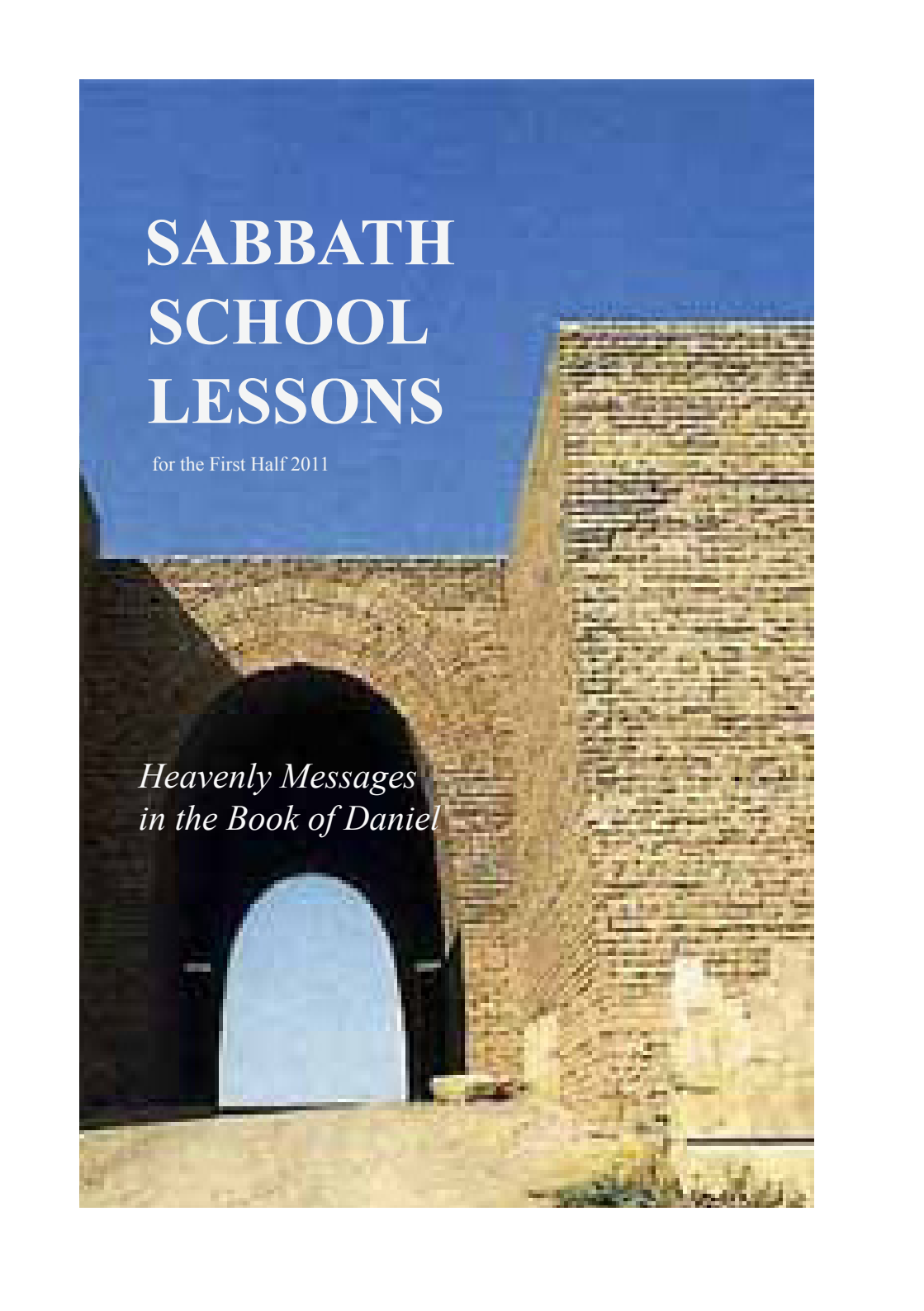


The background of the cover is a photograph of a brick building with a large, dark arched doorway. The sky above the building is a clear, solid blue. The title 'SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS' is printed in large, white, serif capital letters in the upper left quadrant. Below it, in smaller white text, is 'for the First Half 2011'. In the lower left, the subtitle 'Heavenly Messages in the Book of Daniel' is written in a white, italicized serif font.

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the First Half 2011

*Heavenly Messages
in the Book of Daniel*

Author of the First Half: Anonymus

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by the General Conference Ministerial Department

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SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the First Half 2011

*Heavenly Messages
in the Book of Daniel*

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INTRODUCTION

One who has ever had to walk in pitch dark or drive in dense fog understands what a blessing light is. How grateful we should therefore be that the Lord created both physical and spiritual light to save us from the serious dangers of darkness. The Scriptures say of the prophetic word: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1:19.

The book of the prophet Daniel, written in the sixth century B.C., contains heavenly messages for the last days—our days. “... 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 12:4. And the writings of the Spirit of prophecy confirm this: “... Since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 356.

The counsel is more appropriate today than ever before: “Read the book of Daniel. Call up, point by point, the history of the kingdoms there represented. Behold statesmen, councils, powerful armies, and see how God wrought to abase the pride of men, and lay human glory in the dust. God alone is represented as great. In the vision of the prophet He is seen casting down one mighty ruler, and setting up another. He is revealed as the monarch of the universe, about to set up His everlasting kingdom—the Ancient of days, the living God, the Source of all wisdom, the Ruler of the present, the Revealer of the future. Read, and understand how poor, how frail, how short-lived, how erring, how guilty is man in lifting up his soul unto vanity.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1166.

So, let us note carefully what has been written, for the prophetic messages are especially for us: “The light that Daniel received direct from God was given especially for these last days. The visions he saw by the banks of the Ulai and the Hiddekel, the great rivers of Shinar, are now in process of fulfillment, and all the events foretold will soon have come to pass.” —(*Letter 57*, 1896) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1166.

Since the seal was removed from this important book, important knowledge has been imparted to every humble searcher; and we have the promise that, as the very last events approach, more light will shine from these inspired pages. Furthermore, “When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 114.

As the most awesome events press upon us, it will become increasingly clear what a solemn time we live in. Let us be motivated now to study these heavenly messages and “understand” history in the light of prophecy and also to be among those “many” who will “be purified, and made white, and tried” (Daniel 12:10) for the soon coming of our Lord.

—*The brothers and sisters of the General Conference*

**The Special Sabbath School Offering
is dedicated to Nepal**

*Remember to give your offering as an expression
of love and gratitude.*

1

Sabbath, January 1, 2011

The Prophetic Word Is a Light

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” 1 Peter 1:19.

- 1. What did the Lord do so as not to leave His children in uncertainty? Through whom did He speak to mankind in the past? Genesis 18:17; Amos 3:7; 1 Samuel 9:9.**

“‘The Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants and prophets.’ While ‘the secret things belong unto the Lord our God,’ ‘those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.’ Amos 3:7; Deuteronomy 29:29. God has given these things to us, and His blessing will attend the reverent, prayerful study of the prophetic scriptures.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 234.

“‘The secret things,’ says Moses, ‘belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever;’ and the Lord declares by the prophet Amos, that He ‘will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.’ Deuteronomy 29:29; Amos 3:7. The students of God’s word may, then, confidently expect to find the most stupendous event to take place in human history clearly pointed out in the Scriptures of truth.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 324.

GUIDELINES FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

- 2. What is important for us to do immediately when God speaks? Psalm 46:10; 1 Samuel 3:10.**

“The language of the meek is never that of boasting. Like the child Samuel, they pray, ‘Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.’ 1 Samuel 3:9. When Joshua was placed in the highest position of honor, as commander of Israel, he bade defiance to all the enemies of God. His heart was filled with noble thoughts of his great mission. Yet upon the intimation of a message from Heaven he placed himself in the position of a little child to be directed. ‘What saith my lord unto His servant?’ (Joshua 5:14), was his response. The first words of Paul after Christ was revealed to him were, ‘Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?’ Acts 9:6.” –*The Sanctified Life*, p. 15.

3. What counsel did the apostle Peter give so one may benefit from the precious light of prophecy? 2 Peter 1:19-21.

“The apostle was well qualified to speak of the purposes of God concerning the human race; for during the earthly ministry of Christ he had seen and heard much that pertained to the kingdom of God.

“Yet convincing as was this evidence of the certainty of the believers’ hope, there was another still more convincing in the witness of prophecy, through which the faith of all might be confirmed and securely anchored.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 534.

THE MOST ESSENTIAL LIGHT

4. Who alone knows and is able to foretell the future? To whom are a great number of wonderful prophecies addressed? Isaiah 41:21-23; 1 Peter 1:10-12.

“The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. ‘All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.’” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 436, 437.

“The time of Christ’s coming, His anointing by the Holy Spirit, His death, and the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles, were definitely pointed out. It was the privilege of the Jewish people to understand these prophecies, and to recognize their fulfillment in the mission of Jesus. Christ urged upon His disciples the importance of prophetic study. Referring to the prophecy given to Daniel in regard to their time, He said, ‘Whoso readeth, let him understand.’ Matt. 24:15. After His resurrection He explained to the disciples in ‘all the prophets’ ‘the things concerning Himself.’ Luke 24:27. The Saviour had spoken through all the prophets. ‘The Spirit of Christ which was in them’ ‘testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.’ 1 Peter 1:11.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 234.

5. What prophetic book of the Old Testament contains the most exact information in regard to the time of the end? Daniel 12:4

“Ministers should present the sure word of prophecy as the foundation of the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be carefully studied, and in connection with them the words, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’” –*Evangelism*, p. 196.

“In view of the testimony of Inspiration, how dare men teach that the Revelation is a mystery beyond the reach of human understanding? It is a mystery revealed, a book opened. The study of the Revelation directs the mind to the prophecies of Daniel, and both present most important instruction, given of God to men, concerning events to take place at the close of this world’s history.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 341.

THE SEAL OF CONFIRMATION ON BIBLE PROPHECY

6. Who imprinted the divine seal on the book of Daniel? Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14.

“... Christ directed His disciples to the words of the prophet Daniel concerning events to take place in their time, and said: ‘Whoso readeth, let him understand.’ Matthew 24:15.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 341.

7. What is reported about Daniel as a person? Daniel 1:3, 6.

“Daniel was a prince of Judah.” –*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 148.

“It was their conscientious observance of the commands of Holy Scripture, that in the days of Jeremiah’s ministry brought to Daniel and his fellows opportunities to exalt the true God before the nations of earth. The instruction these Hebrew children had received in the homes of their parents, made them strong in faith and constant in their service of the living God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. When, early in the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar for the first time besieged and captured Jerusalem, and carried away Daniel and his companions, with others specially chosen for service in the court of Babylon, the faith of the Hebrew captives was tried to the utmost. But those who had learned to place their trust in the promises of God found these all-sufficient in every experience through which they were called to pass during their sojourn in a strange land. The Scriptures proved to them a guide and a stay.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 428.

“Daniel and his companions were captives in a strange land, but God suffered not the envy and hatred of their enemies to prevail against them. The righteous have ever obtained help from above. How often have the enemies of God united their strength and wisdom to destroy the character and influence of a few simple persons who trusted in God. But because the Lord was for them, none could prevail against them. Only let the followers of Christ be united, and they will prevail. Let them be separated from their idols and from the world, and the world will not separate them from God.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 139.

- Jeremiah 1:4-9.
- Revelation 1:1.

2

Sabbath, January 8, 2011

A Lost Opportunity and Its Results

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season....” 2 Timothy 4:2

“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both [shall be] alike good.” Ecclesiastes 11:6.

A KING’S TEST

- 1. What did the Lord permit to happen to King Hezekiah? 2 Kings 20:1, first part.**

“In the midst of his prosperous reign King Hezekiah was suddenly stricken with a fatal malady. ‘Sick unto death,’ his case was beyond the power of man to help.”
—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 340.

- 2. What dire message did he receive from the prophet? 2 Kings 20:1, second part.**

“And the last vestige of hope seemed removed when the prophet Isaiah appeared before him with the message, ‘Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.’ Isaiah 38:1.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 340.

HEALING AND INGRATITUDE

- 3. What did Hezekiah do in his anguish? What wonderful miracle resulted from his earnest prayers and tears? 2 Kings 20:2-6.**

“The outlook seemed utterly dark; yet the king could still pray to the One who had hitherto been his ‘refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.’ Psalm 46:1. And so ‘he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, I

beseech Thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.' 2 Kings 20:2, 3....

"He whose 'compassions fail not,' heard the prayer of His servant. Lamentations 3:22....

"Gladly the prophet returned with the words of assurance and hope. Directing that a lump of figs be laid upon the diseased part, Isaiah delivered to the king the message of God's mercy and protecting care."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 340-342.

"When Hezekiah was sick, the prophet of God brought him the message that he should die. He cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard His servant and worked a miracle in his behalf, sending him a message that fifteen years should be added to his life. Now, one word from God, one touch of the divine finger, would have cured Hezekiah instantly, but special directions were given to take a fig and lay it upon the affected part, and Hezekiah was raised to life. In everything we need to move along the line of God's providence."—*Counsels on Health*, pp. 381, 382.

4. Was the king grateful for the great benefit he had received? How did his attitude and actions plant a seed that resulted in the Babylonian captivity? 2 Chronicles 32:25-27.

"The Bible does not condemn the rich man because he is rich; it does not declare the acquisition of wealth to be a sin, nor does it say that money is the root of all evil....

"The Scriptures teach that wealth is a dangerous possession only when placed in competition with the immortal treasure. It is when the earthly and temporal absorbs the thoughts, the affections, the devotion which God claims, that it becomes a snare....

"Like other gifts of God, the possession of wealth brings its increase of responsibility, and its peculiar temptations. How many who have in adversity remained true to God, have fallen under the glittering allurements of prosperity. With the possession of wealth, the ruling passion of a selfish nature is revealed. The world is cursed today by the miserly greed and the self-indulgent vices of the worshipers of mammon."—(*The Review and Herald*, May 16, 1882) *Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 138, 139.

RESULTS OF THE SIGN

5. What sign did Hezekiah request as proof that his life would be prolonged? Who else saw this sign? 2 Kings 20:7-10, 12; 2 Chronicles 32:31.

"In the fertile valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates there dwelt an ancient race which, though at that time subject to Assyria, was destined to rule the world. Among its people were wise men who gave much attention to the study of astronomy; and when they noticed that the shadow on the sundial had been turned back ten degrees,

they marveled greatly. Their king, Merodachbaladan, upon learning that this miracle had been wrought as a sign to the king of Judah that the God of heaven had granted him a new lease of life, sent ambassadors to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery and to learn, if possible, more of the God who was able to perform so great a wonder.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 344.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

6. What holy opportunity was thus presented to the king? How did he use it? Psalms 66:16; 40:9, 10.

“The visit of these messengers from the ruler of a far-away land gave Hezekiah an opportunity to extol the living God. How easy it would have been for him to tell them of God, the upholder of all created things, through whose favor his own life had been spared when all other hope had fled! What momentous transformations might have taken place had these seekers after truth from the plains of Chaldea been led to acknowledge the supreme sovereignty of the living God!...

“Had Hezekiah improved the opportunity given him to bear witness to the power, the goodness, the compassion of the God of Israel, the report of the ambassadors would have been as light piercing darkness. But he magnified himself above the Lord of hosts. He ‘rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up.’ Verse 25....

“Hezekiah had grievously sinned; ‘therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.’ Verse 25.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 344, 346.

7. What terrible mistake did he make? What results would follow? 2 Kings 20:13-18.

“But pride and vanity took possession of Hezekiah’s heart, and in self-exaltation he laid open to covetous eyes the treasures with which God had enriched His people.... Not to glorify God did he do this, but to exalt himself in the eyes of the foreign princes. He did not stop to consider that these men were representatives of a powerful nation that had not the fear nor the love of God in their hearts, and that it was imprudent to make them his confidants concerning the temporal riches of the nation...

“To Isaiah it was revealed that the returning ambassadors were carrying with them a report of the riches they had seen, and that the king of Babylon and his counselors would plan to enrich their own country with the treasures of Jerusalem.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 344-346.

“The solemn, sacred truth—the testing message given us of God to communicate to the world—lays every one of us under the strongest obligation to so transform our daily life and character that the power of the truth may be well represented. We should have a continual sense of the shortness of time and of the fearful events which prophecy has declared must speedily take place.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 612.

- Isaiah 38:1-22.
- Isaiah 39:1-8.

3

Sabbath, January 15, 2011

The Captivity of Judah

“... For our iniquities have we ... been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands.” Ezra 9:7.

PROPHECY AND FULFILLMENT

1. Who prophesied that the Babylonians would take the people of Judah captive? Jeremiah 25:8-11.

“Within a few years this terrible judgment was to be visited upon Jehoiakim; but first the Lord in mercy informed the impenitent nation of His set purpose. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign ‘Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem,’ pointing out that for over a score of years, ‘from the thirteenth year of Josiah,... even unto this day,’ he had borne witness of God’s desire to save, but that his messages had been despised. Jeremiah 25:2, 3. And now the word of the Lord to them was:

“... ‘And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.’” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 430, 431.

2. According to the Biblical record, when did the first assault against Jerusalem occur? What calendar year was this? Daniel 1:1.

“The overthrow of Jerusalem recorded here was predicted by Jeremiah, and was accomplished in 606 B.C. Jeremiah 25:8-11.... Nebuchadnezzar set out on his expedition near the close of the third year of Jehoiakim, from which point Daniel reckons. But the king did not accomplish the subjugation of Jerusalem until about the ninth month of the year following, from which year Jeremiah reckons.” —Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, 1944 Edition, p. 19.

3. Who were among the first captives? What is recorded concerning them? Daniel 1:3, 4, 6.

“When, early in the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar for the first time besieged and captured Jerusalem, and carried away Daniel and his companions, with others specially chosen for service in the court of Babylon, the faith of the Hebrew captives was tried to the utmost. But those who had learned to place their trust in the promises of God found these all-sufficient in every experience through which they were called to pass during their sojourn in a strange land. The Scriptures proved to them a guide and a stay.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 428.

DISOBEDIENCE, BLINDNESS, AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

4. Did God’s judgment cause repentance and change among the people who remained in Jerusalem? What was the result? 2 Kings 24:8-11, 14-16.

“Within a few short years the king of Babylon was to be used as the instrument of God’s wrath upon impenitent Judah. Again and again Jerusalem was to be invested and entered by the besieging armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Company after company—at first a few only, but later on thousands and tens of thousands—were to be taken captive to the land of Shinar, there to dwell in enforced exile.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 422.

5. What consequence of King Zedekiah’s spiritual blindness occurred in the third conquest? What prophecy concerning him was thus fulfilled? 2 Kings 24:17-19; 25:1, 2, 6, 7; Ezekiel 12:13, 14.

“Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah—all these Jewish kings were in turn to become vassals of the Babylonian ruler, and all in turn were to rebel. Severer and yet more severe chastisements were to be inflicted upon the rebellious nation, until at last the entire land was to become a desolation, Jerusalem was to be laid waste and burned with fire, the temple that Solomon had built was to be destroyed, and the kingdom of Judah was to fall, never again to occupy its former position among the nations of earth.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 422, 423.

CONSEQUENCES OF PLAYING WITH SIN

6. Even who recognized that the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity came from the Lord’s hand as the consequence of apostasy? During this time, what happened to the ark of the covenant? Jeremiah 40:2, 3; 2 Chronicles 36:14-16.

“Among the righteous still in Jerusalem, to whom had been made plain the divine purpose, were some who determined to place beyond the reach of ruthless hands the sacred ark containing the tables of stone on which had been traced the precepts of the Decalogue. This they did. With mourning and sadness they secreted the ark in a cave, where it was to be hidden from the people of Israel and Judah because of their sins, and was to be no more restored to them. That sacred ark is yet hidden. It has never been disturbed since it was secreted.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 453.

7. From these experiences, what may we learn about the consequences of disobedience and sin? Proverbs 14:34; Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 15.

“We are far from being the people God would have us to be, because we do not elevate the soul and refine the character in harmony with the wonderful unfolding of God’s truth and His purposes. ‘Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.’ Proverbs 14:34. Sin is a disorganizer. Wherever it is cherished—in the individual heart, in the household, in the church—there is disorder, strife, variance, enmity, envy, jealousy, because the enemy of man and of God has the controlling power over the mind. But let the truth be loved and brought into the life, as well as advocated, and that man or woman will hate sin and will be a living representative of Jesus Christ to the world.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 377.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- Ezra 9:7-15.
- 2 Samuel 22:49.

4

Sabbath, January 22, 2011

At the Babylonian Court

“... *The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you....*” 2 Chronicles 15:2.

CHOSEN AND PROVEN

1. What order did the Babylonian king give Ashpenaz, the master of the eunuchs? What else did he command? Daniel 1:3-5.

“At the very outset of their career there came to them a decisive test of character. It was provided that they should eat of the food and drink of the wine that came from

the king's table. In this the king thought to give them an expression of his favor and of his solicitude for their welfare." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 481.

2. Who were among the selected ones? What did their names signify? Daniel 1:6.

"In the Hebrew, Daniel signified, 'judge for God;' Hananiah, 'gift of the Lord;' Mishael, 'who is what God is;' and Azariah, 'whom Jehovah helps.'" —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 23.

"Among those who maintained their allegiance to God were Daniel and his three companions—illustrious examples of what men may become who unite with the God of wisdom and power. From the comparative simplicity of their Jewish home, these youth of royal line were taken to the most magnificent of cities and into the court of the world's greatest monarch....

"Seeing in these youth the promise of remarkable ability, Nebuchadnezzar determined that they should be trained to fill important positions in his kingdom. That they might be fully qualified for their lifework, he arranged for them to learn the language of the Chaldeans and for three years to be granted the unusual educational advantages afforded princes of the realm." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 480.

SIGNIFICANT RESOLVE

3. What names did the master of the eunuchs give them? What did these names mean, and to what did they refer? Daniel 1:7.

"This change of names was probably made on account of the signification of the words.... Since these [Hebrew] names had some reference to the true God and signified some connection with His worship, they were changed to names which had definitions linking them to the heathen divinities and worship of the Chaldeans. Thus Belteshazzar, the name given to Daniel, signified 'prince of Bel;' Shadrach, 'servant of Sin' (the moon god); Meshach, 'who is what Aku is' (Aku being the Sumerian equivalent of Sin, the name of the moon god); and Abednego, 'servant of Nebo.'" —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 23. These new names referenced heathen deities.

"The names of Daniel and his companions were changed to names representing Chaldean deities. Great significance was attached to the names given by Hebrew parents to their children. Often these stood for traits of character that the parent desired to see developed in the child...

"The king did not compel the Hebrew youth to renounce their faith in favor of idolatry, but he hoped to bring this about gradually. By giving them names significant of idolatry, by bringing them daily into close association with idolatrous customs, and under the influence of the seductive rites of heathen worship, he hoped to induce them to renounce the religion of their nation and to unite with the worship of the Babylonians." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 480, 481.

4. What resolution did Daniel make in his heart? Who looked upon this resolution with pleasure and impressed the mind of the king's officer? Daniel 1:8, 9.

"But a portion having been offered to idols, the food from the king's table was consecrated to idolatry; and one partaking of it would be regarded as offering homage to the gods of Babylon. In such homage, loyalty to Jehovah forbade Daniel and his companions to join. Even a mere pretense of eating the food or drinking the wine would be a denial of their faith. To do this would be to array themselves with heathenism and to dishonor the principles of the law of God.

"Nor dared they risk the enervating effect of luxury and dissipation on physical, mental, and spiritual development. They were acquainted with the history of Nadab and Abihu, the record of whose intemperance and its results had been preserved in the parchments of the Pentateuch; and they knew that their own physical and mental power would be injuriously affected by the use of wine.

"Daniel and his associates had been trained by their parents to habits of strict temperance. They had been taught that God would hold them accountable for their capabilities, and that they must never dwarf or enfeeble their powers."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 481, 482.

FAITH, OBEDIENCE, AND BLESSING

5. What did Daniel propose to the king's steward? What was the result after ten days had passed? Daniel 1:12-15.

"Daniel and his companions knew not what would be the result of their decision; they knew not but that it would cost them their lives; but they determined to keep the straight path of strict temperance even when in the courts of licentious Babylon."—*The Youth's Instructor*, August 18, 1898.

"This officer saw in Daniel good traits of character. He saw that he was striving to be kind and helpful, that his words were respectful and courteous, and his manner possessed the grace of modesty and meekness. It was the good behavior of the youth that gained for him the favor and love of the prince."—*The Youth's Instructor*, November 12, 1907.

6. What did the steward do after making this experience? How did the Lord reward the faithfulness of His children? Daniel 1:16, 17.

"The Lord regarded with approval the firmness and self-denial of the Hebrew youth, and their purity of motive; and His blessing attended them.... The promise was fulfilled, 'Them that honor Me I will honor.' 1 Samuel 2:30. As Daniel clung to God with unwavering trust, the spirit of prophetic power came upon him. While receiving instruction from man in the duties of court life, he was being taught by God to read the mysteries of the future and to record for coming generations, through figures and symbols, events covering the history of this world till the close of time."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 484, 485.

7. What conclusion did the king draw after his final examination of these young men? Daniel 1:18-20.

“Read the Old and New Testaments with a contrite heart. Read them prayerfully and faithfully, pleading that the Holy Spirit will give you understanding. Daniel searched the portion of the Old Testament which he had at his command, and made the word of God his highest instructor. At the same time he improved the opportunities that were given him to become intelligent in all lines of learning. His companions did the same....” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 357, 358.

“... Their learning did not come by chance. They obtained their knowledge by the faithful use of their powers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They placed themselves in connection with the Source of all wisdom, making the knowledge of God the foundation of their education. In faith they prayed for wisdom, and they lived their prayers. They placed themselves where God could bless them.... And God Himself was their teacher.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 486.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 478-490.

5

Sabbath, January 29, 2011

A Panoramic Dream

“For God speaketh once, yea twice.... In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed.” Job 33:14, 15.

1. What happened to King Nebuchadnezzar in the second year of his reign? Daniel 2:1.

“In the same year that Daniel and his companions entered the service of the king of Babylon events occurred that severely tested the integrity of these youthful Hebrews and proved before an idolatrous nation the power and faithfulness of the God of Israel.

“While King Nebuchadnezzar was looking forward with anxious forebodings to the future, he had a remarkable dream, by which he was greatly troubled, ‘and his sleep brake from him.’ Daniel 2:1. But although this vision of the night made a deep impression on his mind, he found it impossible to recall the particulars.” —*The Sanctified Life*, p. 34.

2. Whom did the king call to relate and explain his dream? How did his counselors try to hide their incompetence? Daniel 2:2- 4.

“He applied to his astrologers and magicians, and with promises of great wealth and honor commanded them to tell him his dream and its interpretation. But they said, ‘Tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.’ Verse 4.

“The king knew that if they could really tell the interpretation, they could tell the dream as well. The Lord had in His providence given Nebuchadnezzar this dream, and had caused the particulars to be forgotten, while the fearful impression was left upon his mind, in order to expose the pretensions of the wise men of Babylon.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 34.

3. Into what crisis did the king place these men? What request did they once again make of the ruler? Daniel 2:5-7.

“Dissatisfied with their evasive answer, and suspicious because, despite their pretentious claims to reveal the secrets of men, they nevertheless seemed unwilling to grant him help, the king commanded his wise men, with promises of wealth and honor on the one hand, and threats of death on the other, to tell him not only the interpretation of the dream, but the dream itself.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 492.

4. What did the angry king threaten? What confession were the wise men and astrologers forced to make? Daniel 2:8-11.

“Nebuchadnezzar [was] now thoroughly aroused and angered by the apparent perfidy of those in whom he had trusted,...

“Filled with fear for the consequences of their failure, the magicians endeavored to show the king that his request was unreasonable and his test beyond that which had ever been required of any man.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 492.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF RISKING ONE’S LIFE

5. In his fury, what did King Nebuchadnezzar command? Daniel 2:12.

“The monarch was very angry, and threatened that they should all be slain if, in a given time, the dream was not made known.”—*The Sanctified Life*, pp. 34, 35.

6. Who was included in the vengeful decree? Daniel 2:13.

“Daniel and his companions were to perish with the false prophets; but, taking his life in his hand, Daniel ventures to enter the presence of the king, begging that time may be granted that he may show the dream and the interpretation.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 35.

7. What did Daniel do, and to whom did he present his petition? Daniel 2:14-16.

“Among those sought for by the officers who were preparing to fulfill the provisions of the royal decree, were Daniel and his friends. When told that according to the decree they also must die, ‘with counsel and wisdom’ Daniel inquired of Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, ‘Why is the decree so hasty from the king?’ Arioch told him the story of the king’s perplexity over his remarkable dream, and of his failure to secure help from those in whom he had hitherto placed fullest confidence. Upon hearing this, Daniel, taking his life in his hands, ventured into the king’s presence and begged that time be granted, that he might petition his God to reveal to him the dream and its interpretation.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 493.

“When the decree went forth from an angry, furious king, commanding that all the wise men of Babylon should be destroyed, Daniel and his fellows were sought for to be slain. Then Daniel answered, not with retaliation, but ‘with counsel and wisdom,’ the captain of the king’s guard, who was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. Daniel asked, ‘Why is the decree so hasty from the king?’ He presented himself before the king, requesting that time be given him, and his faith in the God he served prompted him to say that he would show the king the interpretation.” –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 373.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *The Faith I Live By*, p. 10.

6

Sabbath, February 5, 2011

God Honors Those Who Honor Him

“... *Them that honour Me I will honour; and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.*” 1 Samuel 2:30.

A PROMPT ANSWER TO PRAYER

- 1. To whom did Daniel and his friends turn to have the secret revealed? What did the Saviour say about mutual prayer? Daniel 2:17, 18; Matthew 18:19.**

“To this request the monarch accedes; and now Daniel gathers his three companions, and together they take the matter before God, seeking for wisdom from the Source of light and knowledge. Although they were in the king’s court, surrounded with temptation, they did not forget their responsibility to God. They were strong in the consciousness that His providence had placed them where they were; that they were doing His work, meeting the demands of truth and duty. They had confidence toward God. They had turned to Him for strength when in perplexity and danger, and He had been to them an ever-present help.” —*The Sanctified Life*, p. 35.

“Together they sought for wisdom from the Source of light and knowledge. Their faith was strong in the consciousness that God had placed them where they were, that they were doing His work and meeting the demands of duty. In times of perplexity and danger they had always turned to Him for guidance and protection, and He had proved an ever-present help. Now with contrition of heart they submitted themselves anew to the Judge of the earth, pleading that He would grant them deliverance in this their time of special need.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 493, 494.

2. How did the Omnipotent One answer their humble plea? Daniel 2:19.

“And they did not plead in vain. The God whom they had honored, now honored them. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, and to Daniel, ‘in a night vision,’ was revealed the king’s dream and its meaning.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 494.

“Nehemiah humbled himself before God, giving Him the glory due unto His name. Thus also did Daniel in Babylon. Let us study the prayers of these men. They teach us that we are to humble ourselves, but that we are never to obliterate the line of demarcation between God’s commandment-keeping people and those who have no respect for His law.

“We all need to draw near to God. He will draw near to those who approach Him in humility, filled with a holy awe for His sacred majesty, and standing before Him separate from the world.” —(*Manuscript 58*, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1136.

HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

3. What was the first thing Daniel did after receiving the answer? What teaching of the apostle Paul should always be remembered? Daniel 2:20-23; Ephesians 5:20.

“The Christian should live so near to God that he may approve things that are excellent, ‘being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.’ His heart should be attuned to gratitude and praise. He should be ever ready to acknowledge the blessings he is receiving, remembering who it is that has said, ‘Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.’” —*My Life Today*, p. 153.

4. With what request did Daniel go to Arioch? What did Arioch do after receiving this good news? Daniel 2:24, 25.

“Wonderful is the work which God designs to accomplish through His servants, that His name may be glorified. God made Joseph a fountain of life to the Egyptian nation. Through Joseph the life of that whole people was preserved. Through Daniel God saved the life of all the wise men of Babylon. And these deliverances were as object lessons; they illustrated to the people the spiritual blessings offered them through connection with the God whom Joseph and Daniel worshiped. So through His people today God desires to bring blessings to the world. Every worker in whose heart Christ abides, everyone who will show forth His love to the world, is a worker together with God for the blessing of humanity. As he receives from the Saviour grace to impart to others, from his whole being flows forth the tide of spiritual life.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 227.

5. What anxious question did the ruler of the mightiest world empire address to Daniel? Daniel 2:26.

HUMILITY AND FAITH

6. How humbly did Daniel reply? Daniel 2:27, 28.

“Behold the Jewish captive, calm and self-possessed, in the presence of the monarch of the world’s most powerful empire. In his first words he disclaimed honor for himself, and exalted God as the source of all wisdom.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 494.

7. What promise is given to God’s humble children? 1 Peter 5:5, last part.

“As God made known His will to the Hebrew captives, to those who were most separate from the customs and practices of a world lying in wickedness, so will the Lord communicate light from heaven to all who will appreciate a ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ To them He will express His mind. Those who are least bound up with worldly ideas, are the most separate from display, and vanity, and pride, and love of promotion, who stand forth as His peculiar people, zealous of good works—to these He will reveal the meaning of His word. The very first exhibition of God’s power to the Hebrew captives was in showing the defective wisdom of the great ones of the earth. The wisdom of men is foolishness with God. The magicians revealed their ignorance of the light before the Lord revealed His wisdom as supreme. The wisdom of human agents who had misappropriated their God-given talents, God showed to be foolishness.” —*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 101, 102.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 13.

The Prophetic Dream

“... *There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known ... what shall be in the latter days.*” Daniel 2:28.

RELATING THE DREAM

- 1. What was the king thinking about when the Lord gave him the dream? For what purpose did Daniel receive the same dream? Daniel 2:29.**

“Consider the experience of Daniel. When called to stand before King Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel did not hesitate to acknowledge the source of his wisdom. Did that faithful recognition of God detract from Daniel’s influence in the king’s court? By no means; it was the secret of his power; it secured for him favor in the eyes of the ruler of Babylon. In God’s name Daniel made known to the king the heaven-sent messages of instruction, warning, and rebuke, and he was not repulsed. Let God’s workers of today read the firm, bold testimony of Daniel and follow his example.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 151.

- 2. What did the king see in his very special dream? Of what was the image made? Daniel 2:31-33.**

“The dream of the great image, opening before Nebuchadnezzar events reaching to the close of time, had been given that he might understand the part he was to act in the world’s history, and the relation that his kingdom should sustain to the kingdom of heaven.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 503.

“Nebuchadnezzar, a worshiper of the gods of the Chaldean religion, was an idolater. An image was an object which would at once command his attention and respect. Moreover, earthly kingdoms, which, as we shall hereafter see, were represented by this image, were objects of esteem and value in his eyes.

“But how admirably adapted was this representation to convey a great and needful truth to the mind of Nebuchadnezzar. Besides delineating the progress of events through the whole course of time for the benefit of His people, God would show Nebuchadnezzar the utter emptiness and worthlessness of earthly pomp and glory. How could this be more impressively done than by an image whose head was of gold?” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 38.

3. Even though image in the dream was very impressive, what was to happen to it and to the kingdoms which it represented? Daniel 2:34, 35.

“Below this head was a body composed of inferior metals descending in value until they reached their basest form in the feet and toes of iron mingled with miry clay. The whole was then dashed to pieces, and made like the empty chaff. It was finally blown away where no place could be found for it, after which something durable and of heavenly worth occupied its place. So would God show to the children of men that earthly kingdoms are to pass away, and earthly greatness and glory, like a gaudy bubble, will break and vanish. In the place so long usurped by these, the kingdom of God shall be set up and have no end, while all who have an interest in that kingdom shall rest under the shadow of its peaceful wings forever and ever.”
—*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 38, 39.

THE HEAD OF GOLD

4. What did the head of gold represent? Daniel 2:36-38.

“God exalted Babylon that it might fulfill this purpose. Prosperity attended the nation until it reached a height of wealth and power that has never since been equalled—fitly represented in the Scriptures by the inspired symbol, a ‘head of gold.’ Daniel 2:38.”—*Education*, p. 175.

“God has presented to me the case of Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord worked with power to bring the mightiest king on the earth to acknowledge Him as King over all kings. He moved upon the mind of the proud king until Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged Him as ‘the most high God,’ ‘whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.’” —(*Letter 132*, 1901) *Evangelism*, p. 88.

5. When did this mighty empire begin? Who built it up to its height of power? Genesis 10:8-12; Daniel 4:26, 27.

“The Babylonian Empire rose to power under the general who also became king, Nabopolassar. When he died in 604 B.C. his son Nebuchadnezzar became king....

“The character of the Babylonian Empire is indicated by the head of gold. It was the golden kingdom of a golden age. Babylon, its metropolis, towered to a height never reached by any of its successors. Situated in the garden of the East; laid out in a perfect square said to be sixty miles in circumference, fifteen miles on each side; surrounded by a wall estimated to have been two hundred to three hundred feet high and eighty-seven feet thick, with a moat, or ditch, around this, of equal cubic capacity with the wall itself; divided into squares by its many streets, each one hundred and fifty feet in width, crossing at right angles, every one of them straight and level; its two hundred and twenty-five square miles of enclosed surface laid out in luxuri-

ant pleasure grounds and gardens, interspersed with magnificent dwellings—this city, with its sixty miles of moat, its sixty miles of outer wall, its thirty miles of river wall through its center, its gates of solid brass, its hanging gardens rising terrace above terrace till they equaled in height the walls themselves, its temple of Belus three miles in circumference, its two royal palaces, one three and a half and the other eight miles in circumference, with its subterranean tunnel under the River Euphrates connecting these two palaces, its perfect arrangement for convenience, ornament, and defense, and its unlimited resources—this city, containing in itself many things which were themselves wonders of the world, was itself another and still mightier wonder.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 41-43.

BABYLON’S GLORY, DECLINE, AND FALL

6. What expressions did the prophet Isaiah employ to describe Babylon’s glory? Isaiah 13:19, first part.

“There, with the whole earth prostrate at her feet, a queen in peerless grandeur, drawing from the pen of inspiration itself this glowing title, ‘The glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency,’ stood this city, fit capital of that kingdom which was represented by the golden head of this great historic image.

“Such was Babylon, with Nebuchadnezzar in the prime of life, bold, vigorous, and accomplished, seated upon its throne, when Daniel entered within its walls to serve as a captive in its gorgeous palaces for seventy years. There the children of the Lord, oppressed more than cheered by the glory and prosperity of the land of their captivity, hung their harps on the willows by the Euphrates, and wept when they remembered Zion.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 43.

7. With what words did he outline the future of this glorious city? How long did the Babylonian Empire last? Isaiah 13:19-22.

“In the first year of Neriglissar, only two years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, broke out that fatal war between the Babylonians and the Medes, which resulted in the overthrow of the Babylonian kingdom.... According to all human calculation, they had good ground for their feelings of security. Never, weighed in the balance of earthly probability, could that city be taken with the means of warfare then known. Hence they breathed as freely and slept as soundly as though no foe were waiting and watching around their beleaguered walls. But God had decreed that the proud and wicked city should come down from her throne of glory. And when He speaks, what mortal arm can defeat His word?

“... In the drunken revelry of that fatal night, these river gates were left open,... The entrance of the Persian soldiers was not perceived.... Thus the first empire, symbolized by the head of gold of the great image, came to an ignoble end.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 44, 45, 47, 48.

“In the unexpected entry of the army of the Persian conqueror into the heart of the Babylonian capital by way of the channel of the river whose waters had been

turned aside, and through the inner gates that in careless security had been left open and unprotected, the Jews had abundant evidence of the literal fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the sudden overthrow of their oppressors." –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 552. After dominating the world for only a short time, from 606 to 538 B.C., the Babylonian Empire came to its end.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- Isaiah chapters 13, 14, 47.
- Jeremiah chapters 50, 51.
- Daniel 5:1-31.
- *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 514, 535.

8

Sabbath, February 19, 2011

The Prophetic Dream, Continued

"I will ... open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut."
Isaiah 45:1.

THE BREAST AND ARMS OF SILVER

- 1. What was below the head of gold? What kingdom was represented by this part of the image? Daniel 2:32, middle part, 39, first part.**

"The succeeding kingdom, Medo-Persia, answered to the breast and arms of silver of the great image. It was to be inferior to the preceding kingdom." –*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 51.

- 2. What other prophets foretold the destruction of Babylon and the rise of a new world power? Isaiah 13:17, 18; Jeremiah 51:11.**

"Instead of being a protector of men, Babylon became a proud and cruel oppressor. The words of Inspiration picturing the cruelty and greed of rulers in Israel reveal the secret of Babylon's fall and of the fall of many another kingdom since the world began" –*Education*, p. 176.

3. What did the Lord call the conqueror of the Babylonian world empire? Isaiah 44:28; 45:1.

“More than a century before the birth of Cyrus, Inspiration had mentioned him by name, and had caused a record to be made of the actual work he should do in taking the city of Babylon unawares, and in preparing the way for the release of the children of the captivity. Through Isaiah the word had been spoken:

“Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him;... to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.” Isaiah 45:1-3.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 551.

4. When did Cyrus give the Jews permission to return to their land? Did all the captives take advantage of this opportunity? Jeremiah 25:12; Ezra 1:1-4; 2:1, 64.

“As the king saw the words foretelling, more than a hundred years before his birth, the manner in which Babylon should be taken; as he read the message addressed to him by the Ruler of the universe,... his heart was profoundly moved,” and he determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission. Isaiah 45:5, 6, 4, 13. He would let the Judean captives go free; he would help them restore the temple of Jehovah.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 557, 558. This command was given in 736 B.C.

“These, however, in comparison with the hundreds of thousands scattered through the provinces of Medo-Persia, were but a mere remnant. The great majority of the Israelites had chosen to remain in the land of their exile, rather than undergo the hardships of the return journey and the reestablishment of their desolated cities and homes.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 598.

DISCERNMENT OF WHAT IS HELP AND WHAT IS NOT

5. Who offered their help to the weak people of God in rebuilding the city and temple? Was this seemingly well-meant offer accepted? Ezra 4:1, 2, 3.

“Only a remnant had chosen to return from Babylon; and now, as they undertake a work seemingly beyond the strength, their nearest neighbors come with an offer of help. The Samaritans refer to their worship of the true God, and express a desire to share the privileges and blessings connected with the temple service.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 568.

6. Why could the leaders of the people not accept this offer? How was the true character of these pretenders revealed? Deuteronomy 14:2; Ezra 4:4, 5.

“But had the Jewish leaders accepted this offer of assistance, they would have opened a door for the entrance of idolatry. They discerned the insincerity of the Samaritans. They realized that help gained through an alliance with these men would be as nothing in comparison with the blessing they might expect to receive by following the plain commands of Jehovah....

“... Those who had recently rededicated themselves to the Lord at the altar set up before the ruins of His temple, realized that the line of demarcation between His people, and the world is ever to be kept unmistakably distinct. They refused to enter into alliance with those who, though familiar with the requirements of God’s law, would not yield to its claims.... Never can we afford to compromise principle by entering to alliance with those who do not fear Him....

“By false reports they aroused suspicion in minds easily led to suspect.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 568, 570, 571.

7. What warning of inspiration is appropriate for us today in regard the lines of demarcation? 1 Corinthians 10:11; 2 Corinthians 6.14.

“It is not the open and avowed enemies of the cause of God that are most to be feared. Those who, like the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin, come with smooth words and fair speeches, apparently seeking for friendly alliance with God’s children, have greater power to deceive. Against such every soul should be on the alert, lest some carefully concealed and masterly snare take him unaware.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 570, 571.

“The Lord’s injunction, ‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers’ (2 Corinthians 6:14), refers not only to the marriage of Christians with the ungodly, but to all alliances in which the parties are brought into intimate association, and in which there is need of harmony in spirit and action. Exodus 34:12-14.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 121.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.
- *The Signs of the Times*, June 2, 1881, found in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1001.

The Jewish People in the Medo-Persian Empire

“And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.” Ezra 6:14.

OPPOSITION

- 1. What did the people who had returned begin to do with great zeal? What happened to the temple construction work because of the difficulties caused by their enemies? Ezra 3:8, 10, 11; Haggai 1:1, 2.**

“The opposition of their enemies was strong and determined, and gradually the builders lost heart. Some could not forget the scene at the laying of the cornerstone, when many had given expression to their lack of confidence in the enterprise. And as the Samaritans grew more bold, many of the Jews questioned whether, after all, the time had come to rebuild. The feeling soon became widespread. Many of the workmen, discouraged and disheartened, returned to their homes to take up the ordinary pursuits of life.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 572.

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE LORD

- 2. Whom did the Lord raise up in this crisis? What message did the Lord issue through them? Ezra 5:1; Haggai 1:3-11.**

“But even this dark hour was not without hope for those whose trust was in God. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah were raised up to meet the crisis. In stirring testimonies these appointed messengers revealed to the people the cause of their troubles. The lack of temporal prosperity was the result of a neglect to put God’s interests first, the prophets declared. Had the Israelites honored God, had they shown Him due respect and courtesy, by making the building of His house their first work, they would have invited His presence and blessing....

“For over a year the temple was neglected and well-nigh forsaken. The people dwelt in their homes and strove to attain temporal prosperity, but their situation was deplorable. Work as they might they did not prosper....

“The desire to escape poverty has led you to neglect the temple, but this neglect has brought upon you that which you feared. ‘Ye have sown much, and bring in little;...’”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 573, 574.

3. Did this message have results? When was the prophecy of Haggai fulfilled? Haggai 1:12-14; 2:6-9.

“For centuries the Jews had vainly endeavored to show wherein the promise of God given by Haggai had been fulfilled; yet pride and unbelief blinded their minds to the true meaning of the prophet’s words. The second temple was not honored with the cloud of Jehovah’s glory, but with the living presence of One in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily—who was God Himself manifest in the flesh. The ‘Desire of all nations’ had indeed come to His temple when the Man of Nazareth taught and healed in the sacred courts. In the presence of Christ, and in this only, did the second temple exceed the first in glory.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 24.

4. By whom and when was the second decree given to continue the rebuilding of the temple? Ezra 6:1-12.

“The king further decreed that severe penalties be meted out to those who should in any wise alter the decree.... Thus the Lord prepared the way for the completion of the temple.

“For months before this decree was made, the Israelites had kept on working by faith, the prophets of God still helping them by means of timely messages, through which the divine purpose for Israel was kept before the workers. Two months after Haggai’s last recorded message was delivered, Zechariah had a series of visions regarding the work of God in the earth. These messages, given in the form of parables and symbols, came at a time of great uncertainty and anxiety, and were of peculiar significance to the men who were advancing in the name of the God of Israel. It seemed to the leaders as if the permission granted the Jews to rebuild was about to be withdrawn; the future appeared very dark. God saw that His people were in need of being sustained and cheered by a revelation of His infinite compassion and love.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 579, 580.

It was around the year B.C. 519 that Darius gave the decree that the Jews should continue building the temple. See *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 208.

ANOTHER TEST AND ITS RESULTS

5. What challenge did the Lord send through the prophet to His people who still remained in Babylon? What happened to those who were still there for convenience’ sake in spite of the divine call and repeated royal decree? Zechariah 2:7; Esther 3:8-11.

“Meanwhile conditions in the Medo-Persian realm were rapidly changing. Darius Hystaspes, under whose reign the Jews had been shown marked favor, was

succeeded by Xerxes the Great. It was during his reign that those of the Jews who had failed of heeding the message to flee, were called upon to face a terrible crisis. Having refused to take advantage of the way of escape God had provided, now they were brought face to face with death....

“The Lord foresaw the troublous times that were to follow during the reign of Xerxes—the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther—and He not only wrought a change of feelings in the hearts of men in authority, but also inspired Zechariah to plead with the exiles to return.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 600, 598, 599.

6. Who issued the third and last decree? When? What written document did this ruler give to Ezra the priest? Ezra 6:14; 7:7, 8, 11-26.

“About seventy years after the return of the first company of exiles under Zerubabel and Joshua, Artaxerxes Longimanus came to the throne of Medo-Persia. The name of this king is connected with sacred history by a series of remarkable providences. It was during his reign that Ezra and Nehemiah lived and labored. He is the one who in 457 B.C. issued the third and final decree for the restoration of Jerusalem. His reign saw the return of a company of Jews under Ezra, the completion of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah and his associates, the reorganization of the temple services, and the great religious reformations instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah. During his long rule he often showed favor to God’s people, and in his trusted and well-beloved Jewish friends, Ezra and Nehemiah, he recognized men of God’s appointment, raised up for a special work.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 607.

DECLINE OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

7. What led to the fall of the Medo-Persian Empire? Esther 1:1-9.

“Had the king maintained his royal dignity by practicing habits of temperance, he would never have made this command. But his mind was affected by the wine that he had used so freely, and he was not prepared to act wisely.... Occasions of indulgence such as are pictured in the first chapter of Esther, do not glorify God....

“Through the experience that brought Esther to the Medo-Persian throne, God was working for the accomplishment of His purposes for His people. That which was done under the influence of much wine worked out for good to Israel.”—(*MS 39, 1910*) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1139. This world empire was in power from 538 to 331 B.C.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- Zechariah chapter. 4.
- Haggai chapters 1, 2.
- *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 593-617.

Subsequent Empires

"... After ... a third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." Daniel 2:39, 40.

THE THIRD EMPIRE

1. What empire followed that of Medo-Persia? How was the prophecy fulfilled? Daniel 2:32, last part, 39, second part.

"Few and brief are the inspired words which involved in their fulfillment a succession in world rulership. In the ever-changing political kaleidoscope, Grecia came into the field of vision, to be for a time the all-absorbing object of attention, as the third of what are called the universal empires of the earth.

"After the battle which decided the fate of the empire, Darius endeavored to rally the shattered remnants of his army, and make a stand for his kingdom and his rights. But he could not gather out of all the host of his recently so numerous and well-appointed army a force with which he deemed it prudent to hazard another engagement with the victorious Grecians. Alexander pursued him on the wings of the wind. Time after time Darius barely eluded the grasp of his swiftly following foe." —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 52.

2. What is reported about the triumphal procession of Alexander the Great? What was the cause of his premature death? What were the consequences for the kingdom? Proverbs 31:4, 5; 16:32.

"Alexander the Great, inheriting his father's newly expanded Greco-Macedonian kingdom, set out to extend Macedonian dominion and Greek culture eastward, and conquered the Persian Empire. The prophecy represents the kingdom of Greece as following Persia, because Greece never became united into a kingdom until the formation of the Macedonian Empire, which replaced Persia as the leading world power of that time (for parallel prophecies see on chs. 7:6; 8:5-8, 21, 22; 11:2-4).

"The last reigning king of the Persian Empire was Darius III (Codomannus), who was defeated by Alexander at the battles of Granicus (334 B.C.), Issus (333 B.C.), and Arbela, or Gaugamela (331 B.C.)." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 774.

"Alexander found it much easier to subdue kingdoms than to rule his own spirit. After conquering nations, this so-called great man fell through the indulgence of appetite—a victim of intemperance." —*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 29.

“With contemptible arrogance, he claimed for himself divine honors. He gave up conquered cities, freely and unprovoked, to the mercy of his bloodthirsty and licentious soldiery. He often murdered his friends and favorites in his drunken frenzies. He encouraged such excessive drinking among his followers that on one occasion twenty of them died as the result of their carousal. At length, having sat through one long drinking spree, he was immediately invited to another, when, after drinking to each of the twenty guests present, he twice drank, says history, incredible as it may seem, the full Herculean cup containing six of our quarts. He was seized with a violent fever, of which he died eleven days later, June 13, 323 B.C., while yet he stood only at the threshold of mature life, in the thirty-second year of his age.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 53, 54.

THE FOURTH EMPIRE

3. What are we told about the fourth empire? How far did it extend? Daniel 2:33, first part, 40; Luke 2:1.

“The arms of the Republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome.’

“At the opening of the Christian Era, this empire took in the whole south of Europe, France, England, the greater part of the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the south of Germany, Hungary, Turkey, and Greece, not to speak of its possessions in Asia and Africa....

“The empire of the Romans filled the world,...” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 54, 55.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN WORLD HISTORY

4. What important event took place under the rule of the Roman Empire? Were the leaders of God’s chosen people prepared for this event? Luke 2:4-7; John 1:5, 11.

“An angel visits the earth to see who are prepared to welcome Jesus. But he can discern no tokens of expectancy. He hears no voice of praise and triumph that the period of Messiah’s coming is at hand. The angel hovers for a time over the chosen city and the temple where the divine presence has been manifested for ages; but even here is the same indifference.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 314.

GREAT JOY FOR THOSE WHO WERE WAITING

5. Why were the shepherds presented with these glad tidings? Luke 2:8, 9.

“There is no evidence that Christ is expected, and no preparation for the Prince of life. In amazement the celestial messenger is about to return to heaven with the shameful tidings, when he discovers a group of shepherds who are watching their flocks by night, and, as they gaze into the starry heavens, are contemplating the prophecy of a Messiah to come to earth, and longing for the advent of the world’s Redeemer. Here is a company that is prepared to receive the heavenly message.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 314.

6. What was the theme of the heavenly message? Luke 2:10, 11.

“And suddenly the angel of the Lord appears, declaring the good tidings of great joy. Celestial glory floods all the plain, an innumerable company of angels is revealed, and as if the joy were too great for one messenger to bring from heaven, a multitude of voices break forth in the anthem which all the nations of the saved shall one day sing: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’ Luke 2:14.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 314.

7. Who else was watching for the fulfillment of the prophecy? Luke 2:25-38; Matthew 2:1, 2; Numbers 24:17.

“In the land of the heathen also were those that looked for Him; they were wise men, rich and noble, the philosophers of the East. Students of nature, the Magi had seen God in His handiwork. From the Hebrew Scriptures they had learned of the Star to arise out of Jacob, and with eager desire they awaited His coming, who should be not only the ‘Consolation of Israel,’ but a ‘Light to lighten the Gentiles,’ and ‘for salvation unto the ends of the earth.’ Luke 2:25, 32; Acts 13:47. They were seekers for light, and light from the throne of God illumined the path for their feet.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 315.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- Matthew 2:1-12.
- Luke 2:1-38.
- *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 31-49.

Fall of the Roman Empire

“... *The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron.... And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided....*” Daniel 2:40, 41.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE

- 1. What beautiful promise was expressed by the angels to the shepherds when Jesus, the Prince of Peace, was born? What contrasting condition existed at the time? Luke 2:13, 14.**

“‘When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son.’ Providence had directed the movements of nations, and the tide of human impulse and influence, until the world was ripe for the coming of the Deliverer. The nations were united under one government. One language was widely spoken, and was everywhere recognized as the language of literature. From all lands the Jews of the dispersion gathered to Jerusalem to the annual feasts. As these returned to the places of their sojourn, they could spread throughout the world the tidings of the Messiah’s coming.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 32.

- 2. What world power confirmed and carried out the death sentence pronounced against God’s Son? Matthew 27:24-31.**

“In the judgment hall of Pilate, the Roman governor, Christ stands bound as a prisoner. About Him are the guard of soldiers, and the hall is fast filling with spectators. Just outside the entrance are the judges of the Sanhedrin, priests, rulers, elders, and the mob.

“After condemning Jesus, the council of the Sanhedrin had come to Pilate to have the sentence confirmed and executed.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 723.

PILATE’S CRIME AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

- 3. What did Heaven do to try to protect Pilate from the terrible guilt he would take upon himself by condemning Jesus unjustly? How did Pilate’s career and life end? Matthew 27:19; Job 20:4-7; 2 Corinthians 4:7-11.**

“If at the first Pilate had stood firm, refusing to condemn a man whom he found guiltless, he would have broken the fatal chain that was to bind him in remorse and

guilt as long as he lived. Had he carried out his convictions of right, the Jews would not have presumed to dictate to him. Christ would have been put to death, but the guilt would not have rested upon Pilate. But Pilate had taken step after step in the violation of his conscience. He had excused himself from judging with justice and equity, and he now found himself almost helpless in the hands of the priests and rulers. His wavering and indecision proved his ruin....

"Pilate yielded to the demands of the mob. Rather than risk losing his position, he delivered Jesus up to be crucified. But in spite of his precautions, the very thing he dreaded afterward came upon him. His honors were stripped from him, he was cast down from his high office, and, stung by remorse and wounded pride, not long after the crucifixion he ended his own life. So all who compromise with sin will gain only sorrow and ruin. 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.' Proverbs 14:12." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 732, 738.

FATAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE

4. What happened to the Jews after they rejected the Prince of Peace? Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 22:4-7.

"Thus the Jewish people sealed their rejection of God's mercy. The result was foretold by Christ in the parable. The king 'sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.' The judgment pronounced came upon the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the nation." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 308, 309.

PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS

5. From the time of Nero on, how did Rome treat the followers of Christ? 1 Corinthians 4:7-11.

"During Paul's imprisonment the converts to Christianity had become so numerous as to attract the attention and arouse the enmity of the authorities. The anger of the emperor was especially excited by the conversion of members of his own household, and he soon found a pretext to make the Christians the objects of his merciless cruelty." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 487.

"These persecutions, beginning under Nero about the time of the martyrdom of Paul, continued with greater or less fury for centuries. Christians were falsely accused of the most dreadful crimes and declared to be the cause of great calamities—famine, pestilence, and earthquake. As they became the objects of popular hatred and suspicion, informers stood ready, for the sake of gain, to betray the innocent. They were condemned as rebels against the empire, as foes of religion, and pests to society. Great numbers were thrown to wild beasts or burned alive in the amphitheaters. Some were crucified; others were covered with the skins of wild animals and thrust into the arena to be torn by dogs. Their punishment was often made the chief entertainment at public fetes. Vast multitudes assembled to enjoy the sight and greeted their dying agonies with laughter and applause." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 40.

6. How did prophecy portray the end of the Roman Empire? When was this iron monarchy divided? Daniel 2:33, 41.

“Here, then, is a division presented; and what have we in the symbol to indicate it? Nothing but the toes of the image. Unless they do, we are left utterly in the dark on the nature and extent of the division which the prophecy shows did exist. To suppose this would be to cast a serious imputation upon the prophecy itself. We are therefore held to the conclusion that the ten toes of the image denote the ten parts into which the Roman Empire was divided.

“This division was accomplished between A.D. 351 and 476. The era of this dissolution thus covered a hundred and twenty-five years, from about the middle of the fourth century to the last quarter of the fifth. No historians of whom we are aware, place the beginning of this work of the dismemberment of the Roman Empire earlier than A.D. 351, and there is general agreement in assigning its close in A.D. 476.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 57, 58.

7. What does history present about the division of the Roman Empire? Daniel 2:42, 43.

“Earthly powers are shaken. We need not, and cannot, expect union among the nations of the earth. Our position in the image of Nebuchadnezzar is represented by the toes, in a divided state, and of a crumbling material, that will not hold together. Prophecy shows us that the great day of God is right upon us. It hasteth greatly.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 360.

“The ten nations which were most instrumental in breaking up the Roman Empire, and which at some time in their history held respectively portions of Roman territory as separate and independent kingdoms, may be enumerated (without respect to the time of their establishment) as follows: Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruli, Anglo-Saxons, and Lombards.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 58.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *The Desire of Ages*, p. 34.
- *Prophets and Kings*, p. 514.

“Of the second ruler of Rome, Numa Pompilius (B.C. 716- 673) history tells us he built a temple for Janus.... This temple was to be open in times of war and shut in times of peace. Under Numa himself, the temple was always closed. After Numa, during the whole period of the Roman Republic, this occurred only two more times—the first time after the end of the first Punian war and then again at the beginning of the reign of Caesar Augustus, the first Caesar.” —Dr. Starke, *Römische Geschichte (Roman History)*, p. 9.

The Everlasting Kingdom

“How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.” Daniel 4:3.

A HOLY KINGDOM

1. **To what kingdom did Daniel point after showing the temporal nature of the earthly kingdoms? Whom did this stone represent? Daniel 2:34, 44, 45; Isaiah 28:16.**

“Exalted to the pinnacle of worldly honor, and acknowledged even by Inspiration as ‘a king of kings’ (Ezekiel 26:7), Nebuchadnezzar nevertheless at times had ascribed to the favor of Jehovah the glory of his kingdom and the splendor of his reign. Such had been the case after his dream of the great image. His mind had been profoundly influenced by this vision and by the thought that the Babylonian Empire, universal though it was, was finally to fall, and other kingdoms were to bear sway, until at last all earthly powers were to be superseded by a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, which kingdom was never to be destroyed.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 514.

2. **To what event did this point? What strong deception will take place before this event? John 14:3; Matthew 24:23-27.**

“As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour’s advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 624.

3. **What alone will keep a person from accepting this strong delusion? John 5:39, first part; 2 Peter 3:14.**

“Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his dis-

guise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses?" –*The Great Controversy*, p. 625.

"Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 216.

THE SAVIOUR'S COMING IN THE CLOUDS

4. How will Christ's second coming occur? What request in the Lord's prayer will then be fulfilled? Who alone can become a citizen of that kingdom? Revelation 1:7; Matthew 6:10, first part; John 3:3, 5.

"Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man....

"The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place." –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 640-642.

"... The full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place until the second coming of Christ to this world. 'The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,' is to be given to 'the people of the saints of the Most High.' Daniel 7:27. They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them 'from the foundation of the world.' Matthew 25:34. And Christ will take to Himself His great power and will reign." –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 108.

THE KING'S REACTION

5. What impression did the interpretation of the dream make upon Nebuchadnezzar? What did he acknowledge? Daniel 2:46, 47.

"Nebuchadnezzar felt that he could accept this interpretation as a divine revelation; for to Daniel had been revealed every detail of the dream. The solemn truths conveyed by the interpretation of this vision of the night made a deep impression on the sovereign's mind, and in humility and awe he 'fell upon his face, and worshipped.'...

"Nebuchadnezzar saw clearly the difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the most learned men of his kingdom." –(*The Youth's Instructor*, September 8, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 169.

6. What rewards did the king bestow on Daniel? Daniel 2:48.

“Daniel was a faithful statesman in the courts of Babylon; for he feared, loved, and trusted God; and in time of temptation and peril he was preserved by the power of God. We read that God gave Daniel wisdom, and endowed him with understanding.” –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 204, 205.

“When all his business transactions were subjected to the closest scrutiny, not one faulty item could be found. The record of his business life, incomplete though it is, contains lessons worthy of study. It reveals the fact that a businessman is not necessarily a scheming, policy man. He may be a man instructed of God at every step. Daniel, while prime minister of the kingdom of Babylon, was a prophet of God, receiving the light of heavenly inspiration. His life is an illustration of what every Christian businessman may be.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 248.

7. Of whom did Daniel think even when he was honored? Daniel 2:49.

“The case of Daniel was presented before me. Although he was a man of like passions with ourselves, the pen of inspiration presents him as a faultless character. His life is given us as a bright example of what man may become, even in this life, if he will make God his strength and wisely improve the opportunities and privileges within his reach. Daniel was an intellectual giant; yet he was continually seeking for greater knowledge, for higher attainments. Other young men had the same advantages; but they did not, like him, bend all their energies to seek wisdom—the knowledge of God as revealed in His word and in His works. Although Daniel was one of the world’s great men, he was not proud nor self-sufficient. He felt the need of refreshing his soul with prayer, and each day found him in earnest supplication before God. He would not be deprived of this privilege even when a den of lions was opened to receive him if he continued to pray.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 569.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- Matthew 25:34.
- John 18:36.
- *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 350.

“Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that the fact might be determined whether it would fulfill the purposes of the Watcher and the Holy One. Prophecy has traced the rise and progress of the world’s great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with the nations of less power, history has repeated itself. Each has had its period of test; each has failed, its glory faded, its power departed.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 535.

Please read the Missionary Report from Sudan on page 43.

A Fiery Test

“Then ... answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29.

THE BABYLONIAN KING’S IMAGE AND DECREE

- 1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar do at the pinnacle of his power? What motivated him to make this command? Daniel 3:1.**

“In time he ceased to honor God, and resumed his idol worship with increased zeal and bigotry....

“The wise men of the realm, taking advantage of this and of his return to idolatry, proposed that he make an image similar to the one seen in his dream, and set it up where all might behold the head of gold, which had been interpreted as representing his kingdom....

“Instead of reproducing the image as he had seen it, he would excel the original. His image should not deteriorate in value from the head to the feet, but should be entirely of gold—symbolic throughout of Babylon as an eternal, indestructible, all-powerful kingdom, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 504.

- 2. Who were called to the dedication of the image? When all were assembled, what command did the king’s herald issue? Daniel 3:2-6.**

“And it is not surprising that in a land where idol worship was of universal prevalence, the beautiful and priceless image in the plain of Dura, representing the glory of Babylon and its magnificence and power, should be consecrated as an object of worship. This was accordingly provided for, and a decree went forth that on the day of the dedication all should show their supreme loyalty to the Babylonian power by bowing before the image.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 505, 506.

THREE YOUNG MEN STAND FOR GOD

- 3. What did the representatives of the conquered nations do under this incredible pressure? But who could not worship this image? Daniel 3:7-12.**

“To Nebuchadnezzar, flushed with triumph, was brought the word that among his subjects there were some who dared disobey his mandate. Certain of the wise

men, jealous of the honors that had been bestowed upon the faithful companions of Daniel, now reported to the king their flagrant violation of his wishes.” –*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 506, 507.

“The appointed day has come, and the vast company is assembled, when word is brought to the king that the three Hebrews whom he had set over the province of Babylon, had refused to worship the image. These are Daniel’s three companions, who had been called by the king, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Full of rage, the monarch calls them before him, and pointing to the angry furnace, tells them the punishment that will be theirs if they refuse obedience to his will.” –*The Review and Herald*, February 1, 1881.

4. What further opportunity did the king offer the young men? Daniel 3:13-15, first part.

“He would give them another trial. If only they would signify their willingness to unite with the multitude in worshipping the image, all would be well with them;...” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 507.

“The forbearance of the king is shown in his granting Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego another trial after their first failure to comply with his requirements. Doubtless the matter was thoroughly understood. They could not plead ignorance. They knew what the king wanted, and their failure to fulfill his command was an intentional and deliberate refusal to obey him. With most kings this would have been enough to seal their fate. But no, said Nebuchadnezzar, I will overlook this offense if upon a second trial they comply with the law. But they informed the king that he need not trouble himself to repeat the test.” –*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 73.

5. What threat did the king say he would carry out if they refused his command? Daniel 3:15, second part.

“If only they would signify their willingness to unite with the multitude in worshipping the image, all would be well with them; ‘but if ye worship not,’ he added, ‘ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.’ Then with his hand stretched upward in defiance, he demanded, ‘Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?’” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 507.

HOLY ADHERENCE TO PRINCIPLE

6. In whom did the three young men trust? Daniel 3:16, 17.

“We have marked illustrations of the sustaining power of firm, religious principle. Even the fear of death could not make the fainting David drink of the water of Bethlehem, to obtain which, valiant men had risked their lives. The gaping lions’ den could not keep Daniel from his daily prayers, nor could the fiery furnace induce

Shadrach and his companions to fall down before the idol which Nebuchadnezzar set up. Young men who have firm principles will eschew pleasure, defy pain, and brave even the lions' den and the heated fiery furnace rather than be found untrue to God. Mark the character of Joseph. Virtue was severely tested, but its triumph was complete. At every point the noble youth endured the test. The same lofty, unbending principle appeared at every trial. The Lord was with him, and His word was law. Such firmness and untarnished principle shines brightest in contrast with the feebleness and inefficiency of the youth of this age." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 43.

7. What possibility did they nevertheless have to consider? What decisive stand did they take despite the terrible threat? Daniel 3:18.

"From the history of their fathers they had learned that disobedience to God results in dishonor, disaster, and death;..." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 508.

"Their answer was both honest and decisive. 'We are not careful,' said they, 'to answer thee in this matter.' That is, you need not grant us the favor of another trial; our minds are made up. We can answer as well now as at any future time; and our answer is, We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Our God can deliver if He so desires; but if not, we shall not complain. We know His will, and we shall render Him unconditional obedience." —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 73.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *Messages to Young People*, pp. 27, 28.

"In the history of Joseph, Daniel, and his fellows we see how the golden chain of truth may bind the youth to the throne of God. They could not be tempted to turn aside from their course of integrity. They valued the favor of God far above the favor and praise of princes, and God loved them, and spread His shield over them. Because of their faithful integrity, because of their determination to honor God above every human power, the Lord signally honored them before men. They were honored by the Lord God of hosts, whose power is over all the works of His hand in heaven above and the earth beneath. These youth were not ashamed to display their true colors. Even in the court of the king, in their words, their habits, their practices, they confessed their faith in the Lord God of heaven. They refused to bow to any earthly mandate that detracted from the honor of God. They had strength from heaven to confess their allegiance to God." —*My Life Today*, p. 120.

Missionary Report from Sudan

To be read on Sabbath, March 26, 2011

The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on April 2, 2011

“Christ calls upon us to labor patiently and perseveringly for the thousands perishing in their sins, scattered in all lands, like wrecks on a desert shore. Those who share in Christ’s glory must share also in His ministry, helping the weak, the wretched, and the despondent.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 31

“Every believer should be wholehearted in his attachment to the church. Its prosperity should be his first interest, and unless he feels under sacred obligations to make his connection with the church a benefit to it in preference to himself, it can do far better without him. It is in the power of all to do something for the cause of God. There are those who spend a large amount for needless luxuries; they gratify their appetites, but feel it a great tax to contribute means to sustain the church.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 18.

Praise be to God that the message of Reformation has entered Sudan, the largest country in Africa, located in the northeast and sharing borders with Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the Red Sea on the east, the Central African Republic and Chad on the west, Egypt and Libya on the north, and Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo on the south. The country covers an area of 2,505,800 square kilometers (967,530 square miles), with a population of approximately 41,000,000 people.

Economically, the country is poor, although it has good reserves of natural resources, such as crude oil and minerals. The country has suffered many civil wars, which have severely crippled the economy and society. For 21 years there was civil war in South Sudan, which claimed more than 1.5 million lives. Although a peace agreement was signed in 2005, there is still a great deal of tension there. Currently there is an ongoing war in the Darfur region of western Sudan which has claimed more than 200,000



lives. This greatly hinders missionary activity. Another hindrance is the Islamic religion; more than 70% of the population are Muslim, while Christians make up just 15%, mostly in the south. Pagan or traditional religions also claim about 15% of the population. Generally speaking, Sudan is a strictly Muslim country, so there is no freedom of worship for Christians. International pressure has helped bring about at least a measure of tolerance, so there is not as much torture of Christians as there was previously.

South Sudan has been granted an interim self government under the peace agreement between the Christians who dominate South Sudan and the federal government which is dominated by Muslims. At least for now, missionary activities can be carried out freely. We praise God that our missionaries are able to use this opportunity. The Arabic language is dominant throughout Sudan; in Muslim mosques, Christian churches, and in business offices, that is the official language. The people use Bibles in the Arabic language. English and other local languages are also used in communication.

Seventh-day Adventists first presented the third angel's message in Sudan in the early 1970s, beginning in South Sudan. The pioneer SDA pastor who contributed much in establishing the SDA Church in South Sudan has become the first person to welcome the Reformation message in Sudan. His name is Nathana Bathuel.

Early in July 2009 a man contacted the General Conference, claiming that he was a member of the Reform Movement in Uganda and had been doing business in South Sudan. He said he wanted to help establish the work of Reformation in Sudan. The General Conference arranged with Pastor Sevith Moyo from BAMI College in Nairobi to meet up with this man and travel with him according to his request. However, when the travel arrangements were completed in September 2009 and the day came when they were supposed to travel, the man did not come and was not heard from again. Brother Moyo had to make quick arrangements to take Brother Wilberforce Kariisa from Uganda to accompany him to Juba in South Sudan.

After being there a week, the brethren made some important contacts, including Pastor Bathuel, Brother Jacob Gore, and others. In December 2009 Brother Moyo and I made a second visit to Juba to answer a call from those who were interested in learning more. A few days before we arrived, some other people visited them and made false allegations against us, causing some to become discouraged and drew back. But we praise God that among those who welcomed us were Pastor Bathuel and Brother Gore. We did our best to encourage them to stand firm for God with this prophesied Reform Movement. Now we need to send a permanent missionary worker to give a strong foundation to the work of God.

Plans include registering the church, obtaining a piece of land, and establishing a central office and chapel in Juba, the capital city of South Sudan. Houses of worship are also needed in other places to relieve the believers from the harassment of government authorities who want to see the people in every religious organization meeting in an official house of worship. Your generous gifts this coming Sabbath will be used for these purposes to the honor and glory of God. May God bless you richly as you set your mind to serve God through your financial blessings.

—Parmenas Shirima and Sevith Moyo,
BAMI College, Nairobi, Kenya

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the First Half 2011

*Heavenly Messages
in the Book of Daniel*

Second Quarter

**The Special Sabbath School Offering
is dedicated to Sudan**

*Remember to give your offering as an expression
of love and gratitude.*

14

Sabbath, April 2, 2011

A Wonderful Revelation of Divine Power

“... Through faith ... quenched the violence of fire....” Hebrews 11:33, 34.

- 1. What did the enraged monarch command? Who was ordered to cast the servants of the Almighty into the furnace? Daniel 3:19-21.**

“The king’s wrath knew no bounds. ‘Full of fury,’ ‘the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,’ representatives of a despised and captive race. Directing that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than its wont, he commanded the mighty men of his army to bind the worshipers of Israel’s God, preparatory to summary execution.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 508.

“Daniel and his fellow-companions ... and many others were witnesses for God in their captivity. The Lord scattered them among the kingdoms of the earth that their light might shine brightly amid the black darkness of heathenism and idolatry. To Daniel God revealed the light of His purposes, which had been hidden for many generations. He chose that Daniel should see in vision the light of His truth, and reflect this light on the proud kingdom of Babylon. On the despot king was permitted to flash light from the throne of God. Nebuchadnezzar was shown that the God of heaven was ruler over all the monarchs and kings of earth. His name was to go forth as the God over all gods. God desired Nebuchadnezzar to understand that the rulers of earthly kingdoms had a ruler in the heavens. God’s faithfulness in rescuing the three captives from the flames and vindicating their course of action showed His wonderful power.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1169.

- 2. What happened to the men who carried out this command? What suddenly caused Nebuchadnezzar’s face to turn pale? Daniel 3:22-25, first part.**

“But the Lord did not forget His own. As His witnesses were cast into the furnace, the Saviour revealed Himself to them in person, and together they walked in the midst of the fire. In the presence of the Lord of heat and cold, the flames lost their power to consume.

“From his royal seat the king looked on, expecting to see the men who had defied him utterly destroyed. But his feelings of triumph suddenly changed. The nobles standing near saw his face grow pale as he started from the throne and looked intently into the glowing flames. In alarm the king, turning to his lords, asked, ‘Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?’...” –*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 508, 509.

PROTECTED AND RESCUED

3. What did the king say about the fourth Man in the fire? What did the monarch do? Daniel 3:25, last part, 26.

“How did that heathen king know what the Son of God was like? The Hebrew captives filling positions of trust in Babylon had in life and character represented before him the truth. When asked for a reason of their faith, they had given it without hesitation. Plainly and simply they had presented the principles of righteousness, thus teaching those around them of the God whom they worshiped. They had told of Christ, the Redeemer to come; and in the form of the fourth in the midst of the fire the king recognized the Son of God.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 509.

4. What did the government officials discover about the young men? What impression did this make on the ruler? What confession did he make? Daniel 3:27, 28.

“Forgotten was the great golden image, set up with such pomp. In the presence of the living God, men feared and trembled.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 510.

“John was cast into a caldron of boiling oil; but the Lord preserved the life of His faithful servant, even as He preserved the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 570.

RECOGNITION OF THE TRUE GOD

5. What decree did Nebuchadnezzar issue to the then-known world? How did the Lord reward His servants’ steadfastness? Daniel 3:29, 30.

“It was right for the king to make public confession, and to seek to exalt the God of heaven above all other gods; but in endeavoring to force his subjects to make a similar confession of faith and to show similar reverence, Nebuchadnezzar was exceeding his right as a temporal sovereign. He had no more right, either civil or moral, to threaten men with death for not worshipping God, than he had to make the

decree consigning to the flames all who refused to worship the golden image. God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 510, 511.

6. According to the testimony of the Spirit of prophecy, what happened because of these young men’s faithfulness? What thought should be uppermost in our minds? 1 Samuel 14:6, last part.

“The tidings of their wonderful deliverance were carried to many countries by the representatives of the different nations that had been invited by Nebuchadnezzar to the dedication. Through the faithfulness of His children, God was glorified in all the earth.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 512.

“Great light shone forth from Daniel and his companions. Glorious things were spoken of Zion, the city of the Lord. Thus the Lord designs that spiritual light shall shine from His faithful watchmen in these last days. If the saints in the Old Testament bore such a decided testimony of loyalty, how should God’s people today, having the accumulated light of centuries, shine forth, when the prophecies of the Old Testament shed their veiled glory into the future.”—(*Letter 32*, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1169.

AN EXAMPLE FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

7. In the last days, what similar circumstances will confront God’s people? Revelation 13:14, 15.

“Important are the lessons to be learned from the experience of the Hebrew youth on the plain of Dura. In this our day, many of God’s servants, though innocent of wrong-doing, will be given over to suffer humiliation and abuse at the hands of those who, inspired by Satan, are filled with envy and religious bigotry. Especially will the wrath of men be aroused against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; and at last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death....

“As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth’s history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 512, 513.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 503-513.
- *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1169, 1170.

Nebuchadnezzar's Pride and Humiliation

"... Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke 14:11.

ANOTHER PROPHETIC DREAM

1. What explanation did King Nebuchadnezzar give for writing his testimony? What had he experienced? Daniel 4:1-5.

"Nebuchadnezzar's noble conception of God's purpose concerning the nations was lost sight of later in his experience; yet when his proud spirit was humbled before the multitude on the plain of Dura, he once more had acknowledged that God's kingdom is 'an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation...."

"It is not surprising that the successful monarch, so ambitious and so proud-spirited, should be tempted to turn aside from the path of humility, which alone leads to true greatness...."

"In mercy God gave the king another dream, to warn him of his peril, and of the snare that had been laid for his ruin." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 514, 515.

2. Who were called to explain the dream? Who alone could explain it? Daniel 4:6-9.

"Greatly troubled by the dream, which was evidently a prediction of adversity, the king repeated it to 'the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers;' but although the dream was very explicit, none of the wise men could interpret it.

"Once more in this idolatrous nation, testimony was to be borne to the fact that only those who love and fear God can understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. The king in his perplexity sent for his servant Daniel, a man esteemed for his integrity and constancy and for his unrivaled wisdom." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 516.

A PERSONAL APPLICATION

3. What did the Lord reveal to the king in this second dream? What impression did the dream told to him by Nebuchadnezzar make upon Daniel? Daniel 4:10-19.

“A still greater humiliation than that narrated in the second chapter was brought upon the magicians. At that time they boasted that if they only knew the dream they could make known the interpretation. Upon this occasion Nebuchadnezzar distinctly remembered the dream and related it to them, but his magicians ignominiously failed him again. They could not make known the interpretation, and once again the king turned to the prophet of God.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 81.

“To Daniel the meaning of the dream was plain, and its significance startled him....

“The prophet realized that upon him God had laid the solemn duty of revealing to Nebuchadnezzar the judgment that was about to fall upon him because of his pride and arrogance.... And although its dreadful import had made him hesitate in dumb amazement, yet he must state the truth, whatever the consequences to himself.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 517.

4. How did Daniel explain the dream’s meaning? What urgent counsel did he extend to the king? Daniel 4:20-27.

“Nebuchadnezzar had given a minute statement of his dream, and as soon as Daniel informed him that the dream applied to him, it was evident that the king had pronounced his own sentence. The interpretation which follows is so plain that it needs no explanation. The threatened judgments were conditional. They were to teach the king ‘that the Heavens do rule,’ the word ‘heavens’ here being put for God, the ruler of the heavens. Hence Daniel took occasion to give the king counsel in view of the threatened judgement. But he did not denounce him in a harsh and censorious spirit. Kindness and persuasion were the weapons he chose to wield: ‘Let my counsel be acceptable unto thee.’” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 83, 84.

“Having faithfully interpreted the dream, Daniel urged the proud monarch to repent and turn to God, that by right doing he might avert the threatened calamity.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 518.

A FORGOTTEN WARNING

5. Did the monarch heed the advice? Not long afterward, what did he exclaim in his pride? Daniel 4:28-30; 5:19, 20.

“For a time the impression of the warning and the counsel of the prophet was strong upon Nebuchadnezzar; but the heart that is not transformed by the grace of God soon loses the impressions of the Holy Spirit. Self-indulgence and ambition had not yet been eradicated from the king’s heart, and later on these traits reappeared. Notwithstanding the instruction so graciously given him, and the warnings of past experience, Nebuchadnezzar again allowed himself to be controlled by a spirit of jealousy against the kingdoms that were to follow. His rule, which heretofore had been to a great degree just and merciful, became oppressive. Hardening his heart, he used his God-given talents for self-glorification, exalting himself above the God who had given him life and power.

“For months the judgment of God lingered. But instead of being led to repentance by this forbearance, the king indulged his pride until he lost confidence in the interpretation of the dream, and jested at his former fears.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 519.

A LESSON FOR ALL TIME

6. What happened even before the king had finished his boasting? How exactly were the prophetic words fulfilled? Daniel 4:31-33.

“Man may have brilliant intellect; he may be rich in the possession of natural endowments. But these are all given him by God, his Maker. God can remove the gift of reason, and in a moment man will become as Nebuchadnezzar, degraded to the level of the beasts of the field. This God does because man acts as though his wisdom and power had been gotten independently of Him.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 297.

“The time had come for Nebuchadnezzar’s humiliation. A voice from heaven again announced the threatened judgement, and divine providence proceeded immediately to execute it. His reason departed. No longer the pomp and glory of his great city charmed him. God with a touch of His finger took away his capability to appreciate and enjoy it. He forsook the dwellings of men, and sought a home and companionship among the beasts of the field.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 85.

7. When could the Lord help the king again? What did Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge after his humiliation? Daniel 4:34-37.

“For seven years Nebuchadnezzar was an astonishment to all his subjects; for seven years he was humbled before all the world. Then his reason was restored and looking up in humility to the God of heaven, he recognized the divine hand in his chastisement....

“God’s purpose that the greatest kingdom in the world should show forth His praise, was now fulfilled. This public proclamation, in which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the mercy and goodness and authority of God, was the last act of his life recorded in sacred history.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 520, 521.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1170.
- *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 129, 130.
- *Prophets and Kings*, p. 514.

Belshazzar's Sacrilege

"... If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin ... to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him...." Matthew 24:48-50.

FORGETTING ONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

1. What did the last king of Babylon do? What do wine and strong drink cause? Daniel 5:1; Proverbs 20:1.

"To us the warning is given, 'All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' Mark the influence of their extremes and fanaticism in the service of the great master worker, Satan. As soon as the wicked one had the people under his control, there were exhibitions of a satanic character. The people ate and drank without a thought of God and His mercy, without a thought of the necessity of resisting the devil, who was leading them on to the most shameful deeds. The same spirit was manifested as at the sacrilegious feast of Belshazzar. There was glee and dancing, hilarity and singing, carried to an infatuation that beguiled the senses; then the indulgence in inordinate, lustful affections—all this mingled in that disgraceful scene. God had been dishonored; His people had become a shame in the sight of the heathen. Judgments were about to fall on that infatuated, besotted multitude. Yet God in His mercy gave them opportunity to forsake their sins."—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 101, 102.

2. What warning is given to us? Proverbs 23:29-35.

"Let every soul remember that he is under sacred obligations to God to do his best for his fellow creatures. How careful should everyone be not to create a desire for stimulants. By advising friends and neighbors to take brandy for the sake of their health, they are in danger of becoming agents for the destruction of their friends. Many incidents have come to my attention in which through some simple advice, men and women have become the slaves of the drink habit....

"With the awful results of indulgence in intoxicating drink before us, how is it that any man or woman who claims to believe in the word of God, can venture to touch, taste, or handle wine or strong drink? Such a practice is certainly out of harmony with their professed faith."—*Temperance*, p. 42.

3. What command did the inebriated King Belshazzar give? How did the uninvited Guest reveal His presence? Daniel 5:2-6.

“Little did Belshazzar think that there was a heavenly Witness to his idolatrous revelry; that a divine Watcher, unrecognized, looked upon the scene of profanation,...” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 527.

“The inhabitants of the Noachian world were destroyed because they were corrupted through the indulgence of perverted appetite. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed through the gratification of unnatural appetite, which so benumbed the intellect that they could not discern the difference between the sacred claims of God and the clamor of appetite. The latter enslaved them, and they became so ferocious and bold in their detestable abominations that God would not tolerate them upon the earth. God ascribes the wickedness of Babylon to her gluttony and drunkenness.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 162.

4. What experience did the king make? Who remembered someone who could help? Daniel 5:7-12.

“Terror seized the king, for his conscience accused him. Although he could not read the writing, he knew it was no message of peace and blessing that was traced in glittering characters upon his palace wall. The description the prophet gives of the effect of the king’s fear cannot be excelled in any particular. The king’s countenance was changed, his heart failed him, pain seized upon him, and so violent was his trembling that his knees smote one against another. He forgot his boasting and revelry. He forgot his dignity. And he cried aloud for his astrologers and soothsayers to solve the meaning of the mysterious inscription.” –*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 90.

“But of no avail was his appeal to his trusted advisers, with offers of rich awards. Heavenly wisdom cannot be bought or sold. ‘All the king’s wise men ... could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.’ They were no more able to read the mysterious characters than had been the wise men of a former generation to interpret the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 527.

INTERPRETING THE SENTENCE

5. What promise was Daniel given? What impression did the promise of great gifts and distinction make upon him? Daniel 5:13-17.

“Before that terror-stricken throng, Daniel, unmoved by the promises of the king, stood in the quiet dignity of a servant of the Most High, not to speak words of flattery, but to interpret a message of doom.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 529.

6. How did Daniel begin the explanation of the handwriting? What was the message from heaven? Daniel 5:18-28.

“The prophet first reminded Belshazzar of matters with which he was familiar, but which had not taught him the lesson of humility that might have saved him. He spoke of Nebuchadnezzar’s sin and fall, and of the Lord’s dealings with him—the dominion and glory bestowed upon him, the divine judgments for his pride, and his subsequent acknowledgment of the power and mercy of the God of Israel; and then in bold and emphatic words he rebuked Belshazzar for his great wickedness. He held the king’s sin up before him, showing him the lessons he might have learned but did not. Belshazzar had not read aright the experience of his grandfather, nor heeded the warning of events so significant to himself. The opportunity of knowing and obeying the true God had been given him, but had not been taken to heart,...” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 529.

RAPID EXECUTION OF THE SENTENCE

7. What happened that night? What had the prophet Jeremiah foretold more than one hundred years before? Daniel 5:29-31; Jeremiah 51:9.

“Even while he and his nobles were drinking from the sacred vessels of Jehovah and praising their gods of silver and gold, the Medes and the Persians, having turned the Euphrates out of its channel, were marching into the heart of the unguarded city.... Their triumphant shouts could be heard above the despairing cries of the astonished revelers.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 531.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- Exodus 32.
- Isaiah 22:13, 14.
- *The Adventist Home*, pp. 59, 60.

In the Lions' Den

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell." Psalm 27:1, 2.

ENVIOUS PEERS

1. **How did King Darius change the government after conquering Babylon? What change did he desire to make? Why? Daniel 5:31; 6:1-3.**

"What an impression was produced upon Darius by the conduct of Daniel! Daniel lived a pure and holy life. God was first with him. Whenever real Christianity reigns in the heart, it will be revealed in the character. All will take knowledge of such, that they have been with Jesus. The undivided affections must be given to God." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 443.

"Daniel was a statesman; heavy responsibilities rested upon him; yet three times a day he sought God, and the Lord gave him the Holy Spirit." —*Counsels on Health*, p. 423.

2. **What did the government officials realize when they wanted to go against Daniel and hinder the king's plan? What is envy capable of? Daniel 6:4-7.**

"The honors bestowed upon Daniel excited the jealousy of the leading men of the kingdom, and they sought for occasion of complaint against him. But they could find none,...

"Daniel's blameless conduct excited still further the jealousy of his enemies." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 539.

"Envy is one of the most satanic traits that can exist in the human heart, and it is one of the most baleful in its effect." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 385.

SPYING AND ACCUSATION

3. **What did the unsuspecting king think of the proposed law? Did Daniel change his habits in view of this new danger? Daniel 6:8-10.**

“In the conspiracy thus formed, Satan had played an important part. The prophet was high in command in the kingdom, and evil angels feared that his influence would weaken their control over its rulers. It was these satanic agencies who had stirred the princes to envy and jealousy; it was they who had inspired the plan for Daniel’s destruction; and the princes, yielding themselves as instruments of evil, carried it into effect....

“He [Daniel] did not change his course in a single particular. Why should he cease to pray now, when he most ‘heeded to pray?... Before those who were plotting his ruin, he would not allow it even to appear that his connection-with Heaven was severed.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 540-542.

4. What did the king do after he realized for whom the trap was laid? How did the princes nullify the king’s attempts to save Daniel? Daniel 6:11-15.

“Daniel’s position was not an enviable one. He stood at the head of a dishonest, prevaricating, godless cabinet, whose members watched him with keen, jealous eyes, to find some flaw in his conduct. They kept spies on his track, to see if they could not in this way find something against him. Satan suggested to these men a plan whereby they might get rid of Daniel. Use his religion as a means of condemning him, the enemy said.” —(*The Youth’s Instructor*, November 1, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1171.

IMMUTABILITY OF THE DIVINE LAW

5. Whose law is truly unchangeable? What command did Darius finally give? In whom did he have full confidence? Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17; Daniel 6:16, 17.

“Had it been possible for the law to be changed or set aside; then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin. The death of Christ, so far from abolishing the law, proves it immutable.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 466.

“In all ages God’s appointed witnesses have exposed themselves to reproach and persecution for the truth’s sake. Joseph was maligned and persecuted because he preserved his virtue and integrity. David, the chosen messenger of God, was hunted like a beast of prey by his enemies. Daniel was cast into a den of lions because he was true to his allegiance to heaven.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 575.

6. Was the king and Daniel’s trust rewarded? What happened to the cunning accusers? Daniel 6:18-24.

“God did not prevent Daniel’s enemies from casting him into the lions’ den; He permitted evil angels and wicked men thus far to accomplish their purpose; but it was

that He might make the deliverance of His servant more marked, and the defeat of the enemies of truth and righteousness more complete. ‘Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee’ (Psalm 76:10), the psalmist has testified. Through the courage of this one man who chose to follow right rather than policy, Satan was to be defeated, and the name of God was to be exalted and honoured.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 543.

7. What wonderful message did the king send out to his entire kingdom after this experience? What did Daniel experience? Daniel 6:25-28.

“Study the history of Joseph and of Daniel. The Lord did not prevent the plottings of men who sought to do them harm; but He caused all these devices to work for good to His servants who amidst trial and conflict preserved their faith and loyalty....

“We need not keep our own record of trials and difficulties, griefs, and sorrows. All these things are written in the books, and heaven will take care of them. While we are counting up the disagreeable things, many things that are pleasant to reflect upon are passing from memory, such as the merciful kindness of God surrounding us every moment and the love over which angels marvel, that God gave His Son to die for us. If as workers for Christ you feel that you have had greater cares and trials than have fallen to the lot of others, remember that for you there is a peace unknown to those who shun these burdens. There is comfort and joy in the service of Christ. Let the world see that life with Him is no failure.” –*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 487, 488.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- Proverbs 26:27.
- Ecclesiastes 10:8.
- *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 90, 487.

Another Power

“... That horn ... had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.” Daniel 7:20.

FOUR SYMBOLIC BEASTS

1. **What did Daniel experience in the first year of King Belshazzar’s reign? What did he see in vision? Daniel 7:1-3.**

2. **What do wind and waters signify in the Bible’s symbolic language? What did the four beasts represent? Jeremiah 25:32, 33; Revelation 17:15; Daniel 7:17.**

“Seas, or waters, when used as a Bible symbol, represent peoples, and nations, and tongues. Said the angel to the prophet John, ‘The waters which thou sawest ... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.’ Revelation 17:15.

“The definition of the symbol of the four beasts is given to Daniel before the close of the vision: ‘These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth.’ Verse 17. With this explanation of the symbols, the field of the vision is definitely opened before us.” *—The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 106.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE BEASTS

3. **What kingdom was represented by the first beast? Looking at the second beast, what did the three ribs signify? Daniel 7:4, 5.**

“In the vision of Daniel 7, the first beast seen by the prophet was a lion. For the use of the lion as a symbol, read Jeremiah 4:7; 50:17, 43, 44. The lion as first seen in the vision before us had eagle’s wings. The symbolic use of wings is impressively described in Habakkuk 1:6-8, where it is said that the Chaldeans should ‘fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.’

“From these symbols we may easily deduce that Babylon was a kingdom of great strength, and that under Nebuchadnezzar its conquests were extended with great rapidity....

“As in the image of Daniel 2, so in this series of symbols a marked deterioration is noticed as we descend from one kingdom to another. The silver of the breast and

arms is inferior to the gold of the head. The bear is inferior to the lion. Medo-Persia fell short of Babylon in wealth, magnificence, and brilliance. The bear raised itself up on one side. The kingdom was composed of two nationalities, the Medes and the Persians.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 107, 108.

4. What did the four wings and four heads of the third beast denote? What did the fourth beast look like, and how many horns did it have? Daniel 7:6, 7.

“The third kingdom, Grecia, is here represented by the symbol of a leopard. If wings upon the lion signified rapidity of conquest, they would signify the same here. The leopard itself is a swift-footed beast, but this was not sufficient to represent the career of the nation here symbolized. It must have wings in addition. Two wings, the number the lion had, were not sufficient; the leopard must have four. This would denote unprecedented celerity of movement, which we find to be a historical fact in the Grecian kingdom.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 108.

THE FOURTH BEAST AND THE LITTLE HORN

5. What occurred to the fourth beast? What was of special interest to Daniel? What explanation did the heavenly messenger give of the fourth kingdom? Daniel 7:8, 19, 23.

“Inspiration finds no beast in nature to symbolize the power here illustrated. No addition of hoofs, heads, horns, wings, scales, teeth, or nails to any beast found in nature will answer. This power is diverse from all the others, and the symbol is wholly different from anything found in the animal kingdom.

“The foundation for a volume is laid in verse 7, but for lack of space we are compelled to treat it briefly here. This beast corresponds to the fourth division of the great image—the legs of iron. In the comment on Daniel 2:40 are given some reasons for believing this power to be Rome.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 110.

“In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’... This prophecy, which is nearly identical with the description of the little horn of Daniel 7, unquestionably points to the papacy.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 439.

A PEACEFUL KINGDOM OF LOVE

6. What great event took place during the time of the fourth kingdom? Luke 2:1; Galatians 4:4.

“The germ in the seed grows by the unfolding of the life-principle which God has implanted. Its development depends upon no human power. So it is with the

kingdom of Christ. It is a new creation. Its principles of development are the opposite of those that rule the kingdoms of this world. Earthly governments prevail by physical force; they maintain their dominion by war; but the founder of the new kingdom is the Prince of Peace. The Holy Spirit represents worldly kingdoms under the symbol of fierce beasts of prey; but Christ is ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29. In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 77.

“To Daniel was given a vision of fierce beasts, representing the powers of the earth. But the ensign of the Messiah’s kingdom is a lamb. While earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power, Christ is to banish every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion. His kingdom was to be established to uplift and ennoble fallen humanity.” —(*Letter 32*, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1171.

7. What did Daniel want to know more about? What was the explanation? Daniel 7:20, 24, first part.

“... Enough has already been said respecting the fourth beast (Rome) and the ten horns, or ten kingdoms, which arose out of this power. The little horn now more particularly demands attention. As stated in comments on verse 8, we find the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning this horn in the rise and work of the papacy. It is a matter of both interest and importance, therefore, to inquire into the causes which resulted in the development of this arrogant power.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 119.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *The Great Controversy*, p. 439.
- *Prophets and Kings*, p. 547.

The Little Horn

“... There came up among them another little horn,... and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” Daniel 7:8.

A HORN WITH EYES AND A MOUTH

1. **Since the ten horns were all political powers, what power alone could be described as ‘diverse from the first’? How powerful was the papal power to become? Daniel 7:24, 20, last part.**

“Popery had become the world’s despot. Kings and emperors bowed to the decrees of the Roman pontiff. The destinies of men, both for time and for eternity, seemed under his control. For hundreds of years the doctrines of Rome had been extensively and implicitly received, its rites reverently performed, its festivals generally observed. Its clergy were honored and liberally sustained. Never since has the Roman Church attained to greater dignity, magnificence, or power....

“A striking illustration of the tyrannical character of this advocate of infallibility was given in his treatment of the German emperor, Henry IV. For presuming to disregard the pope’s authority, this monarch was declared to be excommunicated and dethroned.... In company with his wife and a faithful servant he crossed the Alps in midwinter, that he might humble himself before the pope. Upon reaching the castle whither Gregory had withdrawn, he was conducted, without his guard into an outer court, and there, in the severe cold of winter, with uncovered head and naked feet, and in a miserable dress, he awaited the pope’s permission to come into his presence. Not until he had continued three days fasting and making confession, did the pontiff condescend to grant him pardon.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 60, 57, 58.

2. **What happened to the three horns that were in its way? What do the words “eyes like the eyes of man” and “mouth” indicate? Daniel 7:20, 8.**

“Another step in papal assumption was taken, when, in the eleventh century, Pope Gregory VII proclaimed the perfection of the Roman Church. Among the propositions which he put forth was one declaring that the church had never erred, nor would it ever err, according to the Scriptures.... The proud pontiff also claimed the power to depose emperors, and declared that no sentence which he pronounced could be reversed by anyone, but that it was his prerogative to reverse the decisions of all others.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 57.

- 3. Against whom would this power strive and initially conquer? Of what do his blasphemies consist? Daniel 7:21, 25, first part; Matthew 23:8, 9; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 5:23.**

“Century after century the blood of the saints had been shed. While the Waldenses laid down their lives, upon the mountains of Piedmont ‘for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,’ similar witness to the truth had been borne by their brethren, the Albigenses of France. In the days of the Reformation its disciples had been put to death with horrible tortures.... The brave Huguenots, battling for those rights which the human heart holds most sacred, had poured out their blood on many a hard-fought field. The Protestants were counted as outlaws, a price was set upon their heads, and they were hunted down like wild beasts....

“It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the Pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world. More than this, the pope has been given the very titles of Deity. He has been styled ‘Lord God the Pope,’ and has been declared infallible. He demands the homage of all men.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 271, 50.

ATTEMPTING TO CHANGE GOD’S LAW

- 4. What did Jesus say about God’s law? Contrary to Jesus’ teaching, what did prophecy state that the papacy would attempt to do? Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17; Daniel 7:25, middle part.**

“The papacy has attempted to change the law of God. The second commandment, forbidding image worship, has been dropped from the law, and the fourth commandment has been so changed as to authorize the observance of the first instead of the seventh day as the Sabbath.... An intentional, deliberate change is presented: ‘He shall think to change the times and the law.’ The change in the fourth commandment exactly fulfills the prophecy.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 446.

A LONG PERIOD OF SUPREMACY

- 5. According to what key is prophetic time calculated? For how long was the papacy to exercise its persecuting power? Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Daniel 7:25, last part; Revelation 13:5; 12:6.**

“The forty and two months are the same as the ‘time and times and the dividing of time,’ three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7—the time during which the papal power was to oppress God’s people....

“The periods here mentioned—‘forty and two months,’ and ‘a thousand two hundred and threescore days’—are the same, alike representing the time in which the church of Christ was to suffer oppression from Rome. The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in A.D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798. At that time

a French army entered Rome and made the pope a prisoner, and he died in exile. Though a new pope was soon afterward elected, the papal hierarchy has never since been able to wield the power which it before possessed.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 439, 266.

6. What did God in mercy do for His people? How does the Lord comfort His people today? Daniel 11:34; Matthew 24:21, 22; Daniel 7:9-14, 22.

“The persecution of the church did not continue throughout the entire period of the 1260 years. God in mercy to His people cut short the time of their fiery trial. In foretelling the ‘great tribulation’ to befall the church, the Saviour said: ‘Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.’ Matthew 24:22. Through the influence of the Reformation the persecution was brought to an end prior to 1798.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 266, 267.

TIME OF THE JUDGMENT

7. To what did the Lord direct the prophet’s attention? Daniel 7:26, 27.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“When amid the storms of the migration of nations the empire fell to ruins, the nations looked up in respect to the Roman bishop’s throne, which alone stood upright in the midst of all the destruction.” –Emil Staub, A. Zimmermann, *Bilder aus der Kirchengeschichte (Pictures from Church History)*, p. 43.

“The first pastors or bishops of Rome enjoyed a respect proportionate to the rank of the city in which they resided. For the first few centuries of the Christian Era, Rome was the largest, richest, and most powerful city in the world. It was the seat of empire, the capital of the nations. ‘All the inhabitants of the earth belong to her,’ said Julian; and Claudian declared her to be the ‘fountain of laws.’ ‘If Rome is the queen of cities, why should not her pastor be the king of bishops?’ was the reasoning these Roman pastors put forth. ‘Why should not the Roman Church be the mother of Christendom? Why should not all nations be her children, and her authority their sovereign law? It was easy,’ says D’Aubigne, from whom we quote these words, ‘for the ambitious heart of man to reason thus. Ambitious Rome did so’ (from Jean Henri Merle d’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. I, p. 8).” –*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 119, 120.

Arius, the Presbyterian from Alexandria, “taught that Christ was not an equal being with God, but was merely His first creation.” –Emil Staub, A. Zimmermann, *Bilder aus der Kirchengeschichte (Pictures from Church History)*, p. 30.

The following claims are made for the papacy: (1) “The pope is the Vicar of God and Christ upon earth.” (2) “As such he is lord of all the earth, and all countries belong to him. The kings and princes borrow them from him, and he can, if they do not obey him, dethrone them and give their land to a prince more obedient.” –*Textbook of World History*, by Prof. F. Noesselt, p. 81.

A Struggle for Power

“... I lifted up mine eyes, and, ... behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: ... And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west....: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.... And when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones.... And out of one of them came forth a little horn, ...” Daniel 8:3, 5, 8, 9.

1. **What happened two years after Daniel received the vision described in chapter 7? What did the prophet see first? What power did this represent? Daniel 8:1-4, 20.**

“In verse 20 an interpretation of this symbol is given in plain language: ‘The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.’ We have only therefore to consider how well the power answers to the symbol in question. The two horns represented the two nationalities of which the empire was composed. The higher came up last. This symbolized Persia, which at first was simply an ally of the Medes, but later came to be the leading division of the empire. The directions in which the ram pushed denote the directions in which the Medes and Persians carried their conquests.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 150.

“The light that Daniel received direct from God was given especially for these last days. The visions he saw by the banks of the Ulai and the Hiddekel, the great rivers of Shinar, are now in process of fulfillment, and all the events foretold will soon have come to pass.” —(*Letter 57*, 1896) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1166.

2. **What did the second beast look like, and what did it do? What power is represented by this symbol, and what was the name of its first king? Daniel 8:5-7, 21.**

“The ‘goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth.’ That is, Greece lay west of Persia and attacked from that direction. The Greek army swept everything on the face of the earth before it.

“The goat ‘touched not the ground.’ Such was the marvelous celerity of his movements that he seemed to fly from point to point with the swiftness of the wind. The same characteristic of speed is indicated by the four wings of the leopard in the vision of Daniel 7, representing the same nation.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 152.

3. What happened to this horn symbolically and thus to this great empire in reality? Daniel 8:8, 22.

“The ram, Medo-Persia, became ‘great;’ the goat, Greece, became ‘very great.’ ‘When he was strong, the great horn was broken.’ Human foresight and speculation would have said, When he becomes weak, his kingdom torn by rebellion, or weakened by luxury, then the horn will be broken, and the kingdom shattered. But Daniel saw it broken in the prime of its strength, at the height of its power, when every beholder would have exclaimed, Surely, the kingdom is established, and nothing can overthrow it. Thus it is often with the wicked. The horn of their strength is broken when they think they stand most firm....

“Four notable horns were to come up toward the four winds of heaven in place of the great horn that was broken. These were Cassander, who had Greece and the neighboring countries; Lysimachus, who had Asia Minor; Seleucus, who had Syria and Babylon, and from whom came the line of kings known as the ‘Seleucidae,’ so famous in history; and Ptolemy, son of Lagus, who had Egypt, and from whom sprang the ‘Lagidae.’ These held dominion toward the four winds of heaven. Cassander had the western parts, Lysimachus the northern regions, Seleucus the eastern countries, and Ptolemy the southern portion of the empire. These four horns may therefore be named Macedonia, Thrace (which then included Asia Minor, and those parts lying on the Hellespont and the Bosphorus), Syria, and Egypt.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 153, 155.

4. What did Daniel see emerge from one of these horns, or states, and what was said about it? How early in history was this nation “of fierce countenance” prophesied, and what did it represent? Daniel 8:9, 23; Luke 2:1; Deuteronomy 28:49, 50.

“A third power is here introduced into the prophecy. In the explanation given to Daniel by the angel this symbol is not described as definitely as are Medo-Persia and Greece....

“It has been an easy matter to show that the little horn does not denote Antiochus Epiphanes. It will be as easy to show that it does denote Rome....

“The little horn waxed great toward the south. This was true of Rome....

“The little horn waxed great toward the east. This also was true of Rome.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 156, 158, 159.

5. Who was to feel the force of this power? Whom did the stars represent? Daniel 8:10; Revelation 12:4, first part; Daniel 12:3.

“The little horn ‘waxed great, even to [against, margin] the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground.’ Rome did this also. In this expression two figures are introduced, ‘the host’ and ‘the stars.’ When used in a symbolic sense concerning events taking place on earth, these figures refer almost always to the people of God and their leaders.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 159.

6. Even whom did pagan Rome attack? Who was this Prince? Daniel 8:11, first part; Matthew 27:11, 26.

“The little horn ‘magnified himself even to the Prince of the host.’ Rome alone did this. In the interpretation (verse 25) the little horn is said to ‘stand up against the Prince of princes.’ This is clearly an allusion to the crucifixion of our Lord under the jurisdiction of the Romans.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 159.

7. What else was to be destroyed by this power? Who spoke about the fate of Jerusalem and the temple? Daniel 8:11, last part; Luke 19:41-44.

“The little horn waxed great toward the pleasant land. So did Rome. Judea is called ‘the pleasant land’ in many scriptures. The Romans made it a province of their empire in 63 B.C., and eventually destroyed the city and the temple, and scattered the Jews throughout the earth.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 159.

“For nearly forty years after the doom of Jerusalem had been pronounced by Christ Himself, the Lord delayed His judgments upon the city and the nation. Wonderful was the long-suffering of God toward the rejectors of His gospel and the murderers of His Son....

“The longsuffering of God toward Jerusalem only confirmed the Jews in their stubborn impenitence. In their hatred and cruelty toward the disciples of Jesus they rejected the last offer of mercy. Then God withdrew His protection from them....” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 27, 28.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- Matthew 24:15-20.
- Mark 13:14-18.
- Luke 21:20-24.
- *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 149-159.

Rise of the Papacy

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first....” 1 Thessalonians 2:3.

APOSTASY

- 1. What change occurred in Rome in the fourth century A.D.? What else was cast down by this power, and in what way? 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4; Daniel 8:12, 25.**

“Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.

“This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of ‘the man of sin’ foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God....

“The Bible would exalt God and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it or to have it in their houses, and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions. Thus the pope came to be almost universally acknowledged as the vicegerent of God on earth, endowed with authority over church and state.

“Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the pope of Rome. Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins and for eternal salvation, the people looked to the pope, and to the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority. They were taught that the pope was their earthly mediator and that none could approach God except through him; and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 50, 51, 55.

- 2. Who helped the papacy become so powerful? What question did an angel ask after this symbol was described? Daniel 8:24, 13.**

“The archdeceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the Christian world under his banner and to exercise his power through his vicegerent, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ. Through half-converted pagans, ambitious prelates, and world-loving churchmen he accomplished his purpose.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 53.

3. What was the answer? Did Daniel understand everything about this? Daniel 8:14, 15.

“How long shall be the vision?” Both the question and the answer are placed upon record, which is prima facie evidence that this is a matter the church should understand. This view is further confirmed by the fact that the answer was addressed to Daniel, as the one whom it chiefly concerned, and for whose information it was given....

“We have already mentioned Daniel’s longing to understand these things. He sought for the meaning. Immediately there stood before the prophet one who had the appearance of a man. Daniel heard a man’s voice, that is, the voice of an angel as of a man speaking.”—*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 162, 187.

4. How did the Lord fulfill his desire? When did the angel return with another message? Daniel 8:16.

“It was Gabriel, the angel next in rank to the Son of God, who came with the divine message to Daniel. It was Gabriel, ‘His angel,’ whom Christ sent to open the future to the beloved John; and a blessing is pronounced on those who read and hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things written therein. Revelation 1:3.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 234.

“The commandment was given to make this man Daniel understand the vision. It was addressed to Gabriel, a name that signifies ‘the strength of God,’ or ‘man of God.’ He continues his instruction to Daniel in chapter 9. Centuries later this same angel was commissioned to announce the birth of John the Baptist to his father Zacharias, and that of the Messiah to the virgin Mary. Luke 1:26. To Zacharias, he introduced himself with these words: ‘I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.’ Luke 1:19.”—*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 187.

5. In what period of time does the vision of the 2,300 days belong? Daniel 8:17-19.

6. What impression did the presence of this high-ranking angel make upon Daniel? Was Gabriel able to carry out his commission to explain the vision completely? Daniel 8:18, 8:27.

“... The angel Gabriel, though commanded to make Daniel understand the vision, gave him only a partial explanation. As the terrible persecution to befall the church was unfolded to the prophet’s vision, physical strength gave way. He could endure no more, and the angel left him for a time.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 325.

7. How did William Miller fare when he studied the verse in Daniel 8:14?

“Miller accepted the generally received view that in the Christian age the earth is the sanctuary, and he therefore understood that the cleansing of the sanctuary foretold in Daniel 8:14 represented the purification of the earth by fire at the second coming of Christ. If, then, the correct starting point could be found for the 2300 days, he concluded that the time of the second advent could be readily ascertained....

“In the eighth chapter of Daniel he could find no clue to the starting point of the 2300 days;...” –*The Great Controversy*, 324, 325.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *Early Writings*, pp. 54-56.
- *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 375-379.

“During the year 330 Constantine moved his governmental headquarters from Rome to Byzantium (Constantinople).... This move was of far-reaching significance for the church. It facilitated the unhindered development of the papal power in Rome....” –*Großer katholischer Katechismus (Great Catholic Catechism)*, p. 243.

“We are told of King Clovis and the Franks that they joined the church in the fifth century: ‘It was important to note that the powerful Franks did not join the Arians, but generally acknowledged the confession, which was called the Catholic Confession for that reason. Because the Franks conquered gradually one German tribe after another, this meant at the same time the victory of the Catholic Church over the Arians.’” –Emil Staub, A. Zimmermann, *Bilder aus der Kirchengeschichte (Pictures from Church History)*, p. 44.

22

Sabbath, May 28, 2011

Response to a Humble Prayer

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16.

SEARCHING FOR UNDERSTANDING

- 1. What did Daniel see come to pass in fulfillment of the vision given in Chapter 8? With what thought was he preoccupied? Daniel 5:30, 31; 9:1, 2.**

“Daniel’s prayer had been offered ‘in the first year of Darius’ (verse 1), the Median monarch whose general, Cyrus, had wrested from Babylonia the scepter of universal rule. The reign of Darius was honored of God. To him was sent the angel Gabriel, ‘to confirm and to strengthen him.’ Daniel 11:1....

“The answer that was given, ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,’ filled him with perplexity. Earnestly he sought for the meaning of the vision. He could not understand the relation sustained by the seventy years’ captivity, as foretold through Jeremiah, to the twenty-three hundred years that in vision he heard the heavenly visitant declare would elapse before the cleansing of God’s sanctuary. The angel Gabriel gave him a partial interpretation; yet when the prophet heard the words, ‘The vision ... shall be for many days,’ he fainted away.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 556, 554.

2. How did he go about his search for more understanding? What did he recognize as the reason for what had happened to his people? Daniel 9:3-8.

“In his petition he identified himself fully with those who had fallen short of the divine purpose, confessing their sins as his own....

“Though Daniel had long been in the service of God, and had been spoken of by heaven as ‘greatly beloved,’ yet he now appeared before God as a sinner, urging the great need of the people he loved. His prayer was eloquent in its simplicity, and intensely earnest. Hear him pleading:...”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 555.

PRAYER AND CONFESSION

3. To what did he cling? What law did he remember? Daniel 9:9-13.

“Have not we as great need to call upon God as had Daniel? I address those who believe that we are living in the very last period of this earth’s history. I entreat you to take upon your own souls a burden for our churches, our schools, and our institutions. That God who heard Daniel’s prayer will hear ours when we come to Him in contrition. Our necessities are as urgent, our difficulties are as great, and we need to have the same intensity of purpose, and in faith roll our burden upon the great Burden-bearer. There is need for hearts to be as deeply moved in our time as in the time when Daniel prayed.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 256.

4. What had been said to Moses concerning this law? What divine characteristic did Daniel acknowledge in his prayer? Deuteronomy 28:15, 36, 37; Daniel 9:14.

“To this point Daniel’s prayer is employed in making a full and heartbroken confession of sin. He vindicates fully the course of the Lord, acknowledging the sins of his people to be the cause of all their calamities, as God had threatened them by the prophet Moses.”—*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 195.

“The prophet Daniel was an example of true sanctification. His long life was filled up with noble service for his Master. He was a man ‘greatly beloved’ (Daniel 10:11) of Heaven. Yet instead of claiming to be pure and holy, this honored prophet identified himself with the really sinful of Israel as he pleaded before God in behalf of his people: ‘We do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousness, but for Thy great mercies.’” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 470.

NO RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ONE’S OWN

5. Being conscious of the sins the people had committed, what was his fervent request? Daniel 9:15-18, first part.

“Daniel makes no plea on the ground of his own goodness, but he says: ‘O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear; open Thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Thy name: for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies.’ Daniel 9:18. His intensity of desire makes him earnest and fervent. He continues: ‘O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.’” –*That I May Know Him*, p. 271.

6. Upon what could neither he nor his people depend? Therefore, what did he rely on? Daniel 9:18, last part, 19.

“The prophet now pleads the honor of the Lord’s name as a reason why he desires his petition to be granted... Not that God is moved with motives of ambition and vainglory; but when His people are jealous for the honor of His name, when they evince their love for Him by pleading with Him to work, not for their own personal benefit, but for His own glory, that His name may not be reproached and blasphemed among the heathen, this is acceptable with Him. Daniel then intercedes for the city of Jerusalem, called by God’s name, and His holy mountain, for which He has had such love, and beseeches Him, for His mercies’ sake, to let His anger be turned away. Finally, his mind centers upon the holy sanctuary, God’s own dwelling place upon this earth, and he pleads that its desolations may be repaired.” –*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 196.

A RAPID RESPONSE

7. What wonderful experience did he make through this prayer? What commission was now to be completed? Daniel 9:20-23; 8:16.

“Heaven was bending low to hear the earnest supplication of the prophet. Even before he had finished his plea for pardon and restoration, the mighty Gabriel again appeared to him...” –*Prophecy and Kings*, p. 556.

“Yet God had bidden His messenger: ‘Make this man to understand the vision.’ That commission must be fulfilled. In obedience to it, the angel, some time after-

ward, returned to Daniel, saying: ‘I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding;’ ‘therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.’ Daniel 8:27, 16; 9:22, 23, 25-27. There was one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which had been left unexplained, namely, that relating to time—the period of the 2300 days;...” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 325.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- *In Heavenly Places*, pp. 75, 87.
- *Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 353.
- *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 193-196.

23

Sabbath, June 4, 2011

Light Imparted to a Humble Petitioner

“Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel,... informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.” Daniel 9:21, 22.

SEVENTY WEEKS ARE SET APART

- 1. How much time was granted to the Jews before great events would take place? According to what key is prophetic time calculated? Daniel 9:24, first part; Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6.**

“Seventy Weeks. These are the first words the angel uttered to Daniel in imparting to him that instruction which he came to give. Why did he thus abruptly introduce a period of time? We must again refer to the vision of Daniel 8. We have seen that Daniel, at the close of that chapter, says that he did not understand the vision.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 201.

“Following his rule of making Scripture its own interpreter, Miller learned that a day in symbolic prophecy represents a year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6);...” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 324.

- 2. What was to happen at the end of this time period? Daniel 9:24, last part.**

The German Menge Translation says: “Seventy weeks [equaling year-weeks; i.e., weeks of seven years instead of days] are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of their sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness [salvation] and to seal up the vision and the [statement of the] prophet and to anoint [consecrate] the most holy.”

“Seventy weeks, then, or 490 days of the 2300, were allotted to Jerusalem and the Jews. The events which were to be consummated within that period are briefly stated. The transgression was to be finished, that is, the Jewish people were to fill up the cup of their iniquity, which they did in the rejection and crucifixion of Christ. An end of sins, or of sin offerings [The Hebrew word, *chattath*, translated ‘sins’ in Daniel 9: 24, denotes either sin or sin offering], was to be made. This took place when the great offering was made on Calvary. Reconciliation for iniquity was to be provided. This was accomplished by the sacrificial death of the Son of God. Everlasting righteousness was to be brought in, the righteousness which our Lord manifested in His sinless life. The vision and the prophecy were to be sealed, or made sure.”
—*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 203.

THE BEGINNING DATE

3. What event marked the beginning point of this prophecy? Where do we find this command? When was it given? Daniel 9:25, first part; Ezra 6:14; 7:11-28, 7.

“The word here translated ‘determined’ (Daniel 9:24) literally signifies ‘cut off.’ Seventy weeks, representing 490 years, are declared by the angel to be cut off, as specially pertaining to the Jews. But from what were they cut off? As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventy weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together. The seventy weeks were declared by the angel to date from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. If the date of this commandment could be found, then the starting point for the great period of the 2300 days would be ascertained....

“These three kings, in originating, reaffirming, and completing the decree, brought it to the perfection required by the prophecy to mark the beginning of the 2300 years. Taking 457 B.C., the time when the decree was completed, as the date of the commandment, every specification of the prophecy concerning the seventy weeks was seen to have been fulfilled.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 326, 327.

EVENTS PREDICTED FOR THE SEVENTY WEEKS

4. Who was to come on the scene after 69 weeks (483 years), and in what year? What was to happen during the 70th week? Daniel 9:25, 27, first part.

“From this date, 483 years extend to the autumn of A.D. 27. At that time this prophecy was fulfilled. The word ‘Messiah’ signifies ‘the Anointed One.’ In the autumn of A.D. 27 Christ was baptized by John and received the anointing of the Spirit.... The ‘week’ here brought to view is the last one of the seventy; it is the last seven years of the period allotted especially to the Jews. During this time, extending from A.D. 27 to A.D. 34, Christ, at first in person and afterward by His disciples, extended the gospel invitation especially to the Jews.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 327.

5. **How was this carried out in the labors of Christ as well? What was to happen in the middle of the 70th week, or 3 1/2 years after Jesus’ anointing? Matthew 10:5, 6; 15:22-24; Daniel 9:26, first part, 27, middle part.**

“‘In the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.’ In A.D. 31, three and a half years after His baptism, our Lord was crucified. With the great sacrifice offered upon Calvary, ended that system of offerings which for four thousand years had pointed forward to the Lamb of God. Type had met antitype, and all the sacrifices and oblations of the ceremonial system were there to cease.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 327, 328.

6. **What event marked the end of the 70 weeks (490 years)? What year was that? Acts 8:3-8; 10:1-5, 26-28, 34, 35; 22:21.**

“The seventy weeks, or 490 years, especially allotted to the Jews, ended, as we have seen, in A.D. 34. At that time, through the action of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the nation sealed its rejection of the gospel by the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of the followers of Christ. Then the message of salvation, no longer restricted to the chosen people, was given to the world. The disciples, forced by persecution to flee from Jerusalem, ‘went everywhere preaching the word.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 328.

THE REMAINING PORTION OF TIME

7. **How much time remains when the 70 weeks (490 years) are subtracted from the 2,300 years? To what year does this bring us? Will the old city of Jerusalem and the Jews, as a nation, again play a role in the plan of salvation? Daniel 9:26, last part.**

“The seventy weeks—490 days—having been cut off from the 2300, there were 1810 days remaining. After the end of 490 days, the 1810 days were still to be fulfilled. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. Consequently the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 terminate in 1844.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 328.

”Then I was pointed to some who are in the great error believing that it is their duty to go to Old Jerusalem, and think they have a work to do there before the Lord comes... I also saw that Old Jerusalem never would be built up; and that Satan was doing his utmost to lead the minds of the children of the Lord into these things now, in the gathering time, to keep them from throwing their whole interest into the present work of the Lord, and to cause them to neglect the necessary preparation for the day of the Lord.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 75, 76.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“Through His chosen agencies God will graciously make known His purposes. Then the grand work of redemption will go forward. Men will learn of the reconciliation for iniquity and of the everlasting righteousness which the Messiah has brought in through His sacrifice. The cross of Calvary is the great center. This truth acted upon will make Christ’s sacrifice effectual. This is that which Gabriel revealed to Daniel in answer to fervent prayer. It was of this that Moses and Elijah and Christ talked at His transfiguration. By the humiliation of the cross He was to bring everlasting deliverance to all who would walk after Him, giving positive evidence that they are separated from the world.”—(*Letter 201*, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1172, 1173.

”Every action, every word, and every moment of our lives should bear the impress of our holy faith. The end of all things is at hand, and we have no time to be idle or to live in pleasure, at cross-purposes with God....

“To every person is committed some peculiar gift or talent which is to be used to advance the Redeemer’s kingdom. All God’s responsible agents, from the lowliest and most obscure to those in high positions in the church, are entrusted with the Lord’s goods. It is not the minister alone who can work for the salvation of souls. Those who have the smallest gifts are not excused from using the very best gifts they have, and in so doing their talents will be increased. It is not safe to trifle with moral responsibilities nor to despise the day of small things. God’s providence proportions His trusts according to the varied capabilities of the people.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 618.

The Time of His Judgment Has Come

“Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”
Revelation 14:7.

SERVICES IN THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY

1. **How was the earthly sanctuary partitioned? What did the repentant sinner do under the sacrificial system? Hebrews 9:2-5; Leviticus 4:27-29.**

“The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and placing his hand upon the victim’s head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 354.

2. **What happened to the sanctuary when sin was transferred like this? On what day did the cleansing of the sanctuary occur each year? Leviticus 23:26-32.**

“The sins of Israel being thus transferred to the sanctuary, the holy places were defiled, and a special work became necessary for the removal of the sins.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 355.

“Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed, completed the yearly round of ministration....” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 198.

THE SERVICE OF CLEANSING

3. **How did the symbolic cleansing take place? What did the high priest do after he finished the service in the most holy place? Was sin actually blotted out through the blood of animals? Leviticus 16:15, 16, 20-22; Hebrews 10:3, 4.**

“On the day of atonement the high ‘priest, having taken an offering for the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, above the tables of the law. Thus the claims of the law, which demanded the life of the sinner, were satisfied. Then in his character of mediator the priest took the sins upon himself, and leaving the sanctuary, he bore with him the burden of Israel’s guilt. At the door of the tabernacle he laid his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, and confessed over him ‘all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat.’ And as the goat bearing these sins was sent away, they were with him regarded as forever separated from the people.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 356.

CLEANSING OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

4. Who gave Moses the plan for the construction and the services of the sanctuary? After what were they patterned? Who is the High Priest in the real sanctuary? Exodus 25:9, 40; Hebrews 8:5, 1, 2.

“What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? That there was such a service in connection with the earthly sanctuary, is stated in the Old Testament Scriptures. But can there be anything in heaven to be cleansed? In Hebrews 9 the cleansing of both the earthly and the heavenly sanctuary is plainly taught....

“The cleansing, both in the typical and in the real service, must be accomplished with blood: in the former, with the blood of animals; in the latter, with the blood of Christ....

“He [Christ] asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne.” –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 206.

5. Who was represented by the animal sacrificed under the old covenant? When did the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary begin? John 1:29; Daniel 8:14.

“As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded....

“Thus those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 421, 422.

6. How did Daniel portray these events? Daniel 7:9, 10, 13.

“The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 479.

7. What special message did the Lord send to those who would live from this time forward? Upon whom will the sins that were confessed and forgiven through Jesus’ blood ultimate be placed? Revelation 14:6, 7.

“When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty. The scape-goat was sent into a land not inhabited, never to come again into the congregation of Israel. So will Satan be forever banished from the presence of God and His people, and he will be blotted from existence in the final destruction of sin and sinners.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 422.

“But such subjects as the sanctuary, in connection with the 2300 days, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show what our present position is,... These, I have frequently seen, were the principal subjects on which the messengers should dwell.”—*Early Writings*, p. 63.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

- Leviticus chapter 16.
- Hebrews chapters 7 and 9.
- *The Great Controversy*, p. 433.

“The cleansing was not a removal of physical impurities, for it was to be accomplished with blood, and therefore must be a cleansing from sin.

“But how could there be sin connected with the sanctuary, either in heaven or upon the earth?

“As the sins of the people were anciently transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary by the blood of the sin offering, so our sins are, in fact, transferred to the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Christ. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which

are there recorded. This necessitates an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement.

“Then [in the great day of final award] by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 206.

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Sabbath, June 18, 2011

War in the Invisible World

“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.” Daniel 10:13.

APPEARANCE OF A GLORIOUS, POWERFUL BEING

1. **What did the Jews experience after they received permission from King Cyrus to return to Jerusalem in B.C. 536 and began the restoration? What did the prophet Daniel think about this? Ezra 3:8; 4:4, 5; Daniel 10:1.**

“When the temple at Jerusalem was rebuilt in the days of Ezra, the Samaritans wished to join the Jews in its erection. This privilege was refused them, and a bitter animosity sprang up between the two peoples. The Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. Here they worshiped in accordance with the Mosaic ritual, though they did not wholly renounce idolatry.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 188.

“This verse [Daniel 10:1] introduces the last recorded vision of the prophet Daniel, the instruction imparted to him at this time being continued through Daniel 11 and 12.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 225.

2. **What did the prophet experience? Where do we find a similar description? Who was this? Daniel 10:4-6; Revelation 1:13-15.**

“No less a personage than the Son of God appeared to Daniel. This description is similar to that given by John when Christ was revealed to him upon the Isle of Patmos. Our Lord now comes with another heavenly messenger to teach Daniel what would take place in the latter days. This knowledge was given to Daniel and recorded by Inspiration for us upon whom the ends of the world are come.” —(*The Review and Herald*, February 8, 1881) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1173.

3. What effect did this revelation have on Daniel? What else happened at this time, and who lifted him up? Daniel 10:7-12.

“After Daniel had fallen at the majestic appearance of Christ, the angel Gabriel, obviously the speaker in verses 11-13, laid his hand upon him to give him assurance and confidence. He told Daniel that he was a man greatly beloved. Wonderful declaration! A member of the human family, one of the same race with us, loved, not merely in the general sense in which God loved the whole world when He gave His Son to die for mankind, but loved as individual, and that greatly! Well might the prophet receive confidence from such a declaration as that! He tells him, moreover, that he is come for the purpose of an interview with him, and he wishes him to bring his mind into a proper state to understand the words. Being thus assured, the holy and beloved prophet stood trembling, before the angel.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 227.

EVIL ANGELS HINDER THE WORK

4. Why did Daniel not receive an answer during three weeks of earnest prayer and supplication? Who else spoke of such a Prince? Daniel 10:13, first part; Ephesians 6:11, 12.

“While Satan was striving to influence the highest powers in the kingdom of Medo-Persia to show disfavor to God’s people, angels worked in behalf of the exiles. The controversy was one in which all heaven was interested. Through the prophet Daniel we are given a glimpse of this mighty struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus;...” —*Prophecy and Kings*, pp. 571, 572.

5. Only when was the victory won in this battle between good and evil angels? What else was Daniel shown? Daniel 10:13, last part, 14.

“... Before the contest closed, Christ Himself came to Gabriel’s aid.... All that heaven could do in behalf of the people of God was done. The victory was finally gained;...” —*Prophecy and Kings*, p. 572.

“By this we see that heavenly agencies have to contend with hindrances before the purpose of God is fulfilled in its time. The king of Persia was controlled by the highest of all evil angels. He refused, as did Pharaoh, to obey the word of the Lord. Gabriel declared, He withstood me twenty-one days by his representations against the Jews. But Michael came to his help, and then he remained with the kings of Persia, holding the powers in check, giving right counsel against evil counsel. Good and evil angels are taking a part in the planning of God in His earthly kingdom. It is God’s purpose to carry forward His work in correct lines, in ways that will advance His glory. But Satan is ever trying to counterwork God’s purpose. Only by humbling

themselves before God can God's servants advance His work. Never are they to depend on their own efforts or on outward display for success."—(*Letter* 201, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1173.

STRENGTH AND LIGHT IMPARTED

6. What happened again? Did Satan and his angels finally give up? Daniel 10:15-21.

"The prophet is at length strengthened to hear in full the communication which the angel has to make. Gabriel says, 'Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee?' Do you understand my purpose so that you will no more fear? He then announced his intention to return, as soon as his communication was complete, to fight with the king of Persia."—*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 230.

7. Who else was shown the resistance of the evil one at that time? What work of evil powers is described as preceding Christ's coming? Zechariah 3:1-5; Revelation 16:14.

"Then the Lord sent them messages of encouragement, declaring that He would deliver them from their captivity and restore them to His favor. It was this that Satan was determined prevent. A remnant of Israel had already returned to their land, and Satan was seeking to move upon the heathen nations, who were his agents, to utterly destroy them.

"As Joshua humbly pleads for the fulfillment of God's promises, Satan stands up boldly to resist him. He points to the transgressions of Israel as a reason why that people should not be restored to the favor of God. He claims them as his prey and demands that they be given into his hands to be destroyed....

"If the veil which separates the visible from the invisible world could be lifted, and the people of God could behold the great controversy that is going on between Christ and holy angels and Satan and his evil hosts concerning the redemption of man; if they could understand the wonderful work of God for the rescue of souls from the bondage of sin, and the constant exercise of His power for their protection from the malice of the evil one, they would be better prepared to withstand the devices of Satan."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 467, 468.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"A most majestic being visited Daniel on this occasion. The description here given of him is almost parallel to the description of Christ in Revelation 1:14-16. Also, since the effect on Daniel was similar to that experienced by Paul and his companions when the Lord appeared to them on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-7), we conclude that Christ Himself appeared to Daniel. We learn in verse 13 that Michael had come to assist Gabriel in influencing the Persian king. How natural then that He should show Himself to Daniel on this occasion."—*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 226.

“The light that Daniel received direct from God was given especially for these last days. The visions he saw by the banks of the Ulai and the Hiddekel, the great rivers of Shinar, are now in process of fulfillment, and all the events foretold will soon have come to pass.” —(Letter 57, 1896) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1166.

Please read the Missionary Report from Togo on page 86.

26

Sabbath, June 25, 2011

Daniel's Last Vision

“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.” Daniel 12:1.

In the eleventh chapter of the book of Daniel is a detailed description of the different rulers of the world empires briefly described in chapters 2, 7, and 8. Because in their general lines we have already studied them, we will focus on the most important events for the time of the end.

PERSECUTION

- 1. What was the fate of many faithful people of God during the 1,260-year period of papal persecution? What did the Lord in mercy send to His children? Daniel 11:33, 34, first part.**

“The long period of papal persecution against those who were struggling to maintain the truth and instruct their fellow men in ways of righteousness, is here brought to view. The number of the days during which they were thus to fall is given in Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5. The period is called ‘a time, and times, and the dividing of time;’ ‘a time, times, and a half;’ ‘a thousand two hundred and threescore days;’ and ‘forty and two months.’ All these expressions are various ways of denoting the same 1260 years of papal supremacy.” — *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 279.

- 2. What did Jesus say concerning this time of persecution? How did Satan seek to destroy the work of Reformation? Matthew 24:21, 22; Daniel 11:34, last part; Acts 20:30.**

“The persecution of the church did not continue throughout the entire period of the 1260 years. God in mercy to His people cut short the time of their fiery trial. In foretelling the ‘great tribulation’ to befall the church, the Saviour said: ‘Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.’ Through the influence of the Reformation the persecution was brought to an end prior to 1798....

“But Satan was not idle. He now attempted what he has attempted in every other reformatory movement—to deceive and destroy the people by palming off upon them a counterfeit in place of the true work. As there were false christs in the first century of the Christian church, so there arose false prophets in the sixteenth century.

“A few men, deeply affected by the excitement in the religious world, imagined themselves to have received special revelations from Heaven, and claimed to have been divinely commissioned to carry forward to its completion the Reformation which, they declared, had been but feebly begun by Luther. In truth, they were undoing the very work which he had accomplished....

“The Romanists now regained their confidence and exclaimed exultingly: ‘One last struggle, and all will be ours.’” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 266, 267, 186, 187.

3. Did the persecution finally end? Daniel 11:35.

“In Revelation 12, where this same papal persecution is brought to view, we read that the earth helped the woman by opening her mouth and swallowing up the flood which the dragon cast out after her. The Protestant Reformation let by Martin Luther and his co-workers furnished the help here foretold. The German states espoused the Protestant cause, protected the reformers, and restrained the work of persecution carried on by the papal church. But when the Protestants were helped, and when their cause began to be popular, many were to cleave unto them with flatteries, or embrace the faith from unworthy motives....

“Though restrained, the spirit of persecution was not destroyed. It broke whenever there was opportunity.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 279.

FRANCE’S ROLE

4. What did France earn for its crimes in the service of the papacy? Who took military power for himself in the middle of this confusion? Daniel 11:36-39.

“The cruelties that were inflicted upon the innocent Protestants by the Catholics accumulated in a weight of retribution, and in after centuries wrought the very doom they had predicted to be impending, upon the king, his government, and his subjects;... It was ... the suppression, of Protestantism, that, three hundred years later, was to bring upon France these dire calamities....

“The atheistical power that ruled in France during the Revolution and the Reign of Terror, did wage such a war against God and His holy word as the world had never witnessed....

“‘Intimately connected with these laws affecting religion, was that which reduced the union of marriage—the most sacred engagement which human beings can form, and the permanence of which leads most strongly to the consolidation of society—to the state of a mere civil contract of a transitory character, which any two persons might engage in and cast loose at pleasure.’” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 226, 227, 273, 270.

KINGS OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH

Beginning the section of Daniel 11:40-43, which makes reference to “the time of the end,” the following comment is given: “After a long interval, the king of the south and the king of the north again appear on the stage of action.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 289.

5. What will the king of the north do at the end of time in a battle that is still in the future? What important sign is this for the believers? Daniel 11:44, 45; 12:1, first part.

“As we see the divine predictions meeting their fulfillment in history, our faith is strengthened in the final accomplishment of God’s prophetic word.

“The prophecy of verse 45 centers in that power known as the king of the north...

“It is predicted of the king of the north that ‘he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.’ Just how and when and where his end will come, we may watch with solemn interest, knowing that the hand of Providence guides the destiny of nations.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 299.

This prophecy points to the fact that the king of the north in the time of the end will transfer his seat (“the tabernacle of his palace”) to Jerusalem. This city, according to the Scriptures, is represented as the holy mountain situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea.

FINAL EVENTS

6. What will then end, and what will begin? What will happen before Jesus returns? Revelation 22:11; Daniel 12:1, last part, 2, 3.

“When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor.... Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose....

“Graves are opened, and ‘many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth ... awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’ Daniel 12:2. All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept

His law. ‘They also which pierced Him’ (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 614, 637.

EARNEST STUDY AND PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

7. What was to happen to the vision? What assurance was given to the faithful servant of God? Daniel 12:4, 8-13.

“As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures.... The promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. ‘The wise shall understand’ (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days; and of the revelation that Christ gave to His servant John for the guidance of God’s people all through the centuries, the promise is, ‘Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.’ Revelation 1:3.” –*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 547, 548.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“The prophecies of Daniel and of John are to be understood. They interpret each other. They give to the world truths which every one should understand. These prophecies are to be witnesses in the world. By their fulfillment in these last days they will explain themselves.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 949.

“All should see the necessity of understanding the truth for themselves individually. We must understand the doctrines that have been studied out carefully and prayerfully. It has been revealed to me that there is among our people a great lack of knowledge in regard to the rise and progress of the third angel’s message. There is great need to search the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation, and learn the texts thoroughly, that we may know what is written.” –*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 392.

“When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 114.

Missionary Report from Togo

To be read on Sabbath, June 25, 2011

The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on July 2, 2011

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.” Matthew 24:45-47.

The message of Reformation officially reached Togo in 2006. This is a relatively small country on the west coast of Africa, bordering the Republic of Benin on the east, Ghana on the west, Burkina Faso on the north, and the Atlantic Ocean on the south. The country has an area of 56,785 square kilometers (21,925 square miles) and a population of about 6,000,000 people. Togo was once a French colony, and French language is still an official language; other local African languages are also very popular even in schools and business centers. Economically, the country is very poor, and the cost of living is very high.

Paganism or traditional religions are still very popular in this country, being practiced by about 40% of the population. Christians constitute about 35%, while Moslems claim about 20%. Roman Catholicism is the dominant Christian religion. In 2005 a brother from Ghana, Christian Doxodor, visited Togo on private business and met some interested souls. In 2006 he took us with him to visit the first group in Lome, the capital city. On this trip, we were privileged to have the company of missionary sisters from Canada, Sisters Leila McTavish and Edda Tedford. A small group was established under the leadership of Brother James Etse. Later our brethren from the Ghana Field visited Togo to provide additional spiritual help and conduct baptisms. In 2008 I made my third visit to the country with Brother Emanuel Chileshe, from Zambia, and more souls were also baptized.



The work in Togo is advancing very slowly, because it lacks a permanent missionary worker, registration of the church, and a central office from which the work can be coordinated. The laws of the country require every religious organization to have a central office and places of worship. There is a wonderful potential for reaching many souls in this country, so there is a great need of a missionary worker and French study materials.

The special Sabbath school offering for next week will be sent to Togo to help meet the above-mentioned needs. May the Holy Spirit impress the heart of every giver to offer a genuine sacrifice which will find recompense in heaven. Let the following inspired statement touch your heart: "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 117.

"The words 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature' (Mark 16:15) are spoken to each one of Christ's followers. All who are ordained unto the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. The same longing of soul that He felt for the saving of the lost is to be manifest in them. Not all can fill the same place, but for all there is a place and a work. All upon whom God's blessings have been bestowed are to respond by actual service; every gift is to be employed for the advancement of His kingdom." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 16.

—P. N. Shirima
General Conference Second Vice President