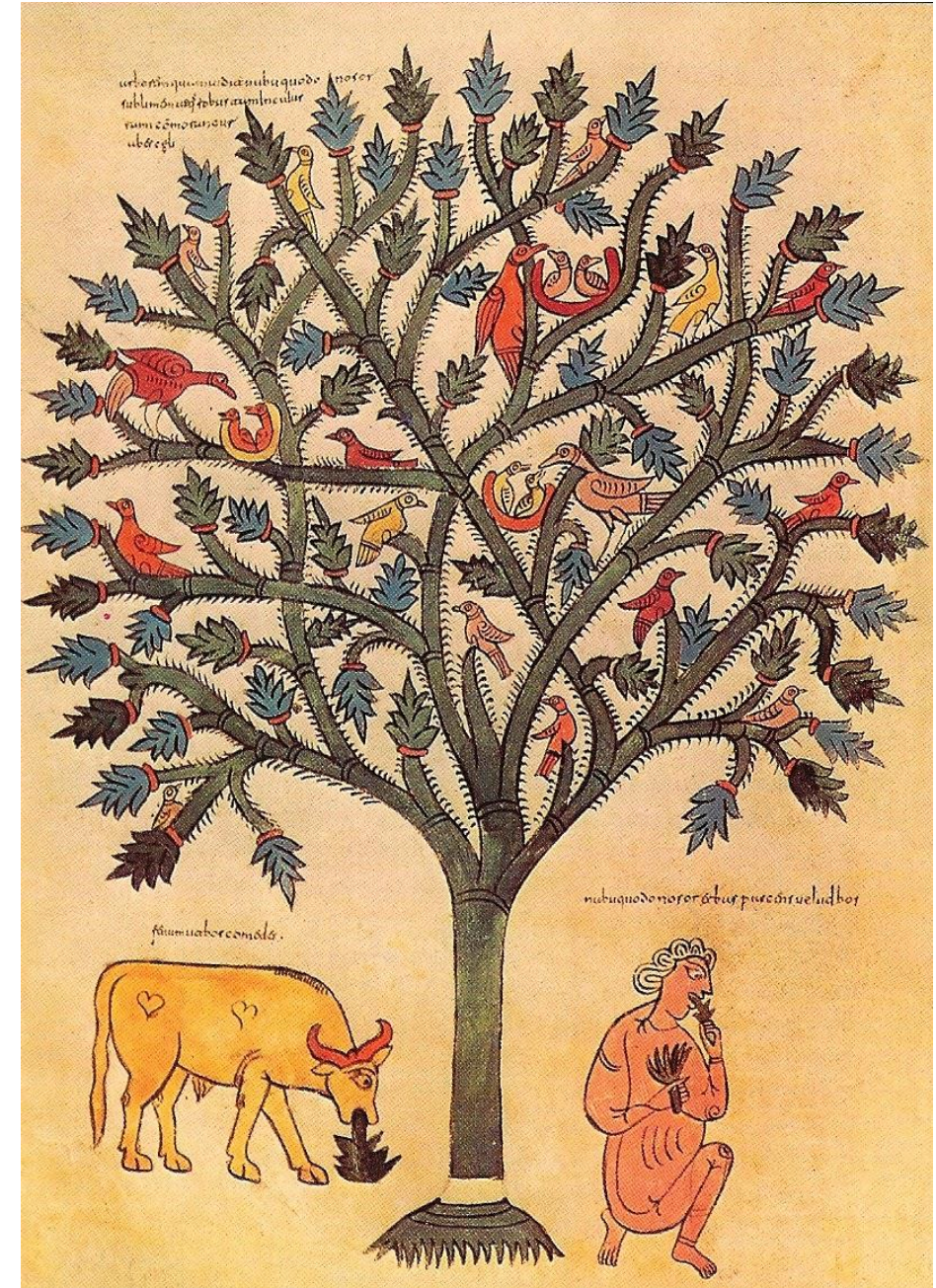


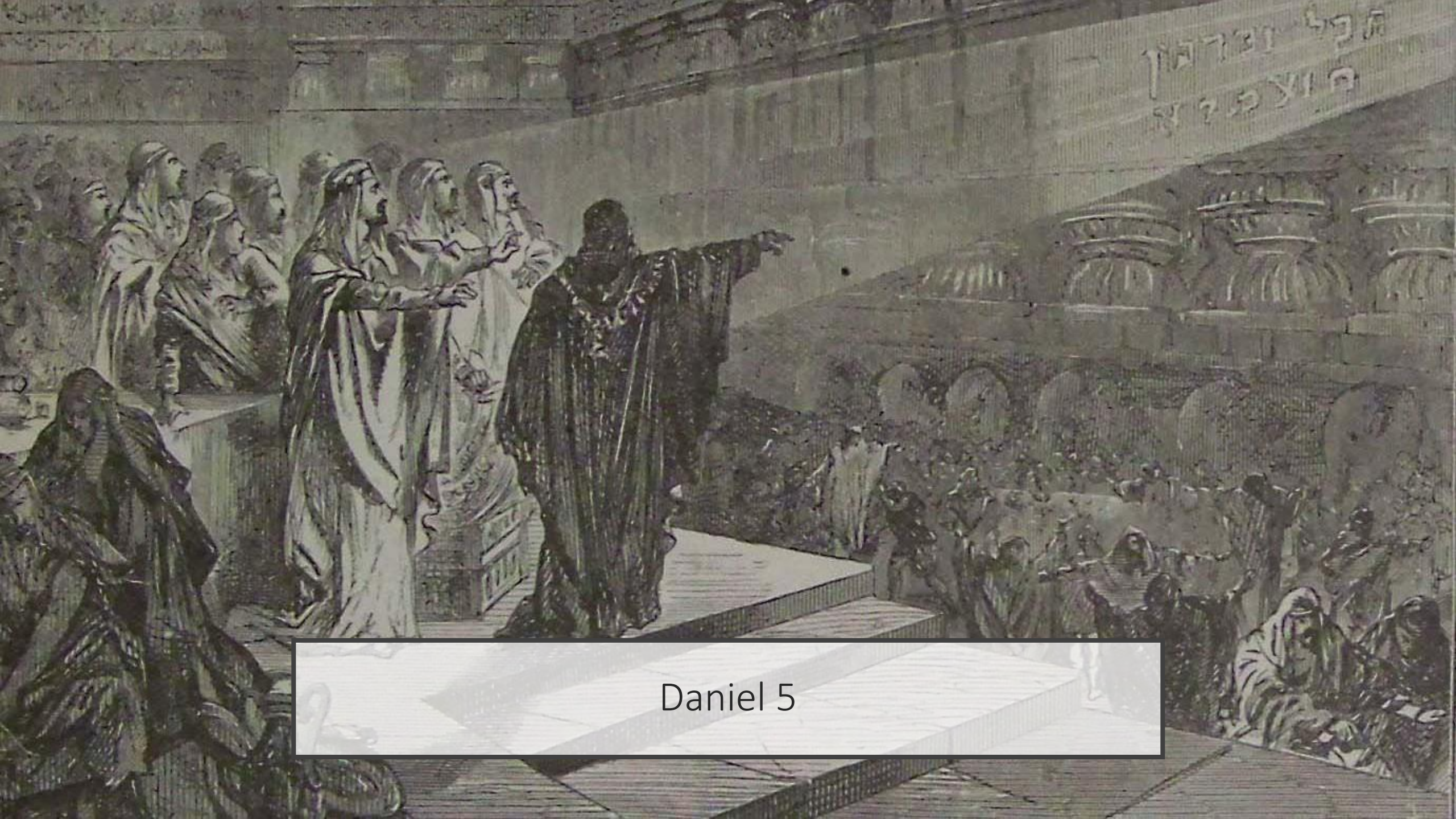


Daniel 3



The Tree & The King's Madness – Daniel 4





Daniel 5



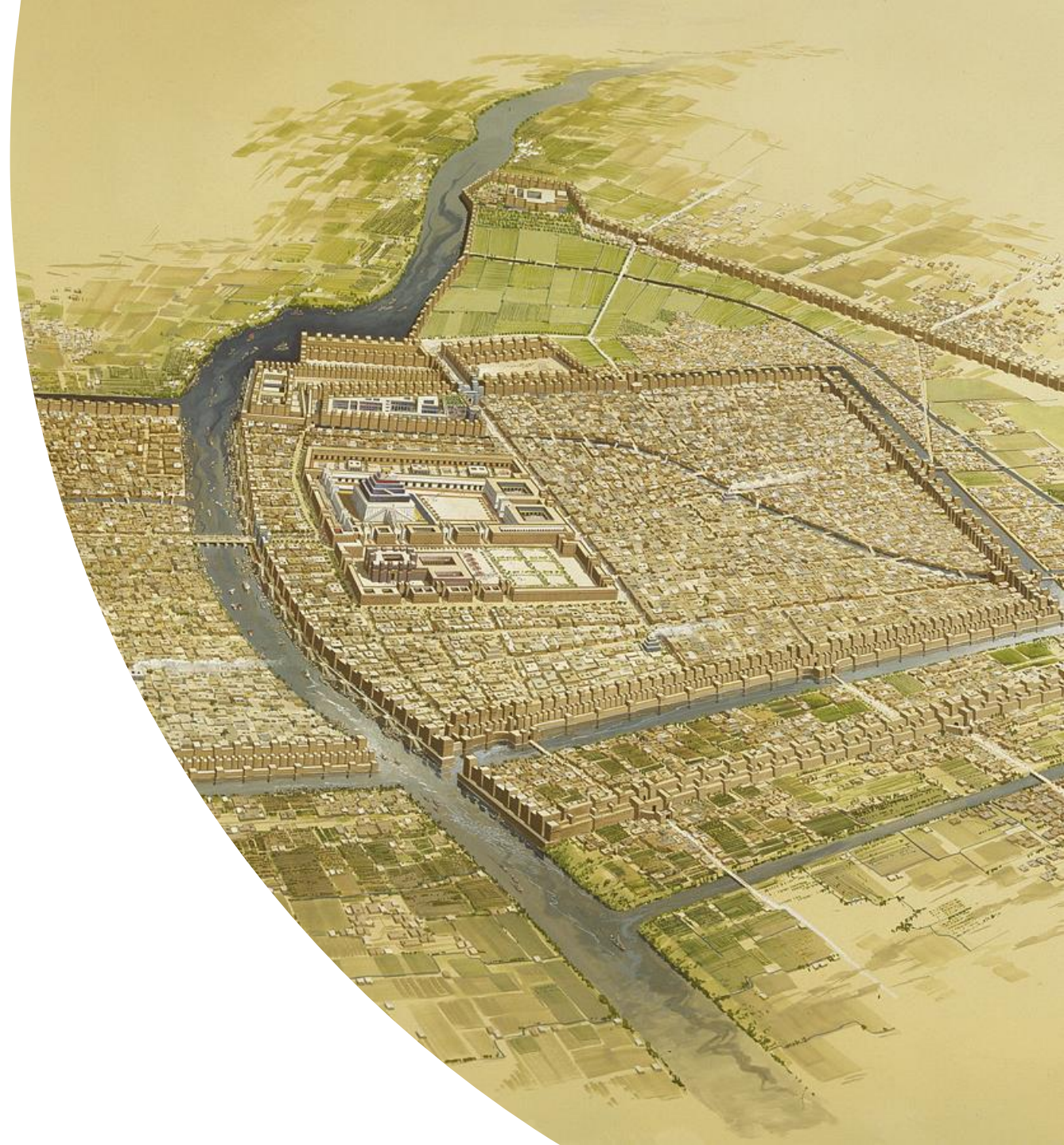
Daniel 5.30

Babylon was surrounded by a massive wall over one hundred feet thick and three hundred feet high. To breach such a wall, even with constant sieging, would take months, and yet there is no hint in Daniel's record that the city was under siege at this time. Could a city of Babylon's size and fortifications be taken in one night?

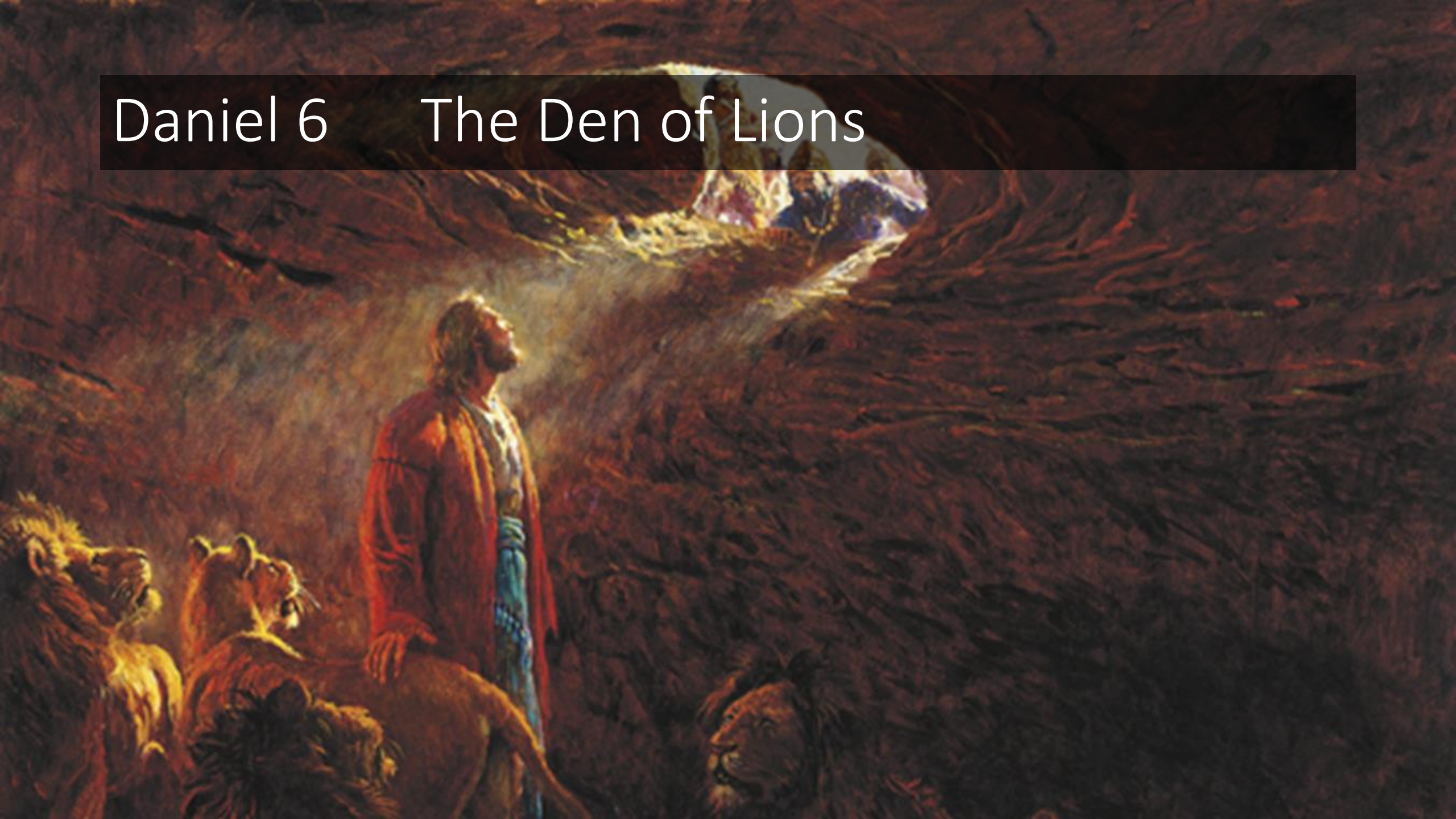
Cyrus diverts water

Historical sources other than the Bible indicate that that is exactly what happened, supporting Daniel's record. The ancient Greek historian, Herodotus, recorded that "Cyrus had previously caused the Pallacopas, a canal which ran west of the city, and carried off the superfluous water of the Euphrates into the lake of Nitocris, to be cleared out, in order to turn the river into it; which, by this means, was rendered so shallow that his soldiers were able to penetrate along its bed into the city."

(In Samuel Fallows, ed., *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary*, p. 207.)



Daniel 6 The Den of Lions



Apocalyptic Visions of Daniel

Daniel 7-12 contain visions of Daniel that are apocalyptic. What is apocalyptic literature? *Apocalypse* is a Greek word meaning **revelation**, and *apocalyptic* as an adjective describes the genre of literature that contains visionary or revelatory experiences. Although such writings have been known from ancient times (texts like Daniel, and the Revelation of John), discoveries since the late nineteenth century of apocalyptic texts have increased scholarly interest in the subject. **The apocalyptic tradition was one of those the early Christian church rejected in the third through the fifth centuries**, only to be recovered in modern times through these discoveries. The importance of revelation in the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith makes the study of apocalyptic texts as worthwhile to Latter-day Saints as it is interesting to scholars.



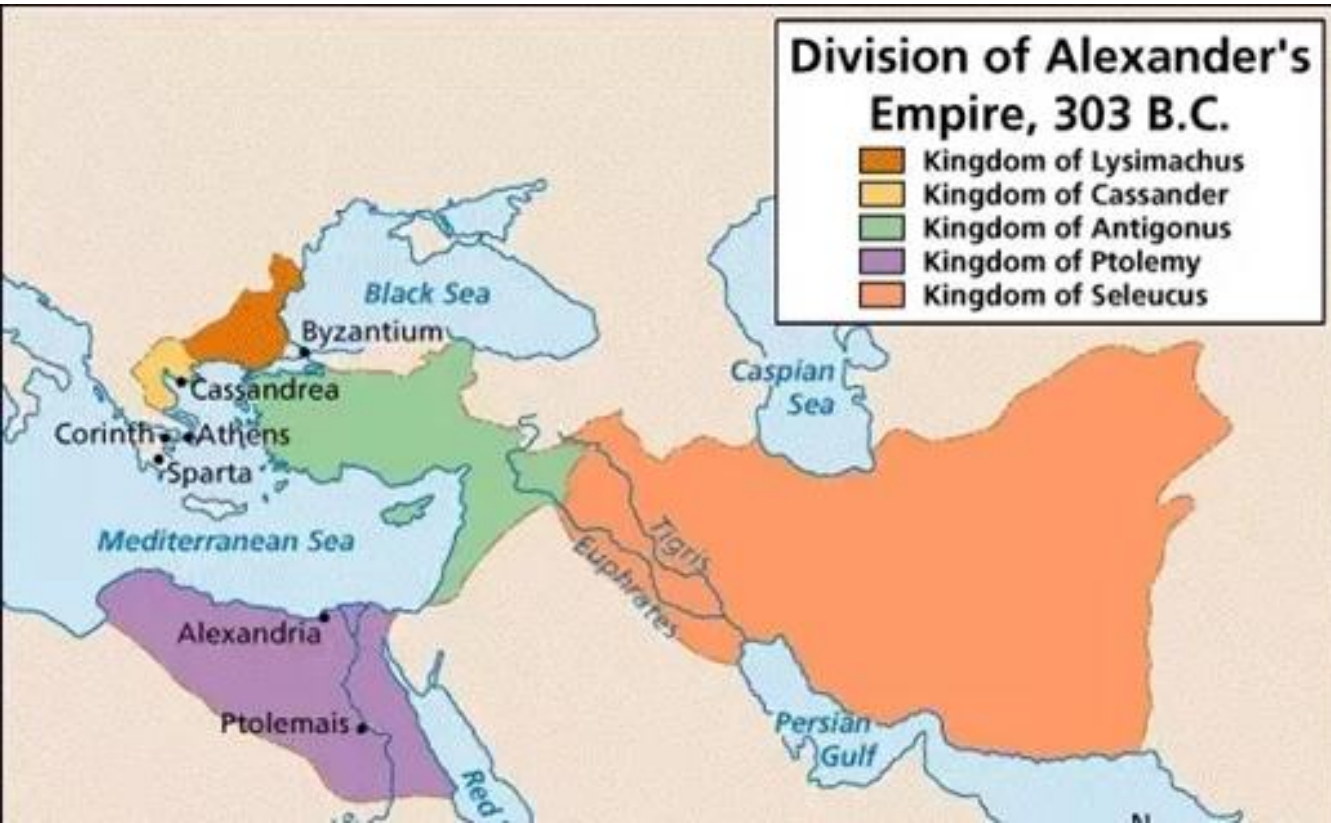
(C. Wilfred Griggs, *Apocalyptic Texts*, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*).

Apocalyptic Visions of Daniel

Because of the detailed nature of apocalyptic timetables, **the dating of at least the last chapters of Daniel can be established precisely.** Scholars consider the predictions in this book, as in other apocalypses, to be **prophecies after the fact**, purportedly written down centuries earlier and kept secret in order to give credence to other predictions about the end of history. **The recounting of history, then, though symbolic, can be matched quite easily with the history of the ancient Near East in the Greek period.** The predictions are detailed and accurate until near the end of the Maccabean revolt in 164. At that point they veer dramatically from what we know of the actions of the Seleucid king, and **scholars assume that the author lived and wrote at the precise time when the predictions are no longer accurate.** (*The Jewish Study Bible*, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 1636)



Alexander's
Empire splits
after he dies



Important Dates in the Hellenistic Period (B.C.)

336-323 Campaigns of Alexander the Great

320-198 Judea ruled by Ptolemies of Egypt (the king of the south)

198-164 Judea conquered by Seleucids of Syria (the king of the north)

175-164 Antiochus IV Epiphanes

175-168 Hellenistic reform in Jerusalem

168-167 Profanation of the temple in Jerusalem; Maccabean revolt

164 Rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabee

164-163 Judea independent under Hasmonians (descendants of the Maccabees)

63 Conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey, Roman general

Daniel 7 – 8 The Little Horn

The “little horn” (Dan. 8.9) that came from one of them has generally been interpreted to represent Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), who ruled Syria 175–164 B.C. He persecuted the Jews bitterly, declaring observance of the Mosaic law to be a capital offense. Reynolds and Sjodahl wrote: “That **this ‘little horn’ represents Antiochus Epiphanes** is a view entertained by most ancient writers, but this does not exclude the probability that the ‘great and abominable power’ previously referred to, and which is the ‘church of the devil’ is pointed to by the Prophet as necessary to the complete fulfillment of his prediction. **What Antiochus was to the Jews during the time of the Maccabees, the ‘church of the devil’ has been to the ‘Church of Christ’ in all ages.**” (*Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price*, p. 13.)



Antiochus IV Epiphanes at the Altes Museum in Berlin. Antiochus reigned as the Seleucid emperor from 175-164 BCE.

Antiochus desecrated the temple – 165 BCE





Matthias ben Johanan sparks the Maccabee revolt

Matityahu began his revolt in the village of Modiin, where the Greeks tried to compel him to publicly engage in idol worship. When he refused, violence broke out and a group of Jews ended up taking refuge in caves among the surrounding hills.





Mattathias – 167 BCE

It was 167 BCE, Mattathias the Hasmonean was a Jew and he was furious. The king who reigned over the region had sent his officers to Mattathias's hometown in Judea. The officers were trying to force Mattathias, his five sons, and their neighbors to perform sacrifices to their gods. When another Jew stepped forward to make the sacrifice, Mattathias killed him on the altar. The king's officer was next. Finally, Mattathias tore down the altar. The Hasmonean Revolt was born.



The Maccabean Revolt 167-160 BC

Mattathias sparked the revolt against the Seleucid Empire by refusing to worship the Greek gods. Mattathias killed a Hellenistic Jew who had stepped forward to take Mattathias' place in sacrificing to an idol as well as the Greek officer who was sent to enforce the sacrifice... Afterwards, **he and his five sons fled to the wilderness of Judah.**

Many meanings are ascribed to the name Maccabee

The term Maccabee, which was apparently first only associated with Judah, may be related to the Hebrew word for “hammer” or the Greek words for “strong” or “fighter.”

Perhaps the best-known explanation is that the word “Maccabee” comprises the initial letters of a verse the Jewish people sang after the Lord split the sea: “*Mi kamocha ba’eilim Hashem* (מִי־ כְּמֹכָה בְּאֵלִים יְהוָה) “Who is like You among the gods, O Lord?” (Ex. 15.11). It is said that this phrase was the Maccabean battle cry, written upon their banners and shields.

The Maccabean Revolt 167-160 BC

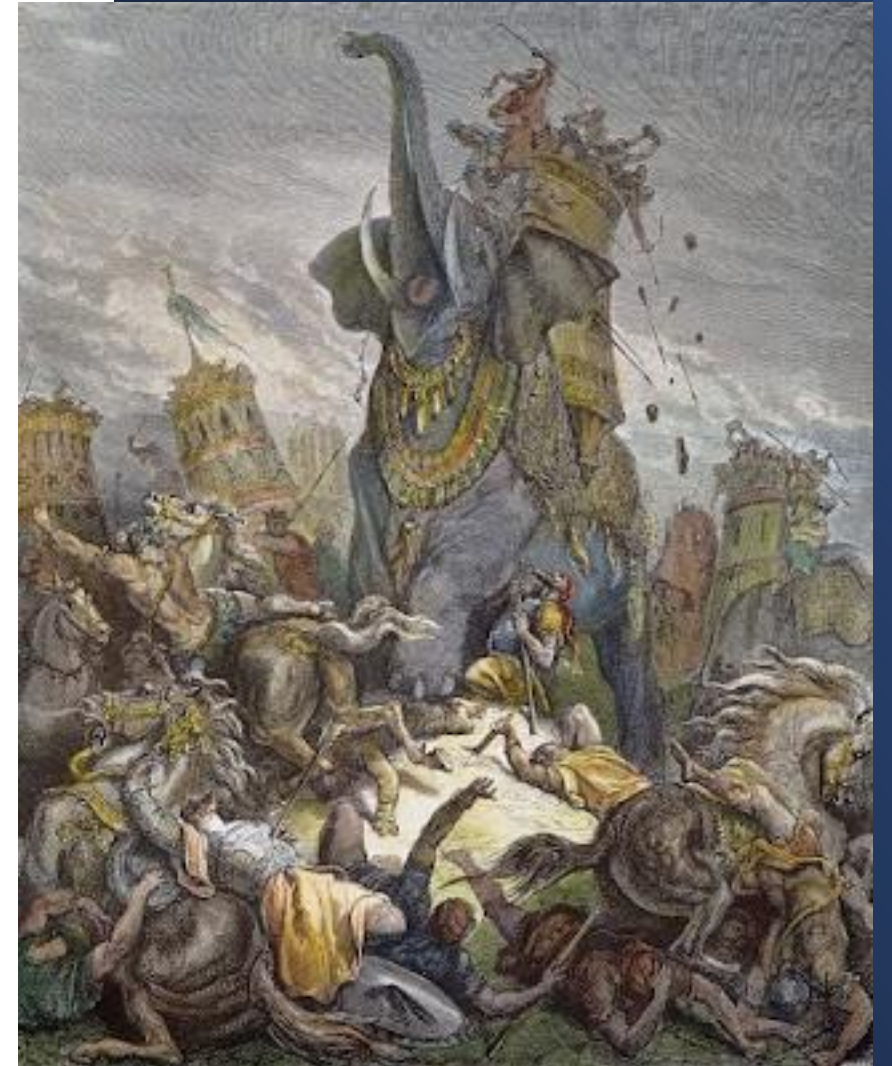
After Mattathias' death about one year later in 166 BCE, his son Judah Maccabee led an army of Jewish dissidents to victory over the Seleucid dynasty in guerrilla warfare, which at first was directed against Hellenized Jews. Judah's nickname "Maccabbeus," now used in popular culture to describe the Jewish partisans as a whole, is taken from the Hebrew word for "hammer".



167-160 The Maccabean Revolt

Two thousand years ago, [Judah Maccabee](#) crushed the numerically superior Greeks and restored the Temple in Jerusalem. The Seleucid Greeks decided to counter with an army that included thirty war elephants. The war elephants were terrifying, bearing towers filled with archers and lance-throwers. But Judah's younger brother Eleazar decided to show his fellow men that the elephants were vulnerable. He charged towards a large elephant wearing the royal seal, cast himself under it and thrust his sword into its soft belly. The elephant died — but in collapsing, it crushed Eleazar, killing him.

([Rationalist Judaism](#), accessed 10.01.22)



He shall be broken without hand – Dan. 8:25

The saints are the Jews that are godly and the prince of princes is God, to whom Antiochus' self-deification was an affront, and by whom he was broken. See **2 Macc. 9.1-5,9-10** which says, "At that time **Antiochus returned with dishonour** out of Persia. For he had entered into the city called Persepolis, and attempted to rob the temple, and to oppress the city: but the multitude running together to arms, put them to flight: and so it fell out that Antiochus being put to flight returned with disgrace. Now when he was come about Ecbatana, he received the news of what had happened to Nicanor and Timotheus. And swelling with anger he thought to revenge upon the Jews the injury done by them that had put him to flight.

He shall be broken without hand – Dan. 8:25

And therefore he commanded his chariot to be driven, without stopping in his journey, the judgment of heaven urging him forward, because he had spoken so proudly, that he would come to Jerusalem, and make it a common burying place of the Jews. But the Lord the God of Israel, that seeth all things, struck him with an incurable and an invisible plague. For as soon as he had ended these words, a dreadful pain in his bowels came upon him, and bitter torments of the inner parts... So that worms swarmed out of the body of this man, and whilst he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell off, and the filthiness of his smell was noisome to the army. And the man that thought a little before he could reach to the stars of heaven, no man could endure to carry, for the intolerable stench. (2 Maccabees 9.1-5, 9-10)

Daniel 9 Apocalyptic Vision #3



Gabriel appears to Daniel

Daniel 9 is about Daniel's confession that the reason for the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the captivity is due to the failure of the Jewish people to be faithful to the covenant (Daniel 9.1-19). It is during this prayer that "the man Gabriel" appears unto Daniel (Daniel 9.21). He informs Daniel that "seventy weeks are determined upon thy people" (verse 24).

Daniel 9 Apocalyptic Vision #3

The Hebrew word that is commonly translated weeks would more properly be translated sevens. It means a period divided into sevens. The phrase “seventy weeks” thus refers to seventy periods of sevens. These periods of seven could be days, weeks, months, years, or even periods of unspecified duration. Because of this variation, **it is difficult to tie Gabriel’s explanation to specific historical time periods**, but many attempts have been made to do that, resulting in several differing interpretations of the passage. Sperry called these verses “one of the most difficult passages in all of the Old Testament”

(Sidney Sperry, *The voice of Israel's prophets: A Latter-day Saint interpretation of the Major and Minor Prophets of the Old Testament*, Deseret Book, 1952, p. 266).



Gabriel appears to Daniel

Daniel 9 Apocalyptic Vision #3

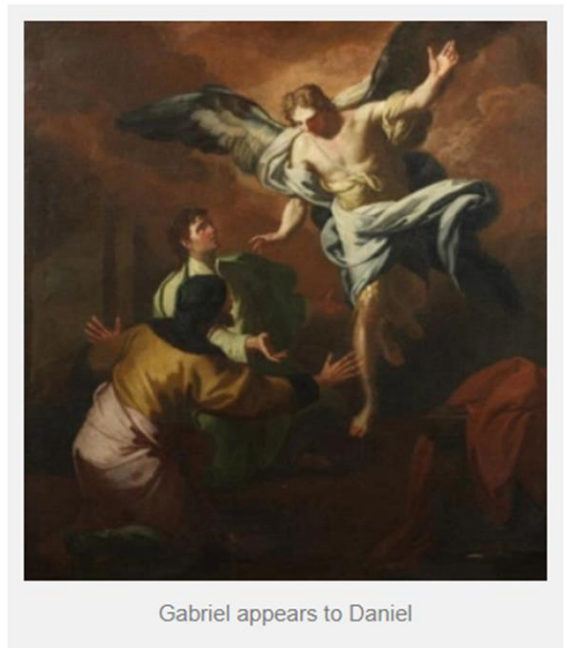


Gabriel appears to Daniel

Though the time periods mentioned are difficult to identify, the context and several phrases in the passage indicate that the passage has to do with a period in which the salvation of Daniel's people is to be accomplished. Daniel 9:24 is undoubtedly a reference to the coming of Christ and His Atonement, by which forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God through repentance would be made possible. By completing the mission His Father sent Him to accomplish, Christ fulfilled the law and the words of the prophets concerning His coming, and thus did He "seal up [make sure] the vision and prophecy" (v. 24).

Daniel 9 Apocalyptic Vision #3

Verse 25 refers to the time between the return of the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah. Verse 26 makes reference to the Messiah being “cut off, but not for himself,” which seems to be an allusion to His Crucifixion. The rest of the chapter describes the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and parallels very closely the message of Matthew 24.15 and Joseph Smith’s inspired revision of that verse (see JS—M 1:12). The reference to confirming the covenant for one week (see Daniel 9.27), however, has not been satisfactorily explained and may make problematic the explanation given above.



Daniel 10-12 Apocalyptic Vision #4

Daniel 10 – Daniel sees the Lord (v. 5-6)

Daniel 11 is a vision of a battle between Antiochus Epiphanes, “the king of the north” and the king of Egypt, “the king of the south.” This vision is significant because it emphasizes the importance of staying true to the covenant and not giving in to the evil that surrounds us. To the Jews at the time that this vision was disseminated, Antiochus was defiling the temple, and oppressing the Jewish people. This vision was meant to encourage these people to be faithful and true to their covenants with God. While the final prediction (v.40-45) regarding Antiochus Epiphanes is an unfulfilled prophecy, (he isn’t killed in the land of Israel) the overall message was one of encouragement and faith.

Daniel 11.40-45 describes the downfall of the king

Daniel 11.45 claims that he would meet his death between the sea and the holy mountain, that is, in the land of Israel. *This prophecy was not fulfilled. Antiochus Epiphanes died in Persia from wounds received in an attempt to rob a temple late in 164 BCE. The unfulfilled prophecy reveals the date of the composition of Daniel.* All of the “predictions” are correct down to the persecution. This part of the prophecy was presumably written after the fact and served to inspire confidence in the real prediction of the end of the story, which was yet to come. *The prophecy must have been written before the news of Antiochus’ death reached Jerusalem.*

The death of the king is not the climax of the prophecy

According to Daniel 12.1-3, “At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise.” Then all those written in the book of life would be delivered. Some would rise to everlasting life and some to everlasting contempt. The wise would shine like the stars forever. We know from a passage in [1 Enoch 104](#) that “to shine like the stars” means “to become companions of the angels.”



The Hope of Daniel 12

The **hope for resurrection** explains why the wise could let themselves be killed in the time of persecution. The traditional hope in ancient Israel was for a long life and to see one's children's children. This hope was changed radically by the idea of resurrection to a glorious afterlife. The goal of life would henceforth be to become like the angels, so that one could live with them forever. This new hope is central to the apocalyptic literature. ***It figures prominently in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and it was essential to the rise of Christianity.***

(John Collins, [A short introduction to the Hebrew Bible](#), Fortress Press, 2007, p. 286-287, emphasis added.)

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time **thy people shall be delivered**, every one that shall be found written in the book. And **many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake**, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And **they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament**; and they that turn many to righteousness **as the stars for ever and ever**. But thou, O Daniel, **shut up the words, and seal the book**, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (Daniel 12.1-4)