



# DANIEL

BELOVED STORIES, BIZARRO VISIONS

# The Total Collapse of Arrogance

## *The Tale of Nebuchadnezzar's Breakdown*

- ▶ Nebuchadnezzar's introduction (4:1-3)
- ▶ Nebuchadnezzar's dream (4:4-18)
- ▶ Daniel's explanation (4:19-27)
- ▶ Nebuchadnezzar's collapse (4:28-33)
- ▶ Nebuchadnezzar's restoration (4:34-37)

# Watch How Daniel Works

*Beloved Stories, Bizarre Visions*

- ▶ The stories focus on a few repeated themes
  - ▶ The supremacy of God
  - ▶ The folly and futility of pride
  - ▶ The necessity and reward of faith
- ▶ The visions work a certain way
  - ▶ They only show the future to help God's people live in the present
  - ▶ Always think about Daniel's near future first

# Watchers? What's THAT all about?

*Pay attention to the details in the text*


- ▶ They are heavenly beings (v 13)
- ▶ They carry messages (v 14)
- ▶ They issue decrees (v 17)
- ▶ Their decrees are God's decrees (v 24)
- ▶ They are “holy ones” (repeatedly)



# Watchers? What's THAT all about?

*What else can we find out?*

- ▶ This is the only place this word appears in the Bible
  - ▶ However, a similarly weird scene is in 1 Kings 22
- ▶ The Book of Enoch (300-100 BC) speaks of the Watchers
  - ▶ But the ones it talks about are rebels against God
  - ▶ It clearly re-tells Genesis 6:1-4
  - ▶ Jude (14-15) and 2 Peter (2:4-5) refer to this passage
- ▶ This is a very, very deep rabbit hole, so be careful
  - ▶ Remember Col 2:18; Hebrews' downplaying of angels



Nabopolassar (658 to 605 BC) Labashi-Marduk (reign: 556 BC)  
Neriglissar (reign: 560 to 556 BC) Evil-Merodach (Reign: 562 to  
560 BC) Nebuchadnezzar II (c. 634 to 562 BC) Nabonidus  
(reign: 556 to 539 BC) Belshazzar (co-regent with Nabonidus:  
555 to 539 BC) Nitocris (daughter) Amytis (daughter of  
Astyages, king of Media) Kasšaya (daughter) Evil-Merodach –  
Nebuchadnezzar's son is mentioned in 2 Kings 25:27-30





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# 3 OF THE WILDEST BIBLE PROPHECIES THAT DEFINITELY HAVEN'T BEEN FULFILLED YET

- ▶ ***The Return*** Our Lord Jesus Christ will return physically and literally to consummate the Kingdom and bring history to its close.
- ▶ ***Resurrection Day*** Our Lord will raise living and the dead to stand before him.
- ▶ ***Judgment Day*** Our Lord will judge the living and the dead, to separate the righteous from the wicked and give them their just and eternal reward.

# 4 WAYS OF SEEING BIBLE PROPHECIES THAT DO OR DON'T WORK WITH DANIEL

- ▶ **Futurism** The wildest Bible prophecies mostly will be fulfilled in our FUTURE
- ▶ **Preterism** The wildest Bible prophecies mostly have been fulfilled ALREADY, in our past
- ▶ **Idealism** The wildest Bible prophecies mostly are given to reveal God's IDEAL view of things
- ▶ **Historicism** The wildest Bible prophecies have been fulfilled across HISTORY

# 4 UNDERSTANDINGS OF REVELATION 20

## WHERE DANIEL DOES OR DOESN'T FIT

- ▶ **Postmillennialism** Jesus will return AFTER the 1000-year reign, which began at the Ascension and is spreading on earth.
- ▶ **Amillennialism** There is NO earthly Millennium; Jesus' reign is heavenly and is happening right now. He will come back physically when the Father tells him to.
- ▶ **Dispensational premillennialism** Jesus will return BEFORE his earthly reign begins, and after a 7-year Tribulation.
- ▶ **Classic premillennialism** Jesus will return BEFORE his earthly reign begins, with or without any Tribulation.

# WHERE I'M COMING FROM

- ▶ I grew up hearing dispensational premillennialism taught, including its peculiar ways of handling Daniel's prophecies.
- ▶ I've been studying the Bible and its prophecies (including in Daniel) for decades now, and I've become firmly convinced that D.P. overcomplicates and confuses things badly.
- ▶ You heard me teach through an overview of ALL of the prophecies of the Bible, including a deep dive into Revelation, from a preterist, postmillennial perspective. I did this because I was and am convinced that it is the most careful and faithful way to understand the WHOLE Bible.
- ▶ I'll be approaching Daniel likewise from a preterist, postmillennial perspective, because I am convinced that is the most careful and faithful way to understand the book of Daniel.



# DANIEL SPEAKS IN STORIES & VISIONS

- ▶ These prophetic visions were given so that the Jews of the Restoration period, from the time of the Persian kings onward, would know the times and events surrounding the coming of the Messiah.
- ▶ These prophetic visions are also given so that all God's people, in every age, might see that our God wills & works & knows & shows the end from the beginning for our salvation.
- ▶ These stories are told to help God's people remember who they are and trust in God's salvation, wherever we find ourselves in time and space.



# DANIEL, HIS FRIENDS, & THEIR FOOD

- ▶ The early Exile, under Jehoiakim
- ▶ “Cultural imperialism” is the way our Babylonian captors put it
- ▶ Food sacrificed to idols, as in Romans 14 & 15 and 1 Corinthians 8 – 10
- ▶ What are the ways you have “refused the food of the Babylonians”?
- ▶ How does God want us to relate to “Babylon” today?



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# Neo-Babylonian Dynasty

## *Nebuchadnezzar's Family Tree*

Nabopolassar (reigned 626 to 605 BC)



Nebuchadnezzar II (reigned 605 to 562 BC)

# GOD'S VIEW OF THE EMPIRES OF MAN

## *CENTERED ON JERUSALEM*

- ▶ HEAD OF GOLD → the Neo-Babylonian Empire → 605 to 539 BC
- ▶ ARMS OF SILVER → the Medo-Persian Empire → 539 to 330 BC
- ▶ THIGHS OF BRASS → the Alexandrian Empire → 330 to 64 BC
- ▶ LEGS OF IRON with toes of iron & clay → the Roman Empire → 64 BC until AD 70
- ▶ GREAT MOUNTAIN filling the earth → the Kingdom of God
  - began at Jesus' baptism around AD 30,
  - was confirmed at the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and
  - continues growing today

# A FEW EXPLANATIONS

- ▶ Changes times and seasons → compare 2:9; 2:21; 7:29
- ▶ Toes of iron and clay → Suetonius' 12 Caesars

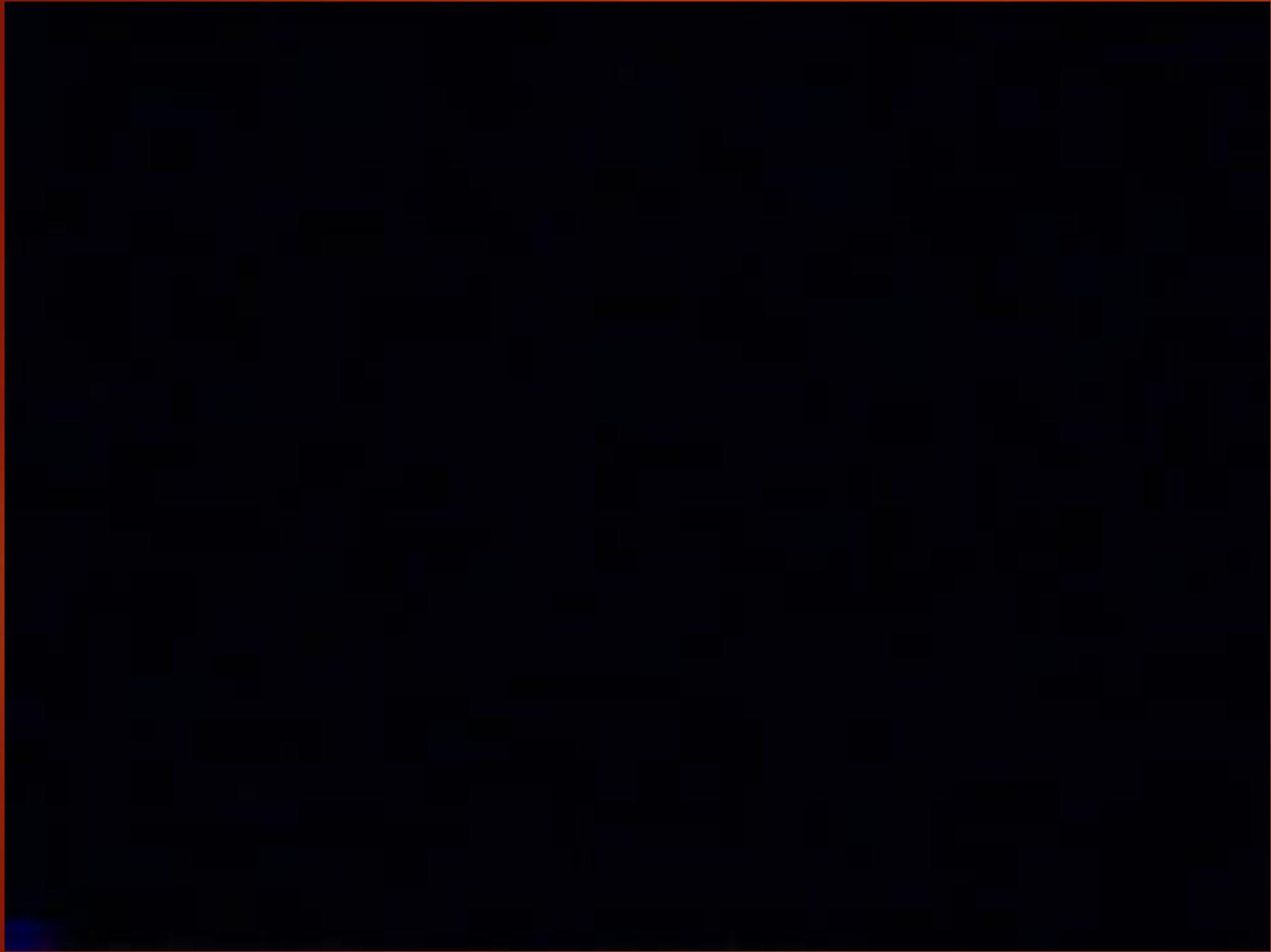
1. Julius Caesar	2. Caesar Augustus	3. Tiberius	4. Caligula
5. Claudius	6. Nero	7. Galba	8. Otho
9. Vitellius	10. Vespasian	11. Titus	12. Domitian





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# The Burning, Fiery Furnace

## *Nebuchadnezzar's Idol*

- ▶ Was Nebuchadnezzar reacting to his dream?
- ▶ “The plain of Dura” → see Genesis 11:2
- ▶ “A son of the gods” → see Genesis 6, Job 1 & 2
- ▶ The point of the story
  - ▶ Standing up for yourself?
  - ▶ Standing up for your beliefs?
  - ▶ Standing up against oppression?
  - ▶ Standing on the promises of God?



ARE YOU READY OR NOT