



JACK KELLEY

DANIEL'S STORY

The life and times of
the Prophet Daniel



‘Daniel’s Story’

Jack Kelley

Chapter 1 ... Daniel's Story	3
Chapter 2 ... The Big Dream	5
Chapter 3 ... The Big Statue	7
Chapter 4 ... "O King, You're Such An Animal"	9
Chapter 5 ... The Big Party	11
Chapter 6 ... The Lion's Den	14
Chapter 7 ... The Big Dream Part 2	16
Chapter 8, Part 1 ... The Ram And The Goat	19
Chapter 8, Part 2 ... The Origin of Hanukkah	21
Chapter 9 ... Answered Prayer	24
Chapters 10-12 ... The Big Picture Chapter 10 ... Pre- lude	27
Chapter 11:1-35 ... The Kings of the North and South	28
Chapter 11:36-12 ... History to Prophecy	32
Chapter 12 ... Michael To The Rescue (With A Little Help	

From You Know Who) 34

Chapter 1 ... Daniel's Story

Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding... for you are highly esteemed.-

Daniel 9:23

What follows is the story of Daniel's adventures with God as recorded in the Bible. It is being presented as if Daniel himself is telling the story in his own words.

It would have been the summer of 605 BC on your calendar when everything fell apart for my people. I was 13 years old and a Royal Prince of Judah. For 150 years the LORD had been threatening us with judgment if we didn't stop offending Him with our pagan behavior, even using the defeat and capture of our cousins, the 10 tribes of Israel to demonstrate what would happen to us. Remember, after the death of King Solomon 300 years earlier a civil war had split us into two countries, Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

The LORD first had Isaiah warn my great uncle Hezekiah about Babylon (you call it Iraq) when he was King of Judah (**Isaiah 39**) and had spoken through all the prophets since that time that He was running out of patience with us. But like humans throughout the age, we didn't think He would really follow through. Boy was that a mistake.

To give you a little background, Nabopolassar had been King of Babylon and his 20 year old son Nebuchadnezzar was the General of the Army when Babylonian forces defeated Pharaoh Neco of Egypt at the Battle of Carchemish in 606 BC. Having earlier conquered Assyria, the Babylonians were now pretty much rulers of all the known world, and remembering the stories he had heard growing up about Israel's legendary wealth, Nebuchadnezzar decided to attack Jerusalem on his way home. (He didn't know it then, but he was being used as the LORD's instrument of judgment against us.)

This was the first of three battles that over the next 19 years would bring about Jerusalem's total destruction. In the process the glorious Temple of Solomon would be burned to the ground and the wealth of Judah and all its survivors carried off to Babylon for 70 years of servitude, leaving Jerusalem a desolate heap of ruins. It seems that for 490 years we had ignored the LORD'S commandment to let our land lay fallow one year out of every seven. It was called a Sabbath for the Land and was spelled out in **Leviticus 25:1-7**. Our defeat by Babylon was the LORD'S punishment for our worship of false gods, the length of our servitude being determined by the 70 Sabbath Years we had skipped. And so "The land enjoyed its Sabbath Rests; all the time of its desolation it rested until the 70 years were completed in fulfillment of the Word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah" (**2 Chron. 36:21**). As I said, the prophets had foretold all these things, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

To forestall our total defeat and try to squirm out from under the LORD'S judgment, the Rulers of Judah had pledged their allegiance to Babylon. They also agreed to pay an enormous annual tribute to Nebuchadnezzar, who had recently learned of the death of his father and was now King of Babylon. As a show of good faith my uncle, King Jehoiakim, agreed to let Nebuchadnezzar take several Royal Princes and other nobles to Babylon as hostages. I was one of those chosen to go, and among the others were my three best friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (Nebuchadnezzar had them re-named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and those are the names by which you know them today. My new name, Belteshazzar never really took hold.) Later I learned that Ezekiel, although a Levite, had been taken as well and would document the defeat of Judah from Babylon while Jeremiah was left behind to give an eyewitness account from Jerusalem.

In Babylon we joined the best of the other hostages in a three-year training program designed to teach us the language and culture of the Babylonians and prepare us for service to the King. We were offered food and drink from the King's private kitchen, but since it wasn't kosher the four of us declined, asking for vegetables and water instead. This created a huge problem for the man in charge and could have gotten him fired or even executed, but he agreed to give us a 10 day trial period and then compare us with the others who were eating the King's food and drinking his wine.

It wasn't so much that the King's food was bad, but that the LORD was honoring our obedience to His commandments when at the end of the 10 days we looked healthier and better nourished than the rest. So they let us stay on our diet, and the LORD gave us supernatural knowledge and understanding even granting me the power to interpret dreams and visions. This would soon come in very handy.

When our training was complete, we were thoroughly examined by the King and must have passed with flying colors, because he appointed us to his board of advisers. Imagine, three Jewish teenagers as advisors to the ruler of the known world. But since the King himself was only in his early twenties, and since he didn't trust the advisers he had inherited from his father as far as he could throw them, it did make some sense. Maybe that's where the phrase, "Don't trust anyone over 30," really originated.

Of course you don't last very long in politics without learning some survival skills and so the older advisers, although clearly jealous of our appointment, went along with it and began looking for an opportunity to get revenge. It would take them a few years, but even after we literally saved their necks, they struck back twice and almost got us.

Chapter 2 ... The Big Dream

In the second year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that really perplexed him and he saw a great opportunity to put his advisers to the test. Remember, he had inherited most of them from his father and didn't trust them one whit. When he assembled them to interpret the dream, they of course asked him to describe it first. But to prove they hadn't been giving him made-up or false information he demanded, on pain of death, that they tell him both the dream and its meaning. They said they had never heard of such a thing. No King had ever required both a description and an interpretation, and when they told him this was humanly impossible, he became very angry and sentenced all of them to death.

Since my friends and I were now part of this group, we were scheduled for execution as well, even though we hadn't been there at the meeting. I went to the King and asked for a little time so that I could give him what he wanted and when he agreed I ran as fast as I could back to the house so my friends and I could pray for a way out of this. During the night, the LORD gave me both the dream and its interpretation in a vision. The four of us thanked God and praised Him all night long. You might think it a bit presumptuous of me to promise the King I would explain his dream before even asking the LORD for direction. But I reasoned that He hadn't gone to all the trouble to put us in the position of influence we were in just to have our heads cut off before we had hardly gotten started. I knew He had given me the ability to interpret dreams, so I just naturally figured He would help us especially since all of our lives were at stake. It's called faith. (Believe me when I say I was still pretty relieved when He came through for us.)

The next morning I went to Arioch, the guard the King had ordered to execute all of us, and got him to spare our lives and take me to the King. When the King asked if I could tell him the dream AND its meaning, I was careful to give credit where credit was due and tell him that no one on Earth could do what the King demanded. But there was a God in Heaven Who could, and He had sent the dream to show the King what would happen in the future, and given me the interpretation. Then I told him the dream.

The LORD had shown the King that his was the first in a series of four Gentile Kingdoms that would rule the world during a time that would later come to be known as Gentile Dominion. He did this by depicting a giant statue built of various precious metals. The statue's head of gold stood for Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. After him would come another kingdom represented by the statue's chest and arms of silver. Its belly and thighs of bronze meant another kingdom would come after that one and finally the legs of iron with feet and toes of iron mixed with clay made it four altogether.

Each metal was inferior in value but greater in strength to the one before it. That meant that each kingdom would be weaker in terms of its authority in the world than the one preceding it and would have to rely more on

its military might to stay in power. Looking back from your vantage- point, you can identify these four powers that have ruled the world from my day until yours. Babylon was conquered by Media-Persia, which was conquered by Greece, which was conquered by Rome. Rome was never really conquered but disintegrated gradually through corruption and was transformed from a political kingdom into a religious power. As the Roman Empire fell apart several of its remnants had their turn at ruling the world but none with the authority given to Babylon. First came Spain and England and now the US, but as the end of the age approaches this ancient Roman Empire will try to re-form and re-assert itself, as shown by the feet and toes of iron mixed with clay.

As it does, a fifth Kingdom, one not of this Earth, will suddenly come on the scene and so thoroughly subdue the others that it will seem as if they never existed. This Kingdom will be worldwide and will never be displaced by another. In the dream this Kingdom was depicted by the rock cut out, not by human hands, which became a mountain that filled the whole Earth. It is the Kingdom of our Lord and it will end the period of Gentile Dominion over Earth forever.

Needless to say the King was impressed. Even he never believed anyone could both tell him the dream and interpret it. He gave me a big bonus, appointed me Mayor of the capital city and placed me in charge of all his advisers. But most importantly, he gave honor and glory to the LORD, correctly proclaiming Him superior to all gods. Seizing the opportunity of the moment, I got him to promote my three friends as well and they were named administrators over all the province of Babylon. All in all it was quite a day for four Jewish teenagers, hostages in a foreign land.

Chapter 3 ... The Big Statue

I guess it should come as no surprise that Nebuchadnezzar developed quite a big head over his dream. I mean it's one thing to become a king in your early 20's, but quite another to be told by the Creator of the Universe that you've been given authority over all living things wherever they are in the world (**Dan 2:36-38**). This meant he wasn't just the Ruler of Babylon, but King of the whole Earth; superior in power and authority even to the kings of other nations. (This was born out by the prophet Jeremiah who summoned envoys from all the neighboring countries to tell them their choice was to either surrender to Babylon or be destroyed. (**Jeremiah 27:2-11**) Nebuchadnezzar truly was the King of Kings.

But pride goeth before a fall and Nebuchadnezzar decided to go the LORD one better. He commissioned metal workers to build the statue of his dream, only make it entirely of gold, signifying that his kingdom would rule forever and never be defeated. It was a huge image, 60 cubits tall and 6 cubits wide, and stood on a platform with 6 steps leading up to its base. (You students of Revelation will no doubt notice the hint of 666. In fact this whole episode is seen by prophecy buffs as a model of the Great Tribulation with the King in the role of the anti-christ, his advisers being the false prophet, and my Jewish friends representing Israel, but that's another story.)

A cubit being roughly a foot and a half meant the statue was over 90 feet tall! In a move that seemed to say "The louder you proclaim something the more believable it will become," he then made it mandatory for everyone to stop what they were doing on his signal and fall down and worship the statue to the accompaniment of loud music.

I was away on the King's business when all this happened, but my three friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were there and got themselves into huge trouble over it. In the first place the worship of anyone or thing other than God was forbidden, and if that wasn't bad enough the Babylonian form of worship was sexual in nature and involved certain behavior that we believed was reserved for a married couple in the privacy of their own home. But here was the King requiring his subjects to worship the statue by behaving this way in public with whomever. Although the penalty was death by fire my friends defied the King's orders and refused to worship the statue.

I told you that in spite of the fact that we had saved their lives by telling the King what his dream meant, his other advisers were jealous and had begun looking for a way to discredit us. Well, here was their big chance. They immediately informed the King that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had refused to worship the image. The King was furious, and even though he had named them administrators over the whole province, demanded that they comply or die. Nobody said "No" to the King of the whole Earth.

With the courage born of unshakable faith they refused the King to his face and were immediately bound and dragged off to the furnace. In his anger the King ordered the furnace to be made so hot that when they threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fire, the heat killed the guards instantly.

The King and his advisers had positioned themselves to watch my friends suffer their agonizing death and to say they were amazed by what happened next would be the understatement of the ages. As they stared into the furnace they saw not three but four people walking around in the fire as if it was a common everyday thing. Their ropes had burned away but they were otherwise unharmed, and the fourth person looked, in the King's words, "like a Son of God." He then got as close as he could to the furnace and in a loud voice commanded Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come out. When they did, their hair was not singed, their clothes not burned, not even the smell of smoke could be detected on them. The King praised the LORD and issued a decree forbidding anyone from saying anything bad about Him. Then he commended Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for their faith and promoted them again. Talk about snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

As for the King, he was edging closer to acknowledging the LORD as his Creator, which was the plan all along. But as we'll see it was going to take a really dramatic change in his lifestyle to bring him all the way around.

Chapter 4 ... “O King, You’re Such An Animal”

It's not every day that the Creator of the Universe puts a prophetic dream into the mind of a person, and when the dream appoints that person King of the Whole Earth it's truly a unique event. But by building his statue entirely of gold, Nebuchadnezzar had rejected the LORD's account of the future and replaced it with his own. It was time for the LORD to show him who was boss so sometime later He gave him another dream, and again the King called on me to interpret. I had grown quite fond of Nebuchadnezzar over the years and it troubled me greatly to tell him that the LORD was going to teach him a lesson in humility if he didn't change his ways. I begged him to humble himself before God, confess his sins of pride and stop oppressing people (in other words to stop playing God and start acknowledging Him who is God) but he didn't heed my advice.

In a nutshell, the dream depicted the King as an enormous tree so big it reached into the heavens. Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant enough so that every living thing fed from it, and under its branches all who came found shelter. This was to symbolize the security and well-being people found in the kingdom that Nebuchadnezzar had built, and indeed the capital city was an impressive example. It was over 14 miles square with an enormous wall 350 feet high and 87 feet thick surrounding it. There were literally hundreds of watchtowers that rose another 100 feet into the sky every so often along the wall for added security. The Great River Euphrates ran through the city supplying its water and there was enough farmland within its walls to feed the entire population in case of enemy attack. The gates and palaces and temples in the city were amazing works of art and architecture and its famous hanging gardens were later included among the seven wonders of the ancient world. In all the history of man, the wealth and splendor of Babylon has never since been equaled.

But then an angel appeared in the dream and ordered the tree cut down, its fruit and branches scattered, and only the stump left alive to live among the wild animals as one of them. This meant that the King would be stripped of his power and authority and be afflicted with a rare disease that would cause him to believe he was a wild animal and render him unfit to govern or even live among humans. This disease, which medical science would later call “insania zoanthropica” would afflict the King for seven years until he acknowledged the LORD as the Creator of Heaven and Earth, Who gives kingdoms to whomever He chooses and elevates even the lowliest of men.

Well as I said, the King didn't heed my advice and so 12 months later the dream came true. As he was walking around his roof top patio, admiring the city and commending himself on his success, he heard the voice from

the dream announcing that his time was up and he would immediately begin suffering the consequences of his pride.

Out of the fear with which people of my time viewed mental disorders, the King was stripped of his authority and driven from the city to live outdoors among the wild animals. For seven years he remained out in the elements without shelter and with no food except the grass of the fields until at last he was humbled enough to look toward the heavens and acknowledge the Lord. Immediately his sanity returned and he praised the LORD, finally giving Him the honor and glory that was His.

During the seven years of his illness I became the King's only companion, his caretaker actually, seeing to his needs and making sure he came to no harm. I knew the term of his affliction, having learned it from the dream, and that he would eventually be restored, so it gave me no end of delight to watch as the LORD returned the King to his former power and authority.

To this day I don't believe that the seven year term was predetermined, but that the LORD Who knows the end from the beginning saw in advance that it would take that long for Nebuchadnezzar to be completely divested of his pride. The LORD took no pleasure from afflicting the King and all during the time of his illness longed to heal him, but until the King humbled himself it wasn't possible. Having been warned in advance and having refused the LORD's offer of forgiveness in exchange for repentance, Nebuchadnezzar had chosen the consequences and brought the punishment upon himself. That the LORD kept His word and restored the King even after so many years of rebellion is a sign of His mercy and gives hope to you and me that it's never too late to seek forgiveness.

Was the King changed by this experience? You bet! Under the influence of the LORD his kingdom became even greater than before and in the process he accomplished another first. In all the Bible there's only one chapter written by a gentile king, and it's Nebuchadnezzar's own testimony of his conversion experience. A year after his restoration he died, so when you get to Heaven be sure and look him up. Though he's done it a million times, he'd love the chance to tell his story yet again. But alas, it seems the only thing we learn from history is that we don't learn anything from history and so next I'll tell you about Nebuchadnezzar's grandson and his encounter with the Living God.

Chapter 5 ... The Big Party

After Nebuchadnezzar's death, several of his relatives had their turn on the throne of Babylon, usually cut short by the malicious infighting that sometimes characterizes royal families. Assassination had become the order of the day. Finally, toward the end of the 70 year period that the LORD had ordained for Babylon's rule over the known world (**Jeremiah 25:12**) his son Nabonidus got control and things settled down a little. I was an old man by then and had retired from public life, so when I was abruptly called back into service one night it was quite a surprise.

Nabonidus was away fighting the Egyptians and had left his son Belshazzar in command. Perhaps taking advantage of the King's absence a great army formed out of a coalition of the Medes (you call them Kurds) and Persians (Iran) came and laid siege to the city. We later saw that this coalition had been represented by the silver chest and arms in Nebuchadnezzar's earlier dream of the big statue.

Well everyone in the city believed it to be impregnable so they just closed the gates and went about their business as if the huge army massing outside didn't exist. And as if to taunt their attackers, Belshazzar scheduled a lavish party inviting all the important people of Babylon to join him in the Great Banquet Hall for drinks and dinner. There must have been more than 1000 people there and pretty soon everyone was feeling no pain including Belshazzar himself.

I guess taunting the Persian army wasn't enough for Belshazzar, so he called for servants to bring all the sacred cups and goblets that his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had looted from the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem and placed in his private museum. His idea was to use them to toast the pagan gods and idols he relied on to keep them safe from the intruders at the gate. And that's just what he did.

His arrogance must have upset the LORD because suddenly such a hush fell over the banquet hall that you could have heard a pin drop as the fingers of a human hand appeared out of nowhere and wrote a message on the wall behind Belshazzar's head. This scared the "you know what" out of him and to say it also put a damper on the festivities would be a huge understatement. With wobbly knees and a shaky voice Belshazzar called for his sorcerers and magicians to interpret the message promising a promotion to 3rd highest in the kingdom to whichever one could do it. Of course nobody could, and that scared Belshazzar even more.

Belshazzar's grandmother, hearing of the commotion in the banquet hall, came in and reminded him of how her now dead husband King Nebuchadnezzar had made use of the supernatural skill the LORD gave me way back when I was a teenager. She told him I could interpret dreams and solve all kinds of puzzles and problems and suggested he call me in to decipher the handwriting on the wall. And that's how my retirement

came to a sudden end.

When I saw the handwriting on the wall I immediately knew what was going on so I didn't waste any kindness on Belshazzar. He was really only an arrogant spoiled kid after all. I reminded him that his grandfather had gone through a similar time of pridefulness and even though he was King of all the world the LORD, Who had made him so, saw fit to take him down a notch or two. Belshazzar's offense against the LORD was all the worse because he knew what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar and still defied Him, praising his worthless idols with sacred objects set apart for the LORD Who had proved Himself to be real. I guess you could say I laid into him pretty good. And then I gave him the meaning of the handwriting on the wall.

"Mene, mene, tekel uparsin." The words had been written in Aramaic, a derivative of Hebrew spoken by the Babylonians. They had both a literal and interpretive meaning. The word mene means "numbered" and used twice explains that the LORD had numbered the days of Babylon's supremacy in the world and brought it to an end. Or as you would say, "Your days are numbered" and "Your number is up." Tekel translates "weighed" and means that they had been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Upsarin is the plural form of peres which means "divided." It's also a form of the word they used for the Persians. The LORD was declaring that Babylon was to be divided between the Medes and Persians whose armies were amassed outside the gates of the city.

Well, Belshazzar didn't like my interpretation but had to concur with its accuracy and so he reluctantly gave me the reward he had promised. Like it or not I was now the 3rd highest ruler of Babylon, a kingdom about to be conquered on orders from the Creator of the Universe.

Well, here's where it gets really interesting. Remember I told you how strong the city's defenses were and how the people all thought it was impregnable. I also explained that the River Euphrates flowed through the city providing an endless supply of water. Nebuchadnezzar had constructed massive gates of crisscrossed bronze bars which could be lowered into the river to prevent any unwanted boat traffic from entering the city while still letting the water flow through. When the city wall's gates were closed, these river gates were lowered deep into the water so no one could get in. Somehow the Medes and Persians had found a way to temporarily divert much of the river's flow on that night so that as Belshazzar and his cronies were getting drunk at the banquet a squad of enemy soldiers was able to squirm under the river gates and into the city. Once inside they overpowered the guards on the main gates in the city wall, opening them up to the advancing armies. The Great City of Babylon was taken without a fight, and Belshazzar was slain. That left me the highest ranking Babylonian official in the city.

A few days later, almost before the residents of Babylon knew they'd been conquered, King Cyrus of Persia made his appearance in the city. I went out to greet him, carrying a scroll written 150 years earlier by the Prophet Isaiah. After introducing myself to Cyrus, I showed him the portion of the scroll that you know as **Isaiah 44:24-45:13**. There the LORD had Isaiah describe in detail the manner in which Cyrus would conquer

Babylon, even mentioning him by name 150 years before the fact. The passage also commanded Cyrus to free the Jews held captive there for 70 years and help them rebuild Jerusalem. Cyrus was astonished! He obviously hadn't read our Scriptures before and seeing his battle plan and even his name written down before he was ever born convinced him to free our people and help us get our homeland back. Within a year the 70 year captivity of Israel would end: our punishment for ignoring the Sabbath for the Land and for worshiping false gods complete.

As for me, it seems my public life wasn't over yet. As the highest ranking official of the conquered Babylon, I should have been scheduled for immediate execution, but Cyrus was so impressed with my prophetic abilities that he named me to the group of royal administrators formed to assist his father in law Darius, King of the Medes, in governing Babylon. Once again the LORD had fashioned victory from the ashes of defeat, and I was saved from certain death. Sad to say it wouldn't be the last time.

Chapter 6 ... The Lion's Den

I guess you'd say I've lived a pretty unique life; born a prince of Israel, taken hostage to Babylon as a teenager only to become a major political figure there as counselor to the King and finally rising to the number 3 spot in the Babylonian government, and then upon its defeat, named to an important post in the Media-Persian regime. In fact I was one of the 3 administrators appointed to oversee the actions of the 120 regional governors who ran day-to-day life in the Kingdom. The three of us answered only to King Darius.

My appointment to such a powerful position aroused much jealousy among the others. I was the only Jew after all and the only one who had governed in Babylon before its defeat. To them I was both an outsider and a loser, clearly not deserving of the honor. As they looked for a way to discredit me, I made sure they wouldn't find one, being neither corrupt nor negligent in the performance of my duties. But there was one area of my life where I was vulnerable to them and that was my devotion to the LORD Who had blessed my life so abundantly. When they concocted a scheme that required everyone to pray only to the King and manipulated him through his vanity into making disobedience a capital crime, they had me.

I had earned the King's trust and respect so when I was caught one morning performing my regular devotions to the LORD he was greatly distressed and realized he'd been duped. But since he himself had signed the edict into law there was nothing he could do for me even though he tried all day to find a loophole. The law was the law and the penalty for disobedience was to be thrown live into a den of hungry lions. At sunset he finally resigned himself to the futility of any further rescue effort, and though it grieved him to do so he gave the order for my execution.

As the guards were about to toss me to the lions, Darius apologized for his inability to rescue me, but reminded me that my God, Whom I had always served, could still intervene and it was up to Him to do so now. Then he went home, refused his dinner and spent a sleepless night alone. I really think that in his grief he may have cried out his first prayers to the LORD that night.

As soon as the sun came up, Darius ran to the lion's den and shouted my name. In a voice filled with anguish he asked if my God had preserved me through the night. When I responded that the LORD had kept the lions' mouths shut all night long as a sign that I was innocent before both Him and the King, Darius was nearly overcome with relief and ordered that I be freed immediately. Once I was free, his joy turned to anger with those who had falsely accused me, so he had them all arrested, and along with all their families thrown to the very lions that should have devoured me. They were all dead before they hit the ground. Justice was swift in those days.

Then to reverse the law requiring people to pray to him, the King ordered everyone in the kingdom to fear and reverence my God, “the Living God Who endures forever, Whose Kingdom will never be destroyed and Whose dominion will never end.” (**Daniel 6:26**) I had told Darius of Nebuchadnezzar’s big dream so many years before and this new edict was his official acceptance of that dream’s validity, and recognition of the Persian Empire’s identity as the chest and arms of silver. Through my ordeal, King Darius had met the LORD!

As for me, it was quite a night for an 85 year old man. Sitting there in the dark, never knowing at what instant one of those hungry lions might take a big bite out of me and start a feeding frenzy, I learned the meaning of the phrase “moment-by-moment faith.” I also learned that I wasn’t alone. The Creator of the Universe, Who has promised never to leave nor forsake us took time out of His busy schedule to spend that night with me, just as He will with you in your darkest hour. It was His hand that shut the lions’ mouths, and His still small voice that comforted me. He reminded me that having orchestrated this episode to reveal Himself to King Darius and the whole Persian Kingdom, he wasn’t going to stop short of victory by letting the lions devour me. For He is, as King David had said, “*Our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble.*” (**Psalms 46:1**) I’ll say He is.

Chapter 7 ... The Big Dream Part 2

So far I've related this tale pretty much in the order these things happened to me. But now I'm going to back track a little to tell you about some remarkable visions and dreams I've had from time to time. I've saved them till now because they don't really fit into the theme of my story. You see, when the Lord judged our people and had us taken off to Babylon, He wanted to make sure we were going to be OK. He loved us and didn't want to discipline us like this, but our behavior left Him no choice. He knew the best way to make sure we were treated all right during our captivity was to show our captors some of his powers, and he chose my three friends and me to help. Each dramatic event in our lives, while sometimes pretty scary for us, resulted in the Babylonians and later the Persians coming to know Him better and therefore to respect my people more. You get the idea? When our time in the penalty box was up, the Persians actually helped us get back to our land and get reestablished there.

As part of His reward to me for helping, the Lord showed me some of the most incredible things, visions that have been allowing Bible students like you to better understand the future in every generation since. You and I call these visions prophecy, but to the LORD Who knows the end from the beginning, prophecy is simply history written in advance. And indeed history has validated the accuracy of these visions beyond all doubt.

This first one came to me back when Babylon was still in control. It was after Nebuchadnezzar had died, but before the Persians took over, about 553 BC on your calendar. While asleep one night I dreamed I saw four great beasts coming up out of the sea. Since they were coming out of the sea rather than from the land I realized that each of these beasts represented a gentile kingdom. And since the sea was being churned up by the four winds of heaven, I knew each of these kingdoms was being created by a sovereign act of God. It dawned on me that I was having a dream very much like the one I had interpreted for Nebuchadnezzar back when I a teenager. Only now I was seeing things from God's point of view.

The first beast was a lion with eagle's wings. I had no problem identifying that one. The winged lion had always been a symbol of Babylon, carved in the stone over every gate in the city's walls. When the lion stood up and was given the heart of a man, I knew it represented King Nebuchadnezzar, the man who really made Babylon into a world power. The second beast, a kind of two-sided bear with one side bigger than the other, had to be Media-Persia, the coalition that would soon conquer Babylon. One side bigger than the other meant that the Persians would become the dominant partner. The 3 ribs in its mouth signified the 3 kingdoms it would conquer in gaining world dominance; Egypt, Babylon and Lydia, a people to the East.

The third beast was a flying leopard with four heads and four wings. History now tells us that this was Greece under Alexander. The four heads stood for the four generals who commanded his armies and took over upon

his death; Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. The four wings were symbolic of the speed with which Alexander conquered the known world. The fourth beast was horrifying and different from all the rest and had ten horns. Then all of a sudden it sprouted another one, uprooting three of the originals in the process. This little horn had the eyes and mouth of a man and was filled with pride. I was about to ask for help from one of the angels standing nearby in my dream in understanding that one. But before I could I was whisked off to heaven, to the Throne of the Eternal One, at the End of the Age.

I'm one of only four prophets who actually saw God's throne, the others being Isaiah (Isaiah 6), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1 & 10) and John (Rev. 4). Each of us saw different things, so to get a comprehensive overview you should read all four accounts. One of the things that impressed me most was the huge number of people standing before Him. 10,000 was the biggest number we had in my day, so when I say 10,000 times 10,000 I'm trying to impress upon you the magnitude of the crowd. You would probably say millions and millions. Something big was clearly in the works and when the court was seated and the books opened, I knew it was Judgment Day.

Back on Earth this horn guy kept boasting and bragging till the 4th beast was totally destroyed, just as the other three had been. And then in Heaven someone who looked to me like the Son of Man approached the LORD's Throne. He was given everlasting power and authority over all the Earth and its inhabitants, wherever they lived, and everyone on Earth worshiped Him. Well, I was OK interpreting things until I got to the 4th beast, and then I became confused. So I asked an angel standing nearby for help. (I was still dreaming you understand.) He explained that the 4th beast represented a kingdom that would be different from all the others. History now tells us that the 4th kingdom is Rome and the reason it's different is that it was never really conquered like the other three were. It self-destructed from corruption and then transformed itself from a political entity into a religious one. The 10 horns are ten kings that will emerge out of it toward the End of the Age, and the little horn is another king who will subdue 3 of the original 10 in his rise to power. In your day this little horn has come to be known as the anti-christ. He'll try to change everything in his efforts to remove every trace of God from the lives of mankind, even eliminating religious holidays, in his quest for power and worship.

For 3 1/2 years it will seem as though he's succeeded, and God's people on Earth have actually been defeated. (This is the time of the Great Tribulation.) But as He always does, the LORD Himself will intervene and destroy the anti-christ and his followers forever. Then the people of God will triumph, as the LORD sets up His promised kingdom and puts an end to Gentile Dominion forever.

You can see the similarity between my dream and Nebuchadnezzar's. Both contained the message of four Gentile Kingdoms spanning the period of time between Babylon and the End of the Age, and both predicted a 5th kingdom to come, one set up by God Himself. This 5th Kingdom will never be conquered or given to another but will last through all eternity. Put together, these two dreams constitute the most detailed and

comprehensive view of Gentile history in all of Scripture. Much of the content has already been fulfilled and documented in history books around the world, which makes the final outcome as predicted by these dreams that much more certain.

Why did the LORD give the dream to both of us? In Jewish law it takes the testimony of two witnesses to establish a fact. King Nebuchadnezzar and I are the two witnesses in this case.

Why did He give us the dream in the first place? Well, in this world there are many so-called Holy Books but only one that is self-validating. Through the prophets of old, the LORD has told mankind of future events to prove He is Who He claims to be. No other “religious writings” contain this kind of validation because only God can predict the future with 100% accuracy. Let Him tell you in His own Words:

I am the LORD, that is my name. I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare. Before they spring into being, I announce them to you. **(Isaiah 42:8-9)**

Chapter 8, Part 1 ... The Ram And The Goat

After the dream of the four beasts, I didn't have any more like it for about 2 years. But then one night in 551BC I dreamed that I was in the city of Susa standing by the Ulai canal in the region of Elam, which was part of Persia in my day. In my dream I saw this ram with 2 horns, one of which started growing later than the other but became bigger. The ram was very large and powerful and could not be defeated as he charged toward the west, north, and south.

Susa was 230 miles east of the City of Babylon and within 16 years would become the capital of the new Persian Empire. Since Persian Kings always wore a ram's head crown in battle, I understood that the ram represented the Media-Persia coalition. From history you know that Persia teamed up with the Medes along their way to greatness but soon became the dominant partner. In the latter years of the 6th century BC this team defeated Egypt, Babylon and everyone else in the area to become the world power of their time, which lasted for over two hundred years until about 330 BC. By the way, the Medes are called Kurds today and they're still trying to regain their ancestral homeland in the region where Turkey, Iran, and Iraq come together.

All of a sudden a one-horned goat appeared in my dream, coming from the west with such speed that his feet barely touched the ground. The goat charged the ram with incredible rage, smashing the ram's horns to pieces and trampling it into the ground. No one could save the ram from the fury of the goat. Then at the height of its power the goat's single horn was broken off, to be replaced by four other prominent horns. (Now's a good time to explain that in prophetic visions, horns often symbolize power.)

Two hundred years after my death a coalition of tribes from Eastern Europe were gathered together under the leadership of a man named Phillip of Macedon. The Persians had oppressed his people, and he wanted it stopped. Together with his young son Alexander, he invented a new language so his tribal chieftains could communicate better, because he discovered that many of the quarrels that disrupted their unity and kept them weak arose from misunderstandings caused by language barriers. But alas even then they weren't strong enough and the Persians trounced them, causing the death of Phillip.

Alexander swore revenge and worked his troops mercilessly to develop a new style of warfare that depended on speed and the element of surprise. At age 19 he began his lightning attacks on the Persian Empire and within 10 years had conquered the known world extending his influence all the way into India. In most of his conquests, he used the minimum force necessary to achieve victory, relying on his legendary status as the son of a god who could not be defeated by mere mortals. But against the Persians he went to the opposite

extreme applying the maximum amount of force, mercilessly crushing them to avenge the death of his father.

Phillip of Macedon had taken the symbol of the one horned goat for his coat of arms and had it pressed into the coinage he used to pay his army. He named the body of water bordering his homeland the Aegean Sea, which is derived from the Greek word for goat. In my dream the speed with which it moved made it clear that the goat stood for the Greek Empire under Alexander. At the height of his success Alexander died at age 29 leaving the Empire to his four generals as we discussed last time. But following his notion that most problems between people are created by language barriers, he had enforced the use of his new language in every nation he conquered. Within the span of a generation this language became the common means of communication for the Greek Empire and indeed the known world. Three hundred years later the Gospel Story was delivered to Earth from heaven, and for the first time since the destruction of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of languages, there existed on Earth a common language in which the Gospel Story could be told and written for all to hear and understand. It was Greek, the language of Alexander. Don't tell me that God doesn't intervene in the affairs of man to accomplish His Purpose!

There exists in the history of my people an incident involving Alexander's arrival outside the gates of Jerusalem. In a dream, Alexander had seen himself coming into the presence of God. As he drew near the city, the High Priest emerged from the city's gates in all his finery accompanied by the entire priesthood with trumpets blaring, pennants waving and voices singing. This so reminded Alexander of his dream that he spared the city and bowed before the High Priest, who according to tradition showed him the story of the ram and the goat from my book. Alexander immediately recognized himself as the main character of the vision, recorded by me 200 years before his birth, and from that point on maintained a special relationship with the Jewish people.

And so the prominent horn between the eyes of the goat represented Alexander, and the four horns that replaced it stand for the four generals who assumed control of the Empire upon his death. Cassander went back home to rule Macedonia and Greece, Lysimachus took Iran, Iraq and parts east, Seleucus got the area we know as the Middle East today, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and parts of Turkey, and Ptolemy was made ruler over Israel, Egypt and the North Africans.

As often happens when people get things they haven't earned and don't deserve, the descendants of these four generals began squabbling over the territory they had inherited and made a general mess of things in the Middle East for over 200 years until the Romans came along and took it all away from them. But that's the topic of another vision, and we'll get to it in due time. First I'll need to tell you about two of the most important specific pieces of information from that span of time. The first concerns the origin of the Festival known today as Hanukkah, and the second is no less than a "to-the-day" prediction of the arrival of the Messiah in Jerusalem.

Chapter 8, Part 2 ... The Origin of Hanukkah

As my dream continued, I saw another horn grow up out of one of the four prominent horns of the goat. It grew to the south and east toward the Beautiful Land, as we often call Israel. This horn grew until its power (horns stand for power remember) reached into the very heavens, drawing some of the starry host down to earth. It defeated the Prince of the Host, defiled the Temple putting a stop to the daily sacrifice, and tried to completely suppress the Truth. According to the angel who appeared in my dream 2300 evening and morning sacrifices, or 1150 days would pass before the temple was rededicated and the daily sacrifices resumed.

About 175 years before the birth of our Lord Jesus and over 300 years after my death, a descendant of Seleucus named Antiochus the 4th who called himself Epiphanes, or God made manifest, wormed his way onto the throne of Syria. He was the horn in my dream who grew out of one of the four prominent ones, and was the latest and worst of the Syrian Kings who had tried to exercise influence over Israel. Following a humiliating defeat in Egypt, he vented his wrath against Israel, seizing the Temple area and murdering thousands of priests. To assert his self-proclaimed supernatural power, he had craftsmen fashion a statue of the Greek god Zeus with a face that looked like his. He positioned the statue in the Holy Place and slaughtered a pig on the nearby Temple altar. Making even the possession of our scriptures a capital offense, he required my people to worship him instead, and to sacrifice pigs and eat their flesh. During this period Onias III, Israel's last legitimate High Priest, was murdered and from that time until the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD the office of High Priest was often subject to barter. Wealth and influence replaced genealogy, with the foreign kings in power selling the office to the highest bidder among the wealthy families of Israel.

This is what the dream meant by defeating the Prince of the Host, defiling the Temple and suppressing the Truth. The fact that some of the starry host was drawn to Earth means that this unprecedented time of warfare and oppression in Israel involved supernatural as well as human forces.

By the way, the Prophet Ezekiel had predicted the suspension of the office of High Priest around the time of Israel's defeat by Babylon 70 years earlier. (**Ezekiel 21:25-27**) He claimed that after the suspension there would never be another legitimate High Priest in Israel until the Messiah returns as King and Priest at the outset of the Kingdom Age. Zechariah, a prophet who came along a few years after me, was given a similar vision (**Zechariah 6:12-13**). By the testimony of two witnesses a thing shall be established.

As I mentioned before, the descendants of Seleucus and Ptolemy frequently squabbled among themselves for territory and Israel was caught right in the middle, geographically and politically. At first, the wealthy liberal

families of Israel had counseled accommodation with these kings and their Greek philosophy, even adopting Greek dress and customs. This spirit of accommodation gave birth to the Saducean movement in Israel that ultimately rejected a literal interpretation of Scripture and denied the notion of predictive prophecy. This is why many among the nation's rulers later rejected Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

But this over-the-top behavior by Antiochus was just too much to tolerate, and a popular uprising led by the Macabbeans resulted in Antiochus's defeat and the restoration of the Temple and resumption of the daily sacrifice. From the erection of the pagan statue in 168 BC to the spiritual cleansing and rededication of the Temple in 165 took 1150 days, the time of 2300 evening and morning sacrifices, just as the angel Gabriel had told me in my dream.

According to our law, after the defiled altar had been replaced and the statue ground to powder and scattered over the countryside, a cleansing ceremony was necessary to make the Temple fit for God's use again. It required burning a very special mixture of oil and fragrances for eight days in the Menorah, the giant golden lamp stand located in the Holy Place. To their dismay, the priests could only find enough consecrated oil to burn for one day and no more could be prepared on such short notice. According to our tradition, the priests in faith poured the single day's supply of oil into the lamp's reservoir and put the matter in God's hands. Miraculously the oil burned for the full eight days, the Temple was cleansed and following a re-dedication ceremony the daily sacrifices were resumed. This miracle signified God's acceptance of the cleansing and re-dedication and is commemorated even now in the Feast of Hanukkah. It explains why the Hanukkah menorah has eight branches instead of seven and why the Feast of Hanukkah lasts for eight days.

Overall, this dream was so frightening that it literally made me sick, and for several days afterward I lay in my bed exhausted and ill. Even after Gabriel, the angel who had explained the dream assured me that it was about the distant future I was appalled by the vision. It was beyond understanding.

But there's another aspect to the dream that explains why Gabriel was there in the first place and makes it even more disturbing. You see Gabriel only appears in Scripture to deliver news about the Messiah, and this dream concerned a time well before His arrival on Earth.

When the history of the Macabbean revolt was written, the placing of the statue in the Holy Place was described as "the abomination that caused desolation." In other words, putting that statue in the Temple so defiled it as to make it unfit for further use. It was the only time in our history that such a thing had happened.

Over 200 years after the revolt, while outlining the chronology of end time events to his disciples, the Lord Jesus alerted believers alive at the end of the age to look for another "abomination that causes desolation." This one will trigger the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the worst period of time on Earth in the entire history of man. **(Matt 24:15-21)** The Lord even declared that I had written about it, and yet nowhere in my account of this dream did I mention such a thing. And history now shows that the predictions of my dream

were fulfilled in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Macabbeans, two centuries before the Lord warned believers to look for them.

Obviously then, this dream has to have a double fulfillment, one in 175-165 BC and another at the End of the Age just before the Lord's return. Antiochus Epiphanes was not only a vicious, depraved King of Syria, he was also a clear model in Scripture of a coming world ruler who would again persecute my people, require worship from his subjects and desecrate the Lord's Temple at the End of the Age. Antiochus Epiphanes was a type of the antichrist, and Gabriel was explaining events that will be repeated just before the Lord's 2nd Coming!

And as for the Lord's statement about me, I would soon get another dream concerning the End of the Age that would contain the most important keys anywhere in the Bible for unlocking the secrets of End Time chronology. It would also clearly refer to another abomination that causes desolation. So, He was right after all. Imagine that.

Chapter 9 ... Answered Prayer

In 538 BC, the first year of Persian rule over Babylon, I read in the Book of Jeremiah that our captivity in Babylon was supposed to last 70 years (**Jere. 25:11-12**). Jeremiah, you may remember, lived around the same time as I did and documented the defeat of Israel and destruction of Jerusalem from that end while Ezekiel and I wrote from Babylon.

Since almost 67 of the 70 years had passed, I began praying for God to free us to go home again. Of course in due time he did and the story of our return to Israel is documented in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. But the answer to my prayer was a blockbuster that went way beyond the scope of my request and has become the most important message in all of prophetic scripture. Like I said before, it's no less than the key that unlocks all the secrets of end-time chronology.

While I was still praying, the Angel Gabriel was dispatched from Heaven with answers that went to the heart of the matter behind my prayer. I simply asked the LORD to remember His promise to let us go back home, but He decided to give me an overview of our people's future to reassure me that not only had He not forgotten us but that He still had great plans for us. He's like that, you know, and it can confuse us if we're not careful. Knowing the innermost concerns of our hearts, He often provides answers that are much bigger than the puny words of our questions.

Gabriel began by telling me that seventy "sevens" were set aside for our people and our Holy City Jerusalem during which the LORD would accomplish six things. He would finish transgression and put an end to sin, atone for all our wickedness and usher in everlasting righteousness, seal up (or bring to pass) all the visions and prophecies He had given our people and anoint the Most Holy Place, His Temple, as His residence on Earth. I understood this to mean that He was going to make right all the things that had gone wrong with His creation since Adam and Eve sinned, restore it to its original state, and set up the Kingdom of God on Earth that He had been promising right from the start. This would be the 5th Kingdom from the dreams He had given Nebuchadnezzar and me earlier, the one that would last forever.

He then told me that this period of time would begin when an official decree was given permitting the rebuilding and restoration of Jerusalem, which had been totally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and was currently a pile of rubble with a 70 year accumulation of brush growing all around. This decree was issued by the Persian King Artaxerxes Longimonus in March of 445BC nearly 93 years after Gabriel's visit. King Cyrus of Persia had actually offered to set us free the same year I began praying but it took years for us to get ready to leave, and then since we could only rebuild our homes and reclaim our fields most of our people stayed in Babylon. Only about 40,000 returned and the last of them finally left for Israel with Ezra in 464 BC. It was 19 years

after that before Nehemiah got permission to rebuild Jerusalem.

To make this easier, let me explain that we have a word in Hebrew that means seven years, just like you have a word in English (decade) that means 10 years. Our Hebrew word has been translated as weeks, meaning a week of years (7 years) or simply sevens. So when Gabriel said seventy sevens he meant 70 times 7 years or 490 years.

When he now told me that a period of 7 sevens followed by a period of 62 sevens would pass he meant that 49 years plus 434 years (483 years in all) after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, the Messiah would visit the city and offer Himself as Israel's King. And that's exactly what happened. On the day you know as Palm Sunday the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem and allowed the crowds to proclaim Him as the Messiah for the first and only time. When our religious leaders told Him to quiet the crowd, He said if He did the very stones would cry out this message because this was His Day. When they still refused to accept Him, He pronounced judgment upon the city because "you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." (**Luke 19:41-44**) Do the math and you'll discover it was 483 years to the day from March 14, 445 BC.

Next Gabriel told me that after the 483rd year the Messiah would be executed (cut off in Hebrew) but not for Himself. Then, without a word of explanation, he skipped ahead nearly 2000 years, telling me things from both the time of the first coming of Christ and His 2nd coming in a single breath. In retrospect you can see why. Shortly after the events foretold above came to pass, my people ceased to exist as a nation, seven years short of the time Gabriel had set forth. Later, Jesus explained that sometime during the life of the generation being born at our national reappearance (1948 on your calendar) the seven-year balance of the prophecy would be fulfilled. (**Matt 24:34**)

It will go like this. A coming world leader, somehow descended from the Romans who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD will arise to power and confirm a treaty with my people that will permit the building of a new Temple in Israel, the first in nearly 2000 years. The execution of this treaty will signal the beginning of the final seven years in Gabriel's 490-year summary. In the middle of this 7-year period when my people are once again back in covenant with God and worshiping Him according to our ways, this leader will suddenly put an end to our worship. Just as Antiochus Epiphanes had done before him, he'll set up an abomination that causes desolation, an act that so angers God that He had His Son warn my people alive at the time to flee Jerusalem for their lives when they see it happen. And then God will pour out disaster after disaster upon him till he's destroyed.

Since the Romans destroyed the city and the Temple in 70 AD and since there hasn't been a Temple in Israel since, we know this last part of the prophecy is still in the future. Also the six things Gabriel told me the LORD would accomplish during our 490 years haven't all been finished yet. On top of that, we know that the last half of the last seven years is something the Lord Jesus called the Great Tribulation, referring to this prophecy as He did so (**Matt 24:15-21**). This is the time described in detail by John in Revelation 6-18, a

time clearly in the future. So there's a gap between the first 483 years and the last 7.

Obviously this visitation had a profound effect on me. Gabriel had just told me something we Israelites had longed for centuries to know; the timing of Messiah's coming. I gathered around me some of the Persian priests I had come to trust and together we formed a group that pledged to pass this knowledge down through our descendants since the time of His coming was still 500 years away. Over the generations this group became more and more influential as each royal birth was scrutinized to determine if it was the one they'd been told of. As remnants of the Persians came to be known as the Parthians, this group gained such influence that no Parthian King could rule without their consent. Then one year a star appeared in the eastern sky just as the prophecy of Balaam had foretold. It was the sign they had waited for and the timing was about right, so representatives of our group, now called the Magi, set out to follow the star.

Traveling in those days required great preparation and support and so it was some time after the Messiah's birth that this caravan arrived in Jerusalem seeking "One that was born King of the Jews." You understand Herod was not even Jewish, but a friend of the Roman Emperor from Edom. He had been appointed King over Israel and a natural born King would obviously have a superior claim to the throne, and these Magi were King makers after all. On top of that the Parthians had recently defeated the invading Roman army and traveling to Israel was tantamount to entering enemy territory, so the Magi were heavily protected. You can see why their arrival threw the whole city into a turmoil.

Herod immediately sent for the Jewish leaders who recalled Micah's prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem so the Magi went there (**Micah 5:2**). For his part Herod figured out the timing and decreed that all the Jewish boys in Bethlehem two years of age and younger were to be murdered, thinking to eliminate his competition. The Jewish leaders, being largely of the Saducean persuasion who no longer believed in predictive prophecy went back to the Temple and their normal routines. After seeing the Baby Jesus the Magi went back home by a different route, avoiding Jerusalem. And Joseph and Mary, being warned in a dream of the looming danger, rushed their baby boy to safety in Egypt.

But Eternity had invaded Time, Heaven had invaded Earth and the Son of God had become the Son of Man. The world would never be the same again.

Chapters 10-12 ... The Big Picture

Chapter 10 ... Prelude

As if the dream predicting the Messiah's coming wasn't enough, two years later I received another revelation. This one gave me such detail about the future of my people that in your time "scholars" who don't believe in predictive prophecy have tried to make the claim that I didn't really write my story at all. They would have you believe that someone in the second century BC wrote it to encourage my people during a time of national despondency. Their biggest problem is that in just the first 35 verses of that part of my story you call chapter 11, over 100 prophecies have been fulfilled by historical record. So to try and reconcile this amazing display of prophetic accuracy with their refusal to believe that such a thing is possible, they've invented an anonymous author who they claim wrote it all down after the fact. But they've outsmarted themselves. The authenticity of my story has been so mercilessly attacked that it's become one of the most thoroughly documented books in the entire Bible. As a result, my claim that I wrote this story in the late 6th century BC has now been established beyond reasonable doubt, at least for all who are willing to accept the idea that God knows the end from the beginning and sometimes lets us in on part of the future just to prove He exists (**Isaiah 46:8-10**).

I had gone into a time of fasting and praying for my people that had lasted for three weeks when an angel appeared to me in the form of a man. He explained that he had been dispatched as soon as I began praying, but had been attacked by enemies in the spiritual realm until finally Michael, the Archangel, had come to rescue him.

Even though I had been visited by angels before, this one had such great power that his mere presence literally knocked me flat on the ground. But the same strength that defeated me restored me, and at his touch I was refreshed and able to stand again. He told me his antagonists were evil spiritual powers working to influence the kingdoms of Persia and Greece to deny God's will and suit the Devil's purpose instead. All during the time of my fasting, they had been trying to prevent him from reaching me. We mortals have no idea of the scope and intensity of battles fought for us and because of us in the spiritual realm. The God Who died that we might have life daily sends His legions into battle to keep and protect us now that we're His. A word of thanks now and then is definitely in order.

Chapter 11:1-35 ... The Kings of the North and South

The angel said he had been sent to tell me what had been written in the Book of Truth, a heavenly account of history, written in advance. He began by saying that there would be three more Persian kings in a time of relative peace and prosperity, then a fourth who would attempt to put down the growing threat from Greece. This fourth one, called Xerxes, is the one who would humiliate Phillip of Macedon and create the circumstances that would eventually bring Alexander the Great to power. He is also the King who would take the Hebrew slave Esther as his bride and make her Queen of Persia. Her selfless act of sacrifice during a time of persecution of the Jewish people in Persia is commemorated in the Feast of Purim. Perhaps one day she'll tell you her story.

As I've already told you, upon Alexander's death in 323BC, Greece would be split among his four generals. The descendants of Cassander and Lysimachus would pretty much fade into the footnotes of history, but those of Seleucus and Ptolemy would be in an almost continuous state of warfare over the lands they'd inherited for the next 150 years or so until the Macabbean revolt. The angel simply referred to the descendants of Seleucus as the King of the North, and the descendants of Ptolemy as the King of the South, but in reality there were several generations of each and nearly every reference is to a different person since they tended to kill each other off with nauseating regularity. In case you're interested in each one's identity, I'll insert their names along with the time in history of their reigns and a few personal observations in the angel's narrative. Otherwise it appears here just as he gave it to me in the portion of my story you know as **Daniel 11:5-35**. (Below are the angel's words. Notes and references are bolded.)

The king of the South (**Ptolemy I Soter, 323-285**) will become strong, but one of his commanders (**Seleucus I Nicator, 311-280**) will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom (**Babylon**) with great power. After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the South (**Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 285-246**) will go to the king of the North (**Antiochus II Theos, 261-246**) to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power, and he and his power will not last. In those days she will be handed over, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her. (**Antiochus left his wife Laodice for Berenice, but Laodice conspired to have Antiochus, Berenice, and her father Ptolemy II killed. The city of Laodicea in Rev. 3 is named after her.**) (Daniel 11:5-6)**

One from her family line will arise to take her place. (**Berenice's brother Ptolemy III Euergetes,**

246-221. He killed Laodice to avenge his sister and father.) He will attack the forces of the king of the North (**Seleucus II Callinicus, 246-226**) and enter his fortress; he will fight against them and be victorious. He will also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years he will leave the king of the North alone. Then the king of the North will invade the realm of the king of the South but will retreat to his own country. His sons (**Seleucus III Ceranus, 226-223 and Antiochus III, called the Great, 223-187**) will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress. (**Daniel 11:7-10**)

Then the king of the South (**Ptolemy IV Philopator, 221-203**) will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North (**Antiochus the Great**), who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated. (**The Battle of Raphia in 217**) When the army is carried off, the king of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands (**10,000 according to the historian Polybius**), yet he will not remain triumphant. For the king of the North (**still Antiochus**) will muster another army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped. (**Daniel 11:11-13**)

In those times many will rise against the king of the South (**Ptolemy V Epiphanes, 203-181**). The violent men among your own people (**Jews**) will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success. (**Ptolemy's general Scopas crushed the rebellion in 200**) Then the king of the North (**still Antiochus the Great**) will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. The invader will do as he pleases; no one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land (**Israel, captured from the King of the South in 197**) and will have the power to destroy it. He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the South. And he will give him a daughter (**Cleopatra I married Ptolemy V in 194**) in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him. (**Don't confuse this Cleopatra with the later one, Cleopatra II, consort to both Julius Caesar and Marc Anthony**) Then he will turn his attention to the coast lands and (**teaming up with the famous Carthaginian General Hannibal**) will take many of them, but a commander (**Roman Consul Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, with whom Cleopatra and Ptolemy had sided**) will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back upon him. After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more. (Antiochus the Great died in battle in 187) (**Daniel 11:14-19**)

His successor (**Seleucus IV Philopator**) will send out a tax collector (**Heliodorus**) to maintain

the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle. **(Heliodorus engineered a coup against him)**

He will be succeeded by a contemptible person **(Antiochus IV Epiphanes, 175-164)** who has not been given the honor of royalty **(Antiochus Epiphanes mounted a palace revolt against his young cousin and rightful heir Demetrius I)**. He will invade the kingdom **(Israel)** when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue. Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant **(Onias III, Israel's last legitimate High Priest, who was murdered in 170)** will be destroyed. After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power. When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers. He will plot the overthrow of fortresses but only for a time. **(Daniel 11:20-24)** Antiochus conquered Israel and, for a time, Egypt.

With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South **(Ptolemy VI)**. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him. Those who eat from the king's provisions **(Ptolemy's family)** will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in battle. The two kings **(Antiochus and Ptolemy)**, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country. **(On his way back to Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes plundered the Temple in Jerusalem and killed many priests) (Daniel 11:25-28)**

At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. Ships of the western coast lands **(Rome)** will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant. **(Daniel 11:29-30)**

(As Antiochus stood in Egypt on the shore of the Mediterranean, the Roman Commander Popilius Laenas drew a circle around him in the sand, telling him that if he stepped out of the circle for any other reason than to surrender and go home, he would be killed. Humiliated and furious he took out his rage on the Jews, prompting the Maccabean revolt. This revolt actually lasted from 168-160, but people are most familiar with the period from

168-165 when the Temple was made desolate in history's clearest preview of the Great Tribulation.)

His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation **(168)**. With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him. **(The Hasidim, who remained faithful to God, were the ancestors of today's Hasidic Jews. They are world renowned for their trade in diamonds) (Daniel 11:31-32)**

Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. **(The Maccabeans, who defeated Antiochus, cleansed the Temple and restored Jewish autonomy, setting up the Hasmonean Dynasty that ruled Israel for about 100 years until the Romans came.)** Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time. **(Daniel 11:33-35)**

Finally in about 175BC a King of the North called Antiochus IV Epiphanes, about whom we've spoken, would come to power and try to defeat the current King of the South, called Ptolemy IV Philometor, for good. But the tables would be turned when Ptolemy received the help of a naval force from a relative newcomer on the world scene, Rome. Antiochus would be defeated and in embarrassment turn northward where he would take out his frustration on my people, Israel. Remember, I described this time of unprecedented persecution and terror in my account of the origin of Hanukkah.

At this point in the revelation, known by you as verse 35 of chapter 11, the angel skipped forward to a time still in your future. This angel was going to fill in the gaps in the account of those last 7 years that Gabriel had only summarized in his visitation to me two years earlier. Just as the Apostle John would tell the story of the Great Tribulation from the world's perspective, I would be filled in on events that concerned my people, Israel. You who are known as the Church will be blessed to view that time from the safe haven of your hidden mansion in the sky, which the Lord Jesus has been preparing for you these last 2000 years.

Chapter 11:36-12 ... History to Prophecy

Even though all of the angel's overview of Israel's history from 535BC to the end of the age came to me in advance, the first 35 verses of chapter 11 have already been fulfilled and documented as historical fact as you have seen. But now, again without skipping a beat and without a word of explanation, he jumped forward to a time still in the future even for your generation. These "fast forwards" occur with surprising regularity in prophetic discourse, most of them omitting the time when Israel didn't exist as a free nation, from 70 AD till 1948. It seems the Lord has always stopped counting time when His people were either under foreign rule or, as in the case of the Babylonian captivity and the Great Diaspora (scattering) after the Romans destroyed our country, ceased to exist altogether.

In **Isaiah 11:10-12** God promised to reach out a second time to re-gather His people as a nation (the first was after Babylon during my lifetime) and in **Amos 9:11-15** He declared that after the second re-gathering we would never again be dispersed. This second re-gathering began in 1948 and continues to this day. But as far as our LORD is concerned the time between 70 AD and 1948 simply didn't exist for Israel. That time belonged exclusively to the Church, and sadly many in the church concluded that my people were gone forever, and that all the blessings God had promised Israel now belonged to them. They seem to have forgotten that James explained just as the Diaspora was beginning that for a time the LORD would focus on taking a people for Himself from among the Gentiles, but that after He was finished He would return to re-build His relationship with Israel (**Acts 15:12-18**). People who don't understand that the LORD's concept of time is way different from ours, and who don't take His Word literally, try to relegate all of prophecy to the past. To say they'll be surprised when He comes back to wrap things up is an understatement of massive proportions.

But my angel informer had no such problems and roared headlong into the still distant future to focus on the missing last 7 years of our 490-year allotment of time. He said that during that time another King, who you know as the anti-Christ, will exalt himself above all mankind and say unheard of things against God. The Apostle Paul even predicted that he would actually claim to be God (**2 Thes. 2:4**). Remember Antiochus called himself "Epiphanes", meaning god made manifest, and this guy will be a lot like him although even worse. He will deny his Creator and his Savior (among my people every woman desired to be the mother of the Messiah which is why the angel called Him the desire of women) and exalt himself even above them. Instead, he will bow to the Devil himself and with his help attempt to conquer the world and defeat the forces of God once and for all. At the End of the Age, the last Kings of the North and South will engage him and,

after he defeats them, troops from the North (Europe and Russia) and from the East (China, India, Japan, etc) will try to sneak in and surprise him, but in a great rage he will take them on, too. Only one spot on the globe will be safe for my people, the Red Rock canyons of southern Jordan known as Petra. Just as the Messiah warned them to do, my people who believe in Him will flee there and be protected.

The anti-Christ will nearly succeed in conquering the world, even entering the Holy City and setting up his command center there. My people will be attacked, the city split in two, and it will seem if evil has triumphed over good after all.

Chapter 12 ... Michael To The Rescue (With A Little Help From You Know Who)

But just as things seem hopelessly lost Michael, the Archangel who commands the forces of the LORD, will arise to join the fray. Israel's situation is getting serious and they've finally recognized that they're outgunned and need some supernatural intervention. The armies of Heaven will accompany him as will the LORD Himself, having waited 2000 years for their call (**Hosea 5:15-6:2**). Once He arrives, just the sound of His Voice is enough to put his enemies to rout.

Then the most amazing thing will happen. All those among my people who believed that the rituals they performed endlessly every day of their lives were really pointing to a coming Redeemer and died in faith of His promise to come and save them, will be raised up to receive the rewards of their faith. From Adam forward, multitudes will be given eternal life in the presence of God. Those who rejected the promise of salvation will arise later to spend eternity regretting their stubbornness and stupidity.

Then two other angels appeared and together informed me that this terrible time of warfare and judgment will last 3 1/2 years, and when my people finally realize that they need their God to survive He'll come back and make things right. It seems the culmination of human history awaits my people's decision to return to the God who has loved them from the beginning of time.

I wanted more clarification, but the angel explained that he had told me all that was permitted and our meeting was over. But in the time between our visit and the actual events he had described many would come to know God and be saved, just as many would reject Him and be lost. It's the predictable effect of man's free will.

Then he gave me a final puzzle, and to the best of my knowledge it works out like this. From the time of the abomination that causes desolation to the Lord's return will be 3 1/2 years. Since God's calendar consists of 12 thirty-day months, 3 1/2 years equals 1260 days. If, as many believe, the Lord's return will take place on Rosh Hashanah, there will immediately be 10 Days of Awe followed by Yom Kippur, the national Day of Atonement for Israel. Assuming that the judgment of the nations spoken of in **Matt. 24:45 - 25:46** requires another 20 days, the 1260 day time of wrath plus 10 days till the judgment of the Jews plus 20 days of judgment for the Gentiles equals the 1290 days referenced by the angel. If setting up Messiah's Kingdom and the cleansing and purifying the Temple built 7 years earlier takes another 45 days then 1335 days will

have passed from the abomination that causes the desolation of the Temple to its first use in service to God. Remember, this number was indicated by the angel without explanation or clarification so I'm just offering an opinion here.

As for me, the angel said I would live out the remainder of my life and die, to be resurrected at the End of the Age to receive my inheritance. I never returned to Israel, but lived the remainder of my life in Persia and was buried in Susa, the capital city, where a shrine built in remembrance of me still exists. And that's my story. I pray that it's blessed you and helped in your understanding of God's Word. Shalom.