

Daniel 06-05-07a

This is the seventh day of May, 2006. As we continue our worship this morning, we come to that portion of our service where we address ourselves to the study of God's Word, the nourishment of our souls through that spiritual food, that bread which the Lord Jesus Christ has given to us. It is important that we are prepared.

When you're a child and it's meal time, what do your parents say? Go wash up. Go wash your hands. Make sure that you're clean and able to eat and take advantage of your food and that the meal and the intake process does not wind up doing something harmful to you.

And in the same way, when we approach the intake of our spiritual food, it's important that we wash up, that we are sanctified, that we are cleansed, that God the Holy Spirit has room to be our teacher. The Apostle John told the early church, it's not men that teach you, it is the Holy Spirit. You have the Spirit.

That's the way that you discern whether or not you're being fed. That's how you know whether you're in the right place, whether you're listening to the right man presenting the Word of God. Am I fed? Is my soul built up and edified? Do I come away with understanding of God's Word that really makes a difference in my life? Half of that process is the taking in of God's Word.

The other part, of course, is up to each individual, which is the application of faith, the effort involved in meditation, in calling God's Word to mind, and thinking of its interpretation and its application. And those are things that I cannot do for you, but God the Holy Spirit can and will if we continue to walk in the light, if we continue to cultivate His active ministry in our souls. He is the one who leads us into all truth.

He will bring to mind the truths that we have learned when we need them. If we are inclined in that direction, you read Proverbs 2, and it's important not only to lay up God's Word in our hearts and incline our ears toward it, but to lift up our voice, to cry out for understanding, to ask so that God can give, to seek so that God can put it in our path to find, and to knock on the door so that God can open those doors and give us those opportunities for application that enable us to claim the righteousness of Christ by faith. All of that hinges upon the intake of God's Word, the study of God's Word, so that there is something to meditate on, so that there is something to apply our faith to.

This is not all of our spiritual life, but it is certainly an essential part. Operating your car is not all putting gas in the tank, is it? But it certainly won't run without it. And this is the gas for our spiritual tank.

This is the food for our souls. Without food, we quickly wither away. We lose strength.

We become apathetic and unable to do anything useful. The very same thing is true in our souls. So let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, there are so many wonderful treasures within your Word. We are privileged to see them as we study these great books written by faithful men so long ago that still today have a dynamic power, a power that is undiminished, the truth that is transforming by its very nature, that is alive and powerful in the hands of the Holy Spirit. It can transform even us, fallen, weak, corrupted by sin, assailed by the world and the flesh and the devil.

Yet these principles, these promises, these doctrines that you give us in your Word have that spiritual, transforming, energizing effect when we avail ourselves of that power. We pray this morning that you will be with us as we study your Word. May each one find in the things that we look at this morning, truths that will motivate and encourage, comfort, strengthen, build up for service, that we may be workmen who need not be ashamed, who rightly divide your Word, not only in understanding and in interpretation, but most importantly in application, so that it does, in fact, reflect your glory in our lives in the days ahead.

We pray for those who have the rule over us. We pray for our governmental leaders, especially those who are professed Christians who do seek to please you in the execution of their duties and to reflect the principles of your Word in the policies and in the actions which they undertake. We pray for those in the military and law enforcement and in the intelligence agencies and in every aspect of our governmental and national structure.

There are believers who are unable to assemble, who are unable to enjoy the blessings of fellowship and the gifts that you've distributed as we do here this morning. Even members of our own congregation are scattered this morning as each week we find those who are not physically present with us, and yet we know that there is no circumstance of this life that limits your power or your blessing. And we pray your blessing on each believer this morning who has a hunger and a thirst for your Word, that they will be filled, that God the Holy Spirit will minister the Word that they may hear, wherever it may be, or the Word that is stored in their soul, that it will be renewed and refreshed to them and become like the cruise of oil and the barrel of flour that never ran dry for the widow, that there is always something available for God the Holy Spirit to bring to our minds and encourage us and strengthen us and guide us with as we seek to live our lives in a way that is pleasing in your sight and glorifying to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask all these things in His name. Amen. We have a lot to cover this morning in the book of Daniel, chapter 11, the latter half of the chapter, specifically verses 36 through 45.

This is an interesting section. This entire chapter has been quite interesting because it is very detailed and very specific in its recounting of human history. So much so that, as I have mentioned the last couple of weeks, secular scholars and those who refuse to believe in predictive prophecy have to assume that it was written after the fact.

Now, this is the point of the spear. Most of the time when you find someone who wants to attack the Bible, this is where they think the soft underside is located. They say, ah, if I can show you where Daniel is late and is not what it claims to be, this invalidates your entire Bible.

They used to think that they had a really strong case. And for years and years, decades and decades, secular scholarship laughed at the Bible, laughed at predictive prophecy, laughed at Christians who believed it and took it as true. And they said, you're deluding yourself.

History itself shows that this book was written after the fact, could not have been written by Daniel in the 6th century. This was written by some unknown author in about 160 or 165 BC, after the events that it predicts. Well, this is a very important charge, and it is an example of the kind of charge that is leveled against the Bible in other places, such as the New Testament, the New Testament writers, the New Testament books.

Well, Paul didn't write all of the Pauline epistles. Peter didn't write 2 Peter. Luke didn't write Luke, and he didn't write Acts.

John and Revelation, well, that's just completely late fabrications by some unknown person. We don't hardly even recognize those as belonging in the Bible. The Gospel authors, none of the authors are who they say they are.

Matthew didn't write Matthew. Mark didn't write Mark. Luke and John, of course, they didn't write their stuff.

A little bit of Paul may be authentic, but Paul invented Christianity out of whole cloth. Some poor raggedy rabbi ran around and got himself crucified. Paul saw the opportunity to foment a movement and start a cult, and for reasons of his own, he created Christianity out of the career of this otherwise unknown sort of good news man who wandered around for a while and didn't do any miracles and didn't say half of the things that are attributed to him.

It's all late fabrication. This is the kind of thing that circulates in the world for truth, and they will point to all kinds of evidence for each of these different charges, each of these different cases that they want to make against the inspired, inerrant, infallible, divinely ordained Word of God. Well, if you take any one of these cases, and they like to lump them all together.

They don't want to get down to brass tacks on any specific one, and I'm going to show you why this morning. We're going to use Daniel chapter 11, and I hesitate to do this because I think our lessons ought to end up at a place of interpretation and personal application. And you will notice that I don't tend to burden you with a lot of points.

I don't tend to go off on tangents of politics or a lot of secular philosophy and so on, because I don't want to walk away from church, and I don't think you do either, saying, well, that was real interesting, but so what? I've got my life to live here, and I don't see anything in that that's going to make a difference for me in the coming week. And I try to make that the litmus test for each lesson that we go through together. At the end of it, was there something in there that ought to make a difference in the way we think and in the way we decide and in the way we live? And it's difficult to go into something like this and say, well, let me show you where the secular scholars are wrong, and when you get all done say, okay, well, now let's go forth and

bear fruit unto righteousness and trust God and so on.

You know, there's a little bit of a lack of applicability, shall we say. However, you and I need to know this information because the subject of this chapter, Daniel chapter 11, is the Antichrist. It is the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his vision with the head of gold, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire.

It's all one thing, isn't it? That image is one entity. Any one part of it is not a complete thing. You need the head of gold.

You need the shoulders and arms of silver. You need the belly and thighs of brass. You need the legs of iron.

You need the feet of iron mixed with clay. You need all of that or you don't have a complete image. There was an interesting development over in Japan or Korea or somewhere.

You know, they're trying to make androids. They're trying to make simulated human beings. And the Japanese a year or so ago came out with a talking robot thing that has kind of a little bit of a moving face and it can gesture a little bit and they were real proud of that.

Well, I think it's the Koreans. Am I right about that? I think the Koreans had just developed something called Eve something. They call her Eve.

But she's an oriental-looking woman in her early 20s. This is how she appears, like you would see a mannequin in a store. You know, they don't put little old grannies out there for mannequins.

It's always some youthful woman for the women's department. And that's what she looks like. She looks like an oriental gal in her early 20s.

And she's sitting down and she's got her hands there. And this is an android that they've made. And it's got intelligence and it can respond to human speech.

It's got speech recognition and it will talk back. And it's got four basic, it's got like 15 different little motors in the face to change the expressions and make it smile or frown. And it can express three or four basic emotions and so on.

And its upper body moves great. It can move its head, its jaw moves, its hands move. It can gesture and it's the latest thing.

What's interesting to me is it's sitting down. And they say, well, the bottom half of it doesn't work. I mean, we've worked on the upper half.

We're trying to get the eyes to move and blink and to act real natural. But that's as far as they've gotten. But they went ahead and unveiled it anyway because it's going to be a while before they can figure out the gyroscope and the legs and get it to stand up and sit down or

walk around.

That's a big challenge. They're doing well just to get the upper half. So it's half an android.

And then it's just sitting on these useless legs that are just there for decoration. Might as well just have it coming up out of the middle of a table because from the waist down, it's non-functional. And, well, you have to look at this image and these visions throughout Daniel, even the visions of the beasts with the bear with the ribs in its mouth and all the rest of it.

These are a continuum. They're all of a piece. And you can't just carve out one part and then say, well, it stops.

It's like this woman. So it's just a waist up. That's not how it is.

Because this image is all one thing, and because history moves from the top to the bottom, from the head to the feet, we know the feet of the iron mixed with clay, this is the end times, right? So we're somewhere before the feet. The revived Roman Empire has not come. The feet of iron mixed with clay, that hasn't happened yet.

So this is an ongoing thing. What does this tell us? The animating spirit of that image, the spirit of Antichrist, is alive and well. It's all one agenda.

It's all one program. That image represents the efforts of Satan on this earth to supplant and replace God and his people and his kingdom. No part of that image represents Israel, does it? It starts out great with gold, and the materials deteriorate as it goes down toward the bottom.

You know why? Satan's best shot was in early history. But everything related to creatures who are separated from God conforms to the second law of thermodynamics, which is, in layman's terms, everything put together falls apart. It is only God who can instigate an action and have it get better and better, have it improve and qualitatively advance and grow and bear increasing amounts of fruit.

That's the work of God in the positive sense. It is degeneration and corruption and a downward trend that are associated with creatures separated from God. This image is Satan's work.

That's his big program. And it starts shiny and bright, but by the time you get to the bottom, you're down to clay, you're down to mud and dirt mixed with water. That's the best he can do.

He's got no more gold, he's got no more silver, he's got no more bronze. He can't even get the iron going anymore. He doesn't have enough iron.

He's left to try to glue it together with some clay. But it represents all of human history. And the only thing that increases and the only thing that burgeons and grows in the fallen world, the world of separation from God, is corruption.

A little leaven will spread and leaven the whole lump. You know, they used to tell me when I

was a boy, don't hang around with the wrong crowd. You know, if you have a barrel of apples and they're all good and you put one bad apple in there, the good apples don't turn the bad apple good.

What happens? The corruption and the little growing microbes that are in that rotten apple are just going to spread to all the good ones and the corruption is going to spread to the good. Bad company corrupts good morals, Paul quotes. And that's the only kind of proliferation you see, is a proliferation of degeneration, of corruption, of falling apart.

Well, how does all this, why are we even talking about it? What does it mean in terms of Daniel chapter 11? We have in the beginning of the chapter this account of what's coming up. Gabriel comes to Daniel and says, look, here's what's about to happen. When you look at verse 2, it says, I will tell you the truth, three more kings will arise in Persia and the fourth will be far richer than them all.

Three more kings. Who are the three more kings? Cambyses, Darius, Darius the Great, and Xerxes. The fourth, beginning in verse 3, you have the conquests of Alexander the Great.

So, the four kings there, I gave you the last three actually, because you start with Cyrus. Cyrus and then his son Cambyses, then Darius the Great, and then Xerxes. Those are the four.

Xerxes is the one richer by far because he goes and gathers all the wealth from the 127 provinces and tries to attack Greece, tries to avenge the defeat of Darius before him, who got stomped on by the Greeks, and Xerxes is going to get stomped on by the Greeks, and he's going to be the last of those four kings. So, Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes. Four kings.

Then, in verse 3, we have the career of Alexander the Great. Then we saw, in verses 5 through 9, this conflict when Alexander's kingdom breaks up into four pieces. You have the big piece at the top and the big piece at the bottom.

You have the Seleucids in the north and you have the Ptolemies down in the south. They battle each other and Israel is caught in the crossfire right in the middle. Then, in verses 10 through 19, which we looked at last time, we have Antiochus III, Antiochus the Great, and all of his activities.

We saw people getting poisoned and falling off of horses and all kinds of things as human power gets exercised in trying to accomplish great things and trying to hold this empire together and expand it and recapture the greatness of Alexander. And, of course, it doesn't work. Things just go from bad to worse no matter what they try.

They turn their face one way or another but they stumble and fall, verse 19, and shall not be found. That's how Antiochus III finally drops out of sight. In verse 20, we have his successor.

There arises one in his place who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom. Within a few days he is destroyed but not in anger or in battle. This is Seleucus IV.

Now, before we get all bogged down again in the details here, I talked about this image of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's vision. It's all one thing. These events refer to specific historical happenings that were future for Daniel.

They're in the past for us. Two things we want to remember about this. This afternoon when you think back and say, what did we cover in church this morning? First thing is, this history was predicted in great detail by God's angel to Daniel before it happened.

And I'm going to give you the reasons we know that this is true. Secondly, so the first is, the Bible is what it claims to be. God says, the reason you know I'm God is I tell you what's going to happen before it happens.

If God can't tell us what's going to happen before it happens, He's not God. Our faith is in vain. Christ is not raised.

It's all a made up thing and we ought to get busy and do something else and quit wasting our time. But this is what it purports to be. It is predictive prophecy.

It is from God, which proves that God exists. Nobody in the history of the world can predict the future except God. Nostradamus notwithstanding, if you think Nostradamus predicted anything, go read a translation of his peregrinations in French.

It's the worst mishmash. You could get that to fit anything. I could get that to fit the history of my daughter's pets.

It's so vague and so contradictory and you have to skip so much and interpret so much, it could mean anything to anybody. Not so with the Word of God. Some people try to make that charge on the Word of God.

Do you think you can take Daniel chapter 11 and apply it to different parts of history? This sequence and these specific things? It's so specific that people are sure that it had to be written after the fact. That's how good it is. Well, I'm going to show you how it's not.

So, point number one. Daniel chapter 11 is predictive. It is inspired.

It is from God. And it is evidence that requires a conclusion about the existence of God and the claims of God and the veracity of the entire Word of God. And, a sub-point to that, it is an example.

Because what we're about to do to the secular case against Daniel chapter 11, you can do to any other one of the cases that people try to make. When they say Paul didn't write Paul's letters. When they say Peter didn't write Peter's letters.

When they say John didn't write John. Luke didn't write Luke. Matthew didn't write Matthew.

Mark didn't. If we wanted to take the time, I could give you the very same quality of case

against secular aspersions and secular doubts and secular speculations that attack the Word of God. We could dismember and eviscerate their case on those points just as we're about to do to this.

So, this is an example. And if you ever run across one of these other quote unquote, look how the Bible contradicts itself. Look how this isn't what it claims to be.

Let me know. And I can give you just the same level of detail I'm going to give you now. That's point one.

Point two. Remember, not only is this an example of God's oversight, knowledge, and control of human history. But, these events are representative not only of other cases for and against the Word of God.

But, they're representative of your life and my life. This is applicable to you and to me. Just as we've seen in the book of Ezekiel.

Just as we've seen in the book of Revelation. We've completed both of those studies in the recent past. And we saw that looking at God's words about the future has just as much by way of observation, interpretation, and application as looking at God's dealings with His people in the past.

You can study Israel in the wilderness. You can study the patriarchs. You can study the life of Christ and the early days of the church in Acts.

And the epistles of Paul. Historical, graven in stone things. And there's great interpretation.

There's great application from those things. The very same is true of what has not yet happened. Of predictive prophecy.

So, whether it's in the past or whether it's in the future, it has applicability. God wouldn't put it in front of us if it was not profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. So, what does this mean to us? What should we draw by way of interpretation and application as we observe these historical details? Future for Daniel.

Past for us. Well, we're going to look at that as well. So, those are our two objectives this morning.

We're going to see that this was predicted. What it means. We're also going to see where it lifts off and instead of being historical, it becomes future even to us.

Part of this is still future. And this puts a stake through the heart of the vampirical case, if you will, against this chapter saying, well, it was all written after the fact. There's part of this that's still future.

And there's part of this that was future to the putative 165 B.C. author. They say, well, we can

explain it because he lived in 160 B.C. and all this stuff was past. There's stuff in this chapter that even in 165 B.C. was still future.

And their case is just as dead in the water if it contains predictive prophecy that is now past and was future for an author in 165 B.C. Well, those people are all wet. Well, I'll show you how that is in fact the case. I want to acknowledge, because obviously all of this work is not my own, I want to acknowledge in particular two great scholars, two people that if you find something they've written, almost anything they've written, it's going to be good.

One is Gleason Archer and the other is Dwight Pentecost. If you find anything written by Gleason Archer, with the exception of some things dealing with the timing of the rapture, I think he's a mid-trib guy. Outside of that, he's really good.

He has a book called The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties. It's fun just to leaf through that and see what people consider a difficulty and the answers that he gives are great. The other is, of course, Dr. Pentecost, who in addition to his landmark, never before or since equaled book called Things to Come, has written others.

He has another book, which I'll give you a little bit, called Thy Kingdom Come. And J. Dwight Pentecost has addressed some elements in here that are summarized so well, I can't do any better, so we'll just use his summary. So Gleason Archer and Dwight Pentecost.

A lot of what I'm giving you this morning comes from them, and it's as good as it gets. If somebody has done the best that can be done, you're silly not to use it. So, what about Daniel chapter 11? What do we need to take away from this chapter before we move on to chapter 12? Well, first of all, this is the basis, as I said, for an attack on the scripture, that it's late, that it was written by somebody in 165 B.C. after Antiochus Epiphanes.

How do we know this is not so? Well, there are two assumptions that these people have to make to get this idea to fly. First of all, you remember the four kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's vision. Remember the four? You get the head of gold, Babylon.

You get the shoulders and arms of silver, the Medes and the Persians. Two shoulders, two arms, remember? Then you have the belly and thighs of brass, which is the Greeks. And then you have the legs of iron, which is the Roman Empire, right? And then the predictive future part for us is the feet of iron mixed with clay, which is the revived Roman Empire, where the pieces of the old empire, the pieces of iron, are glued back together in a temporary fashion with this ceramic, with this clay, right? Nine-tenths of the world who pay any attention at all understand that this is how it works.

Well, think about this now. The Roman Empire did not really come into being until the double digits B.C. Julius Caesar, all the rest of that. But this doesn't take place until after 100 B.C., right? So, you can't be a secular scholar and claim that Daniel has no predictive prophecy and believe that the legs of iron are Rome.

Because in 165 B.C., nobody has any idea that Rome is going to supersede Greece as a world power and subsume it and go beyond it and become this fourth great world empire. Nobody has any clue in 165 B.C., right? So, what do they have to do to this vision of the image? They've got to reinterpret it. They've got to get Rome out of the picture.

Otherwise, even if they succeed in saying the author wrote it in 165, it's still got predictive prophecy in it and it just assassinates their whole case. So, what do they do? They say, look, the four kingdoms, and remember we also had the four beasts with the bear and the leopard and all the rest of it. What they do is they say, here are the four kingdoms.

It's Babylon, then the Medes, then the Persians, then the Greeks. Those are the four. So, the head of gold is Babylon.

The shoulders and arms of silver, those are the Medes. Then the belly and thighs of brass, that's the Persians. And the legs of iron, that's the Greeks.

So, see, it's all done by 160 BC because Antiochus, that's when he checks out. Antiochus gets killed in like 163 BC or so. And so, everything fits now.

It's all in the past. He's writing about all this past history and everything there doesn't say anything about Rome. Well, what is the problem with this? Where do you get this shoulders and arms of silver, which is the Median Empire, to be the second big empire? They say, oh, well, this is Darius the Great.

And they say all of the references in Daniel to Darius are one guy. It's Darius the Great and he was a Mede and he had this big empire. Well, here's the problem with that.

Darius the Mede cannot be Darius the Great. Now, you remember Darius the Mede. We saw him back in Daniel chapter 5 and verse 31.

Remember, Belshazzar was slain. Many, many take a leupharsin. Handwriting on the wall this very night.

Obliterated. Here come the armies of the Medo-Persian Empire. And it says, Darius the Mede received the kingdom being about 62 years old.

So, Belshazzar is the last of the golden head, the last of Babylon, right? And so, here's Darius the Mede. And they say, ah, see, here's Darius. This is the big Median Empire.

This Darius, Darius the Mede, is 62 years old when he takes over from Belshazzar, right? Well, in the first place, Darius the First, Darius the Great, comes after King Cyrus, not before him. These armies are the armies of Cyrus. The army that specifically attacks Jerusalem and defeats and slays Belshazzar is headed or led by General Gubaru.

We talked about this a little back in Daniel chapter 5. Well, Cyrus himself is still busy conquering his empire when Jerusalem falls. And so he appoints his general, Gubaru, to be the king in the

place of the guy that just got killed, Belshazzar. So, Cyrus is the main guy here.

He's the big noise coming out of Persia. But Cyrus is a Persian, and this is the Persian Empire that's coming in, allied with the Medes. Gubaru is a Mede, and he is one of the senior generals in Cyrus' army.

He's the guy that comes in. And because he gets this place conquered, Cyrus says, Good job, Gubaru. You be the king over there for a while until I can come in and claim the throne and so on.

So, his 62-year-old general, this Mede, Gubaru, becomes the king. And he's called Darius. And I won't go into all the etymology, but there's a Persian word called Dara-Wa-Yeshu or some such thing that means it's kind of like Abimelech or Pharaoh.

It means you're the big wig of the area. You're the local monarch. And so, this Dara-Wa-Yeshu, it's kind of like Augustus, where it can be a title.

And so, Gubaru, he doesn't say, Well, just call me King Gubaru. He says, I'm the Dara-Wa-Yeshu, which gets transmogrified when you run it through Hebrew into Darius. And so, this is sort of his title.

And that's why later on, there's going to be another guy who says, Well, I'm Darius now. And I'm the Darius for the whole empire. I'm Darius I or Darius the Great.

But that title was first used by Gubaru when he came in. He's Darius to me. Now, why else do we know this? Well, Darius I, Darius the Great, who's going to come later on after Cyrus and after Cambyses, is a cousin of Cyrus.

Darius the Great is a Persian, not a Mede. So, you can't very well call Darius the Persian, Darius the Great, Darius I, Darius III, he's the second king after Cyrus. You can't very well call him Darius the Mede.

He's not a Mede. Doesn't have any connection to the Medes. He's as Persian as Cyrus is.

So, as a cousin of Cyrus, he's not a Mede. Secondly, we know from other historians, there is secular history for this. And this is one of the great things.

You know, the naysayers and the attackers of the Bible like to say, Well, we've got these historians over here, and they say this and that. Well, we do have secular historians who wrote about this. We have Xenophon.

We have Herodotus. Who wrote extensively about this period of history. And it is from Xenophon and Herodotus and others that we know the history of this time.

And we know that Darius I, Darius the Persian, the second king after Cyrus, he's much later than Darius the Mede, that Darius was a young man when he came to the throne. Because

there was a guy trying to say, Well, I'm the next in line. We had Cyrus, we had Cambyses, and now it's me.

And I'm Smyrdas. I'm a son of the king, and I'm supposed to be the next king. Well, he wasn't Smyrdas.

He was a guy named Gautama. And he was impersonating Smyrdas. He was trying to pass himself off as Smyrdas so that he could come to the throne.

Well, Darius said, Wait a minute. You're not Smyrdas. And he went in there and killed him and took the throne for himself.

So they call Gautama pseudo-Smyrdas. That's how he's known in history. Pseudo-Smyrdas because he tried to be Smyrdas and he wasn't.

He was found out, Darius killed him, and Darius became the king. Well, when all of this took place, and you read about it in the histories, the secular histories, Darius was a young man. He's like in his 20s when he does this.

He goes on to rule for 40 odd years. Well, he couldn't be a man of 62 and do all of this and then rule until he's in his hundreds. He's not the same guy.

You see what I'm saying? Now, right now, you don't know why that's important. But just trust me, it's important to know that there's two different Dariuses. There's Darius the Mede.

Then you have Cyrus Cambyses. And then you have Darius the Great. Years later, two different guys.

It's critical to understand this. Of course, Darius the Great came after Cyrus. Duh.

He didn't come to the throne until seven years after Cyrus died. And in the meantime, Cyrus had crowned his son, Cambyses, king of Babylon. So this Darius, by all accounts, is after Cyrus.

So he can't be the guy of Daniel 5.31 that takes the throne when Belshazzar is slain. It just doesn't work. What happened to Cyrus? What happened to Cambyses? Can't happen.

Xenophon and Herodotus and other historians wrote about all of this. And this knowledge was extant and common and circulating. Scholars all over the world were reading Xenophon and were reading Herodotus by 200 B.C. These guys were published.

The scholarly world knew all about Xenophon. Everybody heard his stories. And the same with Herodotus.

So now, think about this. Xenophon and Herodotus and three or four other ancient historians have all said, well, when the Babylonian Empire fell, here's Cyrus, and here's Cambyses, and here's Darius I. That's the sequence that they give. In fact, they don't even mention Belshazzar.

They mention Nabonidus. And secular people used to say, now see, the book of Daniel is just off because Herodotus and Xenophon and these three or four other guys, they don't mention Belshazzar. Where's Nabonidus? Nabonidus is not in there.

It talks about Belshazzar. And so they threw rocks and poo-pooed it and said, see, it's all screwed up. Well, in the late 19th century, they unearthed inscriptions that said, oh, guess what? Nabonidus had to go off and fight a war and he put his son Belshazzar, which I gave you this information earlier, on the throne.

And so then all the secular people had to shut up because the Bible knew something that Herodotus and Xenophon did not know. That Belshazzar had sat as regent in the place of his father Nabonidus in Jerusalem while Nabonidus went off and fought a war. Now, if this author, putative author in 165 BC, is writing the book of Daniel and he's relying on Herodotus and Xenophon to get his information, he would not know about Belshazzar because Belshazzar is not in any of those accounts.

He's in inscriptions that have been gone for over 2,000 years and were just recently unearthed. And he would be insane to say Darius got the throne upon the death of Belshazzar when everybody who was reading Xenophon and Herodotus says, wait a minute, Darius comes after Cyrus and Cambyses. What are you talking about? Your book's a piece of trash.

And it would have never gotten any currency or any traction or any provenance when people say, well, look at this, it's all goofed up. How could someone write about Belshazzar and be accepted in 165 BC? How could someone write about Darius the Mede getting the throne right after Belshazzar in 165 BC when all of the current wisdom at that time didn't know about Belshazzar and didn't know about Darius the Mede and would have laughed them out of town for saying that Darius came before Cyrus and before Cambyses. You know why? Because it wasn't written in 165 BC.

It was written back when people still knew about Belshazzar and it was current knowledge. And this is about 530 BC when Daniel wrote this down nearly 400 years earlier. Over 400 years.

Well, a little less than 400 years earlier. That's why this information is in here. And the book of Daniel attests the fact that Darius the Mede is not Darius the Great.

It says in Daniel 9.1, Darius the Mede was made king. They didn't really know what to make of this. It's an unusual way.

It's not the normal verb for becoming king. It's made king. And it's weird, but they found this identical phrase.

If you've ever heard of the thing called the Behistun Stone or the Behistun Inscription. B-E-H-I-S-T-U-N They unearthed that thing just not too long ago. Within the last century or century and a half.

They found this inscription and on it, it has a record of Cyrus and him appointing and making kings in the places that he had conquered. And it uses this very same phrase. It says Cyrus made him king.

Cyrus made him king. Cyrus made him king. Darius the First is the guy that's actually responsible for the Behistun Inscription.

And this is what he says about Cyrus. He says he made these kings. It's the very same phrase.

Nobody knew this until the Behistun Inscription was uncovered. This and other evidence tells us the nature of the language. There's been extensive linguistic analysis ever since the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s.

In particular, the Genesis Apocryphon was written right around when they claimed that Daniel was written. They compared the language. Totally different.

You cannot make the case that Daniel was written in the second century B.C. We've got documentation. We've got several books that were actually written in the second century B.C. now thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls. No similarity.

No comparison. Old words. Old Persian terms and things in this that are no longer... Nobody even knows what they mean anymore.

And there are tons of Greek loanwords in the second century B.C. documents like the Genesis Apocryphon. There are no Greek loanwords except a couple of musical instruments in Daniel. You just can't make that case fly.

So the secularists are all out of gas now. They don't know what to do. The only way they can make it fly is to explain away the fourth empire of Rome so that there's no predictive prophecy.

Well, you can do the same to any case against the inspired word of God. If you do your homework, if you look at scholarship, you'll find that all of these cases are equally flimsy, equally specious, equally ridiculous. Well, this ought to give us confidence in God's word.

When it talks about history, it's accurate. When it talks about righteousness and when it talks about the future, it's accurate. It's just as accurate for future to us as it was future for Daniel.

Just as specific. Just as true. Let's pause here and take a break.

When we come back, we'll address our second point. What does this mean to us?