



Daniel 6, 7

Darius, Cyrus

- ✦ Ten references to Darius in Ezra
- ✦ Eight in Daniel
- ✦ Three in Haggai
- ✦ Three in Zechariah
- ✦ One in Nehemiah

- ✦ Twelve references to Cyrus in Ezra
- ✦ Three in Daniel
- ✦ Two in 2 Chronicles
- ✦ Two in Isaiah

- ✦ Ezra 4:5, 6, 7
- ✦ Cyrus, King of Persia
- ✦ Darius, King of Persia
- ✦ Ahasuerus
- ✦ Artaxerxes

Some have identified the Ahasuerus of this verse with Cambyses, some have identified Artaxerxes as the false Smerdis, who ruled for about half a year in 522 BC and was killed by Darius I.

Some believe Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes were kings reigning between Cyrus and Darius I.

Darius

- ✦ 1. Darius the Mede, mentioned only in the book of Daniel. He is depicted as gaining rule over Babylonia in the wake of the capture of Babylon and the death of Belshazzar, who was coregent with his father Nabonidus, the last ruler of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom, (Dan. 5:30–31). Said to be the son of a certain Ahashuerus (Xerxes; not Xerxes I cited at Esth. 1:1, the son of Darius I), and by birth a Mede rather than a Persian, this monarch is portrayed as reigning at least one year (Dan. 9:1; 11:1); it is he who ordered Daniel into the den of lions (6:16). (*Erdman's Bible Dictionary*)



Darius

- 2. Darius I Hystaspes (521–486 B.C.), successor to Cambyses II the son of Cyrus II the Great; also called Darius the Great. Darius' greatest contributions to the empire were as an administrator. Following the policy of Cyrus the Great, Darius was not only tolerant but also supportive of religious freedom among the peoples of the empire. In the second year of his reign (520) he was informed of the desire of the returned Israelites to resume construction of the Jerusalem temple (Ezra 4:5, 24; 5:1–17); reiterating the decree of Cyrus, he supported their efforts and provided royal revenue for the project, which was completed in 515 (6:1–15). He is probably “Darius the Persian” mentioned at Neh. 12:22. (Ibid.)



Darius

- ✦ 3. Darius II Ochus, son of Artaxerxes I.
- ✦ 4. Darius III Codommanus grandnephew of Artaxerxes II. The last Achaemenid monarch, he suffered repeated defeats at the hands of Alexander the Great and the Macedonian forces. (Ibid.)



Cyrus the Great

- ✦ The author of Chronicles ends his account of the southern kingdom by recalling a prophecy by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:12) and recording Cyrus' role in its fulfillment. In his first year (i.e., during his accession as king of Babylon) Cyrus proclaimed his intent to permit the exiled Jews to return and rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (2 Chr. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4). Isaiah, too, in his consolation of Israel (Isa. 40–55) mentions Cyrus' commission to rebuild Jerusalem, with special attention to the temple (44:28). In ch. 45 the prophet calls Cyrus the Lord's “anointed” who would subdue nations and open the gates of Babylon (i.e., permit the exiles to return; 45:1). While the Persian monarch may have been a messianic servant of the Lord, the prophet keeps the focus on God's redemption of his people, of which Cyrus was only the instrument. (Ibid.)



Cyrus the Great

- The book of Ezra depicts the fulfillment of the prophetic passages concerning Cyrus. The book describes the return to Judah of the Jewish exiles during the reign of Cyrus (1:1–2), adding that the monarch returned the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple almost fifty years earlier (vv. 7–8). Cyrus also offered the returnees a royal grant for the reconstruction of the temple (3:7). When the exiles encountered opposition to this project, they reminded their enemies that Cyrus had given them permission (4:3); so concerned were the opponents over the rebuilding of Jerusalem that they even petitioned the later king, Darius I the Great, to confirm this claim (5:13–17; cf. 6:1–12). (Ibid.)



Cyrus the Great

- ◆ Daniel, who had been taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C., remained in royal service there until at least the first year of Cyrus (Dan. 1:21; 6:28; 10:1). (Ibid.)



Although v. 5 [Ezra 4] leaves a number of questions unanswered, it is clear that certain royal advisers were bribed by the Samaritans to influence the king against the Jews. Daniel had presumably died—his last vision is dated in the 3d year of Cyrus (Dan. 10:1)—and his enemies (see Dan. 6:4) may have had more success influencing Cyrus against the Jews following his death. However, Cyrus seems to have neither revoked his decree nor issued one prohibiting the building of the Temple. (*SDA BC*)

IT is the privilege of the children of God to have the same character that Daniel had, so that their enemies can find no accusation against them, except concerning the law of their God, or, in other words, in regard to their religious faith, Our course should be faultless before the world, then our influence will tell most powerfully in favor of the religion which we profess. If we do unto others as we would that others should do unto us, this will be the case. We will be kind, generous, forgiving, gentle, honest, and truthful.

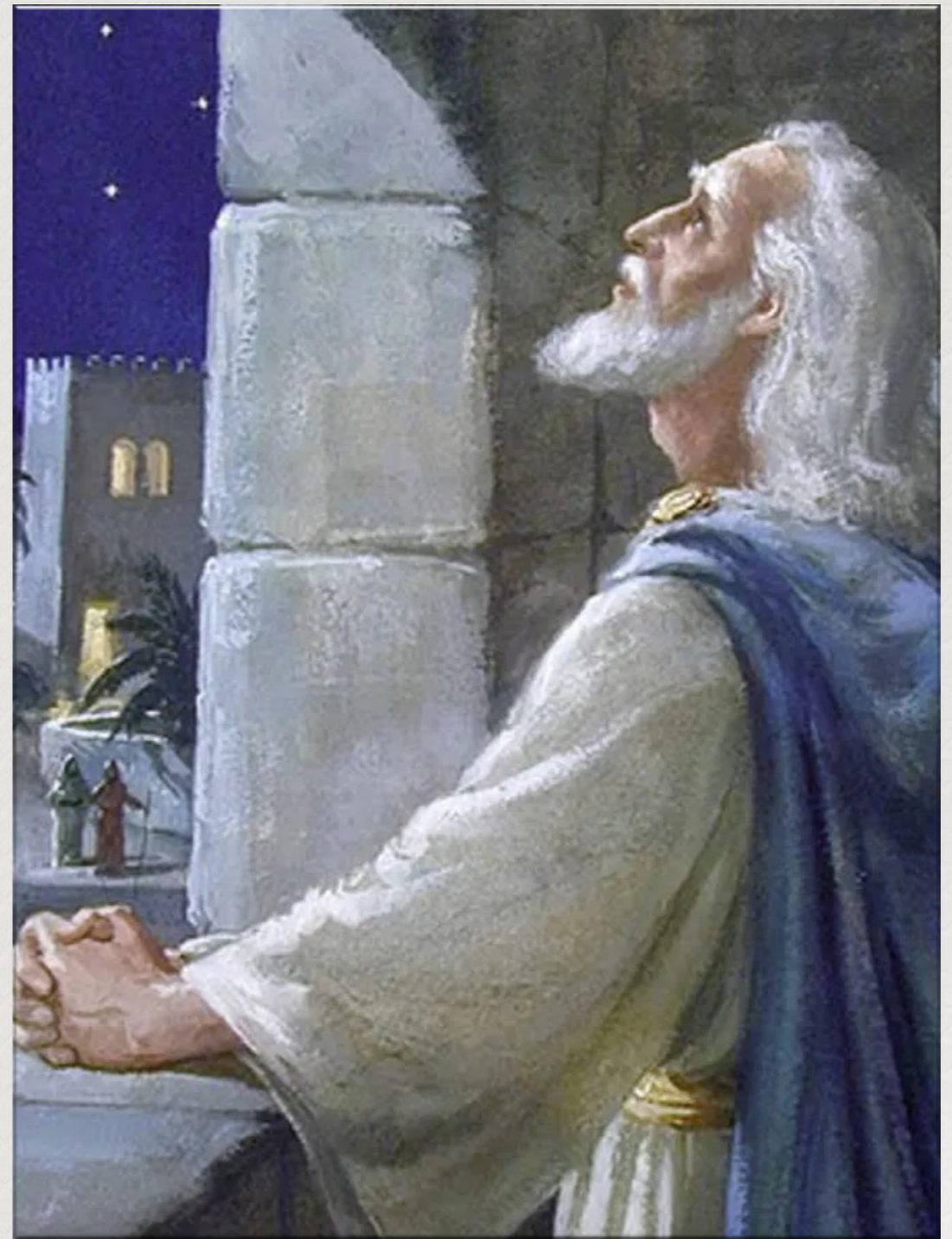
(Lesson Quarterly)

DANIEL was not ashamed of his religion, neither was he afraid to have it known that he prayed to God, even when he risked his life by continuing his devotions, as was his custom. Daniel was not defiant in his attitude toward the king. He only prayed as aforetime. If he had begun this manner of praying after the decree was issued, he would have shown a defiant spirit, which is never proper for the Christian to manifest. The people of God should be loyal to Him, whether human laws are liberal or oppressive, whether they are framed in the interests of liberty and equality, or of a religious despotism. And, however unjust and oppressive, human laws should be obeyed by the Christian unless they conflict with the law of God or our duty to Him. To this rule there is no exception. (Ibid.)

Daniel is an example to believers as to what it means to confess Christ. He held the responsible position of prime minister in the kingdom of Babylon, and there were those who were envious of Daniel among the great men of the court, and they wanted to find something against him that they might bring an accusation against him to the king. But he was a faithful statesman, and they could find no flaw in his character or life. (*OHC 357.2*)

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men,
him will I confess also before my Father which is in
heaven. (Matthew 10:32)

A confession of Christ means something more than bearing testimony in social meeting. Daniel is an example to believers as to what it means to confess Christ. He held the responsible position of prime minister in the kingdom of Babylon, and there were those who were envious of Daniel among the great men of the court, and they wanted to find something against him that they might bring an accusation against him to the king. But he was a faithful statesman, and they could find no flaw in his character or life. (Ellen White, *RH* May 3, 1892, par. 11)



So they agreed together to ask the king to make a decree that no one should ask any petition of any God or man for thirty days save of the king, and if any disobeyed this decree, he was to be cast into the den of lions. (*OHC 357.2*)

But did Daniel cease to pray because this decree was to go into force!—No, that was just the time when he needed to pray. “When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his window being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” Daniel did not seek to hide his loyalty to God. He did not pray in his heart, but with his voice, aloud, with his window open toward Jerusalem, he offered up his petition to heaven. (Ellen White, *RH* May 3, 1892, par. 11.)



... Daniel was thrown into the den of lions. But the Son of God was there. The angel of the Lord encamped round about the servant of the Lord ... (Ibid.)



We may know that if our life is hid with Christ in God, when we are brought into trial because of our faith, Jesus will be with us. When we are brought before rulers and dignitaries to answer for our faith, **the Spirit of the Lord will illuminate our understanding**, and we shall be able to bear a testimony to the glory of God. And if we are called to suffer for Christ's sake, we shall be able to go to prison trusting in him as a little child trusts in its parents. Now is the time to cultivate faith in God. (Ibid., par. 12)

Are we confessing Christ in our daily life? Do we confess him in our dress, adorning ourselves with plain and modest apparel? Is our adorning that of the meek and quiet spirit which is of so great price in the sight of God? Are we seeking to advance the cause of the Master? Is the line of demarkation between you and the world distinct, or are you seeking to follow the fashions of this degenerate age? Is there no difference between you and the worldling? Does the same spirit work in you that works in the children of disobedience? If we are Christians, we shall follow Christ, even though the path in which we are to walk cuts right across our natural inclinations. There is no use in telling you that you must not wear this or that, for if the love of these vain things is in your heart, your laying off your adornments will only be like cutting the foliage off a tree. The inclinations of the natural heart would again assert themselves. You must have a conscience of your own. (Ellen White, *RH*, May 10, 1892, par. 1)

To pray aright, is to ask God in faith for the very things you need. Go to your chamber, or in some retired place, and ask your Father for Jesus' sake to help you. There is power in that prayer that is sent up from a heart convinced of its own weakness, yet earnestly longing for that strength that comes from God. The earnest, fervent prayer will be heard and answered. Go to your God who is strong, and who loves to hear children pray, and, although you may feel very weak, and find yourself at times overcome by the Enemy, because you have neglected the first command of our Saviour, to watch, yet do not give up the struggle. Make stronger efforts yourself than before. Faint not. Cast yourself at the feet of Jesus, who has been tempted, and knows how to help such as are tempted. (*YI* October 1, 1855, par. 4)

Confess your faults, your weakness, and that you must have help to overcome, or you perish. And as you ask, you must believe that God hears you. Plead your case before God, through Jesus, until your soul can with confidence rely upon him for strength, and you feel that you are not left to do the work of overcoming alone. God will help you. Angels will watch over you. (Ibid.)

But before you can expect this help, you must do what you can on your part. Watch and pray. Let your prayers be fervent. Let this be the language of your heart, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Have a set time, a special season for prayer at least three times a day. Morning, noon, and at night Daniel prayed to his God, notwithstanding the king's decree, and the fearful den of lions. He was not ashamed or afraid to pray, but with his windows opened he prayed three times a day. Did God forget His faithful servant when he was cast into the lions' den? O, No. He was with him there all night. He closed the mouths of these hungry lions, and they could not hurt the praying man of God. (Ibid.)

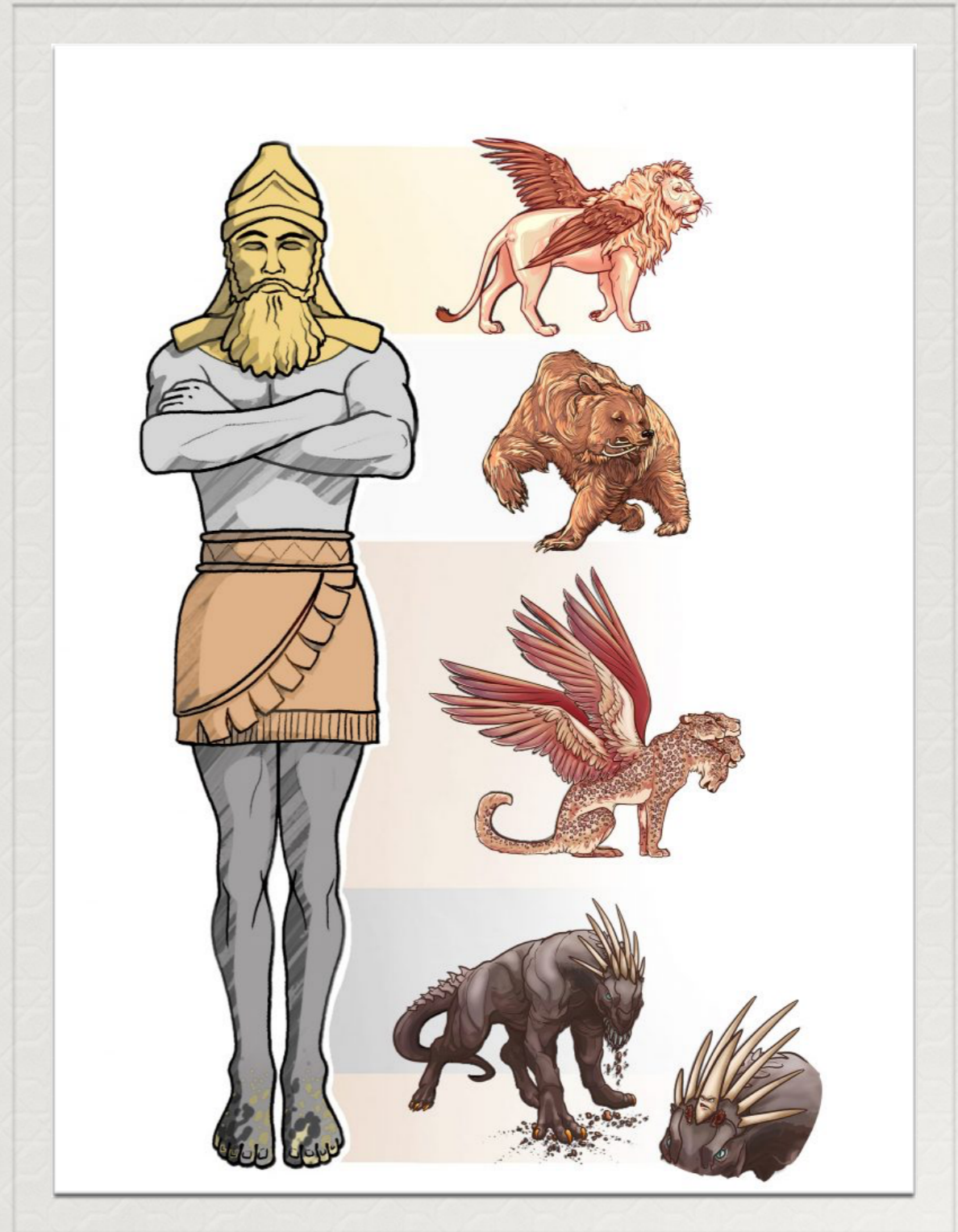


Daniel 7

The prophecy of ch. 7 covers essentially the same span of history as the dream of ch. 2, both reaching from the prophet's day to the time of the establishment of the kingdom of God. Nebuchadnezzar saw the world powers represented by a great metallic image; Daniel saw them as symbolic beasts and horns, and saw also aspects of history related to the experience of God's people and the outworking of His plan. Chapter 2 deals largely with political matters. It was given, first of all, for the instruction of Nebuchadnezzar, to secure his cooperation in the divine plan. (*SDA BC*)



The relationship of the people of God to the shifting political scenes was not a subject of that prophecy. The prophecy of ch. 7, like those of the remainder of the book, was given especially for the people of God in order that they might understand their part in the divine plan for the ages. The inspired preview of events was given against the background of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The efforts of the arch-enemy of souls to destroy the “holy people” were unveiled and the final victory of truth assured. (*SDA BC*)



v2. Winds. From the Aramaic *ruach*, equivalent to the Heb. *ruach*, which has a variety of meanings, such as “air” (Jer. 2:24, translated “wind”), “breath” (Job 19:17), human “spirit” (Ps. 32:2), divine “Spirit” (Ps. 51:12), and “wind” (Ex. 10:13). Metaphorically the word is also used of vain and empty things (Jer. 5:13). When used in symbolic vision, as here, the word seems to denote activity or energy of some form, the particular form to be determined by the context. For example, the “winds” of Ezekiel’s symbolic vision, which revived the dry skeletons, were representative of divine energy reviving the lifeless nation of Israel (Eze. 37:9–14). The “winds” of Daniel, which strove upon the great sea, causing four beasts—or empires—to emerge, represented those movements, diplomatic, warlike, political, or otherwise, that were to shape the history of the period. (Ibid.)

The “four winds,” being from the four points of the compass, doubtless represent political activity in various parts of the earth (Jer. 49:36; cf. Dan. 8:8; 11:4; Zech. 2:6; 6:5, margin)

The sea is here symbolic of the nations of the world—the “great sea” of humanity in all ages (see Rev. 17:15; cf. Isa. 17:12; Jer. 46:7) (Ibid.)