

YOUTH



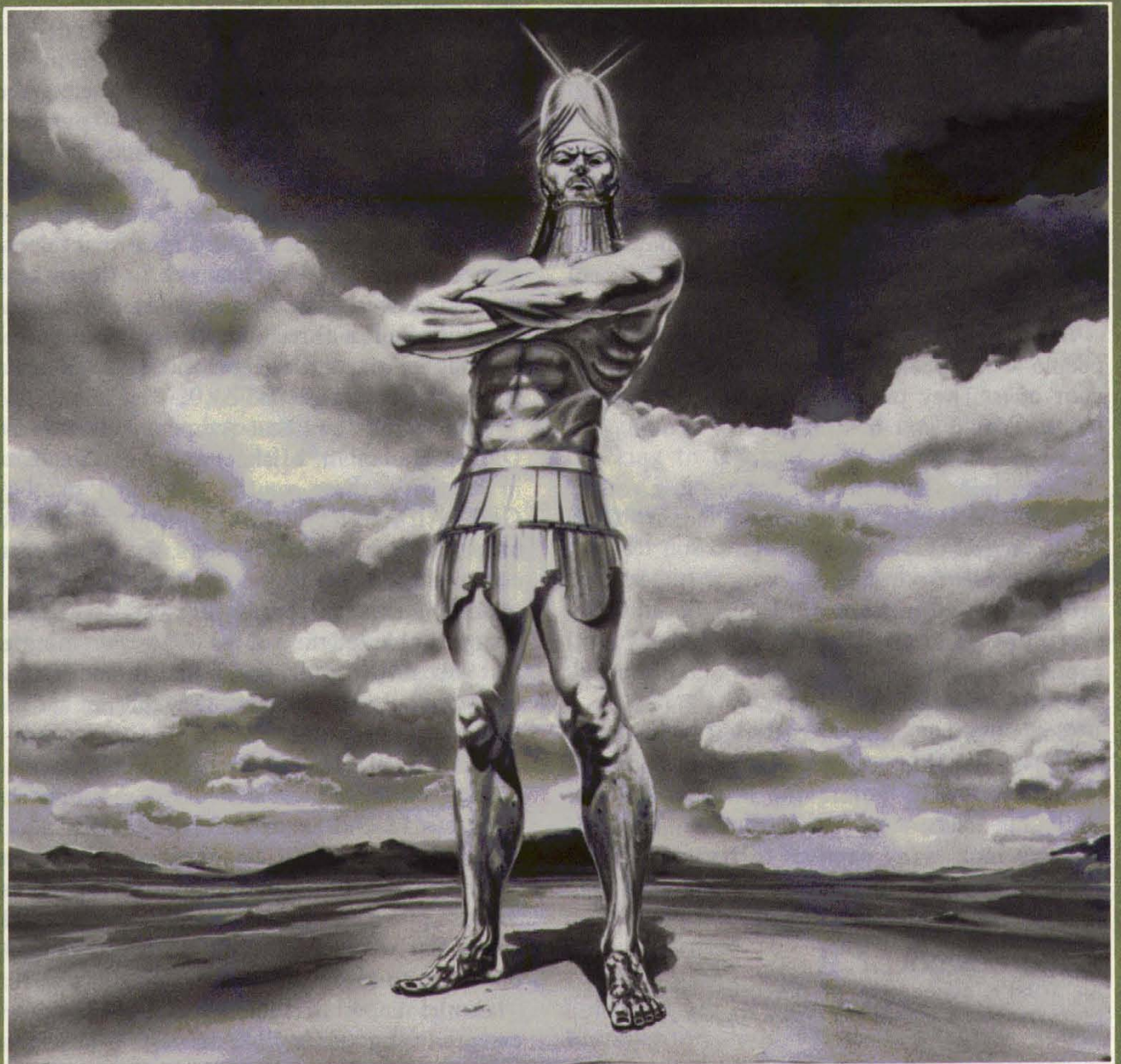
LEVEL 7

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 5



Daniel, A Man of God

DANIEL, A MAN OF GOD

Picture yourself as a young teenager about 14 or 15 years old, living in the city of Jerusalem about 600 years before Christ. You have always tried to obey God. You have wealthy parents who are related to the ruler of your country.

One day a vast army invades your homeland and lays siege to your city. Many of your friends and relatives are killed when the troops attack. The soldiers capture your king and chain him. Then they loot many treasures from the Temple of God where you worship.

Suppose then you are taken captive by these people who speak a language different from your own. They take you far, far away from home. Would you be frightened? Would you continue to obey God?

These things actually did happen to a young man named Daniel, whose name means "God is the judge."

Remember from the last lesson that God had promised the nation of Judah would be overthrown and that the Jews would go into captivity because of their idolatry and disobedience to God's commandments.

God's words came to pass. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged Jerusalem approximately 600 years before the birth of Christ. This king took many riches from the Temple. He also took many captives to Babylon. King Jehoiakim of Judah was one of the captives.

Other captives included the princes of Judah and many of King Jehoiakim's relatives.

DANIEL GOES TO SCHOOL

King Nebuchadnezzar decided to select the best educated captives for a special purpose. He told Ashpenaz, a trusted official, to bring certain of the young Jews to the royal court. Ashpenaz selected handsome young men who were well educated and who had special talents and abilities. The king wanted to train these youths to serve him at the court. So he put them through a three-year period of intensive training in the knowledge of Babylon's most learned men (Daniel 1:3-5).

Among the Jews that Ashpenaz chose were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Even in captivity, these youths continued to obey God. Although the Babylonians tried to influence their religious beliefs, the young men continually looked to the one true God.

King Nebuchadnezzar provided food from his own table for the youths in special training. But because Daniel and his three friends obeyed God's dietary laws, they did not eat the king's food, which undoubtedly included unclean meat (Daniel 1:8). Daniel knew the laws of clean and unclean meats, as found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

Daniel talked with Melzar, the man Ashpenaz set over Daniel and his three friends. "Please prove us," he said. "Give us vegetables, grain and water for ten days. Then compare our looks to those who eat the king's food."

Daniel knew that God's dietary laws are essential for good health. Although Melzar was

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

An artist's conception of the great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream (Daniel 2).

Painting by C. Winston Taylor

afraid the diet would not work, he agreed to a short ten-day trial. Melzar was surprised! At the end of ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked much better than those who ate the king's food.

Since God made our bodies and created food, He knows best what we should eat. Daniel knew the laws of proper diet would enable him and his friends to be in their best physical and mental condition. The health of these four students so impressed Melzar that he continued to give them the food they chose from that time on (Daniel 1:11-16).

Ashpenaz gave Babylonian names to these young Jews. He called Daniel "Belteshazzar." He named Hananiah "Shadrach." Mishael was called "Meshach." Azariah's new name was "Abed-nego" (Daniel 1:7).

When the three-year training program was over, Daniel and his three close friends were the best of all the students. The king himself talked with them and considered them ten times wiser than all the so-called "wise" men—the magicians and astrologers—in Babylon (Daniel 1:19-20). The king gave Daniel and his three friends important positions in his kingdom.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

As the months passed, Daniel continued to obey God and keep His commandments. Besides wisdom and good judgment, God also gave Daniel special understanding to interpret dreams and visions (Daniel 1:17). Daniel was well aware that this understanding came from God.

King Nebuchadnezzar's court was full of magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and others who considered themselves wise. But these men were not wise by God's standards. It is God who gives wisdom, as shown in Proverbs 2:6: "For the LORD giveth _____: out of his mouth cometh _____ and _____."

One night, Nebuchadnezzar had an especially troubling dream. It bothered the king so

much he could not sleep. He knew the dream was important and wanted to know its meaning. But by morning the details of the dream had faded.

In the morning Nebuchadnezzar called all his "wise" men together. "Tell me the dream and its meaning," he commanded. "O King, live forever!" the wise men answered. "Tell us the dream and we will show you the meaning." These men knew that they themselves did not have the power to know what the king had dreamed.

"I do not remember what the dream was about," Nebuchadnezzar answered impatiently. Then he angrily added, "If you don't tell me the dream, you shall be cut into pieces and your homes will be knocked down and used for manure piles." Nebuchadnezzar undoubtedly knew that if these men could tell him the dream, they would also be able to reveal its true meaning.

"On the other hand," the king promised, "if one of you is able to reveal the dream and its meaning to me, I will give him gifts, rewards and great honor."

Again the astrologers and magicians begged the king to tell them the dream. They said, "There is not a man on earth who can do such an unusual thing. Only the gods can do it and they do not dwell with flesh." This was quite the wrong thing to tell King Nebuchadnezzar. He was furious! "Out! Out! All of you will die!" he bellowed. "All the wise men in Babylon will die!"

The king's decree included Daniel and his three close friends. When men came to get Daniel for execution, he was quite shocked at the news. Daniel asked Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, "Why is the king's decree so hasty?" (Daniel 2:1-15.)

Arioch then told Daniel the story of the dream and how no one was wise enough to tell and interpret the king's dream. Daniel requested and was granted permission to appear before Nebuchadnezzar. He then asked the king to give him time, and that he would

then tell the king the dream and its interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar agreed.

Daniel went immediately to his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah and told them what had happened. He asked them to pray that God would grant them mercy and reveal the dream and its interpretation so that they would not have to perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

All four of these young men prayed fervently, and God heard them. In a night vision God revealed the dream to Daniel. He praised and

thanked God for His answer and then went to see the king. As Daniel revealed the dream to the king, he showed great humility. He did not brag to the king about how much he knew. Instead, Daniel made it very clear to Nebuchadnezzar that God deserved the praise and honor, because it was He who revealed the dream to Daniel (Daniel 2:16-28).

Here is how Daniel described the dream. "You saw a great image like a man," he said. "Its head was of fine gold, and its breast and arms were silver. The image's belly and thighs were brass. His two legs were iron, and his feet were part of iron and part of clay.

"You saw a stone hit the feet of the image. The image broke into many pieces and was scattered by the wind. The stone which hit the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

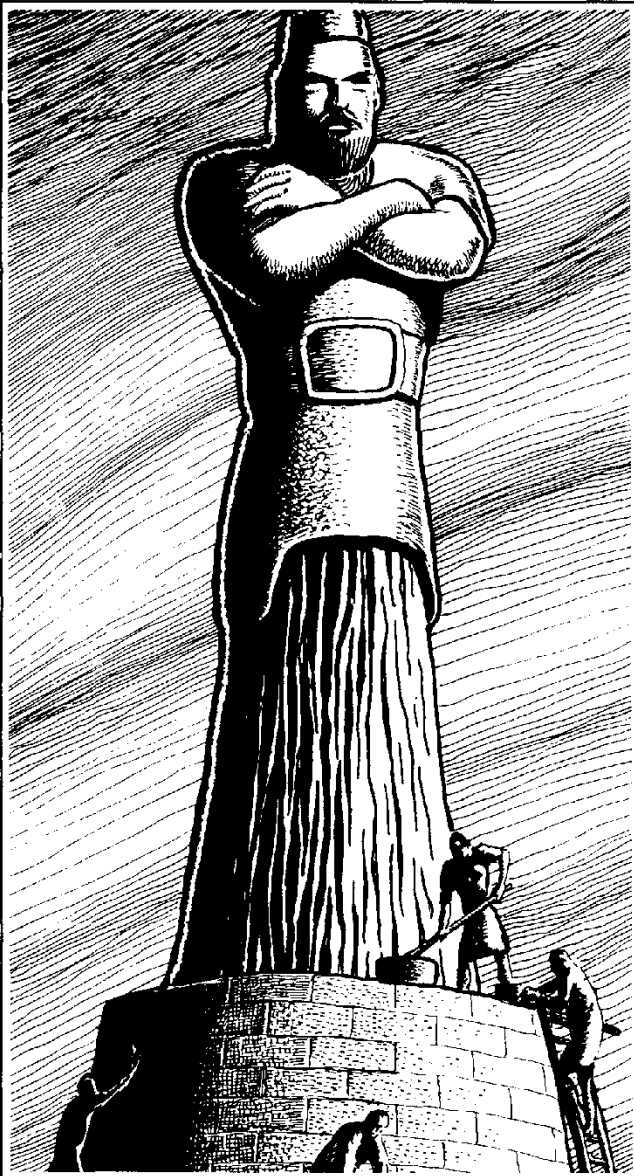
Revealing the interpretation of the dream, Daniel said, "O King, you are the head of gold. The God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength and glory. The other parts of the body represent kings who will rule *after* you. The stone which crushed the image and became a great mountain represents the Kingdom of God which will overthrow all other kingdoms and last forever.

"The great God has made known to you what will happen in the future. The dream is certain and its interpretation is sure," concluded Daniel (Daniel 2:31-45).

Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed that he fell on his face before Daniel and said, "Truly your God is a God of gods." He then made Daniel one of his chief officials and gave him many gifts. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were also given high positions at Daniel's request.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLDEN IMAGE

Although Nebuchadnezzar had learned from Daniel about the supreme God in heaven, the king did not worship Him. Instead, he built a great golden image and commanded everyone in his kingdom to bow down and worship the



Nebuchadnezzar commanded all in his kingdom to fall down and worship the golden image.

image when they heard a special kind of music. Nebuchadnezzar was very proud of the gigantic image. He decreed death in a fiery furnace for anyone who failed to bow down to the image when the music was played.

Of course, God's people are not to worship images. Such worship breaks the _____ commandment. Turn to Exodus 20:4-6 for the answer.

Nebuchadnezzar was furious when he heard that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego would not worship the image. In a rage, he commanded that the disobedient men be brought before him.

Guards immediately brought these men before the king, who asked them, "Is it true that you refuse to worship the image?"

The three men respectfully answered the furious king. Read their answer in Daniel 3:16-18, and fill in the blanks. "... O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful [meaning: overcautious or hesitant. They spoke right up

when asked what they were doing.] to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we _____ is _____ to _____ us from the _____, and he will _____ us out of thine _____, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not _____ thy gods, nor _____ the _____ which thou hast set up."

Upon hearing these words, Nebuchadnezzar became so angry he commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. He then ordered his strongest soldiers to bind the three men and cast them into the furnace. The soldiers quickly grabbed the three men and threw them into the fire. The heat from the fire was so intense it instantly killed the soldiers!

Watching from a safe distance, Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace and was astonished at what he saw. The men were



The soldiers were killed instantly from the intense heat of the furnace.

walking freely about in the fire! “Weren’t there only three men thrown into the furnace?” asked Nebuchadnezzar, blinking in bewilderment. “Why do I see *four* men, and why are they not hurt?”

The king continued to watch. After a few moments the king commanded Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to walk out of the furnace. Not only were they unhurt, but there was not even the smell of smoke on them. The fourth person in the fire had delivered them. He was an angel sent from God’s throne in heaven (Daniel 3:19-27).

God used these three faithful men to remind Nebuchadnezzar that there is a supreme Ruler in heaven. Nebuchadnezzar, however, had such a consuming awareness of his own power as king that he still did not realize how small and powerless he was compared to the Creator God. Little was he aware of what was soon to

happen to him because of his overconfidence in himself.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S SECOND DREAM

One night, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed an unusual dream that none of the Babylonian wise men could interpret. In this dream, he saw a great tree so big that it reached to heaven and provided food and shelter for many animals. But a being from heaven caused the tree to be cut down, leaving only a stump. The being from heaven said, “Let his heart be changed from that of a man’s and let a beast’s heart be given to him; and let seven times pass over him” (Daniel 4:13-16).

When told about the dream by Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel knew immediately what the dream meant. He was troubled over its meaning and hesitated to tell the king its meaning. Nebuchadnezzar could see Daniel’s



Nebuchadnezzar became insane and wandered in the fields as a beast for seven years as prophesied.

concerned look. "Tell me the meaning even if it is bad news," the king said.

"Only your enemies would care to hear what I have to say," Daniel replied. "Here is the meaning of your dream. You are the great tree. You have become great and strong, and your kingdom rules the world. The cutting down of the tree on God's orders means you will lose your position as King of Babylon. For seven years you will live as a wild man among the beasts." Daniel added, "Before this happens, it would be wise to stop sinning and begin showing mercy to the poor. If you were to do that, these miserable events might not happen for a long time" (Daniel 4:10-28).

A HAUGHTY KING IS HUMBLLED

Nebuchadnezzar did not change his ways, and in one year his dream came true.

One day as the king was walking in his palace, he boasted, "See great Babylon. *I* have built it by *my* power for the honor and glory of *my* majesty!"

As Nebuchadnezzar was speaking, a voice from heaven said, "O King, the kingdom is departed from you" (Daniel 5:29-32).

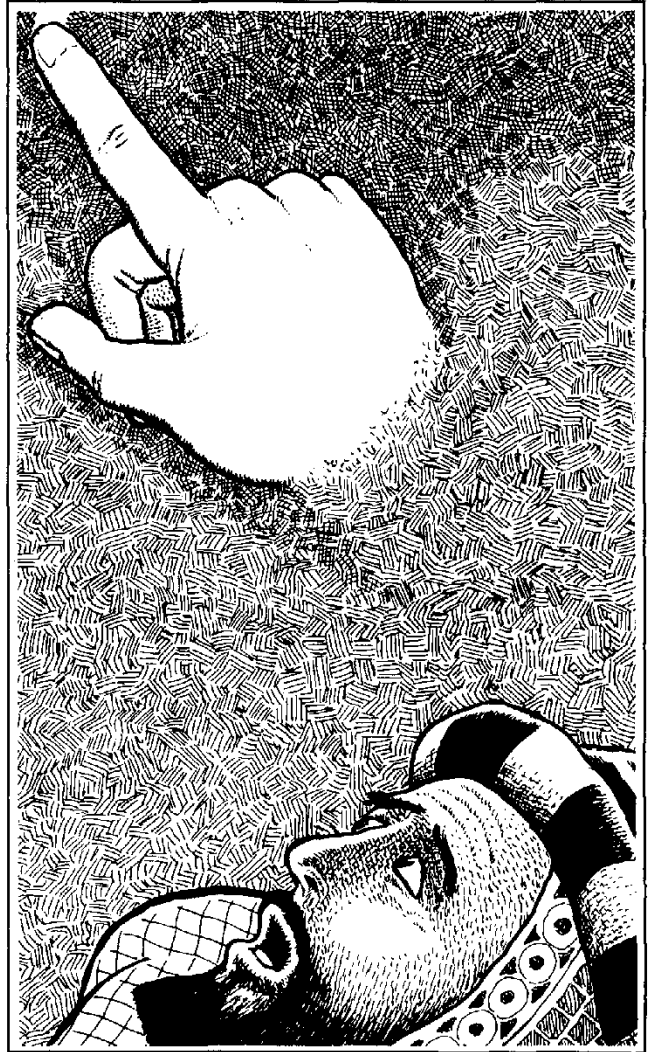
God's words came to pass quickly. Nebuchadnezzar became insane within the hour. For seven years he wandered in the fields as a beast. His hair grew long like eagles' feathers and his nails like claws.

At the end of seven years, God restored Nebuchadnezzar's sanity. Nebuchadnezzar now knew he was dealing with the most high God. He praised and blessed Him. Read the king's words in Daniel 4:34-37. Write out verse 37 which shows us what God is able to do to the proud. _____

God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to rule over his kingdom several more years before he died.

HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

Following Nebuchadnezzar's rule, the Babylo-



Belshazzar stared in fright as the mysterious hand wrote a message on the wall.

nian kingdom lost much power. A wicked and idolatrous man named Belshazzar became king.

One evening while Belshazzar was feasting with his officials, he decided that the ordinary drinking cups were not good enough for such a great king and his guests. He commanded that wine be poured into the vessels Nebuchadnezzar had looted from the Temple in Jerusalem.

Belshazzar drank wine from the golden cups and praised his gods of gold, silver and brass. He should have praised the Eternal God who made these substances.

During the feasting, a mysterious hand suddenly appeared and a finger began writing on the wall. The king stared in fright. The

finger wrote, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." None of the king's so-called "wise" men could interpret the meaning. Then someone remembered Daniel, who lost his high rank in the kingdom soon after Nebuchadnezzar's death. Belshazzar commanded that Daniel be immediately brought before him.

"The words which were written on the wall," Daniel explained, "mean that your kingdom is at an end. You have proven yourself to be an unwise ruler. Your enemies are already at the gates of the city to take your kingdom from you." That night, the prophetic words came true. The kingdom of the Medes and Persians took Babylon and killed King Belshazzar (Daniel 5:24-31).

THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL

Darius the Mede became ruler of the conquered nation, and set up a staff of men to help him administer the government. He noticed Daniel, because he was so talented and wise, and had such a good attitude. Darius gave him a high position in the government.

Some of Darius' officials became very jealous of Daniel. They tried to find fault with him, but were unable because he faithfully carried out his duties. They knew he prayed three times a day, and hoped to use this against him.

These wicked officials went to King Darius and flattered him. "Let us have a royal decree in your honor," they said. "Let no man ask any petition of anyone but you, O great king, for thirty days."

This idea pleased Darius. "Also," the men added, "let any who disobey be thrown into a den of lions" (Daniel 6:1-9).

Darius agreed to this and he wrote out the decree and signed it. The sly officials knew that no official decree of a Median king could be changed.

Soon Daniel heard of the decree. But it did not stop him from praying three times a day, something he had been doing for a long time. When it was time for him to pray, he went into his house by his open window. He kneeled as he

always did and prayed to God (Daniel 6:10).

What would you have done? God expects us to obey those in authority over us (Romans 13:1-7). But when man's laws conflict with God's, what should we do? Acts 5:29 shows us the answer. "... We ought to obey _____ rather than _____."

Daniel feared and trusted the Eternal more than any physical king. The men plotting against Daniel found him praying, as they knew they would, and then told Darius. The king was most unhappy to hear this. He admired Daniel and wanted to change the decree to save him. But the evil officials reminded Darius of the law of the Medes and Persians that no official decree could be changed. So the unhappy king finally had Daniel thrown into a den of lions.

GOD DELIVERS DANIEL

Darius was so upset at what he had done, he spent the entire night in great concern about Daniel's well-being. He didn't eat or sleep. Early in the morning Darius hurried down to the lions' den. "O Daniel," he called, "is your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions?" Then Daniel answered, "My God has sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths. I am not hurt" (Daniel 6:18-22).

Darius immediately freed Daniel and had the evil officials thrown into the den. The king then wrote another decree commanding his subjects to honor the living God whom Daniel worshipped (Daniel 6:25-27).

What does God say will happen to people who deliberately set out to harm others? Write out Proverbs 26:27. _____

Did the evil and wicked men who plotted against Daniel receive a just punishment? How does God say men will be judged? Matthew 7:1-2. _____

GOD SHOWS DANIEL THE FUTURE

At times, God contacted Daniel by visions in which He revealed events of the future (Daniel 7:1; 8:1-2). Daniel carefully wrote down what God revealed to him in these visions. God's prophetic messages about the future are often given in symbols. A symbol is something that stands for something else. For example, a lion is a symbol for courage. A crown is a symbol for a king.

When we read about things in the Bible that are described in symbolic terms, we must be very careful not to misunderstand what is meant. It is God who reveals in different passages of the Bible the meanings of these symbols for us.

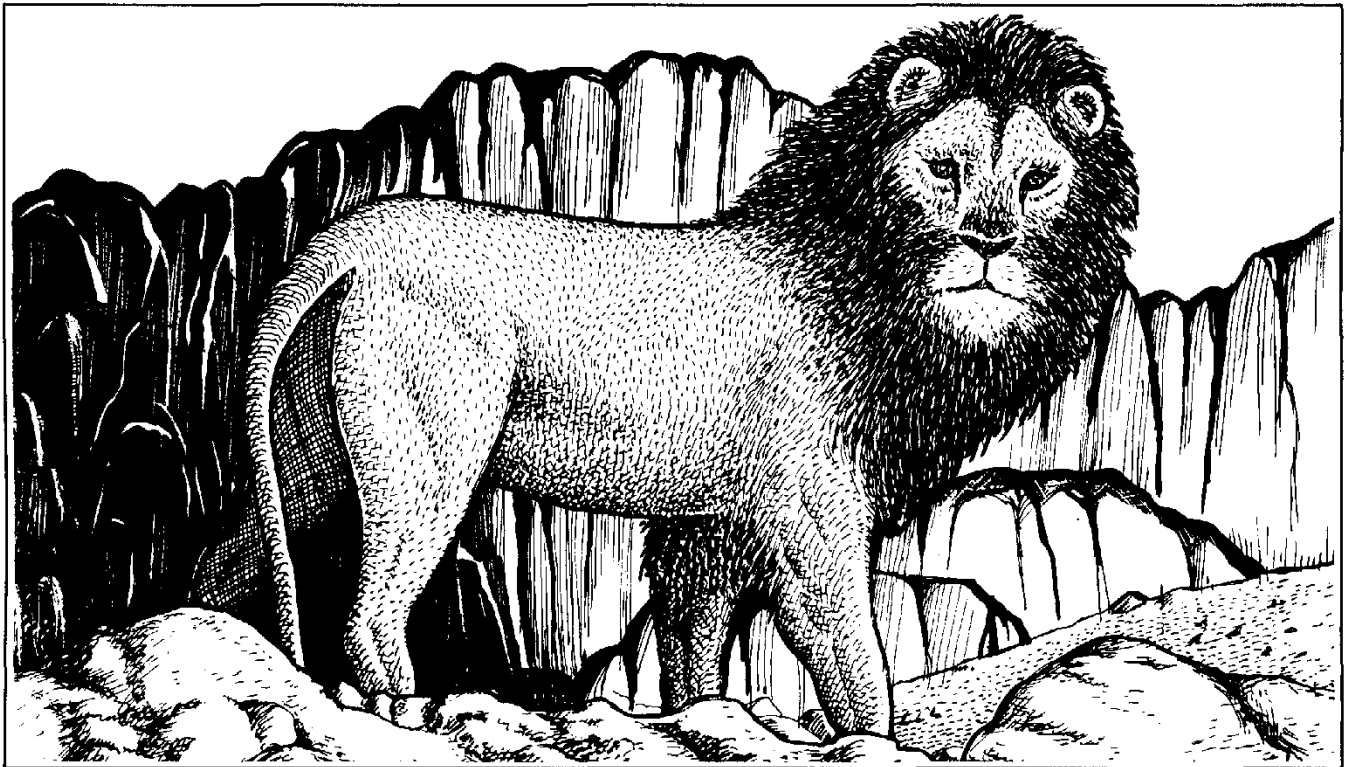
For example, what is a mountain often used to represent? _____ (Daniel 2:35, 44). Also, a star is used as a symbol in the Bible. What does it represent? _____ (Revelation 1:20).

One vision that God gave Daniel was of four great beasts. This vision is recorded in Daniel

7. The first beast was like a lion, the second like a bear, and the third like a leopard with wings. But the fourth beast was very strong and dreadful, unlike any animals we know. This beast had ten horns. In the vision a little horn came up among the ten. This little horn uprooted three of the ten horns.

God revealed to Daniel that these great beasts represented four kingdoms that would rule the world. We know from Daniel 2 that the first kingdom was the Babylonian Empire. The second, third and fourth beasts represented succeeding world ruling empires. From history we know these were the Persian Empire, the Greco-Macedonian Empire under Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire. The ten horns of the fourth beast represented ten successive kings and their governments that would arise out of the fourth beast—the Roman Empire!

God told Daniel that the little horn of the fourth beast would cause God's people much trouble in the last days. But God, who is the supreme Ruler and Judge of all, will take away



God sent an angel to protect Daniel by closing the mouths of the lions.

the little horn's power. At that time God will set up His Kingdom on earth, which will last forever.

In another vision, recorded in Daniel 8, Daniel saw a ram and a he-goat. The goat struck the ram and broke the ram's two horns. This prophecy was fulfilled in the days of the Persian and Greco-Macedonian Empires (Daniel 8:20-25).

You might like to draw on a separate sheet of paper the symbolic animals as described in chapters 7 and 8 of Daniel. Be sure to use the details described in these accounts.

GOD'S PEOPLE WILL KNOW THE FUTURE

Approximately 90% of the prophecies recorded in the Bible concern events yet to occur in the future. Those who are obeying God and keeping His commandments will understand what will soon take place.

There are a number of prophecies in the book of Daniel that God says are sealed until the time of the end (Daniel 12:4, 9). In verse 9, God said, "... Go thy way, Daniel: for the _____ are _____ and _____ till the _____ of the _____."

We are now living just before the "time of the end" when many of these prophecies will occur. It will be very exciting to see the end-time prophecies soon become reality!

God promises He will not do anything without first revealing it to His servants, the prophets (Amos 3:7). God has already revealed much of the meaning of prophecy to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, His Apostle today. You may wish to study the booklet, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled At Last*, written by Mr. Armstrong. This booklet shows us, from the Bible, what will soon happen in world affairs. Also, the booklet *Who is the Beast?* further explains the meaning of the beasts God showed Daniel.

Daniel took prophecy very seriously. One day he decided to fast in order to draw closer to God. Daniel wanted to receive understanding

of a certain vision he had seen. God answered Daniel's prayer and sent a powerful angel to give Daniel the explanation (Daniel 10:1-21).

The book of Daniel records the names of two very powerful, loyal angels of God. Who are these angels of God? _____ (Daniel 9:21) and _____ (Daniel 10:13).

GOD THE ALL-POWERFUL JUDGE

Do you remember what Daniel's name means? It means, "_____." The entire book of Daniel shows God as the Ruler over all rulers. It shows God as the supreme Judge.

King Nebuchadnezzar learned how great God is. God showed King Belshazzar His great power and judgments when He took His throne away.

A physical king threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego into the fiery furnace. Another king threw Daniel into a lion's den. But God's *judgment* was that Daniel and his friends, who obeyed Him, should live.

The prophecies also show that God is the ultimate Ruler and Judge. Do you remember the stone that crushed the image in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream? It represents the soon-coming return of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Man's kingdom's will all be destroyed. But the Kingdom of God will last forever. God's obedient servants will rule with Him, as shown in Daniel 7:27. "And the _____ and _____, and the _____ of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the _____ of the _____ of the most High, whose _____ is an _____ kingdom, and all dominions shall _____ and _____ him."

DANIEL A MAN OF GOD

God called Daniel a righteous man (Ezekiel 14:14). Daniel set a great example for us to

follow. His character traits are listed in various places throughout the book of Daniel. Match up the following character traits of Daniel with the correct chapter and verse below.

- Faithfulness A. Daniel 2:23
- Thankfulness B. Daniel 6:4

- Courage to speak truth C. Daniel 6:10
- Humility D. Daniel 5:22-23
- Constant in prayer E. Daniel 2:30

Daniel was truly a man of God. We should all strive to develop these same character traits in our lives.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS

Circle the names of the animals in the following lists which would have been permissible for Daniel to eat according to God's law. Use an encyclopedia to find descriptions of the animals with which you may be unfamiliar. From the characteristics of the animals, you will be able to discover whether or not they are good for food. Remember that God's laws about clean and unclean meats are found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.



HORSE

EAGLE

ANTELOPE

SALMON

GIRAFFE

RABBIT

SWINE

MOOSE

CHICKEN

SHARK

CORMORANT

DEER

MOUSE

VULTURE

OWL

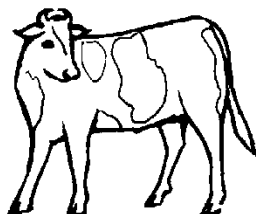
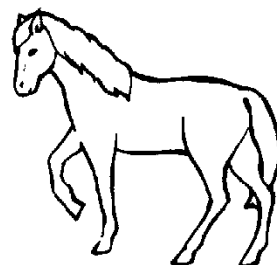
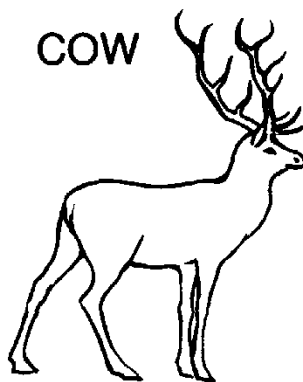
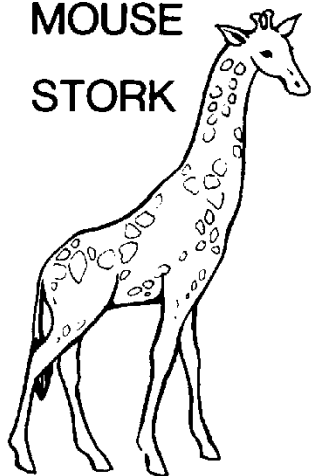
ELEPHANT

STORK

SHEEP

COW

BAT



SCRAMBLED MYSTERY MESSAGE

Complete the statements by filling in the blanks. Then use the circled letters to reveal a message from God to King Belshazzar.

1. King _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ of Babylon besieged Jerusalem about 600 years before the birth of _ _ _ _ _ .
2. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ , a trusted official, chose _ _ _ _ _ , Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to be trained to serve in the royal court.
3. Daniel asked _ _ _ _ _ to allow him and his friends to go on a ten-day diet of _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ , grain and water.
4. King Nebuchadnezzar decided to give Daniel time to find the _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ of his dream, but he refused to give the _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ time.
5. The _ _ _ _ 's first dream brought over-confidence in himself, while the second revealed that eventually he would be _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ by the most high God.
6. King _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ , who ruled after Nebuchadnezzar, was a wicked king. He was killed by his enemies after seeing some prophetic words.
7. Daniel was put into a _ _ _ _ of _ _ _ _ because the men plotting against him found him praying to God.
8. God's messages about the future are often in _ _ _ _ _ _ .
9. One lesson we can learn from reading the book of Daniel is that God is the _ _ _ _ _ over all _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ .

The mystery message is:

" _ _ _ _ _ , _ _ _ _ _ , _ _ _ _ _ , _ _ _ _ _ ."