

# **The Most High God**

## **Ruler of Heaven and Earth**

**A Study of  
Daniel and Matthew 24-25**



**Hillcrest Bible Church**  
**Summer 2023**

# The Most High God Ruler of Heaven and Earth

## A study of Daniel and Matthew 24-25

*Then king Darius wrote  
unto all people, nations, and languages,  
that dwell in all the earth;  
Peace be multiplied unto you.*

*I make a decree,  
That in every dominion of my kingdom  
men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel:  
for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever,  
and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed,  
and his dominion shall be even unto the end.  
Daniel 6:25-26*

Hillcrest Bible Church  
Sunday School  
Summer 2023

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## Introduction

The year 605 B.C. was a momentous one in world history. At Carchemish on the upper Euphrates River, the crown prince of Babylon defeated the Egyptian army to become the dominant power in the Middle East. Following his victory, he took control of Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim king of Judah. Finalization of his control over Judah was deferred when he received word of the death of his father back home. Abruptly, Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon, but not before he arranged for the transport of some of the gifted young men of Judah as captives to Babylon where the new king intended to educate them in the language and wisdom of Babylon. Among these captives was a young man named Daniel. In the years that followed, King Nebuchadnezzar asserted his control over the people of God in a second deportation which included the ruling king of the Davidic dynasty and later a third visitation when he destroyed the Temple of the LORD and the city of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

While these events must have been a crushing blow to the aspirations of the people of God in Judah, and especially those taken captive, it set the stage for a wonderful display of the sovereignty of the Most High God. Outwardly, and superficially, the Sovereign of Israel had been upstaged by the sovereign of Babylon. In fact, as King Nebuchadnezzar would later learn and proclaim, His *“dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”*

Although the second two assaults on Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar seemed to be of greater moment, it was the earlier capture of the Hebrew youth Daniel that was used by God to send the clear message that He is sovereign in heaven and earth. This message was recorded in the Biblical book which bears his name, Daniel. This significant revelation came over the course of about 60 years in the history

of two great empires, Babylon and Persia. In the record of the life of Daniel in Babylon, we see that the LORD is sovereign over the events of the lives of individuals and also in the activities of nations in contemporary history. The scope of the revelation is expanded when the LORD showed Daniel a series of visions in which He revealed the course of history from the Babylonian empire in Daniel's day to the eternal kingdom of God on the earth at the end of the age. In precise detail, Daniel saw world history from his own era up to the death of Messiah. The detail is so accurate that Biblical skeptics insist the book of Daniel could not have been written in his lifetime. They cannot accept that God does not merely see the future, he orders it. In defiance of those who deny God's sovereign rule, the precision of Daniel's visions of the more immediate future (now past to us), renders credibility and authority to his revelation of events which are yet to come at the end of the age. Through Daniel, we have a preview of the last days and the final resurrection of the just and unjust to their eternal destinies.

Daniel's life and prophecy is recorded in a book which contains twelve chapters. The first six are historical anecdotes which show God's rule in the affairs of men in that day but also give some revelation of the future. This section illustrates the profound truth of God's sovereign rule by events from Daniel's life and from the lives of three of his companions, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The final six chapters are a series of visions through which Daniel is shown the future of world history in a series of images, some of which are followed by divine interpretations. The book concludes with an announcement of Daniel's death, but also his resurrection.

In the life of Christ, the disciples of Christ inquired about the signs of His return and the end of the age. Jesus answered in what we know as the Olivet discourse. In it, He directed the disciples' attention to the book of Daniel and repeated what Daniel had stated over 500 years earlier about a sign which would indicate the soon return of Christ.

## Introduction (continued)

The book of Daniel has dual import to us today. First of all, it is a clear statement that God is sovereign in the affairs of men of all ages, from the least event of an individual to the great movements of the nations. This is a message of great comfort to us as it surely was to Daniel and his three friends. Secondly, Daniel speaks of things to come. The book directs our attention to the end of the age and the resurrection. Christ affirms this for us in the

Olivet discourse. If it was important for Daniel, 2500 years ago, and important for the disciples during the life of Christ, how much more important is the message of Daniel for our own generation, so much closer to the end of the age. If we hear the message of Daniel clearly, we will do as Nebuchadnezzar did when he understood Daniel's God: *"I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored Him who liveth forever."*

# Daniel at a Glance

## The Most High God Ruler of Heaven and Earth

Part 1: History					
Daniel in Training	The King's Dream	The Fiery Furnace	The King's Insanity	Writing on the Wall	The Lions' Den
1	2	3	4	5	6

Part 2: Prophecy					
Four Beasts	The Ram and the Goat	Daniel Prays	The Man in Linen	The Coming Kings	The End of the Age
7	8	9	10	11	12

## Schedule Summer 2023

June 4	Lesson 1:	The LORD's Captives Daniel 1
June 11	Lesson 2:	The King's Dream Daniel 2
June 18	Lesson 3:	The King's Image Daniel 3
June 25	Lesson 4:	The Sovereign of Babylon meets the Sovereign God Daniel 4
July 2	Lesson 5:	The Handwriting on the Wall Daniel 5
July 9	Lesson 6:	Daniel and the Lions' Den Daniel 6
July 16	Lesson 7:	Daniel's Vision of Four Beasts Daniel 7
July 23	Lesson 8:	Daniel's Vision of the Ram and the Goat Daniel 8
July 30	Lesson 9:	Daniel's Prayer and the 70 weeks Daniel 9
August 6	Lesson 10:	A Messenger from Heaven Daniel 10
August 13	Lesson 11:	A Vision of the Latter Days Daniel 11
August 20	Lesson 12:	A Time of Trouble Daniel 12
August 27	Lesson 13:	The Sign of the End of the Age Matthew 24:1-31; 25:31-46

## Memory Assignments

### Daniel 2:20-22

- <sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said,  
Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever:  
for wisdom and might are his:
- <sup>21</sup> And he changeth the times and the seasons:  
he removeth kings, and setteth up kings:  
he giveth wisdom unto the wise,  
and knowledge to them that know understanding:
- <sup>22</sup> He revealeth the deep and secret things:  
he knoweth what is in the darkness,  
and the light dwelleth with him.

### Daniel 4:34-35

- <sup>34</sup> And at the end of the days  
I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven,  
and mine understanding returned unto me,  
and I blessed the most High,  
and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever,  
whose dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
and his kingdom is from generation to generation:
- <sup>35</sup> And all the inhabitants of the earth  
are reputed as nothing:  
and he doeth according to his will  
in the army of heaven,  
and among the inhabitants of the earth:  
and none can stay his hand,  
or say unto him, What doest thou?

# Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Walter Chalmers Smith, 1824-1908

Welsh hymn melody

1. Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,  
2. Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,  
3. Great Fa - ther of Glo - ry, pure Fa - ther of Light,

In light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,  
Nor want - ing, nor wast - ing, Thou rul - est in might;  
Thine an - gels a - dore thee, all veil - ing their sight;

Most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,  
Thy jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove  
All praise we would ren - der; O help us to see

Al - might - y, vic - to - rious, Thy great Name we praise.  
Thy clouds which are foun - tains of good - ness and love.  
'Tis on - ly the splen - dor of light hid - eth thee! A - men.



## Lesson 1: The LORD's Captives Daniel 1

**Memory: Daniel 2:20**

**HYMN: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"**

**Summary:** *King Nebuchadnezzar captured Daniel and his three young friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. He ordered them to be trained in the language and literature of the Chaldeans. Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the king's food. God blessed Daniel and his friends by enabling them to fulfill their resolve, and then causing them to excel in their education. The king found none were equal to these four Hebrew youths.*

1. What is the historical setting for the book of Daniel?
2. What special instructions did King Nebuchadnezzar give to Ashpenaz?
3. Who were four of these young men, and how did the king propose to train them?
4. How did Daniel respond to the king's plan of training?
5. Why did the chief of the eunuchs hear Daniel, and how did he respond?
6. What was Daniel's proposal?
7. What was the outcome of the 10-day trial?
8. What was the outcome of the 3 years of training?
9. What did the king find when he interviewed the three Hebrew youths?

## Lesson 2: The King's Dream Daniel 2

**Memory: Daniel 2:21 and review**

**HYMN: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"**

**Summary:** *King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. He demanded that his wise men interpret the dream, but first they must tell him what the dream was. They were not able to tell him his dream, so he ordered their execution. Daniel intervened and with his three friends sought God's mercy, God revealed to Daniel the dream and its interpretation. King Nebuchadnezzar's dream was a revelation of the sequence of world empires leading up to the eternal kingdom.*

1. Why was King Nebuchadnezzar troubled, and what did he do?
2. How did the Chaldean wise men answer the king's command?
3. How did King Nebuchadnezzar respond to the Chaldean wise men?
4. What did Daniel do?
5. How did Daniel respond to the revelation in the night vision?
6. How did Daniel explain his ability to know and interpret the dream for King Nebuchadnezzar?
7. What was the dream?
8. What is the interpretation of the dream?
9. How did King Nebuchadnezzar respond to Daniel's interpretation?

## Lesson 3: The King's Image Daniel 3

**Memory:** Daniel 2:22 and review

**HYMN:** "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

**Summary:** King Nebuchadnezzar made a huge image and demanded all to worship it or face death by fire. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused. They would entrust themselves to their God rather than worship the golden image. When they were thrown into the fiery furnace, God Himself stood with them and the blazing fire was without power over them. King Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that their God was incomparable.

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar make?
2. What did King Nebuchadnezzar decree at the dedication of his image?
3. What did the Chaldeans tell King Nebuchadnezzar about the three Jews?
4. What did King Nebuchadnezzar say to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?
5. How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answer the king?
6. What did King Nebuchadnezzar do to the Hebrew youths?
7. Why was King Nebuchadnezzar astonished as he observed the Hebrew youths in the fire?
8. How did the three Hebrews get out of the fiery furnace, and what was their condition?
9. How did King Nebuchadnezzar respond to the deliverance of the Hebrew youths?

## Lesson 4: The Sovereign of Babylon meets the Sovereign God Daniel 4

**Memory:** Daniel 4:34 and review

**HYMN:** "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

**Summary:** *This chapter is King Nebuchadnezzar's song of praise to the Most High God. He had a dream which foretold his humiliation through insanity for a period of time. A year later, when he was lifted up with pride because of his great kingdom, he became insane and spent seven years as a beast of the field. At the end of that time, his reason returned to him and he blessed the Most High Sovereign of heaven and earth.*

1. How did King Nebuchadnezzar begin this song of praise to God?
2. What happened when King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream?
3. What was King Nebuchadnezzar's dream?
4. What explanation of the dream was given in the dream?
5. Why did King Nebuchadnezzar call upon Daniel, and how did Daniel respond to the dream?
6. What was the interpretation of the dream?
7. What advice did Daniel give to King Nebuchadnezzar?
8. What happened to King Nebuchadnezzar?
9. How did King Nebuchadnezzar react to this experience?

## Lesson 5: The Handwriting on the Wall Daniel 5

**Memory:** Daniel 4:35 and review

**HYMN:** “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”

**Summary:** *King Belshazzar of Babylon made a great feast. When he desecrated gold vessels taken from the house of God in Jerusalem, the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote four mysterious words on the wall. Daniel was brought before the king to interpret the inscription. It was an announcement by God of the imminent fall of Babylon. That very night, Darius the Mede captured the kingdom and killed King Belshazzar.*

1. How did King Belshazzar dishonor the Most High God?
2. What happened in the very hour in which Belshazzar dishonored God?
3. How did King Belshazzar react to what he saw?
4. What did the queen tell King Belshazzar?
5. What did King Belshazzar tell Daniel?
6. What did Daniel remind King Belshazzar about King Nebuchadnezzar?
7. What explanation did Daniel give to King Belshazzar for what he had seen that night?
8. What was the meaning of the inscription on the wall?
9. What happened after Daniel interpreted the inscription on the wall?

## Lesson 6: Daniel and the Lions' Den

### Daniel 6

**Memory: Review**

**HYMN: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"**

**Summary:** *Daniel excelled as a leader in the empire of King Darius who proposed to elevate him over the whole realm. On hearing this, his enemies arranged to have the king make a decree which would eliminate Daniel because of his faithfulness to God. They succeeded and Daniel was thrown into a den of lions. Daniel's God delivered him from the lions. It was Daniel's enemies who were devoured by the lions. King Darius gave testimony to the power and faithfulness of the living God.*

1. What happened to Daniel after Darius the Mede captured Babylon?
2. What was the decree of King Darius, and why did he make it?
3. What did Daniel do when he heard about the decree of King Darius?
4. What did the enemies of Daniel do when they saw his faithfulness to God?
5. How did the king react to the accusations against Daniel, and what did he do?
6. What happened to the king during the night, and what did he do the next morning?
7. Why was Daniel alive after spending the night in the lions' den?
8. What happened to the enemies of Daniel?
9. What did the king learn?

## Lesson 7: Daniel's Vision of Four Beasts

### Daniel 7

**Memory: Review**

**HYMN: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"**

**Summary:** *Daniel saw a vision of four great beasts: a lion with eagle's wings, a bear, a leopard, and a final dreadful and terrible beast with ten horns. He saw a little horn emerge among the ten horns. He then watched as eternal dominion was given to the Ancient of Days Who is One like the Son of Man. Daniel was told that this vision portrayed a series of earthly kingdoms which will be terminated by the kingdom of the saints of the Most High.*

1. What happened in the first year of the reign of King Belshazzar?
2. Describe the first three beasts.
3. Describe the fourth beast.
4. What did Daniel see when the thrones were put in place?
5. What did Daniel see after the fourth beast was killed?
6. What was the interpretation of the vision of the four beasts?
7. What more did Daniel learn about the fourth beast?
8. What did Daniel learn about the horn that came up after the ten horns?
9. How did the vision end?

## Lesson 8: Daniel's Vision of the Ram and the Goat

### Daniel 8

**Memory: Review**

**HYMN: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"**

**Summary:** *Daniel saw a vision in which a ram, which initially could not be contained, was destroyed by a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes. Gabriel told Daniel that this was a vision of the end times. The ram was the kingdom of Media and Persia, and the goat was the kingdom of Greece. The goat's horn which was broken and gave rise to four horns anticipated a time of great evil when there would be opposition to the holy people and the Prince of princes.*

1. When did this vision come to Daniel, and where was he at the time?
2. Describe the ram and what it did.
3. Describe the goat and what it did.
4. What did Daniel observe about the goat's horns?
5. What did Daniel learn from the two holy ones?
6. What happened as Daniel was seeking the meaning of this vision?
7. What was Gabriel's explanation of the ram and the goat?
8. What was Gabriel's explanation of the horns?
9. What did Daniel learn about the final king?



## Lesson 9: Daniel's Prayer and the 70 weeks Daniel 9

**Memory: Review**

**HYMN: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"**

**Summary:** *When Daniel learned from Jeremiah's prophecy that the duration of the Babylonian captivity would be limited to 70 years, he prayed. In his prayer, he acknowledged his sin and the sin of the nation. He asked God to act because of His great mercies and for the sake of His glory. In response, God sent Gabriel who gave Daniel a description of the final 70 weeks determined for Israel and Jerusalem.*

1. What did Daniel learn from Jeremiah's prophecy, and how did he respond to what he learned?
2. How did Daniel address God in his prayer?
3. What did Daniel say about the conduct of the nation?
4. What attributes did Daniel ascribe to God?
5. What request did Daniel make, and what was the basis of his request?
6. Why did Gabriel come to Daniel?
7. What is the purpose of the 70 weeks?
8. What will happen during the first 69 weeks?
9. What will happen in the 70<sup>th</sup> week?

## Lesson 10: A Messenger from Heaven

### Daniel 10

**Memory: Review**

**HYMN: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"**

**Summary:** *At the end of a three week period of mourning by Daniel in the reign of King Cyrus, he received a vision from God. He saw a man who told him that he had been sent at the beginning of Daniel's time of humiliation but had been delayed twenty-one days by the prince of Persia. Michael had come to assist him, and now he was going to make Daniel understand what would happen to his people in the latter days.*

1. What happened in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, and what was Daniel doing at the time?
2. What did Daniel see on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the first month?
3. What happened to Daniel and his companions?
4. What did the man in the vision do, and how did Daniel respond?
5. What explanation did the man give about the timing of his mission?
6. What was the mission of the man, and how did Daniel react when he heard it?
7. How did Daniel regain his speech, and what did he say?
8. How did Daniel regain his strength, and what did he say?
9. What did the one having the likeness of a man tell Daniel about his mission?

## Lesson 11: A Vision of the Latter Days

### Daniel 11

**Memory: Review**

**HYMN: “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”**

**Summary:** Daniel was shown the future of the Persian empire and its successors. The Persian empire will be followed by Greece which would be split into four parts. Two parts would dominate, described here as North and South. The stream of history leads to a particularly vile king who will desecrate the temple in Jerusalem. The passage concludes with a description of another blasphemous king whose powerful reign will include the Glorious Land. It will not be eternal as Daniel is told that “he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.”

1. How will the Persian kingdom end up being in four parts?
2. What will happen to bring the kings of the North and South together?
3. What will happen to the alliance between the North and the South?
4. Who will prevail in the wars between the North and the South?
5. How will the “vile person” (11:21) come to power?
6. What will this vile person do?
7. What will this vile person do against the holy covenant?
8. How is the willful blasphemous king described in Daniel 11:36-39?
9. What will happen to this king at the time of the end?

## Lesson 12: A Time of Trouble

### Daniel 12

**Memory: Review**

**HYMN: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"**

**Summary:** *At the time of the end, there will come a time of great tribulation unparalleled in world history. This will conclude with the resurrection of the just and the wicked as the former enter the eternal state in glory and the latter in shame and contempt. Daniel wanted to know the time of the end but was told to shut up the words and seal the book. A blessing is pronounced upon those who wait. Daniel was told that he would die, but rise from the dead to receive his inheritance in the end.*

1. When will Michael stand up?
2. How is that time described?
3. What did Daniel learn about the resurrection?
4. What was Daniel told to do with this revelation?
5. What did Daniel see and hear?
6. How did Daniel respond to the conversation he heard?
7. What answer did he get to his question?
8. Who will be blessed?
9. What did Daniel learn about his own future?

**Lesson 13: The Sign of the End of the Age**  
**Matthew 24:1-31; 25:31-46**

**Memory: Review**

**HYMN: “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”**

**Summary:** *The disciples asked Jesus for signs of His return to the earth at the end of the age. He responded by telling them that the abomination of desolation foretold by Daniel would usher in a time of great tribulation leading to His return. After His return, the nations will be gathered together and separated into two groups according to the way they had treated Him. Those who received Jesus will enter the eternal kingdom and those who despised Jesus will go to eternal punishment.*

**Matthew 24:1-31**

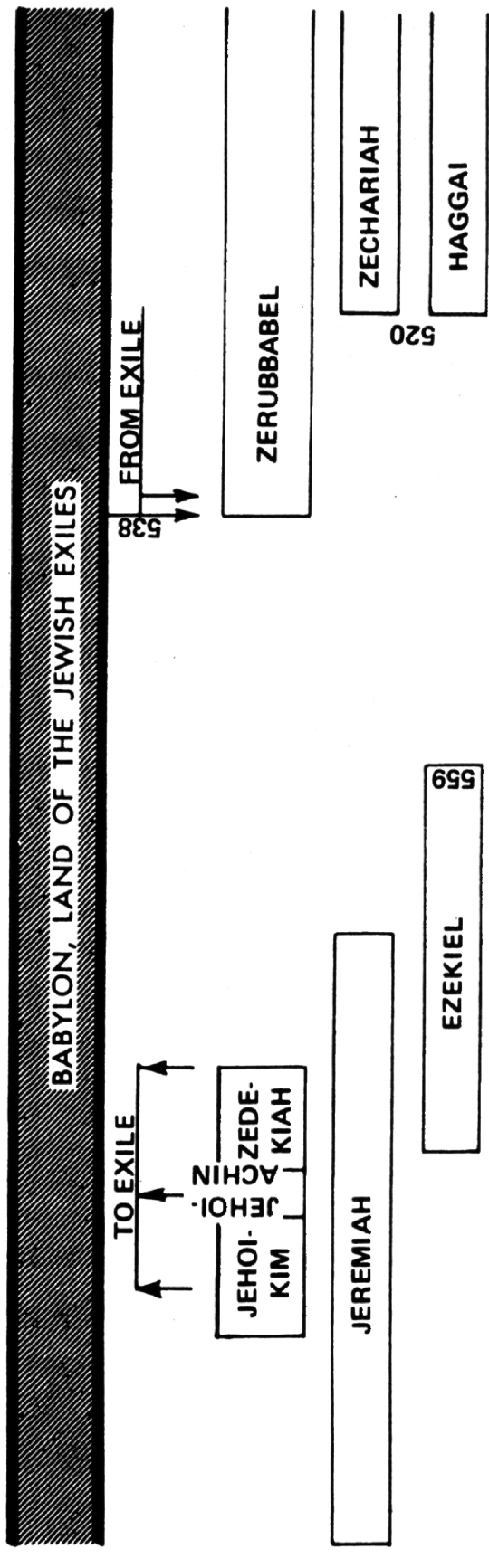
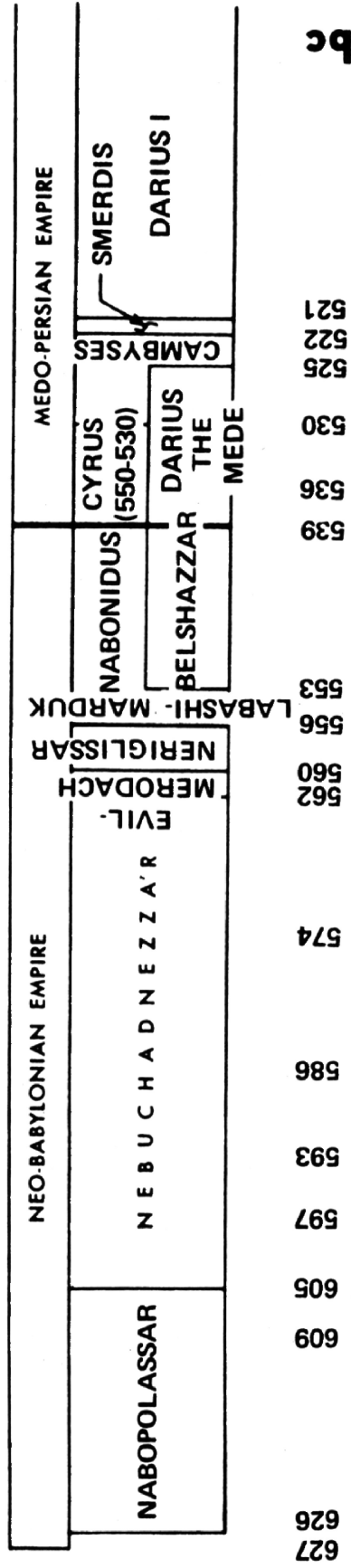
1. What did the disciples ask Jesus, and why did they ask it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What will characterize the age but not indicate that the end is near?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What sign will indicate that the end is near?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What will it be like after that sign appears?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What warning did Jesus give for His people in those days?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What will happen after that time of great tribulation?

**Matthew 25:31-46**

7. What will the Son of Man do after He returns in glory?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What criterion will be used to identify those who will inherit the kingdom?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What criterion will be used to identify those who will enter everlasting punishment?


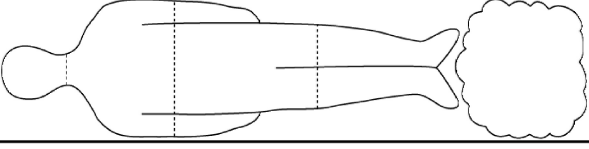
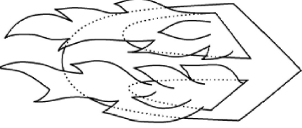

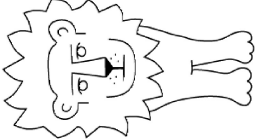
# DANIEL AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

*Daniel*

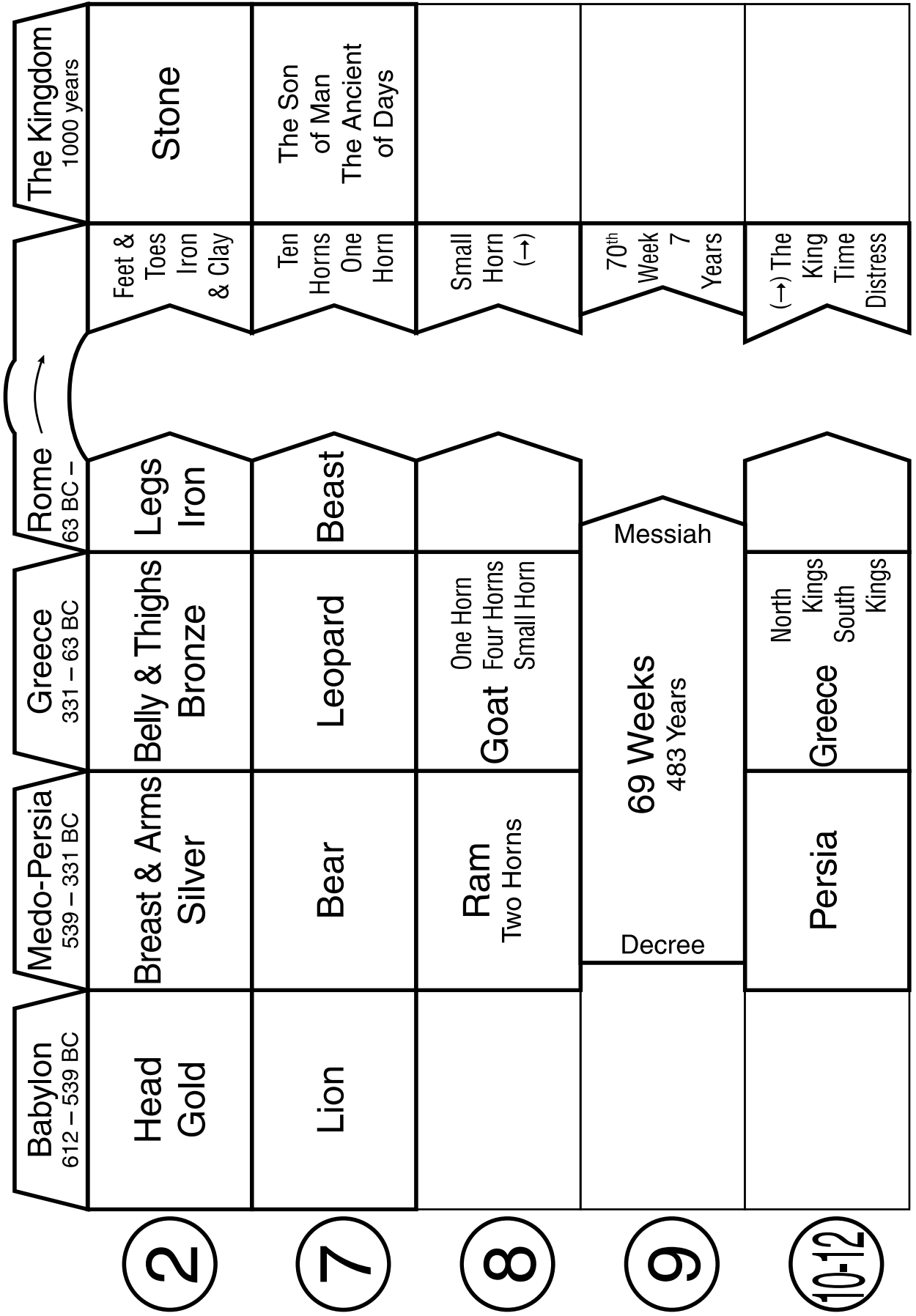


# Daniel “Divine Sovereignty over Human Life and History”

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- 12

History						Prophecy						
The Food	The Dream	The Furnace	The Humble	The Writing	The Lions	Four Beasts	Two Beasts	Seventy Weeks	Two Kingdoms			
Nebuchadnezzar						Belshazzar			Darius			Cyrus
Daniel Three Hebrews			Daniel			Nations						Israel
				Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin		4 Beasts — 10 Horns — 1 Little Horn — The Kingdom	A Ram — A Goat — 1 Horn — 4 Horns — A Small Horn	A Prayer — The 70 Weeks	A Vision — Spiritual Angelic Conflict	Persia — Greece — North & South Kings — 1 King	A Time of Distress — Two Questions	

# The Prophecy of Daniel



2

7

8

9

10-12



# SEVENTIETH WEEK OF DANIEL

