

Daniel outlived both King Nebuchadnezzar and also the sole reign of his son Evil-Merodach, it was his grandson Belshazzar that now ruled over the mighty Babylonian Empire as regent, some seventy years after. Safely behind the enormous walls of that ancient city, or so they thought, the King and his nobles indulged themselves in festivities amidst a siege. They desecrated the God of the Israelites, whom Nebuchadnezzar had honoured, by specifically using the holy vessels captured at Jerusalem when the Solomonic temple was destroyed. Whilst doing so they praised the false gods of the heathen cultures they came from, shunning all the effort the prophet Daniel had put into trying to spiritually educate the upper elite in that society. No doubt they dismissed him and his protestations as the ramblings of an old man past the time when he had been useful in successfully running their civilisation.

This new King did not last long, and he presided over the capitulation of his empire to the Medo-Persians who had surrounded the city and sought to bring Babylon down. He regarded the city as impregnable but had yet to learn the lesson that God ruled in the Kingdoms of men and would ensure that the reins of power would be passed to those whom He chose. “*Til he knew that the most High God El Elyon, ruled in the Kingdom of God and that He appointed over it whomsoever He will*” verse 21. He “knew ALL THIS” because Daniel had been active at court, but his influence was ignored! As happens so often with others also even though they are not as erudite as Daniel himself, who was God’s inspired prophet. Daniel had a reputation from his time with Nebuchadnezzar but as an old man, having been in captivity for seventy years from a young man, he was now sidelined as the old often are, their wisdom and experience overlooked by the overconfident, even arrogant youth.

The King wet his pants (if he wore them)! “*His loins were loosed and his knees smote one against another*” he was physically effected by the seriousness of the situation!

It was the queen, perhaps his mother, who suggested to the young King that Daniel be sought to resolve the dilemma. Women are often also sidelined, but she spoke up at the right time to make up for the King’s lack.

Darius the Mede, not the same Darius as in Ezra and Nehemiah, was the vessel, divinely selected to effect that transition. He was 62 years old at the time. This is a rare comment about a heathen King. Going back to his birth takes the count to the time of Josiah’s sons, when Nebuchadnezzar was still reigning. In 2 Chronicles 36v7 it is recorded that he took the vessels from the temple at the time of the second captivity, when Ezekiel was also taken. A fitting response then, that the man to turn the tables on that empire was born at that time.

There were three captivities and three cyclical endings. All fitting in to the 70 years promised by God. Using the popular but disputed BC dates this gives

1	Daniel	Jehoiakim	Princes taken	606	536	Babylon falls
2	Ezekiel	Jehoiachin	Vessels taken	598	528	Book of Daniel
3	Jeremiah	Zedekiah	Temple destroyed	587	517	Ezra returns

The hand of a man appeared and wrote on the wall in the presence of the King and all of his guests. The doom of the city could not be hid and was shortly to become public in a most emphatic way. Whether the city was plundered or merely hijacked is not stated in the record of Daniel. The foolish King was slain, how many of his citizens shared his fate is not known.

It has been recorded in the secular records that the way the Medo-Persians got inside the walls was to divert the river Euphrates by digging channels permitting access through the water gate once the river levels dropped sufficiently. This allowed the city to fall very suddenly "*in that night*".

As before, none of the wise men or astrologers of the city were able to interpret the writing on the wall. It was left to Daniel to be brought to clear the mists of uncertainty that plagued the confused crowd!

Mene	Numbered, finished doubled because established by God? Genesis 41v42
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Tekel	Weighed, found wanting
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Upharsin (Peres)	Division, divided
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Evil-Merodach was still alive and for that reason Belshazzar could only bestow the honour to Daniel of being third in the Kingdom as a reward of his miraculous interpretation of the vision. None of the nobility within the walls of Babylon could save the city. The Medes and Persians were long time enemies of the Chaldeans. They had been allies briefly when they came together to bring down Nineveh but after that the old rivalries resurfaced. The Medes were horse people, the first nation known to have worn trousers which they did to facilitate riding. The Persians were mountain people from the east of Mesopotamia. They would rise above their allies and eclipse them and become the dominate power in the near east for the next period.

We should reflect upon the legacy of Daniel. Placed over other wise men because he was proven to be superior to the standards that they had set. He transcended them all!

Excellent spirit

Excellent of knowledge

Excellent of understanding

Interpreting of dreams

Showing of hard sentences

Dissolver of doubts

What a man, used by God to further His Truth both then and for subsequent generations!