

# Palm Sunday: the Hour has Come

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## Zechariah's Shabbat HaGadol/Palm Sunday Prophecy

Every year, I enjoy reading Zechariah's prophecy in [Zechariah 9:9-10](#) that was fulfilled on Shabbat haGadol, Palm Sunday:

["Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!](#)

[Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!](#)

[Behold, your King is coming to you;](#)

[He is just and having salvation,](#)

[Lowly and riding on a donkey,](#)

[A colt, the foal of a donkey.](#)

<sup>10</sup> [I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim](#)

[And the horse from Jerusalem;](#)

[The battle bow shall be cut off.](#)

[He shall speak peace to the nations;](#)

[His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea,](#)

[And from the River to the ends of the earth.'"](#) Zechariah

[9:9-10](#)

## **“From the River to the Sea . . . to the ends of the earth”**

You may have heard the Palestinian chant back when Hamas' Gaza still stood strong, “From the River to the sea, Palestine shall be free.”

The problem with the chant is that it (either inadvertently *or* purposefully) calls for the annihilation of Israel. Palestine wanted to claim the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

So when I read this portion of Zechariah's prophecy in preparation for today's message, I was struck by the ending of [verse 10](#):

[His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea,  
And from the River to the ends of the earth.'](#) Zechariah 9:9-10

Jesus' dominion shall be from the River to the sea to the ends of the earth. Glory Hallelujah!

And so much was set in motion on Palm Sunday.

## **Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem**

Let's read [John 12:12-22](#):

<sup>12</sup> [The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, <sup>13</sup> took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:](#)

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’

The King of Israel!”

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

<sup>15</sup> “Fear not, daughter of Zion;

Behold, your King is coming,

Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”

<sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. <sup>18</sup> For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. <sup>19</sup> The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

<sup>20</sup> Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. <sup>21</sup> Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

<sup>22</sup> Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. (emphasis added)

## **The disciples and crowd rejoice**

Last week we talked about Philip. He was the eager one. *We’ve found Him! We have identified who the Messiah is and He is alive in our time today!* On that first Palm Sunday, Philip

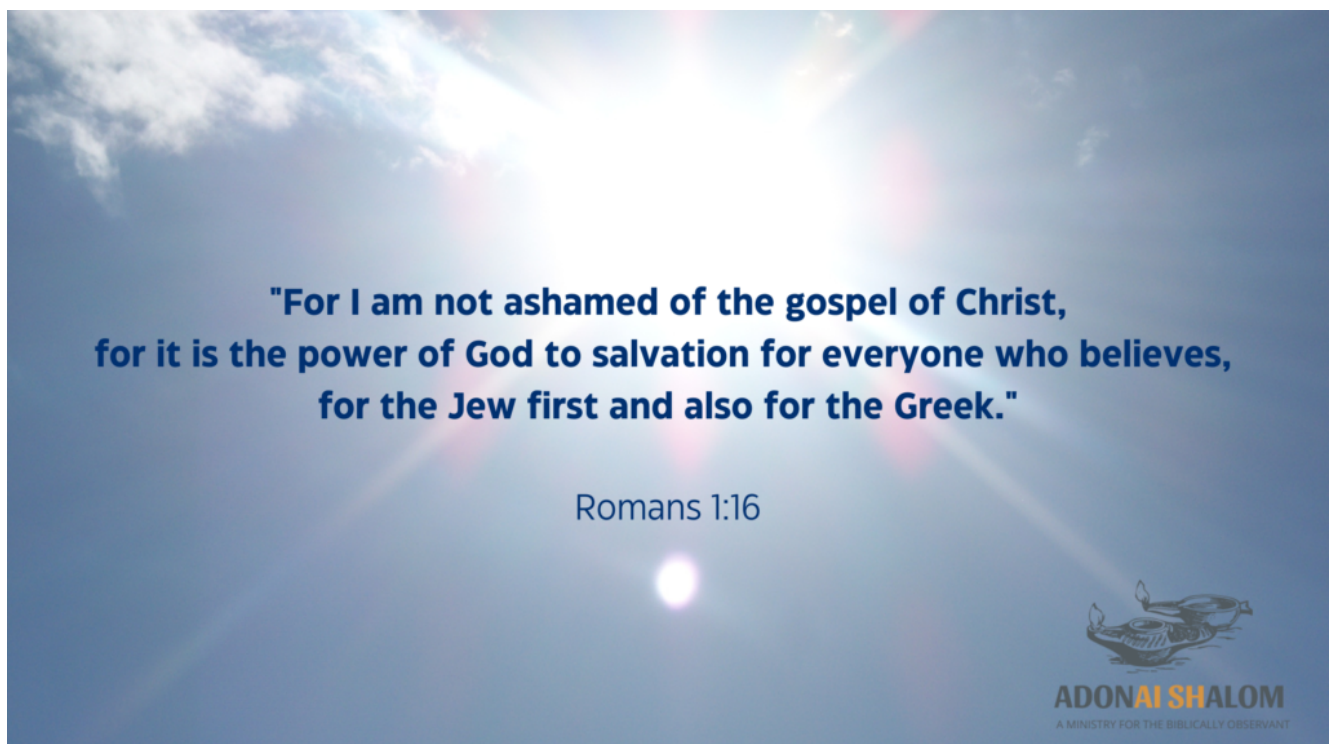
would have been among those who were crying out “Hoshia-na!”  
Lord, save us!

That same excitement and enthusiasm is what we need. We know who the Savior is. He is alive in our time and He is coming back. We need to share with others that He is indeed the only One who can save us!

[John 1:45 “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”](#)

Philip and Andrew were long-time friends. People were coming far and wide to celebrate the Passover feast. It is very interesting that the Scriptures tell us that some Greek travelers were in town and wanted to see Jesus. The message of Jesus was reaching beyond the Jewish enclave. The message was for Jew and Greek, Jew and Gentile.

[Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”](#)



Philip, Andrew, Mary, Martha, the Risen Lazarus, and a whole



multitude were waving palm branches and doing their best to get as close to Jesus as they could.

Enough had transpired that they loved Him. They waved the Palm Sunday branches just like they would have done with the lulav during the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles was like a divine dress rehearsal for the receiving of the Word who dwelt among us:

[“And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.” Leviticus 23:40, \(emphasis added\)](#)

Notice, the people were *commanded* to rejoice. Now, the crowds in Jerusalem freely rejoiced and they heard testimony of witnessing Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead!

[John 12:17-18 “Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.”](#)

His fame was spreading and eyewitnesses to Lazarus' resurrection were now willing to speak up and testify.

The Bible tells us the disciples didn't understand at first ([John 12:16](#)). It took many of them until after the ascension to reflect back and see that Jesus had fulfilled the prophetic Scriptures.

## The Hour has come

At the [wedding in Cana](#), Jesus told his mother His hour had not yet come ([John 2:4](#)).

In [John 7:6](#), same thing: [“Then Jesus said to them, My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.”](#)

[John 7:30 “Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.”](#)

[John 8:20 “These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.”](#)

But now in [John 12:23, “\[And\] Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.”](#) (*emphasis added*)

The Greek word, δὲ, should be translated “and” in [John 12:23](#). The “but” used in the NKJV should be “and.” KJV, ESV, and NIV got this right here.

## Victory Proven

Jesus is fully triumphant. He is the One the Scriptures have foretold, He is revealing Himself to His disciples on that Palm Sunday and even the crowds around Him, and has announced that the hour has come for Him to be glorified.

He didn’t say, the hour of terror has come. It will be an excruciating hour, but Jesus is focused on the victory.

Meanwhile the Pharisees are wallowing in their ineffectual campaign against the Lord.

[John 12:19 “The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”](#)

They are pointing fingers at each other. You’ve done nothing to stop this! The whole world is following this donkey-riding “king.” Their strategy to bring Him down is imploding because of their own disunity.

Unity is so very important. If we want to see a genuine move of God in this city, we need to be of united purpose. Division

and finger-pointing are the enemy's tactics to destroy such a movement.

## **"We wish to see Jesus"**

On the first Palm Sunday, the Greek men expressed that they wanted to see Jesus. They didn't care about the Pharisee's religious constructs. Judaism was fairly foreign to them. They wanted to meet the miracle-working, salvation-bringing Son of God.

Similarly, there's a hunger in hearts today.

Our culture here in North Central Wisconsin is also longing to see Jesus. They see a glimpse,

["For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known." 1 Corinthians 13:12](#)

But lost souls here need to see Jesus in you. They need to know more than religion.

## **The Father glorified**

[John 12:27-36 <sup>27</sup> "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify Your name."](#)

[Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."](#)

[<sup>29</sup> Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."](#)

[<sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world;](#)

now the ruler of this world will be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” <sup>33</sup> This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

<sup>34</sup> The people answered Him, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?”

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.” <sup>36</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Here Jesus expresses His emotions. His soul was troubled. He expresses the sentiment found in [Psalm 6](#):

[Psalm 6:2-5](#)

[Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak;  
O Lord, heal me, for my bones are troubled.](#)

[<sup>3</sup> My soul also is greatly troubled;  
But You, O Lord—how long?](#)

[<sup>4</sup> Return, O Lord, deliver me!  
Oh, save me for Your mercies’ sake!](#)

[<sup>5</sup> For in death there is no remembrance of You;  
In the grave who will give You thanks?](#)

The human part of Jesus would really feel strongly about verse 5, don’t you think?

The divine part of Him knows He can’t ask the Father to detain this. He came to earth for this very moment.

And the Father’s voice was heard audibly. This gets glossed

over a lot. A voice thundered. It's unclear whether or not the people heard what was said to Jesus, but they knew a voice from above had spoken.

If any around had doubts, there could be no doubt now.

## Who is the Son of Man?

The Palm Sunday crowd asked the essential question: who is this Son of Man? The Messiah we know about will live forever, but you talk of your death. Where do you fit into the story, Jesus? We don't understand who is a "Son of Man."

He spoke cryptically: be sons of light.

And then He left from that place and was hidden to them (v.36).

## "Behold, our King is coming to you"

"Behold, our King is coming. He is just and having salvation." Zechariah's words that were fulfilled on Palm Sunday are still true to this day and they have a two-part meaning. The LORD rode in on a colt, but His dominion will extend to the ends of the earth. Maranatha!

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## Review: The NKJV Breathe Life Bible

*As part of the Thomas Nelson Bibles blogger program, I have received a copy of the [NKJV Breathe Life Bible](#) published by [Thomas Nelson](#) Bibles/Harper Collins Publishers at no cost to me in exchange for an honest review here on the Adonai*

- [Thomas Nelson NKJV The Breathe Life Bible Book Description](#)
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## Thomas Nelson [NKJV The Breathe Life Bible](#) Book Description

The [NKJV Breathe Life Bible](#) is a Christian response to the social unrest in Minneapolis and around the country following the tragic death of George Floyd in 2020.

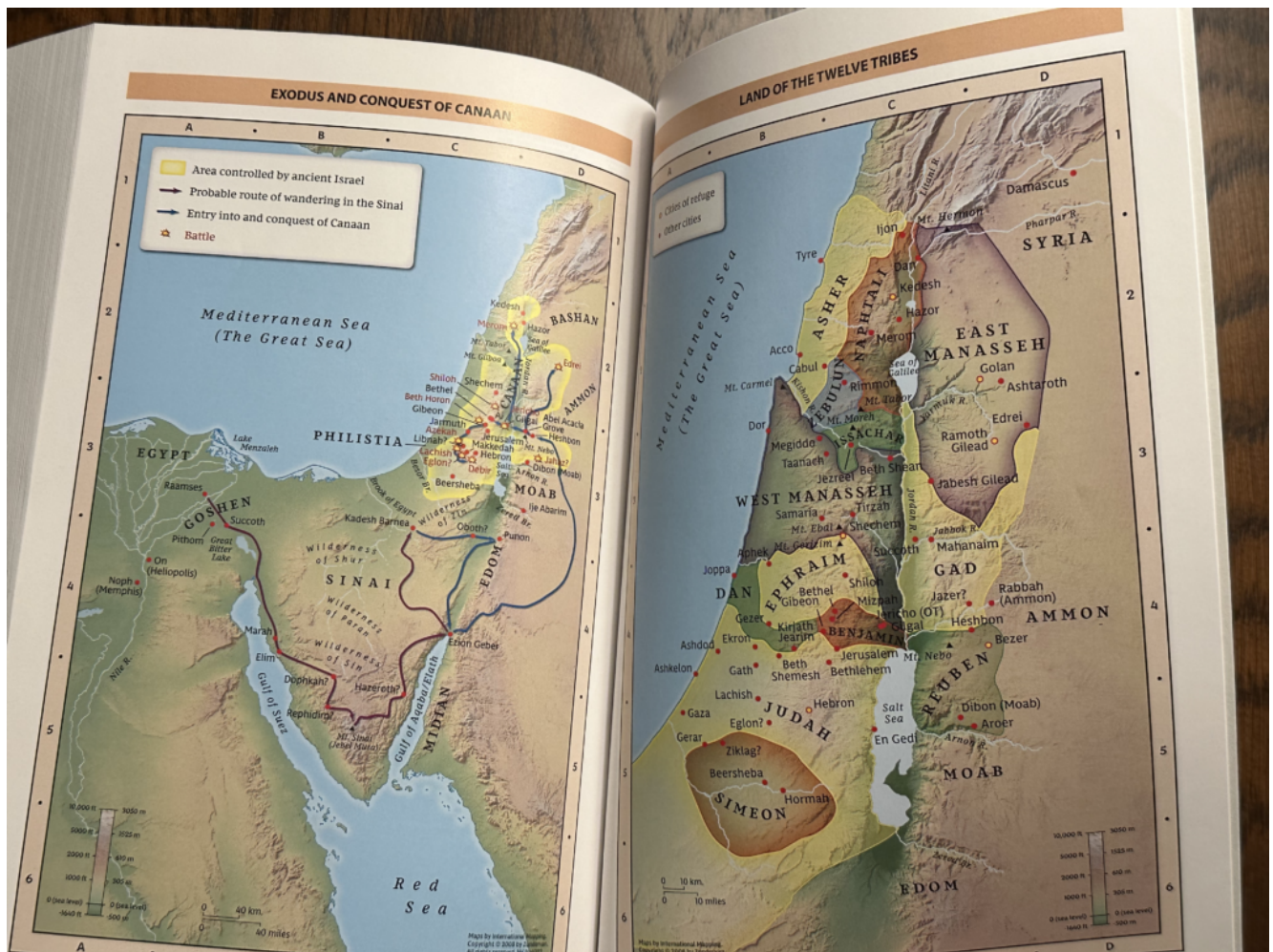
This edition of the Bible contains the full text of the reliable NKJV translation with articles throughout that relate to racial reconciliation and social justice.

The contributors have come up with an acronym: **BREATHE**: Believe, Reconcile, Exalt, Act, Trust, Hope, and Elevate to help the reader find peace in God's Word in a broken world.

## Maps in the [Thomas Nelson NKJV Breathe Life Bible](#)

I received a paperback edition of this Bible. I was pleasantly surprised to see that the softcover edition contains the same high-quality, colorful maps that are found in so many Thomas Nelson Bibles such as the [NKJV Ultra Thinline Bible](#).

The maps included feature the "World of the Patriarchs," "Exodus and Conquest of Canaan," "Land of the Twelve Tribes," "Kingdom of David and Solomon," "Jesus' Ministry," "Paul's Missionary Journeys," and "Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus."



The binding showed a bit of wear from shipping, but all in all it is a high quality, economical edition of the Bible.



Here is an excerpt from the overview page on the Gospel According to Mark:



## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

# MARK

## OVERVIEW

While the Gospel of Matthew appears first in the New Testament, the Gospel of Mark is often considered the oldest Gospel. Mark is the shortest of all four Gospels, and many scholars believe that Luke and Matthew used Mark's account as a primary source for their own. For this reason, given the stark similarities in the details and sequence of events, these Gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels. Only the Gospel according to John stands alone in its style, content, and sequence. The early church assigned a symbolic image to each of the four Gospels that personifies the unique contribution of each. Matthew is depicted by an angel, Luke by an ox, and John by an eagle. Mark's Gospel is depicted by a lion. Mark was written by the cousin of Barnabas and son of the woman in whose home the early church often gathered. He is also known as John Mark.

While Matthew's Gospel was written largely to a Hebrew audience, Mark's Gospel was intended for Gentiles living within the Roman Empire. As such, Mark seldom quoted the Old Testament and took time to describe Jewish customs that were likely unfamiliar to non-Jewish readers.

All four Gospels have similar themes, yet each has attributes clearly distinguishing it from the other accounts. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is uniquely portrayed as a Suffering Servant who serves suffering people. Jesus Christ does two things in Mark's Gospel that epitomize this central theme. First, Christ commends service to His disciples. Second, He exemplifies service to His disciples.

When Jesus' disciples were angling for status and seats of power, Jesus instead advocated service as the highest ambition of His kingdom. Jesus expressed His way simply: "Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant" (Mark 10:43). Mark then proves that service is not just what Jesus demanded from His disciples but is an ethic that He embodies. Jesus exemplifies this notion of the selfless servant two verses later: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (v. 45).

While Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, it includes the most miracles. These miracles are tangible demonstrations of the authority of Christ but also demonstrated His desire to serve humanity. While other Gospels record more content about the messages and discourse of Jesus, Mark clearly focuses more on the actions of Jesus, who did not stand by idly in the face of human suffering. Jesus always met human needs with compassion.

## BREATHE IT IN

Many of us think that the suffering in the world is so enormous that there is nothing we can do about it. But there are many examples of one person's suffering, persistence, and advocacy making a significant impact on the suffering of others.

On August 31, 1997, the world was stunned at the news of the tragic death of Princess Diana of Wales, who succumbed to injuries suffered in a car accident. The entire world mourned the loss of a philanthropic, servant-minded member of the British monarchy. There is no way to sum up the enormity of the loss. Princess "Di" had used her prominence to raise money for, and bring international attention to, egregious human suffering. She had advocated for children, warned of the danger of land mines to civilian populations, brought to light the generational effects of poverty, championed HIV/AIDS research, and promoted care for people all around the globe.

This Bible features articles focusing on "faith in action:"



# THE SKY: ACTION WORKING OUT OUR FAITH

BY DERRICK JOHNSON

RACIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE are not new concepts. In 1908, after the race riots in Springfield, Illinois, a multicultural coalition of social activists formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to stand up for the equality of all people. Since then, the NAACP has fought against injustice and oppression wherever it is found. God is not a respecter of persons, and neither should we be.

Although the NAACP is not a faith-based organization, many of its founders followed their faith in its establishment, like W. E. B. Du Bois, who believed that the church was the central change agent for the Black community and fought against heretical religious concepts that deemed Black people incompatible with the divine. Founder, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, followed her faith in fighting for racial and gender equality and spoke boldly against the lynch laws. She is considered prophetic in the church by connecting Christ to the hope of the oppressed.

We know that without faith it is impossible to please God. But we also know that faith without works is dead. It is important that we follow Christ's example as we experience the grace of God. When we ask, "What did Jesus do?" we know that He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, recover the sight of the blind, and set at liberty those who are oppressed (see Luke 4:18). Faith, then, is not a passive concept. We are all called to put our faith into action, just as Jesus did. Jesus saves, and we become His hands and feet in a world of injustice.

When we serve the least of these, we are doing the will of God. When one is lifted up, all of society is lifted up to a better place for all of us. This is how we perfect our faith, by serving one another in love. The Bible speaks of unity of the body and the premise that we should leave no one behind. All of us should move forward together. First Corinthians 12:26 says, "If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." We look forward to rejoicing with all our brothers and sisters.

The NAACP and I personally will continue to take action on behalf of those who are marginalized or forgotten, standing shoulder to shoulder with those who want to see equality for all. Our faith for the future is that we act today so that all people are valued.

This NKJV Bible uses a very readable "Comfort Print" font exclusive to Thomas Nelson Bibles.

# My recommendation:

★★★★

Rating: 4 out of 5.

I would give the [Thomas Nelson NKJV Breathe Life Bible](#) a **4 out of 5**.

Rev. Jennifer Mieliulis Fuentes, *M.Div.*, *Duke University*

## Book details

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## Recap of [Daniel 2](#): Interpretation of Dreams

Daniel was given the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream because He relied on God's promises. He prayed together with his friends and sought God, and the interpretation of the dream was given.

### Daniel, like Joseph

This week I was reminded that Pharaoh, King of Egypt, also had mysterious and troubling dreams. God used Joseph to give him the interpretation. Like Daniel in Babylon, Joseph in Egypt was given favor by the pagan king and promoted to rule alongside the Pharaoh.

### [Genesis 41:37-41](#)

<sup>37</sup> [So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants.](#) <sup>38</sup> [And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?"](#)

<sup>39</sup> [Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you](#)

all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. <sup>40</sup> You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” <sup>41</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” (Gen.41:37-41, *emphasis added*)

“And Pharaoh said to his servants,  
“Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?”

Genesis 41:38



## **Daniel 3:1-7**

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

<sup>2</sup> And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>3</sup> So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and

all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

<sup>4</sup> Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,

<sup>5</sup> that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;

<sup>6</sup> and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

<sup>7</sup> So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up." Daniel 3:1-7

## **King Nebuchadnezzar's Image of Gold**

Remember the statue-like image of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream? ([Daniel 2:32, 38](#))

He was the head of gold ([Daniel 2:38](#)). Babylon was extremely wealthy and prosperous.

So it is very fitting that King Nebuchadnezzar decides to *build himself* an image of gold.

A huge statue.

He clearly missed the point of the dream. The dream wasn't so that he would go out and build himself a golden image, it was to alert him about the future of his kingdom and the kingdoms



after him, but he fixates on the gold.

See Babylon was like Texas. Everything had to be bigger there.

An Israeli cubit was about 18" while in Babylon a cubit was measured as about 20."

This would make King Nebuchadnezzar's statue the size of a 10 story building, which for ancient Babylon lacking modern construction machines, was a good size.

It was 60 by 6 cubits. Not 70 by 7. It was a mere imitation of greatness. Symbolically, the number 6 means incompleteness in the Bible, sinfulness of mankind, human weakness, and the evil devil.

## **What was the image?**

The Bible doesn't tell us what the image actually was.

Was it a statue of one of the Babylonian deities? Or more likely: was it an image of King Nebuchadnezzar himself? Babylonian kings were worshipped as divine. Receiving a divinely-inspired dream, then, King Nebuchadnezzar may have felt very entitled to being worshipped, considering himself one amidst a pantheon of gods.

## **Dedication of the image**

King Nebuchadnezzar decrees that all of his government officials have to come to the dedication of the idolatrous statue. What's more, all of these people would be required to bow down and worship the gold idol when his pagan worship band starts playing.

## **Worship: or else . . .**

The spirit of Babylon always forces a pluralistic and

polytheistic agenda. Pluralism is the accepting of all religions as equally valid. Polytheism is the belief in multiple gods. Babylon claims to promote religious tolerance. We see evidence of that in their worship because the names of the instruments are actually written in Greek. The rest of this chapter is written in Aramaic, but the uniting of pagan practices and musical influences was occurring in Babylon. The empire wanted to put on a show of inclusivity and universalist worship!

But King Nebuchadnezzar's herald (or spokesman) warned all of his colleagues: "whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." (Daniel 3:6)

So much for tolerance.

It is the spirit of the antichrist.

## **Daniel 3:8-18**

"Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. <sup>9</sup> They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! <sup>10</sup> You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;

<sup>11</sup> and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. <sup>12</sup> There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

<sup>13</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these

men before the king. <sup>14</sup> Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?

<sup>15</sup> Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” (Daniel 3:8-18)

## **Accuser of the brethren**

Some of the Chaldeans (remember, this is just another name for Babylonians) decide to accuse the Jews. ([Daniel 3:12](#)). The Aramaic term there in [Daniel 3:8](#) ܩܪܥܬܐ “*qerets*” translated as simply “charges” has a deeper connotation of “*maliciously accused*” and more literally, “to eat the pieces of, to devour piece by piece” (*NKJV Study Bible*).

So the Chaldeans came forward to maliciously accuse Daniel’s friends “to devour them a bit at a time, piece by piece.” It’s interesting that Daniel is not accused at this point, only his friends.

[1 Peter 5:8](#) says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking



[whom he may devour.](#)” Here we have the same description. And recall from last week that the military commander’s name [Arioach](#) is related to the word for lion. Babylonian art was full of lion depictions that represented the king’s power and one of their goddesses. The devil is an imitator. Roaring but always lacking. We serve the Lion of the Tribe of Judah:

[“But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” Revelation 5:5](#)

200 years later, we see the same accusatory spirit of Haman in the Medo-Persian Empire:

## [\*\*Esther 3:6\*\*](#)

[<sup>6</sup>“But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, \*\*Haman sought to destroy all the Jews\*\* who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.” \(Esther 3:6\)](#)

The devil is the Accuser:

## [\*\*Revelation 12:10\*\*](#)

[“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the \*\*accuser of our brethren\*\*, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.” \(Revelation 12:10\)](#)

In [Daniel 3:12](#), Daniel’s friends are listed by name. Their accusers are trying to really make a point. An “us” vs. “them” point.

They want to remind King Nebuchadnezzar that these *Jews*, who serve in the government *refuse to assimilate* into the pagan culture.

And King Nebuchadnezzar follows the antiSemitic lead of his advisors, but to his credit, ([Daniel 3:14](#)) he does ask the Hebrews directly if the accusations are true.

## Refusal to Worship Pagan Deities

[Daniel 3:13](#) describes King Nebuchadnezzar as being in a “rage and fury!”

He addresses Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah by their Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego and asks them directly: is this true? Do you not worship my golden image?

He gives them a second chance. *“Next time you hear my worship team leading idol worship, make sure you fall down and worship.”* He even says that would be “good!”

And then he threatens them. Worship or else you’re being thrown into an oven.

King Nebuchadnezzar’s pride becomes very glaring.

[Daniel 3:15c](#) “who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

Back in [Daniel 2:47](#), King Nebuchadnezzar had acknowledged that Daniel’s God is Lord of kings and able to reveal secrets. Did he forget already? Or did he not realize that Daniel’s friends also shared strong faith in the God of Israel? King Nebuchadnezzar viewed himself as a god and because our God cannot be seen with human eyes, he didn’t think there would be any intervention.

In [Daniel 3:16](#), the three Judean young men don’t challenge Nebuchadnezzar. It kind of reads that way, like “we don’t need to answer you!” But it’s not that so much as they were admitting they had nothing to say, no answer for the king because their refusal to worship was so obvious.

A lot of people in our culture today, especially those who have grown up with a religious spirit are uncomfortable with expression in worship. They don't want to raise their hands or they don't want to physically bow before the Lord in prayer. But one of the very main definitions of worship used throughout the Bible is the Hebrew word "שָׁחָה" *shachah*, which means to "bow down, very low." It is a physical action shown the heart's devotion.

In the time of Babylon, it was no different. Worship, whether it was the worship of the One True God of Israel, or worship of a pagan deity, was understood as being physically prostrate before the object of worship.

So it was obvious that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were not physically bowing before anything. There was no need to defend themselves, they knew they were guilty of disobeying the king's order.

But they demonstrated great faith.

["Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." Daniel 3:17-18](#)

For me this brings to mind [Isaiah 26:3](#):

["You will keep him in perfect peace,  
Whose mind is stayed on You,  
Because he trusts in You." Isaiah 26:3](#)

The testimonies of believers who have gone before can really be encouraging. Daniel and his friends can really inspire us to trust in God no matter what happens and no matter the cost. Paul suffered and maintained an unwavering faith. He and Timothy wrote to the church in Corinth in [2 Corinthians 1:8-11](#):

<sup>8</sup> For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup> Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, <sup>10</sup> who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, <sup>11</sup> you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.” 2 Cor..1:8-11

The death sentence given by the world is meaningless.

1 Corinthians 15:55-58:

“O Death, where is your sting?  
O Hades, where is your victory?”

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

He has not forgotten about you. He knows the labor of love you do in service to Him. He sees you and He smiles. He died for you so you could live and when you face the world's fiery furnaces and you feel under attack or afraid for your future, just remember, place your hope and trust in Him. He is your confidence and your rescuer, your mighty Savior.

## **Daniel 3:19-25**

<sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on

his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. <sup>20</sup> And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>21</sup> Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. <sup>22</sup> Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. <sup>23</sup> And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

<sup>24</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

<sup>25</sup> "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

The Bible says that Nebuchadnezzar's countenance – the expression on his face – changed. Some translate this as "his face was distorted with his fury." He took on a spirit of rage and his whole attitude worsened (NIV).

He orders the furnace turned up to 7x hotter than normal and then has his valiant army man bind up Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah and throw them into the fire.

The fiery furnace was so hot that it killed anyone near it. King Nebuchadnezzar's men died instantly. To Nebuchadnezzar

they were disposable. He makes no mention of their death. He is satisfied to oversee the three Judeans falling over in a fire, but then . . . he is completely taken aback.

3 tied up Hebrew men were cast into the fire, but now they were freely walking in the fire unharmed, and now not 3, but 4! The only thing that had burned were the ropes that had tied them up! The Septuagint translation (the Greek translation of the original Aramaic/Hebrew) actually says that King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished because he heard the men singing praises! It reminds me of Paul and Silas singing praises in the jail ([Acts 16:25](#)).

## The Fourth Man in the Fire

NKJV: [“Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Daniel 3:25](#)



The New King James and the King James translates this as the Son of God. If you have commentary notes in your Bible, you might notice that Son of God could be translated as “son of the gods.” So which is it?

In Aramaic, the generic word for “God” is singular “Elah.” The plural for “Elah” is “elahin”, which although etymologically related to the Hebrew (a related Semitic language) for God, “Elohim,” the difference is that “*elahin*” is used only to refer to idols.

So (unusually!) the NIV actually translates this a bit more accurately:

NIV: [“He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”” Daniel 3:25](#)

Why?

King Nebuchadnezzar wouldn’t understand a singular Son of God. We know it was Jesus. But, we have to be careful reading translations (the original manuscripts of Scripture are 100% right).

So King Nebuchadnezzar expresses in his own language and his own understanding that there is Someone, of divine origin, who has appeared in the fire. He doesn’t know how to express what he is seeing from his pagan context.

I actually think that gives the text more power, not less. King Nebuchadnezzar is astonished because he is not the supreme deity. He has to really grapple with this . . . who are these Judeans and who is with them!?

This is an example of a *theophany*. A theophany is an appearance of God. The king of Babylon was astonished by this, but the Bible doesn’t mention if the 3 youth even knew the 4th man (Jesus!) was there. Sometimes God will manifest in a very tangible, apparent way in our lives, but other times, He is working and we don’t even realize how close He is to our situation.



## Daniel 3:26-30

<sup>26</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. <sup>27</sup> And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

<sup>28</sup> Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! <sup>29</sup> Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

<sup>30</sup> Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon." Daniel 3:26-30

## **The Most High God and His Messenger**

In [verse 26](#), King Nebuchadnezzar switches to "Elah," the singular form! Here he is beginning to understand! He acknowledges that the 3 young men serve the Most High God (*Elah*). He is recognizing that the God of the Hebrews is greater than his Babylonian gods by singling Him out.

King Nebuchadnezzar only calls the 3 men out of the fire. The 4th man was heavenly enough in appearance, he knew not to even



go there. The Chaldean advisors saw with their own eyes that the fire had no power whatsoever on them and they didn't even smell like a fire.

Nebuchadnezzar celebrates this singular victorious God. Nebuchadnezzar sent his "Angel." This is an accurate translation for the Aramaic מלאך (mal-'a·chēh) (Hebrew: מלאך malach). "Angel" can also be translated as "Messenger." Nebuchadnezzar recognizes that a Messenger from God was in the fire.

## **No Other God can deliver like this**

King Nebuchadnezzar realizes that no other God can deliver like this and he says no one is allowed to slander Hananiah, Mishael, nor Azariah. In keeping with his excessively brutal personality, King Nebuchadnezzar decrees that anyone who does speak against them shall be chopped up and their homes burned. This chapter ends with another promotion: the 3 Hebrew youth are once again promoted in the province of Babylon.

## **Faith and Obedience no matter the cost**

The ordeal of Daniel's friends remind me of [Hebrews 11:32-40](#):

[<sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: <sup>33</sup> who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. <sup>35</sup> Women received their dead raised to life again.](#)

[Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they](#)

might obtain a better resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— <sup>38</sup> of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

<sup>39</sup> And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, <sup>40</sup> God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were willing to pay the ultimate price to remain faithful and obedience to the One True God. And the LORD revealed Himself! May the LORD give us the strength to be that faithful!

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## **Review: The Thomas Nelson NKJV VALUE Ultra Thinline Bible (And what is the difference between the Ultra Thinline and the VALUE Ultra Thinline?)**

*As part of the Thomas Nelson Bibles blogger program, I have received a copy of the [Thomas Nelson NKJV Value Ultra Thinline](#)*

*[Bible](#) published by [Thomas Nelson](#) Bibles/Harper Collins Publishers at no cost to me in exchange for an honest review here on the Adonai Shalom USA blog.*

- [Thomas Nelson NKJV VALUE Ultra Thinline Book Description and Review](#)
- [Thomas Nelson NKJV VALUE Ultra Thinline compared to NKJV Ultra Thinline Bible](#)
- [My recommendation:](#)
- [Book details](#)

## Thomas Nelson [NKJV VALUE Ultra Thinline](#) Book Description and Review

The [Thomas Nelson NKJV Value Ultra Thinline Bible](#) would be a wonderful addition to any home library. Like the regular [Ultra Thinline Bible](#), the [Value Ultra Thinline](#) features the thinnest edition of the Biblical text available from Thomas Nelson. There is a regular [“Thinline”](#) Bible, but these *Ultra* Thinline are the thinnest yet. These Bibles are less than an inch thick!



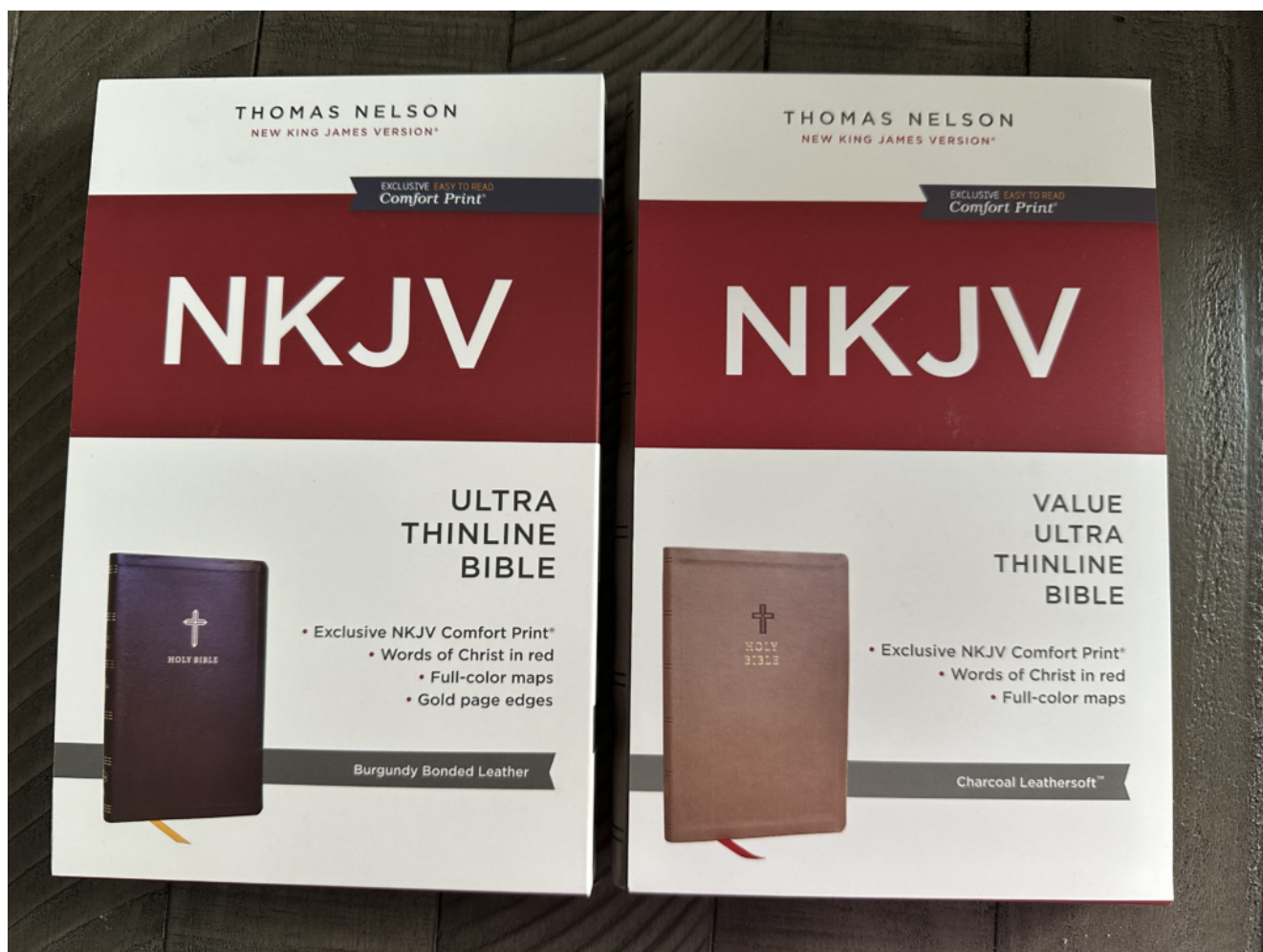
This would be a perfect Bible for an evangelist or missionary: someone who knows the Word and does not want to carry extra weight around when traveling. This Bible does not contain commentary or even cross-references. This Bible would also be



a perfect Bible for any new Christian wanting to read the Bible for him or herself without the distractions of footnotes, cross-references, or commentary.

## Thomas Nelson [NKJV VALUE Ultra Thinline](#) compared to [NKJV Ultra Thinline Bible](#)

I thought it might be helpful to compare Thomas Nelson's [NKJV Value Ultra Thinline Bible](#) to the [NKJV Ultra Thinline Bible](#). I recently posted about the [NKJV Ultra Thinline Bible](#) and you can read about it [here](#).



Each of these Bibles have a presentation page that can be used if you are gifting this to someone special in your life.

THIS  
**HOLY BIBLE**  
IS PRESENTED TO

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BY

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ON

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YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET  
AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH.  
PSALM 119:105

A difference between the Thomas Nelson [NKJV Value Ultra Thinline Bible](#) and the Thomas Nelson [NKJV Ultra Thinline Bible](#) is that the value edition does not have the gilded golden edging on the pages. The edges are simple white paper.



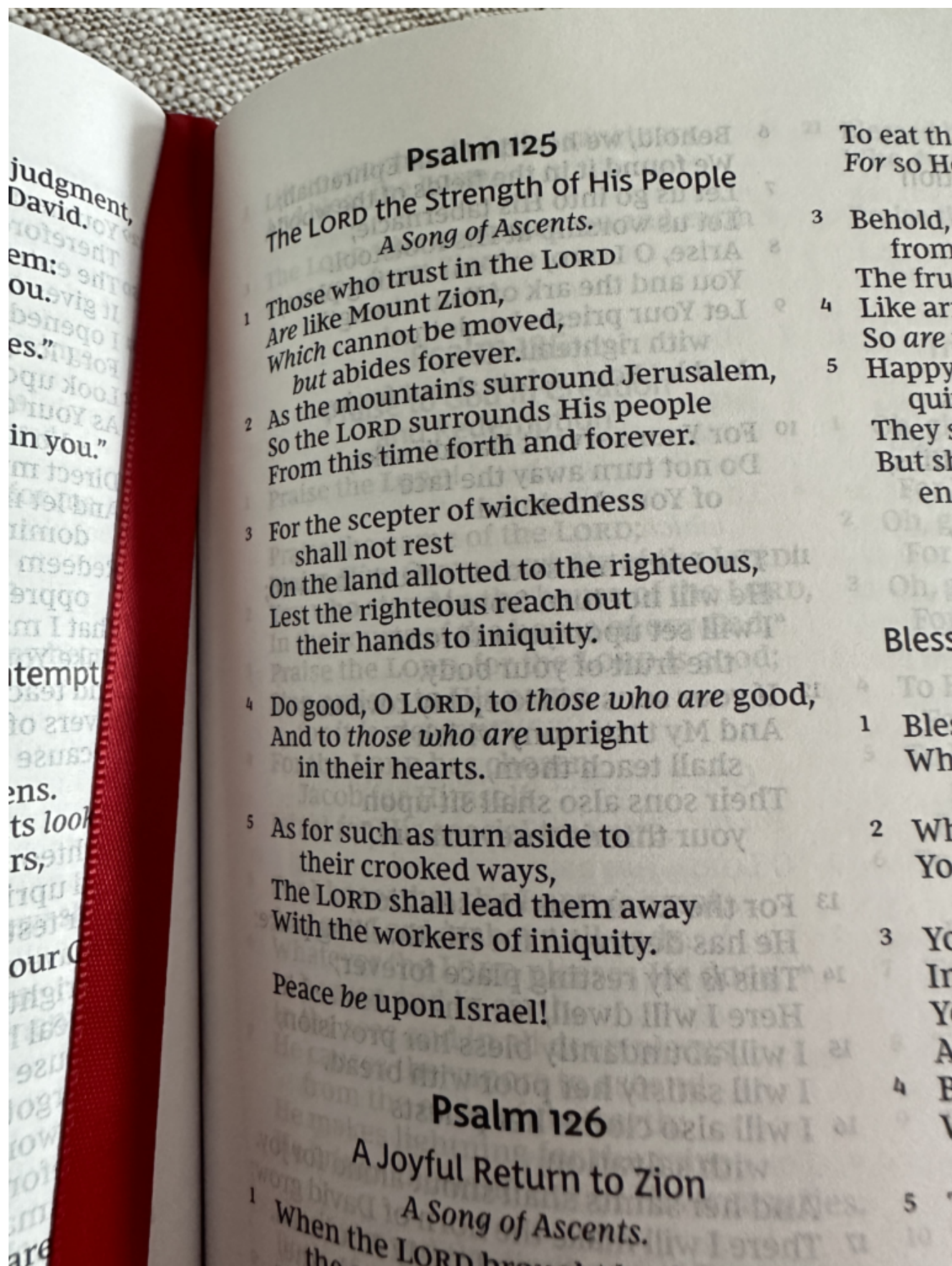
I personally love the golden edging that is on most Bibles. It reminds me how special God's Word is. But, if you are simply looking for an economical Bible or one that does not draw attention to itself, this will work for you.



The Bible does include an integrated red satin bookmark.

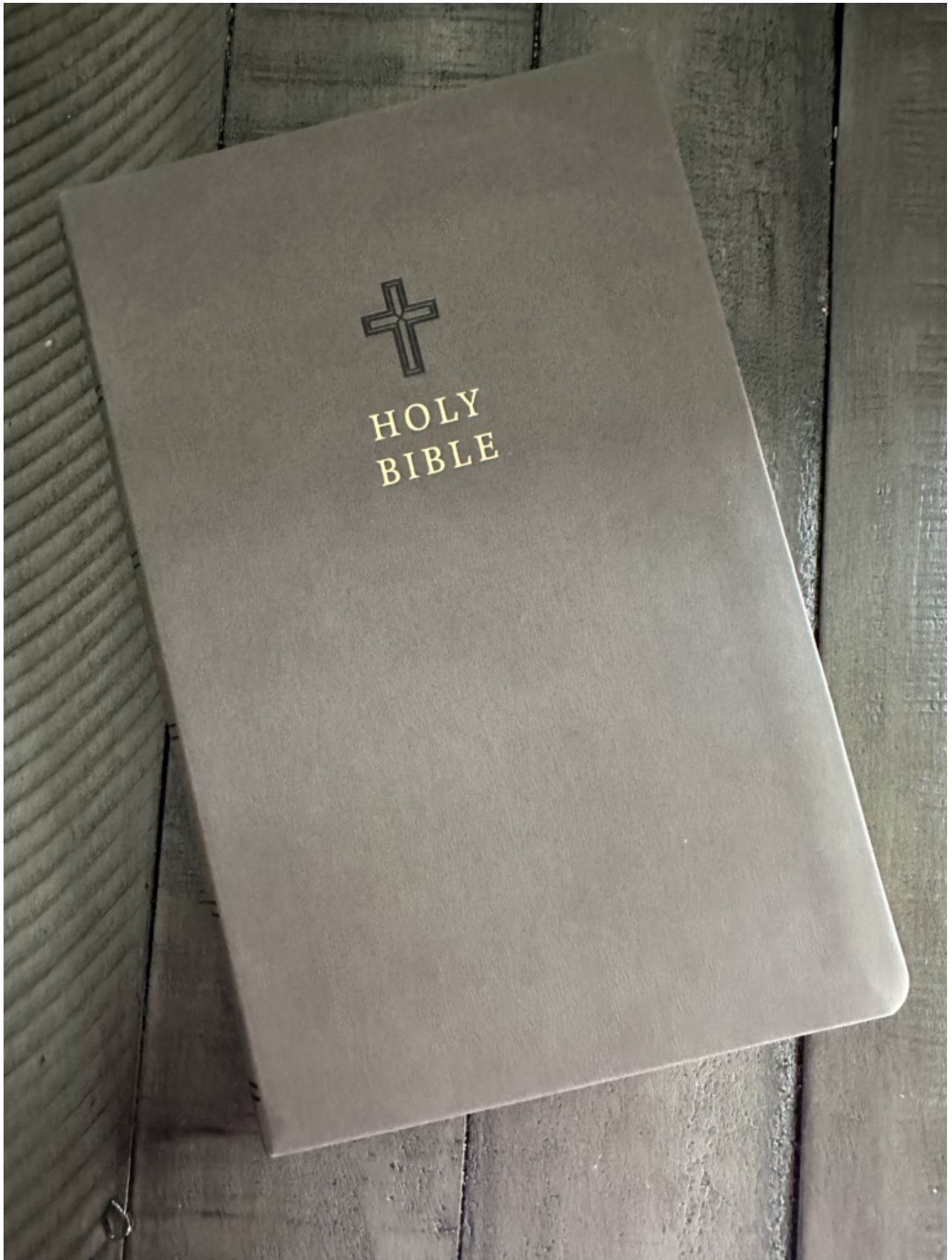
The [NKJV Value Ultra Thinline Bibles](#) use an 8-point font, called "Comfort Print" by Thomas Nelson Bibles. The text in both the ultra and value ultra looks identical to me.



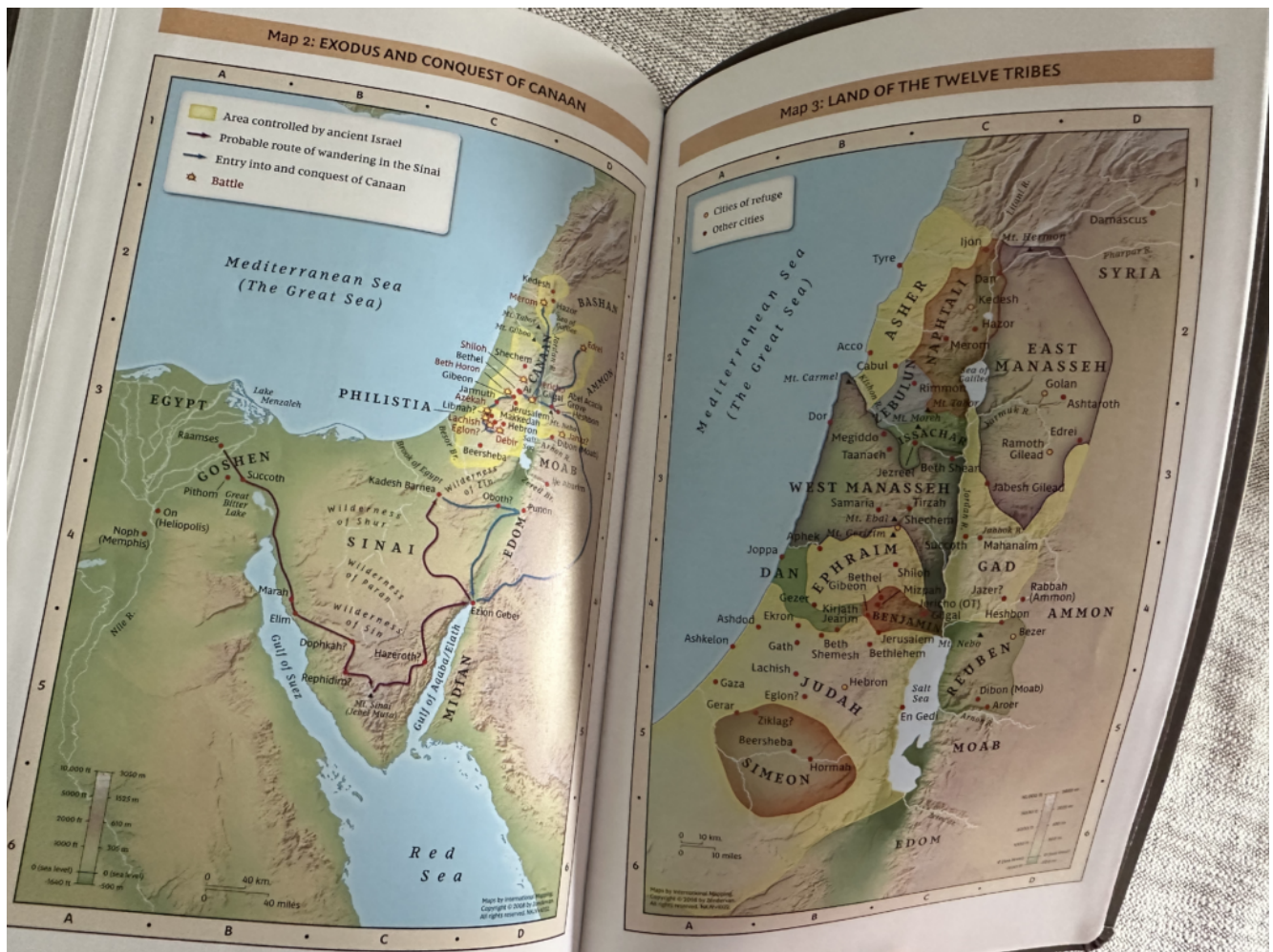


The greige cover is beautiful and simple. The color is tasteful, too. I found it matches my kitchen table quite well!





Both the ultra and value ultra editions contain the beautiful full color maps that Thomas Nelson is known for. These Bibles are made with quality and longevity in mind.



The [NKJV Value Ultra Thinline Bible](#) contains only the simple Biblical text, keeping it lightweight and easy to carry with you anywhere. It does have the words of Christ in red. It would not be considered a “study Bible” because it does not have concordances or commentary.

The NKJV Value Ultra Thinline Bible comes with a lifetime guarantee which proves that Thomas Nelson stands by the quality of their Bibles. In order to get the lifetime guarantee, be sure to register your purchase using this [link](#) on the Thomas Nelson website.

## My recommendation:

★★★★★

Rating: 5 out of 5.

The Thomas Nelson [NKJV Value Ultra Thinline Bible](#) deserves a 5

out of 5.

This economical edition of God's Holy Word in the New King James Version will last for years! It is easy to transport, making this a particularly useful Bible for evangelists and missionaries!

Rev. Jennifer Mieliulis Fuentes, *M.Div., Duke University*

## Book details

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## Daniel 2: Dreams and a vision in the night

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  - [Daniel and his friends receive a promotion](#)



*King Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by dreams. Explore [Daniel 2](#) and how the LORD granted great favor to Daniel and his friends.*

## **Recap of Daniel 1: Steadfastness in love and faith**

[Daniel 1](#) highlighted the stark contrast between the godly faith of the young captives and the Babylonian culture. King Nebuchadnezzar and his staff tried their hardest to impose their pagan, polytheistic culture upon the Hebrew youth.

While Daniel, Hannah, Mishael, and Azariah did learn the Chaldean language and did learn about the Babylonian ways, they did not internalize it. They remained steadfast in their love for and commitment to God Most High, the only True God, the God of Israel.

## **King Nebuchadnezzar was troubled**

Daniel tells us in [Daniel chapter 2](#) that Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by vivid dreams.

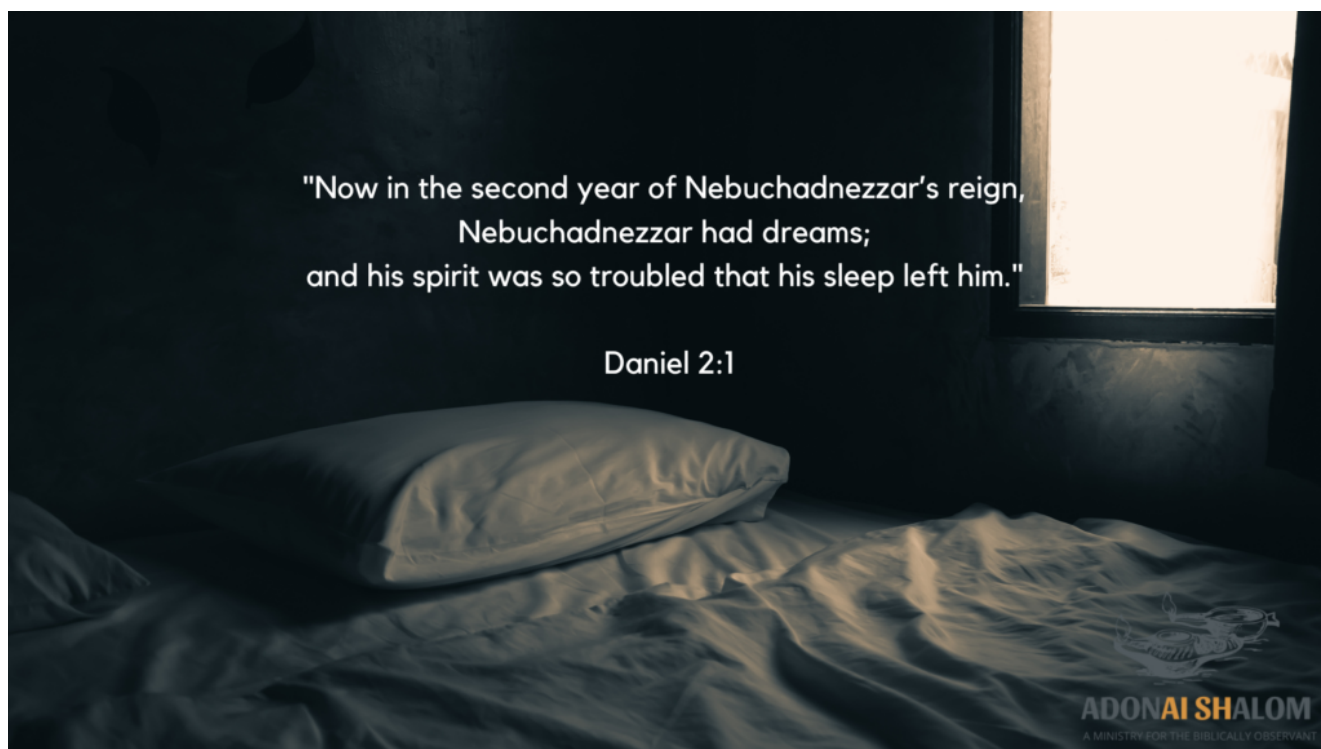
### **[Daniel 2:1](#)**

## **Nebuchadnezzar's Troubling Dreams**

[Daniel 2:1](#) identifies Nebuchadnezzar's dreams as having happened in the second year of his reign. This would be 603BC. In the Near East, there were different customs for the counting of years. Daniel preferred a whole year system, whereas Jeremiah counted part of a year as a full year. This has led to some people concluding that the Bible has discrepancies, but it does not.

["Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign,](#)

Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him." Daniel 2:1



King Nebuchadnezzar was troubled because he had the weight of the world on his shoulders. Babylon was an enormous, prosperous empire and Nebuchadnezzar planned to keep it that way.

If we jump ahead to [Daniel 2:29](#), we see that Daniel recognizes that the king was thinking at night when he was laying down in bed – worried about the future:

"As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this . . . " Daniel 2:29

King Nebuchadnezzar struggled with psychological issues, and here we see signs of anxiety and insomnia that will increase throughout the book of Daniel.

## [Daniel 2:2](#)



# The “Wisdom” of Babylon: Magic, Astrology, & Sorcery

[“Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.” Daniel 2:2](#)

King Nebuchadnezzar brought together his arsenal: those he considered “wise” enough, and really “spiritual” enough to decipher the vivid dreams he was experiencing:

1. Magicians – magicians are illusionists. They trick you and play the games of the dark arts. In 1877, François Lenormant, a French assyriologist, published a book titled [“Chaldean Magic: Its Origin and Development.”](#) He studied a translation of a large tablet found in Nineveh’s royal palace (modern day Iraq) which contained [“28 formulas of deprectory incantations against evil spirits, the effects of sorcery, disease, and the principal misfortunes that attack people in the course of daily life.”](#) According to the [Thomas Nelson NKJV Study Bible](#), the word translated as “magicians” literally refers to those who “use the pen” – people who were very learned in the “sacred” writings of the Babylonians. They would write out their incantations.
2. Astrologers – astrologers studied the stars. Did you know that the Babylonians invented the modern horoscope? Capricorn and Sagittarius . . . the Babylonians invented the 12 signs of the zodiac and relied on their interpretation of the planetary alignments and constellations to predict outcomes. Astrologers served as priests in the Babylonian religion so they used the zodiac signs to attempt to determine the will of the gods.
3. Sorcerers – these are the witches and warlocks of Babylon. They would use satanic spells and incantations,

amulets, and rituals of the dead to invoke demonic influences. They genuinely “received power from evil spirits” (*NKJV Study Bible*).

4. and Chaldeans – here Chaldeans is probably referring to a select group of Chaldean advisors (who likewise would have been well-educated in the Babylonian customs

The king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, insisted that the magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers present themselves before him to tell what the king had dreamed.

Those who were accustomed to creating fear through their sorcery would now be very fearful of whether or not they would be able to correctly guess and describe Nebuchadnezzar’s mystery dreams.

Nebuchadnezzar was known as a brutal king and any misstep could merit execution.

## **Daniel 2:3**

### **Nebuchadnezzar’s Anxiety**

[“And the king said to them, “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.” Daniel 2:3](#)

Nebuchadnezzar did not have a relationship with God that could provide peace to his troubled soul. His dreams caused him to be unsettled and anxious.

However, notice that the Bible is talking about dreams, not “terrors of the night” or “nightmares.” The dream impacted Nebuchadnezzar enough that he wanted an interpretation, but this was a God-given dream.

Nightmares come from the evil one. While what God might reveal to us may be unsettling at times, he is not the author of confusion nor of fear.

## **Daniel 2:4-6**

### **Fake confidence and the king's brutality**

"Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation." The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, **you shall be cut in pieces**, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."Daniel 2:4-6, *emphasis added*

"O king, live forever" was their way of saying, "Long live the king!" The Chaldean advisors praised their earthly king in an effort to keep him appeased and at least fake some confidence.

King Nebuchadnezzar wanted relief from his distress so badly that he made a firm decision regarding the consequence should those summoned before him fail to correctly identify the dream and its interpretation: he would have them cut into pieces and their homes burned.

There was an ancient practice of dismembering bodies and so this is what the king is referring to when he says anyone who doesn't know the dream will be chopped up. (See [1 Samuel 15:33](#), [Daniel 3:29](#))

On the flip side, if the advisors could provide what the king wanted, King Nebuchadnezzar promised to reward them well.

## **Daniel 2:7-13**

**The Chaldean advisors admit their**

# limitations

"They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation." The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation."

The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them." Daniel 2:7-13

King Nebuchadnezzar's advisors realized the peril of their situation. They asked the king to at least reveal the dream so they could provide their interpretation.

However, King Nebuchadnezzar would make it very obvious that the sorcerers and magicians were not as powerful as perhaps they wanted him to believe. He replied to them that if they had the ability to identify his dream he would trust that they had the power to give the interpretation.

The Chaldean advisors would have been panicking at this point. They admit that no one could possibly know the dream "except the gods."

Living up to his harsh reputation, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the wise men of Babylon killed. Daniel and his friends

have not been mentioned in this chapter until now, but they were considered among the Chaldean wise men and were therefore about to be killed.

In another sign of King Nebuchadnezzar's questionable mental state, his desperation causes him to fixate on wanting to kill the very people who could potentially give him his answer. He demonstrates very self-destructive behavior.

## **Daniel 2:14-18**

### **Daniel & Arioch**

"Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon." Daniel 2:14-18

Young Daniel spoke with the captain of the king's guard, a man named Arioch. □□□ The name Arioch in both Hebrew and Aramaic indicates a meaning like "Lion-like," an appropriate name for a military leader.

Daniel approached Arioch with "counsel" and "wisdom." He didn't know why the decree was so "urgent"/"harsh," but Arioch filled him in on what was going on.

Daniel had enough favor to proceed to go directly to the king

to ask him for some time to fulfill the king's request. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah sought "mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret" and prayed that they would not be killed along with the others.

Whenever you face a challenge or need God's direction, seek His mercies! Pray! Your very first line of attack should be as a prayer warrior!

## [Daniel 2:19](#)

### **An Answer to Prayer**

["Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven." Daniel 2:19](#)



Daniel's leadership in prayer and consistent faithfulness to pursuing God's will and way resulted in God granting him supernatural favor. Daniel received a vision in the night that revealed the secret dream.



# Dream and Visions

Do you notice in [verse 19](#) that the Bible says Daniel received a night vision?

Normally, visions are understood as occurring during the day, while dreams occur at night.

I believe God wants us to notice that Daniel had been awake. He was seeking God with all his might and the Lord gave him a vision.

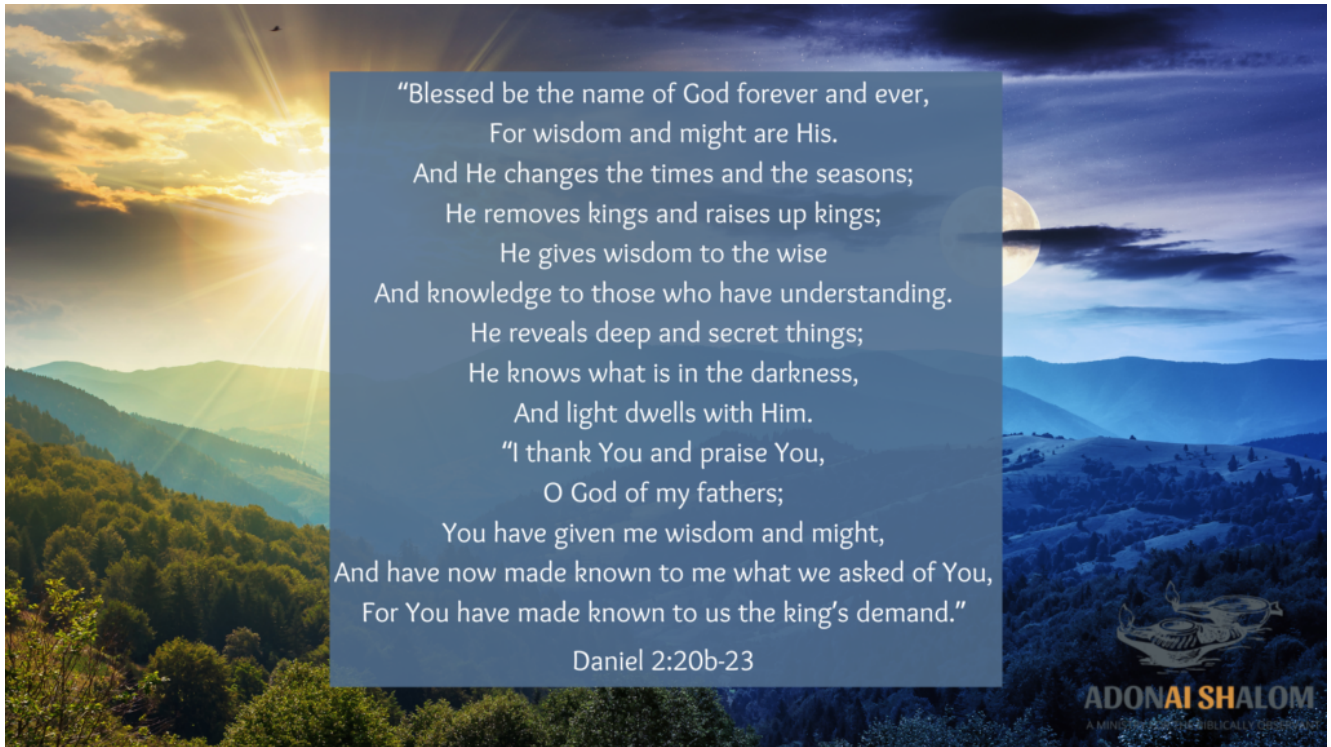
## [Daniel 2:20-23](#)

### Daniel praises the God of his fathers

[Daniel answered and said:](#)

[“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,  
For wisdom and might are His.  
And He changes the times and the seasons;  
He removes kings and raises up kings;  
He gives wisdom to the wise  
And knowledge to those who have understanding.  
He reveals deep and secret things;  
He knows what is in the darkness,  
And light dwells with Him.](#)

[“I thank You and praise You,  
O God of my fathers;  
You have given me wisdom and might,  
And have now made known to me what we asked of You,  
For You have made known to us the king’s demand.” Daniel  
2:20-23](#)



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You have given me wisdom and might,  
And have now made known to me what we asked of You,  
For You have made known to us the king's demand."

Daniel 2:20b-23

**ADONAI SHALOM**  
A MIND FOR THE MINDFULLY SEEKING

## Praise and Prayer = Results

Daniel very naturally praised the God of His fathers.

When Daniel says, "Blessed be the Name of God forever and ever." The construction in Aramaic could also be translated, "Let God's Name be blessed/praised forever and ever." It is clear that Daniel is exalting God and inviting others to do the same.

He gives reasons: because wisdom and might belong to God.

And God is the one who changes the times and seasons (times and seasons will become very important as we continue along in Daniel). God has power over the weather and the days and the times; God is ultimately King over all the kings of the earth and He removes them and raises new ones up.

God alone is Wise and All-Knowing. He gives wisdom and knowledge to those who are wise and have understanding. Notice – he "gives wisdom to the wise" and "knowledge to those who have understanding" – already. Daniel is talking about increase. Those who already have some wisdom and knowledge

will receive still more, but he is not saying that God is giving wisdom to the unwise or knowledge to those lacking understanding. God has chosen to give increase to those who understand.

**In Babylon, this would have been a controversial position.** Daniel is making the claim that the wise in the kingdom are not wise due to their own wisdom and knowledge nor did their insights come from the Babylonian deities. God alone holds true wisdom and knowledge.

Likewise, God alone can reveal deep and secret things.

Though we cannot see in the darkness, God knows what is there and He illuminates all because Light dwells within Him. He is the Light of the world!

Daniel is thankful and acknowledges that God has given him wisdom and might (or strength). He is thankful that God answers prayer and has made known to him and his friends the king's demand.

## **Daniel 2:24-27**

### **Daniel before the king**

Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king.

But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: (Daniel 2:24-27)

Arioch the military commander must have had a pretty good relationship with Daniel. Remember, Arioch is the same man who filled in Daniel about what was happening with the killings of the Chaldean wise men.

This time Daniel filled in Arioch on some important news: Daniel told him that he knew the interpretation and asked Arioch to bring him before King Nebuchadnezzar.

Arioch responded quickly. He knew the urgency and gravity of the matter because lives were at stake. Without the interpretation, Arioch himself would have to continue to carry out the king's orders to kill all of the wise men of Babylon. Daniel 2:25 says Arioch *quickly* brought Daniel before King Nebuchadnezzar.

I find it interesting that Arioch specifies here that the man who has the interpretation is one of the "captives of Judah." It seems Arioch supports Daniel because he does not suggest that Daniel "might" know the interpretation, but rather says with certainty: "who **will** make known to the king the interpretation."

King Nebuchadnezzar asks Daniel (Belteshazzar) directly if he is able to describe the dream and to give the interpretation.

Daniel boldly affirms that he has this ability because of His relationship with the God of heaven. Daniel begins by reminding the king that his wise men and astrologers and

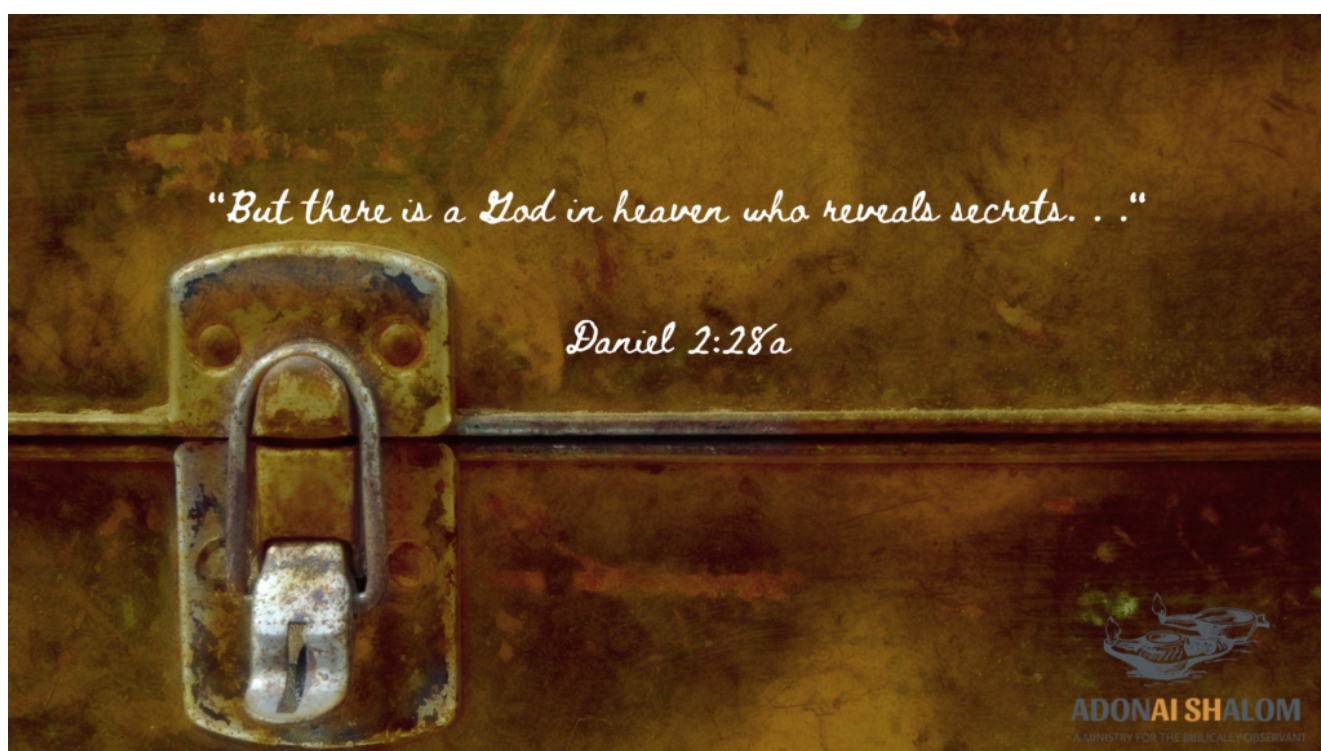
magicians and soothsayers have been unable to reveal the king's secret dream.

And then Daniel makes a faith statement. He does not believe in the polytheism of King Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. He declares "there is a God in heaven."

One God.

Above all else.

["But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets. . ."](#) Daniel 2:28a, *emphasis added*



Daniel proceeds to inform the King of Babylon that the God of Heaven has revealed the mystery dream. **Daniel is making quite the claim:** that his God – the God of the Judean captives – is indeed the Omniscient, All-Powerful God and that Daniel will serve as His spokesman for a prophetic word that will reveal what will happen in the future.

Daniel begins:



## **Daniel 2:29-30**

### **The mystery revealed to save lives**

"As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart." Daniel 2:29-30

The Chaldean culture was very focused on their view of "wisdom."

So Daniel makes very clear that although he is counted among the wise, it was not because of his human wisdom that he was able to ascertain the secret dream.

God alone, All-Merciful and All-Knowing chose to reveal the dream to Daniel to spare the lives of the wise men (particularly those of Judean descent). God loves the Chaldean and the Judean: He wants all to learn of Him and trust in His ways. God also loves King Nebuchadnezzar! In His mercy, God wants King Nebuchadnezzar to understand the dream he was given and have time to repent.

## **Daniel 2:31-35**

### **Nebuchadnezzar's dream in detail**

"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome."

This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found.

And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” Daniel 2:31-35

## **Daniel 2:36-45**

# **The interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream**

Daniel with his friends had prayed for revelation and the interpretation together. Daniel included them in the presentation of the interpretation. The dream was a revelation about four kingdoms represented by an image comprised of four metals.

Ultimately, this is an end times revelation about world empires and the return of Christ.

<sup>36</sup> “This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

<sup>37</sup> You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

<sup>38</sup> and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold.

<sup>39</sup> But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

<sup>40</sup> And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

<sup>41</sup> Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

<sup>42</sup> And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

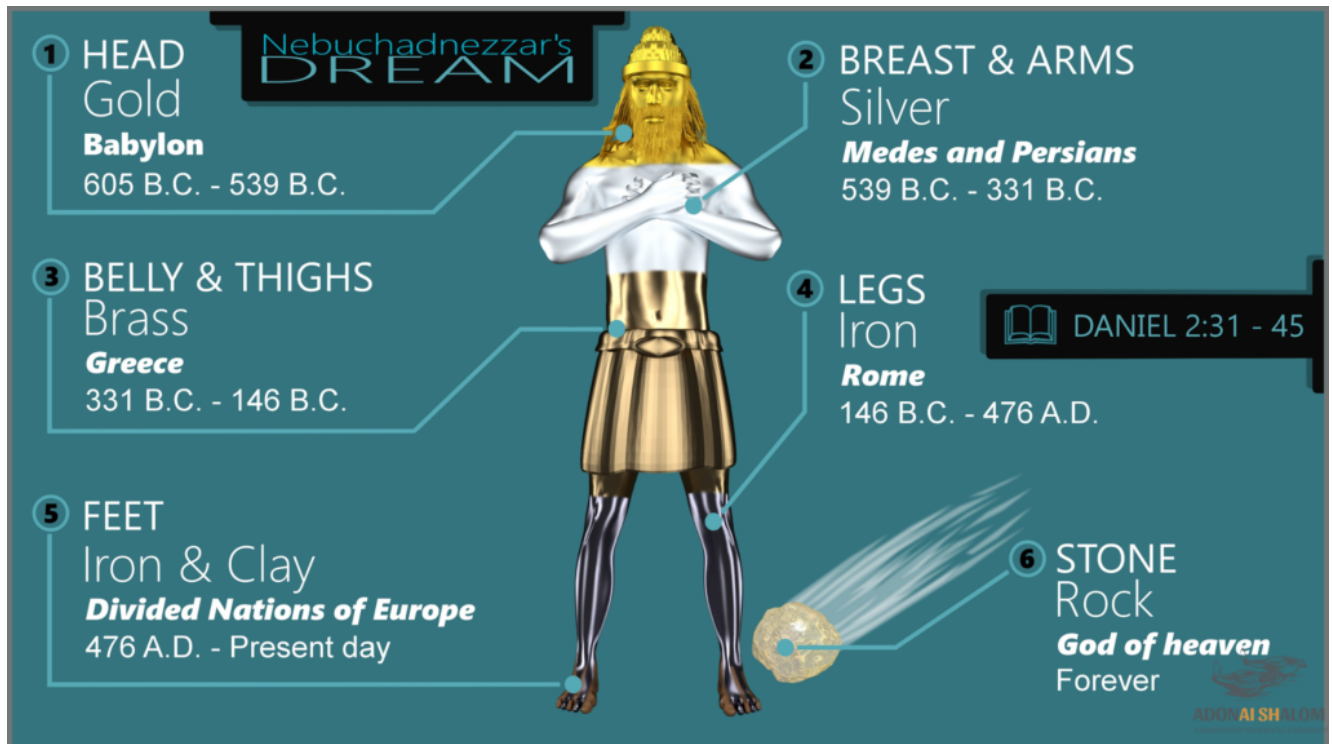
<sup>43</sup> As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

<sup>44</sup> And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

<sup>45</sup> Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.” (Daniel 2:36-45) (*emphases added*)

I found an illustration that you may find helpful. I believe “bronze” is a bit more accurate than “brass,” but besides this

small detail, the rest of this illustration seems accurate:



Notice that while gold would be prized as most valuable, the four materials associated with the different empires go down in value but up in strength.

## The First Kingdom

It is revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar that he is the head of a series of kingdoms. King Nebuchadnezzar has achieved great wealth and fame, a "king of kings." It is generally accepted that the first kingdom depicted by the dream is Babylon.

## The Second Kingdom

### Medo-Persian Empire

The next kingdom would be inferior, but still strong. This refers to the Medo-Persian empire. Persia today is known as Iran. The Medes were from Media, a city important to the Islamic people of Iran. Today, the descendants of the Medes are likely the Kurds of Iraq. The people of Media joined together with the Persians (like the image describes the two

arms and chest).

## **King Cyrus and the gates of bronze and bars of iron**

King Cyrus was the ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire.

We can find out more about him in [Isaiah 45:1-4](#)

[“Thus says the Lord to His anointed,  
To \*\*Cyrus\*\*, whose right hand I have held—  
To subdue nations before him  
And loose the armor of kings,  
To open before him the double doors,  
So that the gates will not be shut:  
‘I will go before you  
And make the crooked places straight;](#)

[\*\*I will break in pieces the gates of bronze  
And cut the bars of iron.\*\*  
I will give you the treasures of darkness  
And hidden riches of secret places,](#)

[\*\*That you may know that I, the Lord,  
Who call you by your name,  
Am the God of Israel.\*\*  
For Jacob My servant’s sake,  
And Israel My elect,  
I have even called you by your name;  
\*\*I have named you, though you have not known Me.”\*\* \(Isaiah  
45:1-4\) \*\(emphases added\)\*](#)

This passage reveals to us that Cyrus, a Gentile king, did not know the God of Israel yet God was using him to bless Israel. Notice the references to breaking the gates of bronze and the bars of iron – components of the future kingdoms.



The Medo-Persian Empire was conquered by Alexander the Great, a Macedonian (Greek) in 331BC.

## The Third Kingdom

### Grecian Empire

The third kingdom is represented by bronze. This refers to the Greek (or "*Grecian*") Empire. The military of Greece may have used bronze for their armor and weaponry.

### Alexander the Great

In 336BC, Alexander the Great conquered Greece and very rapidly extended the empire to the edges of the known world at that time, including the conquering of the Medo-Persian empire. The Grecian Empire extended as far south as Egypt, east to Syria and Persia, and all the way to the border of Pakistan with India. Alexander's military might was so ferociously successful that it is said that at one point Alexander wept because he couldn't think of any more places to conquer in his quest for world domination.

Although Greece was a strong empire, its division into warring city-states weakened it over time and Greece eventually fell to Rome in 146BC following the Macedonian wars.

## The Fourth Kingdom

### Roman Empire

The fourth kingdom is represented by iron. This represents Rome, the last significant world empire. The Bible describes the image in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream as having two iron legs [\(Daniel 2:33\)](#).

The two legs could represent division, in that Rome became

divided between the Eastern and Western empire (Constantinople/Byzantium vs. Rome/Mediterranean).

**Rome's influence has lasted even to our time.**

Roman architecture still very much influences our own government buildings.

The concepts of having a senate, courts, and military codes of ethics, tactics, and strategies all came from Rome.

Have you ever considered the names we use for rulers and kings?

Caesar has morphed into "kaiser" in German and "czar" in Russian.

I find it to be fascinating!

## **Feet of iron and clay**

Rome stood tall, but began to crumble just as the feet in the image show an unstable mixture of iron and clay. No other world leader has ever been as strong as the earlier kingdoms. There are several different opinions as to what exactly the feet represent. Many would agree it refers to the divided countries of Europe.

A very recent article posted by one of my favorite ministries, [\*One for Israel\*](#), was so timely! The article is titled, [\*"Daniel and the dream: Feet of iron and clay."\*](#) I was finishing up my study of [\*Daniel 1\*](#) when their study of [\*Daniel 2\*](#) popped up on my social media feed. God is good!

I was intrigued by a question raised in the article: ***"Could it be that the feet of iron and clay might be the Islamic colonialism that has taken so much ground, and its uneasy alliance with the cloying humanism that has overrun the west?"*** [\*\(One for Israel, Feb.12, 2024\).\*](#)

The [article](#) is definitely worth your time in reading as your study this passage in [Daniel 2](#). Check it out!

## Toes

The feet of the statue image are divided into toes. The NKJV Study Bible considers the perspective that “the Roman Empire will one day be revived ([v.41](#)), will be ruled over by 10 rulers ([the toes of v.42](#)), will feud over internal problems ([v.43](#)), will witness the return of Jesus Christ ([v.44](#)) and will be destroyed by Christ at the Second Coming ([v.45](#)).”

## The Stone and God’s Eternal Kingdom

While the kings of this earth vie for power and supremacy, God reveals that He will set up His Kingdom in the midst of all that chaos. The stone cut out “without hands” refers to the supernatural work of Christ and His eternal kingdom. [“The stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” Daniel 2:35c](#) For more about uncut stones and their spiritual significance, see [Joshua 8:30-31](#).

As the seraphim cry out in [Isaiah 6:3c](#): [“The whole earth is full of His glory!”](#)

Daniel concludes his interpretation with God-given confidence: the dream is certain and its interpretation is sure.

**Just as Daniel predicted, these empires did indeed rise and fall in the precise order given in the dream and interpretation.**

Jesus came to dismantle the world’s empires and to set up the indestructible eternal Kingdom of God! ([Daniel 2:44](#))

# The Second Coming of Christ

The dream reveals that there would never be another world empire as great as Rome. Rome was the last great kingdom. There would be four empires that would rule the world (and fall) before the return of our Messiah.

This means, His return is imminent!

## Daniel 2:46-49

### **Daniel and his friends receive a promotion**

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. <sup>47</sup> The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret."

<sup>48</sup> Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. <sup>49</sup> Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king. (Daniel 2:46-49)

King Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the immensity of Daniel's interpretation. He fell on his face in wonder and confessed that the God of Daniel, Mishael, Hananiah, and Azariah is the "Lord of kings." This does not mean; however, that King Nebuchadnezzar converted – he was acknowledging the supremacy of the God of the Judeans "at least in matters of divine knowledge" (*NKJV Study Bible*) but he did not renounce his own deities.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar promoted Daniel to serve as the ruler ([the governor](#)!) of the whole province of Babylon and the chief administrator over all the wise men! No doubt the wise men gladly served under Daniel's leadership because he had saved them from mass execution!

Daniel requested that King Nebuchadnezzar allow his friends to also serve in the government, which was approved. Daniel sat in the gate of the king which is another way of saying he served on the king's royal court.

Isn't it amazing how God had a marvelous plan to rescue and bless Daniel and his friends? No matter what you face in life, always remember: God is willing to help you and raise you up to accomplish things you never imagined. Daniel and his friends persisted in prayer and faith despite the fear and anxiety that the enemy would have been trying to impose upon them. Whenever you feel discouraged or under pressure, seek God with all your heart and He will minister to you! Be open to the power of the Holy Spirit working in your life through dreams and visions, especially in these last days!