

## *Christ in Prophecy*

### **Daniel 3: Book of Daniel: Fulfilled Prophecies**

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#### **Introduction**

**Tim Moore:** Hello again and welcome to another episode of Christ in Prophecy! We're very glad you've joined us today. We're in the midst of a series of programs on the book of Daniel. This short, 12-chapter final book in the Major Prophets punches well above its weight in terms of significance and sweeping vision. Our deep dive into Daniel will lay a solid foundation to then move toward a study of Revelation in several weeks.

**Nathan Jones:** Well, last week we reviewed the narrative portions of Daniel, that's the first 7 chapters which deal his-story of Daniel's life, and his interaction with a series of pagan kings as he served in exile. Daniel was not only a passionate student of prophecy, he was anointed to be a revealer and interpreter of prophecy—at least to a point, as we'll discuss later.

He and his Jewish friends determined not to defile themselves even as they served the king of Babylon. His integrity and faithfulness set him apart. God then enabled him to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and Belshazzar's handwriting on the wall. And, God miraculously preserved Daniel's friends in the midst of a fiery furnace and Daniel himself in a lion's den!

**Tim Moore:** Daniel's life story is miraculous from beginning to end. Perhaps the most amazing thing is that Daniel never wallowed in self-pity even though he was carted off from his defeated homeland and forced to serve in a pagan society. He recognized the hand of God at work in the devastating events and the outpouring of blessing in his life. In that regard, Daniel stands as a pre-figure or type of the coming Messiah. Surrounded by evildoers, he never defiled himself. He remained faithful to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, trusting in God's promises and intervening mightily on behalf of his people. Today we want to turn to those prophecies Daniel communicated that have already come true in history.

**Nathan Jones:** Older generations will remember hearing the phrase, "The proof is in the pudding." In other words, the value or quality of a dish is only proven when it is eaten. In the same way, the proof of any prophecy is in its fulfillment. God's Word makes it clear that false prophets will make pronouncements that sound grandiose. He spoke of prophets who would speak presumptuously, and said very clearly, "when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has NOT spoken." God said such a prophet was not to be feared, but in fact was to be put to death.

**Tim Moore:** The thing which annoys and even scares scoffers is that Daniel's prophecies did come to pass—with amazing accuracy. Many skeptics even claim that Daniel could not have been written almost 600 years before Christ, because his near-term prophecies came true with incredible exactitude. That is our focus today: the already-fulfilled prophecies contained in Daniel.

**Nathan Jones:** Most of these are found in Chapters 7 thru 11 with future, yet-to-be fulfilled prophecies all blended in to those chapters. We'll talk about still-anticipated prophecies next week. But, as we dive into already-fulfilled prophecies, there is one that was described in great detail in Daniel chapter 2.

## **Part 1**

**Tim Moore:** Alright, Nathan, last week you told us about the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw. This pagan king was given the vision, but he didn't know how to interpret it. And his wise guys and magicians couldn't even tell him what the dream was, let alone interpret it. But Daniel could. So what was the statue? And let's get into some of the near term fulfillment that it prophesied.

**Nathan Jones:** And it shouldn't be understated that Daniel not only gave the interpretation of the vision that Nebuchadnezzar had, the dream, but he also had to tell him what that dream.

**Tim Moore:** Exactly right.

**Nathan Jones:** Or at the penalty of all the wise men being killed.

**Tim Moore:** Including himself.

**Nathan Jones:** Including himself. So, yeah, a lot was on the line. He went back, he prayed, Lord, give me the message. And he went to Nebuchadnezzar and said, "This is your dream. You saw a giant statue with a head of gold, a body and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and then feet that were iron mixed with clay." And then Daniel says, "Nebuchadnezzar, you saw a stone not cut out by human hands," which is interesting he said that, "and it came hurtling out of the sky, and it hits the statue and it blew the statue up, and even the dust of it blew away. And then the stone not cut out by human hands, grew and filled the earth." And Nebuchadnezzar was bowled over and he gave praise to Daniel and his God, Yahweh.

**Tim Moore:** He certainly did. Now, we know from our study of Scripture that even prior to this timeframe in Israel's history, the land of Israel, Judah had been besieged by the Egyptians to the south, by the Assyrians to the north. But by the day and age of Daniel, the reason he was carted off into exile, Babylon had emerged as the leading empire in that part of the world or the known world of that day. And so from the time frame of about 1894 BC, wow that's a long time ago to 539 BC, and of course, Jerusalem fell in 587 or 586 BC. Babylon had become the preeminent power, and we could argue that Nebuchadnezzar was really the greatest king of that empire, and one of the last ones obviously.

**Nathan Jones:** Yeah, Babylon was a descendant of Mesopotamia, and Ur and Chaldees or they are called Chaldeans, so the height of the empire really in Nebuchadnezzar's time with 625 BC until 539 when it fell to his idiot grandson.

**Tim Moore:** Yes.

**Nathan Jones:** Belshazzar. So, what that interpretation of the dream that Nebuchadnezzar was seeing is that the head of gold, Daniel, said, is you, it's Babylon. It is the most powerful. For one, it's gold, which means it's the most valuable of metals. But two, it's strong and so that was the definition of Nebuchadnezzar's empire. And it was the most authoritarian of all the succeeding empires. Nebuchadnezzar had absolute control. He was judge, jury and executioner.

**Tim Moore:** He certainly was. And we can remind ourselves that Babylon, in modern parlance, would be within the area that we've described as Iraq today. As a matter of fact, when Saddam Hussein was in power, he tried to restore the ancient city of Babylon. You can go there and visit still today with the gates of Babylon, that's where some of the hanging gardens were. And so it has been a ruin for all these many centuries, but that is the place where Babylon came into existence. And you mentioned Ur of the Chaldees, we obviously think that Abraham originally came from that part of the world until the Lord said, "Go to a land I will show you." He came up and around the Fertile Crescent to arrive in the land of Canaan. So obviously Babylon grew in power and in authority and over took the Assyrians and became the ones that devastated Israel and conquered Jerusalem itself.

**Nathan Jones:** And Babylon itself is a descendant of the Tower of Babel, it is where Nimrod set up his rebellion against God. It was considered the most pagan empire at the time, the most pagan people. And Daniel and the Israelites, God used the most pagan people to chastise them for their ongoing rebellion against Him and put them among pagan people, but that wasn't the last, right? There was another empire that was going to take over.

**Tim Moore:** There certainly was. And you make a great point, God sometimes uses those who are pagan and evil as instruments of His will and even sometimes of His punishment or judgment. When he told Habakkuk there would be an outpouring of judgment, Habakkuk was taken aback that the Lord would use a people even more wicked than his own Jewish country had become as a form or an instrument of judgment. And yet God is always sovereign and He can choose to act however He will, and even put hooks in the jaws of pagan kings to get them to be an instrument of his authority.

**Nathan Jones:** And yet that kingdom wasn't to last, because after the head, another kingdom was prophesied by Daniel, and that was the chest of silver. And the chest of silver, not as expensive a metal, not as strong of a metal, but it represented the Medo-Persian Empire. And it had two arms because the Medes in the Persians were two different groups that united and overthrew Babylon in 539 B.C.

**Tim Moore:** They sure were. And so, thinking about the Medo-Persian Empire today, you can think of the Medes as the region north of Iraq. Today they are peoples that live up there who are not always considered Iraqi, but they are still in that people group. And then, of course, Persia is modern day Iran. And so to this day, we see how the Persian Empire oftentimes is hearkened to by the rulers of Iran, even the ayatollahs, they try to tie their authority all the way back to the Medo-Persian Empire. They like to forget about the Medes, but they're still there. So, the Kurdish area north of Iraq and Iran is where these Medo-Persians were.

**Nathan Jones:** Matter of fact the Kurds tend to think of or believe their history brings them back to the Medes.

**Tim Moore:** Yes, they do.

**Nathan Jones:** They are the decedents.

**Tim Moore:** Yes, they do. They certainly do. And so we know that the frivolous grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, that being Belshazzar, was not cut from his grandfather's cloth. He was a party boy. He would have been the one, as you said, that was kind of the Hunter Biden of the ancient world. And so he wanted to party. And he even called for the vessels and the cups from the Jewish Temple to be brought forward that he could use them for his festivities. And the Lord said, enough. And that's when the handwriting appeared on the wall and the Lord put to an end the Babylonian Empire. And of course, the Medes and Persians ascended that very night by conquering Babylon.

**Nathan Jones:** And it wasn't hard to conquer it. They diverted the river and they walked right up the riverbed into what was considered an impregnable city. What is interesting is Daniel found favor with Darius, so he was always in a position in two different empires here. But the of course, the Medo-Persian Empire lasted from 539 to about 330 BC, so for 200 years, the Medo-Persian Empire was the powerhouse. What would become their downfall is their constant conflict with Greece.

**Tim Moore:** Yes, and as a matter of fact, the Medo-Persian Empire extended so far that it went all the way from Afghanistan in the north to Egypt, down to the southeast, and included what was in that day and age, the land of Israel. But they were succeeded by the Greeks. And the Greeks had a great mighty warrior, at least a great leader militarily, who to this day is considered probably the greatest general in all of history by military historians.

**Nathan Jones:** Alexander the Great right. He was very upset for the attack that the Persians did 150 years earlier. So he and his father came out of Macedonia, which is north of Greece, they united Macedonian and Greece. And then like a blitz, Alexander burst from the scenes and he conquered pretty much the known world, as some say that he wept because there were no more lands to conquer, although he did want to go into India. Unfortunately for being such a mighty warrior, he only lived up to about 32 years old and he had malaria, tied with he had an alcohol problem, he was an alcoholic, too, and so he wasn't felled by a sword. But when he died, his empire, he had no heirs, and so his empire was divided amongst four of his generals. And so his empire didn't last very long in a consolidated sense, it had to split into four different regions.

**Tim Moore:** It certainly did. And before we move on exactly to Alexander, we need to point out that he and Cyrus have something in common. Cyrus was named by name, and as he realized that the Hebrew prophecies contained my name, it kind of gave him a sense of, wow, this is impressive. And that's one of the reasons that he allowed the exiles from Babylon to go back to Jerusalem and to rebuild the capital. Later, it is said that Alexander, as he was sweeping east, came to the land of Israel and was shown the prophecies related to him, not by name, but clearly as he read, he understood well this describes me and he did not put to the torch some of the Jewish cities, even the capital at that time, because he was so impressed that the Jewish prophets and their God would have foretold him. But Alexander did conquer most of the known world, I mean, obviously not into the North America or China, but what was the

known world within that region and was a great leader for a short period. And as you said, his kingdom divided into his four generals, and that eventually led to the other empire mentioned by this statue, which would be the legs of iron.

**Nathan Jones:** Right, so Greece is the belly and thigh of bronze. And what's interesting is that the Greeks used bronze in almost everything including weapons.

**Tim Moore:** Yes, they did.

**Nathan Jones:** So, the Lord was pretty much pointing to, hey, it's going to be Greece, because look at the medals. But the next one, the iron. Now Iron Age brought about a technological revolution to that time period. Bronze Age you're fighting you hit your swords, they break easy, but iron it didn't break. And so it was a representation that the Roman Empire coming up would be a very powerful empire, very strong and crush all in its wake. It's interesting that even though militarily what the Jews that had returned to Israel and were living under the Persians and now the Greeks, the Greeks defeated them by Hellenizing them, by bringing Greek pagan culture and forcing it upon the Jewish people. So the Jewish people appealed to the Romans, who had been around for a few hundred years but weren't a world power, and said, "Hey, come help us." Well, when you ask the Romans for help, it's like the Chinese today, you can get their help, but they're not leaving.

**Tim Moore:** No, they're not leaving. And certainly, the Hellenized Jews became a continuing problem even in Paul's day and age as he was trying to share the Gospel. He found that so many Jews in some parts of the world had become so, we would say secularized today, but they were so Hellenized that they really were Jew in name only. They no longer worshipped the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And they did not identify with their Jewish heritage, they identified more with their pagan or Hellenized Greek heritage. And so, Rome obviously was the empire when Jesus came into the world. This age of darkness. And in that period of darkness, a great light indeed shined. But in the image, it was foretold that this great iron empire would be disintegrated and yet would come back around in feet represented as iron and clay.

**Nathan Jones:** And you could look at the Roman Empire even at that time as they conquered so many different people groups and united so many people groups, it was a mixture of strength and weakness. They had the power of the Roman army, but all these disparate groups of people that couldn't get along unless the Romans covered them. And when the Roman Empire collapsed in the Byzantines, and we entered the Middle Ages, yeah, they all became little fiefdoms again. And so even though this empire lasted a thousand years, it lived on in the Holy Roman Empire, and then I know we're getting to next week's topic, but, you know, we got to say it that the ten toes represent a future prophecy to the statue. So the statue is not done yet, we'll cover more next.

**Tim Moore:** Yeah, every week we'll have commentary about the statue. But having discussed the statue, the head of gold, the chest of bronze, excuse me silver, the belly and thighs of bronze, and then the legs of iron leading to iron and clay. Daniel has another corresponding vision that seems to hearken to the same succession of empires, but it has nothing to do with the statue, and that is found in chapter seven. So we turn the page to chapter seven and we see a series of beasts that Daniel has in a vision.

**Nathan Jones:** Yes, so it's about 533 BC when he gets this new prophecy, the vision in the four beast. He's now 68 years old and he's going to give this Nebuchadnezzar, he sees this, had seen this massive statue. Well, now he sees these four beasts, and it's very similar to the statue. Each of the beasts represent, again, the different nations, the different eras, I should say, empires really, that would come. We can start with the first one, the lion with the wings of an eagle. A lion is, you know, powerful and strong, but it has wings.

**Tim Moore:** Sounds very impressive. Majestic.

**Nathan Jones:** Yeah, it's the Babylonian Empire again. So, there's a reiteration of the statue with the head of gold is also the wing lion.

**Tim Moore:** And you can go to Babylon to this day, and you can see that imagery presented even on the gates, that this lion with the wings. And let's face it, there are many Western nations, including great Britain, who use the lion as their symbol of majesty. And quite frankly, they are pointing all the way back to this first great empire of Babylon and borrowing the lion is being a majestic imperial symbol. But that beast yielded to another beast, which was a bear raised up on one side with three ribs in his teeth.

**Nathan Jones:** Yes, and so the bear is the second empire, the Medo-Persian empire, because it's raised up on one side, lop sided, it could be because even though the Medes predated the Persians, the Persians were more powerful. It had three ribs and it had conquered three nations. Archeologists are a little argumentative of on this, it's either Egypt, Assyria, Babylon or Egypt, Lydia and Babylon it could be either or. The prophecy was showing that this nation that would replace the Babylonian Empire was also a very powerful, a bear, very powerful, very strong, and the Medo-Persian Empire was very strong. It lasted for 200 years.

**Tim Moore:** It certainly did. And that is followed by yet another beast, a leopard. And this one has four wings on its back. And so it would seem to suggest that this particular empire, while still majestic, moves very swiftly. I mean, a leopard is one of the quickest animals on earth and has wings in this case that make it even faster or even more swift. And so, we believe that this clearly points to Greece that ascended very quickly, and under the leadership, the military leadership of Alexander the Great swept over the known world of that day and age in rapid succession.

**Nathan Jones:** Oh, yeah from 334 to 330 BC in about 4 to 5 years, Alexander had pretty much conquered what was the known world at that time, which is absolutely amazing. But he dies. He has no heir. He has four generals that take over.

**Tim Moore:** Which has the four heads of the leopard. So four heads, four generals. It's obviously right in line.

**Nathan Jones:** And it's important to know these generals, maybe not two, Cassander took over Macedonian and Greece. Lysimachus, Thrace and Asia Minor. But going forward, Ptolemy in Egypt and Seleucus in Syria and Mesopotamia will play a major role when we get to Daniel 11.

**Tim Moore:** They certainly will. And even the succession of folks who followed after those two kings, we get a dramatic scene with a desolation of the temple when a statue of Zeus is

put up and a pig is slaughtered. And that plays even into end times prophecies. But this was a bad succession of rulers, even following Alexander the Great. But then there's this final beast that Daniel sees, which he describes as dreadful and terrifying, extremely strong with large iron teeth and ten horns.

**Nathan Jones:** Yes, very prophetic, because you see this imagery again in Revelation. Ten horns, ten kings, a 11th horn a little king rises up, supplants three and rises to power. And this is where again, remember we said that the legs are the Roman Empire, but it goes down to the toes, which are a mixture of iron and clay. So, it's not like the statue has stopped because the statue is represented as the time of the Gentiles from Nebuchadnezzar to the end of the Antichrist reign. So, we're getting into future prophecy here, is because those toes will represent a future division, possibly of the world, into ten regions, with that little horn rising up and supplanting and taking over the world. But there was a predecessor to the Antichrist, or a type of him, and that was Antiochus Epiphanies.

**Tim Moore:** Antiochus Epiphanies who is that leader who came to Jerusalem. He was tired of the Jews. He thought, I will completely Hellenize them because I will desecrate their temple and force them to worship our pagan gods. And of course he becomes a forerunner, if you will, a pre-fulfillment of the Antichrist, who will do the same thing in the fullness of time. But this begs a question, I'm sure inquiring minds want to know, Nathan, why two presentations of the succession of kingdoms? Why the great and impressive statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw and why the series of beasts that Daniel saw?

**Nathan Jones:** Well, there's a few different theories, but one thing about when the Lord teaches, reinforcement, you have to teach kids over and over again the same thing. And sometimes you use different imagery to bring about the understanding. So, yes, there's actually once we get to the Daniel 8, there's going to be a third one that kind of parallels two of those divisions. So, the Lord is repeating over and over again, giving the same message but different visions.

**Tim Moore:** I think that is exactly right. I think there's another element. I think from man's perspective, that being Nebuchadnezzar the succession of kingdoms that would come was impressive. And from mortal eyes, it is impressive. You got the head of gold and all the other metals in a mighty statue. But from God's perspective, and that's what Daniel saw through the beast, these are not impressive mortal kingdoms. They are ravenous beasts and they get more and more bloodthirsty, more and more devastating to the point that at the end the last beast is simply described as dreadful and terrifying. I think from God's perspective, He isn't impressed by our mortal kingdoms or by the kings of this earth. He sees the kingdoms themselves as devastating.

**Nathan Jones:** Yeah, each animal gets progressively worse, more monstrous. Isn't that what failed flawed human government is? This is a history of Gentile world power getting worse and worse. We worry about the times we live in. We worry sometimes, of people who don't believe in a Pre-Trib Rapture, they're going to have to live through the ultimate expression of evil in the one World Empire. But again, the Lord shows through these visions, too, I believe that He's above and beyond all this, that He's got it all controlled. His kingdom will be that stone that will smash the Gentile nations.

**Tim Moore:** Well, that's a great point, Nathan. And yet we come to the last of a series of visions that we have to address, and frankly, we don't have time to get into it in fullness. But that's chapter 8 and 11, where Daniel introduces this goat and a ram, and just the very word goat suggests the modern interpretation, the g.o.a.t, the greatest of all time. So, you think the greatest basketball player of all time may be Michael Jordan. The greatest president of all time, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln. But we're talking about the greatest dictator and leader of all time and then the ram to follow. So, what does this really point to?

**Nathan Jones:** Okay. Well, we got another series of animals. So, remember, the chest of silver that was Greece, and then remember, in the next and we were learned that it's represented also by a bear, but here it's represented by a ram. A ram strong, and powerful, and conquering all. And that, again, was the Medo-Persian Empire. But this also showed a goat, a very angry goat, almost like a unicorn it had one horn, and it just came charging and it wanted to smash and defeat and trample the ram. So the belly of bronze in the statue was the leopard of the beast. But now here in chapter eight, it's also a goat. And it's about Greece conquering the Medo-Persian Empire. The one horn is Alexander the Great, but then the horn breaks into four, and that's his four generals.

**Tim Moore:** Well, you know, it's great insight that you provide, because one of Alexander's motivations was outrage that the Medo-Persians had allied with his enemies. And he said, well, if you're going to ally with my enemies when I come to power, I'm coming after you. And he certainly did with great force and again, with great swiftness and severity conquering the world.

You know, we can't get into every detail, and there's quite a bit of detail in these two chapters. Chapter 11 alone, if you go through a litany of the battles it describes, historians have been able to equate that directly to the battles that Alexander fought. We would just encourage you to get a copy of Todd Hampson's book, "The Non-Prophet's Guide to the Book of Daniel," and he has a large section devoted to stepping through the history of all that is described in Chapter 11. And that's what Alexander himself was shown when he came into the land and was so impressed that this Hebrew prophet that lived in the time of Nebuchadnezzar in the early Medo-Persian Empire was able to describe him and the battles he fought with such detail.

**Nathan Jones:** Yeah, you had the Seleucids in Syria, you had the Ptolemies in Egypt, and they both vied for power and who was in the middle? Israel. So each of these armies, through generations, all the way up to the Romans, were ping-ponging with poor Israel in the middle. And that's what chapter 11 is, it goes in a direct detail about each of the battles, each of the kings, and it's very complicated. But thank goodness for Todd's book.

**Tim Moore:** Thank goodness for Todd's book, we really advocate that. You know, even Josephus Flavius, who wrote about Jewish history and Roman history after the fall of Israel and Jerusalem, cites these chapters of Daniel as being fulfilled by the actual history of the Greek Empire and later Rome. So already in the day and age, just after Jesus Christ, it was fully understood that these chapters had been fulfilled. Folks, all of God's Word will be fulfilled. But we hope our discussion today of these passages in Daniel show you that Daniel saw in a near term fulfillment what God had shown him.



## **Closing**

**Tim Moore:** If it feels like we provided a sweeping overview of ancient history today, that is because we have. You cannot appreciate the amazing prophecies revealed to Daniel without realizing that they addressed specific historical episodes.

**Nathan Jones:** There was a time when study of the ancient world was a given in any Western education, but that is no longer the case. Our schools barely even teach American history, let alone the history of ancient empires like Babylon, Greece or Rome. So Christians must be committed to studying in order to learn and understand. As we've done today, we must start with Scripture. God's Word was given so that we might know what God wants us to know about Him, about His interaction with our fallen world, and about His plan for mankind.

**Tim Moore:** We've emphasized that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy throughout the Bible. Where does Jesus figure into these historic prophecies that have largely been fulfilled already? He's there as the culmination of human history and as the Mighty One who supersedes the petty aspirations of every mortal king. In Nebuchadnezzar's vision He is the stone cut without hands that crushes the statue and grows into a great mountain that fills the whole earth. Following Daniel's vision of a series of beast, he is the son of man who comes with the clouds of heaven to approach the ancient of days to be given dominion and a kingdom that all peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him.

**Nathan Jones:** Next week we'll turn from our consideration of Daniel's prophecy that have already been fulfilled in history to those that await fulfillment still today and point to the end times and the coming of the Lord. Today, we can assure you that we've only scratched the surface of materials contained in Todd's wonderful book. If you'd like to get a copy, just call the number you see on the screen or visit our online store and for only \$20, and that includes shipping, we'll be glad to send you a copy. It will become a valuable resource as you study God's prophetic Word and anticipate our soon coming King and the eternal Empire He will reign over.

**Tim Moore:** You can also visit our website to explore new Deep Dive with Dave articles and special Prophetic Perspectives that accompany this series. We've emphasized throughout our Daniel series that you have an advantage over the great prophet Daniel, you have hindsight. That allows you to see patterns and fulfillment that Daniel could only anticipate or see as in a glass darkly as he gazed into the future. Daniel was also a student of prophecy himself and understood the timing of the exile based on his study of Jeremiah. We hope this series has motivated you to dive into an intense study of God's Word for the revelations it contains for us today. We'll see you again next week. For now, join us in lifting up the praise of Daniel "O Lord, the great and awesome God who keeps His covenant and loving kindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments." Godspeed.

## **End of Program**