

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

AUGUST 1972

TEXT: DANIEL CHAPTERS 2 & 3

INTRODUCTION:

WHAT HAPPENED IN NIMROD'S REBELLIOUS, ANCIENT KINGDOM OF BABYLON, WHICH HE FOUNDED, THAT CAUSED ALMIGHTY GOD TO TAKE DRASTIC STEPS SCATTERING ALL THE PEOPLE AND CONFUSING THEIR LANGUAGE AFTER HAVING BLESSED MANKIND? (**GENESIS 9**) WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A GENTILE PEOPLE REFUSES TO RETAIN A CORRECT KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN THEIR THINKING, BUT INSTEAD EXPERIMENTS WITH IT? WHAT HAPPENED IN ANCIENT BABYLON MANY CENTURIES LATER IN THE BEGINNING OF A GENTILE DISPENSATION AS A RELIGIOUS IDOLATROUS KING WITNESSED FOR THE FIRST TIME THE REVEALING POWER OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF A PROPHET SERVANT, WHICH RESULTED IN THE ERECTION OF AN IMAGE OR STATUE WHEREUPON ALL WERE COMMANDED TO ATTEND A CERTAIN WORSHIP SERVICE, THAT IS, ALL EXCEPT DANIEL? WHY WAS DANIEL EXCLUDED WHEN HIS BRETHREN WERE COMMANDED TO ATTEND? HOW DOES THIS DIFFER WITH A RELIGIOUS GENTILE PEOPLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY, WHO ALSO FOR THE FIRST TIME WITNESSED THE REVEALING POWER OF GOD IN ANOTHER SERVANT PROPHET AT THE CLOSE OF THE GENTILE DISPENSATION?

BRIEF HISTORY SURROUNDING BABYLON PRIOR TO 6TH CENTURY

Babylon, that ancient city of Mesopotamia, is located beside the Euphrates River at the head of the Persian Gulf some 55 miles south of modern Bagdad, and it was here civilization as we know it after the flood was cradled. By no means did the name Babylonian apply to every living soul in the vast land of Mesopotamia, indeed not but only to those dwelling in the southeastern part, which is now referred to as southern Iraq between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. This region is often called Mesopotamia, meaning in the Greek, "the land between the rivers." Babylon, in ancient times, was bound by Elam on the east, the Persian on the southeast and the Arabian Desert on the south and west and Assyria, who continually overran Babylon until 612 B.C., was situated on the north. Among its chief cities beside Babylon were Nippur, Erech (modern Warka) and Larsa, Ur (old home place of Abraham), Eridu and Borsippa. However note, according to history Babylon never rose to a political center of the land until the reign of Hammurabi (1700 B.C.) who is well known by history students for his most famous code of laws. It should be noted that he was not a Chaldean, seeing no Chaldean such as Nebuchadnezzar II ruled Babylon until 612 B.C.

BABYLON - ACCORDING TO HOLY SCRIPTURES

The holy scriptures record in **Genesis 10 and 11**, gives all of this land of Mesopotamia a still earlier name calling it the land of Shinar. Here it was in this rich ancient territory, lying between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Southeast Asia, a migration from the seed of the three sons of Noah; Shem, Ham and Japheth, under the leadership of Cush's son, Nimrod, drifted into this area several generations after the flood. It was here in this rich fertile Crescent, called land of Shinar, something drastic happened which changed the entire destiny of the gentile world, something secular history failed to record, although

occasionally will refer to the tower of Babel. Nevertheless, because history is silent concerning this period stating only there was a people in the land during this hour and although little is known about them, it's the Bible that tells the story of these people found in **Genesis 10 and 11**. Yes, there most certainly was a people in this area, a people who only a short period of time after the flood had already drifted from the knowledge of the living and true God! **Genesis 11:2-9**, must be read into the setting of **Genesis 10:8-32**, for a complete story upon these people who lived in the land of Shinar. Nimrod, the son of Cush, the grandson of Ham, several generations after the flood journeyed from the east with descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth and found the plain in the land of Shinar and there they dwelt saying one to another, let us take brick and burn them thoroughly. So, with brick for stone and slime for mortar they said let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach into the heavens and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, **Genesis 11:1-4**. Yes, Nimrod came into this area with a people who had already departed from the knowledge of the true and living God to serve idols in this land later to be called Babylon. However, in that hour it was referred to as Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh in the land of Shinar, all of which undoubtedly refer to ancient cities in the province of southeastern Mesopotamia. His kingdom reached throughout that area into Assyria where he built Ninevah, which later became the capitol of Assyria. The largest and by far the most important of these cities, since it was Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters for his Baal religion, was later to be called Babylon or still another name, Babilu, meaning "gate of God." However, you can be assured the gate referred to here has no reference to the living God of Heaven!

REBEL AGAINST GOD

Little is known scripturally concerning Nimrod other than he became a mighty one on the earth and a hunter before the Lord. (**Genesis 10:8-9**) Nimrod in Hebrews means REBEL, and the Jews understood rebel to mean rebel against God for truly, from all history reveals concerning Nimrod and his kingdom, it most assuredly was a kingdom of rebellion against the God of heaven. Babylon is designated as the land of Nimrod, (**Micah 5:6**).

NIMROD'S IDOLATROUS KINGDOM DISPERSED

During the hour of Nimrod's young idolatrous Baal kingdom, scripture declares in **Genesis 11:1**, the people of all the earth were speaking ONE LANGUAGE. Under this idolatrous leadership of Nimrod they were going to build a city and a great tower, which soon became a symbol of all their God defying disobedience and pride and the phrase "build a tower into heaven" later became a symbol as to the heights of idolatry, statues and temples, built by the gentiles after being scattered over the earth and other languages imparted unto them. It must be remembered the God of heaven did come down, confused their tongues and scattered these people unto all parts of the earth causing the city and the tower to never be completed, thus receiving the name of Babel because of all the confusion that was created. The scattering abroad of these people did not leave behind them the knowledge of their heathen, idol worship which they had learned under Nimrod in the land of Shinar, but instead carried this knowledge with them! Therefore, as their new life began in different areas of the world it was these same old gods and idols, created in the land of Shinar (later called Babylon), which were carried with them! Although it will not be until many centuries later that Babylon, largest city in ancient Mesopotamia, Nimrod's old headquarters, will ever become the capitol of any Babylonian Empire, and when it eventually arises to that point somewhere around the 17th Century, it will by no means be a Chaldean like Nebuchadnezzar II who will be seated on the throne as our lesson today shows. Why? Because the Chaldeans of Babylon never rose to power until 612 B.C., when they pushed the Chaldean Empire into such a position it was recognized by the God of heaven as the first world gentile empire.

CHALDEAN MIGRATION

The Chaldeans never begun to migrate into eastern Mesopotamia until around 1000 B.C., and it is only after that period that Babylon is referred to as Chaldea being called that after those Chaldeans who were a non-Semitic people, migrating from the desert of Arabia (around 1000 B.C.). What is it all about? Around 1000 B.C., God began shifting this people into a position where by 612 B.C., they would be in power to crush the Assyrian Empire and become the first heathen idol gentile world empire.

It is sometime after the scattering and confusion of tongues that history picks up the story and records a people coming into this area called Sumerians, who were known as Hamatic descent. Their coming into the land of Shinar is known because of excavations, discovered records, etc.. Babylon's rich soil was formed by deposits drained down by these two rivers and it was these Hamatic people who drained off the swamps and irrigated the land causing the land to become so productive, in areas it was referred to as the Garden of Eden. They developed extensive irrigation systems of the land basing their livelihood of farming and trading and are credited with such inventions as the wagon wheel, plow and the development of measuring and surveying instruments. Their utensils, ornaments and weapons reveal they carried a considerable skill in arts and crafts.

ASSYRIA - 12TH - 6TH CENTURY B.C.

Hurrying on into the period between the 17th and 12th Century, Babylon was constantly overrun by many groups such as the Ammorite dynasty, Hittites, and etc., (more Hamites). However, when civilization finally revived around the 12th Century with Assyria having grown strong enough to become an empire and by 746 B.C., Assyria had reached its height as an empire having conquered all Mesopotamia, which included Babylon. Furthermore, they conquered Egypt and will have by 712 B.C., conquered Israel (the ten northern tribes) whose capitol is a Samaria.

500 YEARS AFTER FLOOD IDOLATRY EVERYWHERE

Long before the 21st Century B.C., long before the calling out of Abraham from this area (**Genesis 12**) Babylon, as well as all Mesopotamia, was sunk deep in idolatry. No doubt, the Province of Babylon had the first large cities throughout this area. Since lumber and stone was scarce brick was used for building (**Genesis 11:3**). Note please, although these people by now are well advanced in their new languages, outside each city throughout Mesopotamia stood a religious, heathen temple or what was referred to as a "ziggurat", consisting of several series of terraces with a temple honoring some idol god standing high above the top terrace. Why was no community or city in all Asia found where the teaching of the living God flourished? Why so soon after the flood has mankind forgotten his Maker and Creator, having lost all the knowledge of a true and living God? Were these people unfortunate? Had they never heard of the Living God? Certainly they had! Paul declares in Romans 1, as he was ready to take the gospel to the gentile especially at Rome, he relates to them how in olden days, sometime after the flood the gentiles had a knowledge of God, but would not retain it, instead they played with it. When eight souls landed on the other side of the flood the knowledge of this God of heaven was prevalent. Noah offered sacrifice to this God of heaven and this God even made a covenant He would never send another flood. (**Genesis 9**)

History records how Shem, who lived 500 years after the flood, (**Genesis 11:10**), along with Japheth stood firmly for this one Great Eternal God of heaven. However, it appears while the gentiles knew God as Paul said they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful rather became vain in their imagination and reasoning, and their foolish hearts were darkened. They simply couldn't let well enough

alone. Professing themselves to be wise (thinking themselves smart) they became fools. And, according to Paul, what made them fools or become so foolish, they changed the glory of this one incorruptible God into an image, (or something else). In their mind or thinking they changed His image, made likened unto a corruptible man and to birds, four footed beasts and creeping things. God, seeing the way these people were going and realizing now what their imagination would get them into as they persisted in believing the image of the God of heaven who they could not see (because he was Spirit), changed His image first in their carnal minds and carnal reasoning into that of corruptible man. However, some didn't feel He was like a man in His makeup, they thought perhaps he was more like a bird which could fly, therefore some made statues of birds; while others didn't feel He either resembled man or beast so they made statues of four-footed beasts; then finally as they became more vain in reasoning some thought He resembled creeping things, therefore, statues of these things began to appear among the gentiles, and as time rocked on these people who were so persistent to believe to believe such things were sealed in their ignorance and God gave them up. **Romans 1:25** says God gave them up, "**Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever.**" It all boils down to this and should be a great lesson to all of us if we persist in believing something untrue about the God of heaven and light comes to show us we have been in darkness in our thinking, yet if we persist to believe error, God will seal us in that error and allow us to go after the desires of our own heart and none can help us! Only history reveals the damage these dead, lifeless idols played in man kinds religious thinking. How horrible sexual sins were even introduced into their worship of certain idols.

In a few generations after the flood especially in the heart and mind of the Hamite race (not to exclude descendants of Shem and Japheth) no doubt, they can still remember their grandparents discussing the horror of the flood which drowned all mankind and the ark which preserved only eight precious souls. Yes, even in excavations of old Babylon such records of the flood has been found.

IDOLATROUS PRIESTS OF BABYLON

Heathen idolatrous priests rose up becoming the teachers of these new found religions centered around these new images such as corruptible man, birds, four-footed beasts and creeping things wherein God finally gave them up to their uncleanness of thought and they drifted to every kind of perverted sexual sin in the category. These heathen idolatrous priests during those early days became most powerful often becoming the rulers of the people. Seemingly every little city in the province of Mesopotamia had its own god, which of course was some idol or statue as to what gentiles in the past had thought God resembled, **Romans 1:19-25**.

NIMROD, FOUNDER OF BABYLON BECOMING CHIEF GOD (MARDUK)

However, after the cities were more or less brought under one common rule, the local gods were still retained and given a special place in the hearts of the people. Nevertheless, Mardak (Baal) the god of the city of Babylon, Nimrod's old religion by which he ruled Babylon and the province of his day, soon became the chief god of all the other areas of that country. And whatever empire was found ruling in the province of Mesopotamia usually always showed kindness or favor to the city of Babylon because of this being the headquarters of the chief god, Baal.

ABRAHAM - HIS CALL AND PURPOSE

GENESIS 12:1-2

According to Haley's Bible Handbook, Shem, Noah's son, was still alive when Abraham received his call of God to go into Canaan. As a matter of fact, Shem lived 75 years after Abraham entered Canaan to begin this new nation. Abraham entered Canaan to fulfill God's will some 427 years after the flood. **Joshua 24:2**, told the children of Israel Abraham's father, Terah and the father of Nachor, was a servant of other gods.

It is from this area, from Ur (which is known as Ur of Chaldea) somewhere around 2081 B.C., after God has permitted the gentiles to drift on in their own thinking and set up a religious program around these various idols building their temples etc., that God speaks to a man, (**Genesis 12**) (whose city also has gone completely into idolatry) leave all his kindred and everything and begin a new and different race of people who shall in certain ways be different from all these other idolatrous gentile people, different in the respect that these people who would be from the seed of Abraham would be able to hear, recognize and worship the one true and living God, who chooses only to reveal Himself unto whomsoever He will, these gentile nations are unaware God has given them up and such a plan is set in motion as He speaks to Abraham to move out by faith. Look now what **Romans 1:18-32**, has gotten the so called smart gentiles into. And although it is true Judah and Israel (after the split of the 12 tribe nation) wandered off into idolatry, Israel with her golden calf worship and Judah constantly being plagued with the idolatrous worship of Mesopotamia, especially Babylon, God's purpose in calling this new nation which will not be referred to as gentiles did serve its purpose. To see that a nation of people was produced from the seed of Abraham (in the Old Testament) who could hear and worship the one true and living God, read especially the account of **Hebrews 11**, where there you find quite a list of Israelites who through faith or revelation were able to hear God speak.

ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

While God is working out His new plan through His new nation, having given the gentiles to go after the lusts of their own hearts, His new nation called Israel who shall be guided and directed by the God of heaven is told by God Himself after freeing them from Egypt under Moses's leadership that they must never build an image or try to erect any likeness of God as did the gentiles. (**Exodus 20:2-5**) God permits the gentiles to go on in their own deceived way to allow them to see what their dead idol gods can actually do for them. Assyria from the 12th Century, down through the 6th Century B.C., becomes master of all this area. The area of individual small nations and states vanishes forever with the rise of the Assyrians to power within the Fertile Crescent.

Assyria was a highland region overlooking the Euphrates region and shortly before 1200 B.C., these idolatrous hill folk who had their own idol gods began to press upon their neighbors in Babylon and Syria and by 700 B.C., became the total master of the Fertile Crescent, having conquered Egypt and Israel (10 northern tribes 721 B.C.) under their control. Up until this hour Assyria was the greatest empire the western world had ever known, however, because Judah and Jerusalem, the southern kingdom of Israel after the split of the 12 tribe nation, did not fall into the hands of these vicious idolatrous gentile people at that time seeing Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians around 604 B.C. Therefore, Assyria cannot be recognized as the first gentile world power nor can it be recognized as the beginning of the gentile dispensation, seeing that Christ, in **Luke 21:24** stated the gentile dispensation was measured by a gentile flag flying over Jerusalem. Christ shows how the gentile dispensation of power would be ended once the gentile flag no longer flew over the holy city. Therefore, since Assyria never captured Judah and

Jerusalem, although they crushed and took away the ten northern tribes whose capitol was in Samaria, they can in no wise be looked upon as the first gentile world empire only that they were the greatest gentile world empire; up until that hour.

JONAH SENT TO NINEVAH

How many recall the beautiful story of the prophet Jonah who feared to go to Ninevah, the capitol city of Assyria, which had more than six score thousand people who could not distinguish their right hand from their left, **Jonah 4:11**? God did not destroy Ninevah as Jonah had warned the people He would do, instead God heard their cry and spared their city for a considerable time allowing Babylon of the Chaldees to rise in 612 B.C., and crush their city becoming the new champions throughout the Fertile Crescent, and thus with Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Judah and Jerusalem as the God of heaven delivered them into his hands for 70 years, Babylon now becomes the first gentile world empire and from that hour until 1967 A.D., no less than 24 different gentile flags constantly flew over Jerusalem, the holy city, while foreign troops marched within that holy city. Jerusalem, the city of peace, changed gentile hands 24 times during that period. Going back into the hands of the Jews in 1967 made the change come to 25 times!

Assyria's rule was founded on efficient fighting methods. Iron weapons and ruthless treatment of rebellious people, few conquerors have ever been known to be as ruthless, cruel and heartless in war as these Assyrians. Cowed by this brutality, the people of the Fertile Crescent dared not revolt, however, as history reveals no people can lord it over others by the power of the sword for a very long time. After little more than a 100 years of total power the Assyrian Empire fell, from the assaults of two subject people, the Babylonian Chaldeans and tribesmen from the Persian mountains (Medes) and there was great rejoicing throughout the Near East as Ninevah, that wicked capitol city of Assyria of which God showed mercy in the day of Jonah, cruel and wicked as it was, fell in the hands of Babylon in 612 B.C., fell to a Chaldean prince, the father of Nebuchadnezzar II. After so long a time Babylon is once again in power, however this time it is under the Chaldeans, little had been heard from this region since those great days of Hammurabi, 17 Century B.C., until now, 612 B.C., when the Chaldean Babylonian kingdom rises to the position of the first gentile world empire, because God who still rules kingdoms permits them to crush Judah where our story begins today in **Daniel 1**.

BABYLON 612 B.C. AGAIN IN FRONT

Under the great King Nebuchadnezzar where our story begins today with Daniel and the three Hebrew children Babylon shall, for a short time, become the center of a new world empire or what God Himself refers to as the first gentile world empire. The people controlling this empire are called Chaldeans, therefore we refer to Nebuchadnezzar's empire, whose father conquered Assyria, as the empire of Those Chaldeans, those people who had begun to enter into this area about 1000 B.C.

ASTROLOGY, NEW FIELD IN SCIENCE

In the field of astrology and astronomy new Babylon made great and important progress. For the first time the stars were studied with exact observation. We follow the Chaldeans in naming some days of the heavenly bodies; Monday, Saturday, etc. We also have inherited from them the seven day period called our week, as well as the division of the day into two twelve hour parts. With the Chaldean study of astronomy went the belief a knowledge of the heavens had much to do with foretelling the future. This false science is called astrology and has deceived millions throughout history. Look at what influence it holds even today upon American people. You still hear the expression, "thank you lucky stars." No less

than five million American people plan their lives daily by the stars, while other millions constantly consult the more than 1220-1750 daily newspapers which carry horoscopes. There is enough business to keep ten thousand full time (and 17,500 part time) astrologers working. An estimated forty million Americans aided by ten thousand professional full time astrologers have turned the zodiac into a two hundred million dollar year business. Where did it stem from - THE CHALDEANS WHO ARE THE GENTILES WHO PUSHED THEIR KINGDOM INTO THE FIRST GENTILE WORLD KINGDOM.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND JERUSALEM TEMPLE

Nebuchadnezzar is best known to Bible students for having crushed Judah and Jerusalem and for destroying the temple of Jehovah in 587 B.C. after having taken over the Babylon kingdom from his father Nabopolassar, the Chaldean prince in 604 B.C. As a matter of fact, outside his defeat of the Egyptians who tried to aid the crushed Assyrians and the capture of Jerusalem, little is known about Nebuchadnezzar's military conquests during his 42 year reign. Instead he chose to follow the Babylonian tradition and boast of only his religious and architectural achievements saying little concerning his wars, therefore Nebuchadnezzar, this heathen gentile Chaldean king who was in total darkness, knew nothing of the God of heaven called Jehovah, yet one must never look upon him as not being religious. In fact he, like all Babylonians, were too religious serving many gods! He boasted much of his religious activities, such as rebuilding the temple in a height of 7-8 stories of the Baal (or Marduk) in Babylon, the chief god of all Babylon which had been destroyed during the days of the Assyrian Empire, the god which demanded great respect throughout Mesopotamia. Even before the Assyrians destroyed Babylon in 689 B.C., because of rebellion was first careful to carry away the statue of Baal for protection. Babylon long before Nebuchadnezzar came to the throne, always seemed to prosper through various periods simply because this god's headquarters was there.

FOUR HEBREW CHILDREN IN BABYLON

Even before the first great deportation of Jews began to flow out of Judah in 598 B.C., already the chosen and skilled in wisdom of Judah were chained and led away to Babylon of which no doubt Daniel and the 3 Hebrew children were already in Babylon around 604 B.C., (**Daniel 2:1**). No doubt as our main characters in **chapters 2 and 3 of Daniel**, where we are about to READ BETWEEN THE LINES (for an unusual story) were deported from Judah, it should be noted Nebuchadnezzar followed the same procedure as that of the Assyrian policy in deporting conquered people in order to reduce their local nationalism or strength especially, as we saw Assyria do in crushing Samaria and removing the ten northern tribes in 721 B.D., never being allowed to return to the homeland, however in this case Judah will only remain in captivity 70 years then be released to return home. Undoubtedly, after 604 B.C., as this little group was being deported from Judah which carried Daniel and the 3 Hebrew children, their forced march encountered many hardships, nevertheless as Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego along with Daniel finally approached the sight of that great ancient city in Mesopotamia called Babylon, the 4 young men who had always been faithful servants to Jehovah God purposed in their young hearts regardless to the cost they would not betray the God of Heaven. Daniel and the 2 Hebrew children were undoubtedly very young perhaps not over 20 when Judah fell to Nebuchadnezzar and they were removed from their homeland to Babylon, where certainly their faith shall be severely tested in a land of many idol gods in days to come.

MAGNIFICENT BABYLON - DANIEL 4:30

However, as they approach this magnificent city of Babylon which has been described by many ancient writers marveling at the wonders and beauty of Babylon such as did the Greek historian Herodotus, who

upon his visit in the 5th Century recorded how it was laid out in the form of a square. The Lord delivered Judah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar who, in turn, instructs his chief eunuch to bring certain of the children of Israel who were well favored and skilled in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge and understanding science and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might reach the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans. Just how many people of this caliber was taken out we do not know but among the number, verse 6 tells us, was Daniel, Hananiah, Misheal and Azariah (3 Hebrew children). After being given Babylonian names the four young men were placed in school. Verse 17 tells us unto these four young men God gave wisdom and skill in all learning and to Daniel was given understanding in all wisdom and dreams. Upon Nebuchadnezzar's personal interview with these four boys he soon determined he had within his kingdom four young men which had been taken from Judah who had ten times the knowledge and ability of all the magicians and astrologers he had within his realm.

DREAM OF FOUR GENTILE WORLD EMPIRES

Chapter 2 informs us in the 2nd year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar he had a dream which troubled his spirit greatly, however the problem was, he had forgotten the dream. Calling upon his magicians and astrologers, soothsayers and Chaldeans, the king demanded an interpretation of his dream whereupon they requested the king tell them the dream and they would furnish the interpretation. To this the king answered, "it has gone from me", and the king must not have been in a very good mood that day because he stated, **"if you will not make known unto me the dream with the interpretation thereof ye shall be cut in pieces and your houses shall be made a dunghill!"** Verse 5, **"But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof."** To this again the Chaldeans said, **"tell thy servants the dream and we shall show the interpretation of it."** The king answered, I now of a certainty you would gain the time because you see the thing has gone from me. After the king had given his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and Chaldeans this bitter news of their fate ere they did not come up with the interpretation, the Chaldeans exclaimed, **"there is not a man upon the earth who can show the king's matter!"** Furthermore they exclaimed, never has there been a king, lord or ruler who would ask such a thing of any magician, astrologer or Chaldean. And it was a rare thing the king would request such a thing! Now note, this following statement for it is most important in that it has something to do with what happened in **Chapter 3** within the mind of Nebuchadnezzar! The wise men said to the king, **THERE IS NONE OTHER THAN THE GODS WHICH DWELL NOT IN FLESH THAT CAN SHOW THE KING SUCH A THING!** Verse 11, to this the king became angry and furious demanding all his wise men in Babylon be destroyed, which naturally included those younger men being schooled for these cabinet positions, among them Daniel and the 3 Hebrew children.

DANIEL INTERPRETS FORGOTTEN DREAM

We are about to see King Nebuchadnezzar receive the surprise of his life as orders have been given to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. What were these wise men of Babylon and why were they so important to the king's administration? Recall after 612 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar's father, with the help of the Medes, crushed the Assyrians, who God had used to defeat and take Israel (northern house) (ten tribes) away in 721 B.C. The Chaldean empire now rises to its height engulfing a vast territory including Judah. Many different nationalities and religious ideas are incorporated into this empire, and therefore for Nebuchadnezzar to rule successfully over such a vast empire he certainly must have close contact with all these various people in order to secure and maintain a tight-fisted control at all times. Moreover, he must use a little initiative, or shall we say, a little psychology as he alone certainly cannot oversee this vast empire. Thus he chooses wise men throughout the various conquered territories to be

placed in key positions. This board is called his personal advisory board and from **Daniel 1:3-4**, we saw the quality of men throughout these conquered empires that Nebuchadnezzar was searching for to be his wise men (magicians, soothsayers, astronomers, etc). Note, every culture of life is represented in his cabinet. His wise men possibly were his philosophers, his magicians, the best in the land, no doubt did many slight of hand tricks when celebrities and dignitaries from other lands were entertained. His soothsayers, much like Jeanne Dixon, Irene Hughes and others.

Sometime ago I read a tract concerning how Mrs. Dixon testified she received her gift. She spoke of a vision where a snake wrapped itself around her body and when the experience was finished she had this gift!

No doubt important dignitaries from other countries traveled to Babylon to counsel with Nebuchadnezzar's soothsayers. It would be amazing to know how many dignitaries in Washington and around the world have sought interviews with Mrs. Dixon and others like her. Yes, Nebuchadnezzar in his council undoubtedly had his Billy Graham's who we have noticed has often given religious counsel to presidents of the U.S. Nebuchadnezzar had his Dale Carnegie's to know how to win friends and influence people, and all the rest. This tactic was to have a cabinet behind him which represented all races and religious beliefs within his empire. And now Nebuchadnezzar had incorporated within his cabinet a representation of people who, unlike the others in his kingdom, serve a God of whom he, the great Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed his temple at Jerusalem and carried away his golden vessel into the land of Shinar, to the house of his own god. Nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar is soon to learn more about this one God than he ever dreamed possible could be learned about any of the gods.

Undoubtedly throughout this short administration of Nebuchadnezzar up until his hour, he had often called upon his advisory board to advise and counsel him. If he wanted to know some far reaching predictions concerning plans for the future, he would turn to his astrologers. For recall both astrology and astronomy were rapidly growing in this hour of Babylon history. However, if he wanted to know something concerning some decision he must soon make, perhaps he would turn to his medium or soothsayer. As far as a perfect setting, carnally speaking within his kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar had a real setup. However, he has now incorporated into his empire a little group of people whose lives have been ruled and influenced by an entirely different source of power than that of demonism. Yet it now seems he is on the verge of abolishing what appears to be his perfect setup of cabinet members including all those in training to learn the Chaldean language, etc., among whom are Daniel and the 3 Hebrew children. The God of heaven looks upon the scene and reveals within this dream He is about to create an environment and set something in motion which started in that day and runs straight down into our very hour! (Something that is already at work in Europe today!)

DREAM ONLY THE GODS CAN REVEAL

It was during the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign he retired for bed one night and as we shall later learn was pondering the future for his kingdom, etc. Although it doesn't say it in those words that is what took place. Nebuchadnezzar had gone to bed with many thoughts upon his mind concerning the length of his kingdom, etc., and as he drifted off to sleep he had a dream. He awakened from sleep and although he had forgotten the dream it left a deep impression on his mind, but why should he worry, with such a board of wise men who always interpreted his dreams they would quickly give him an answer although this time it is different, he couldn't remember the dream! It will be up to them to give both the dream and interpretation and not to do so means the loss of their life. Nebuchadnezzar is most disappointed with his board of wise men for no doubt he now believes them to be truly fakes. Instead of hearing what his dream was and the interpretation of it, he hears this answer, oh king, there is nothing

short of the gods who do not dwell in flesh that can answer the request of the king!

Daniel, who is to be among the number slain, asked the captain of the guard, Arioch, what was the king's haste. Arioch informed Daniel what had led the king to make his hasty decree. **Verse 16**, Daniel went in before the king and desired the king to give him a little time to show forth the interpretation. A brief stay of execution is granted and Daniel rushed to his house to make known to his three companions the terrible thing which is about to happen and instructs them to seriously pray for mercy to the God of heaven concerning this secret whereby Daniel and his companions would not perish.

DANIEL'S PRAISE AND PRAYER MEETING

Verse 19 declares the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision and was he ever a happy young man. Let's listen to him as he blessed the God of heaven, for wisdom and might which is his. **"He, Daniel says, changes times and seasons; removes kings and sets up kings and gives wisdom unto the wise and knowledge unto them that know understanding."** Daniel continued on in **verse 22**, still praising God for what he has done, **"he revealeth the deep and secret things, he knoweth what is in the darkness and the light dwelleth with him."** Daniel is simply overjoyed as he realizes how his life and the life of his three companions will be spared, and he continues in **verse 23**, **"I thank thee, and praise thee, of the God of my fathers, who hath given me wisdom and might, and hath made known unto me now what we desired of thee:"** My, what a rejoicing prayer meeting Daniel is having as he continues to praise God, **"for thou hast made known to us the king's matter."**

GOD OF HEAVEN REVEALS SECRETS

Verse 24, Daniel hastens unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy all Babylon's wise men. Destroy not the wise men of Babylon, Daniel exclaimed, bring me before the king and I will show unto the king the interpretation!

What is happening - the hand of God is setting a stage for something and Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego will play a lead role becoming the benefactors of what God is about to do. The king will receive the surprise of his life as he not only shall hear his dream and the interpretation, but for an added bonus he shall be told the thoughts of his mind which prompted such a dream. Arioch, with whom God had given Daniel favor, takes him before the king.

Let us examine our setting. Arioch, the captain of the guard, escorted Daniel, just a little humble but happy Jew, into this magnificent throne room of colored enameled brick where sat a bewildered and disturbed king, and said I have found a man of the captive of Judah who will make known to the king the interpretation. Why should he not be bewildered? His mind won't allow him rest from thinking about a dream he can't remember and the fact since no one but the gods can answer his request concerning his dream all of his wise men are soon to be executed. As the king looks up, seeing this young man standing before him in the presence of the loyal captain of his guard he ask, art thou able to make known unto me the dream I have seen and the interpretation thereof? To this Daniel answers, the secret the king has demanded can't your wise men, astrologers, magicians, soothsayers, can't they answer your dream, oh king? **Verse 28**, **"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and makes known to King Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."** The dream and the vision of thy head upon thy bed are these.

Here so early in the morning, perhaps long before the king would normally receive visitors, stands Daniel addressing him. Nebuchadnezzar was a royal king before whom dignitaries and representatives of other

conquered powers had often stood frightened, bowing humbly at his feet, often begging for mercy or leniency. Recall, Nebuchadnezzar was the one responsible for Zedekiah's eyes being plucked out after his own sons had been killed before his very presence. Nevertheless, today here he sits on his royal throne all out of sorts, despondent and disturbed over his dream he simply cannot remember as this young Jewish lad begins to tell him, Oh, king, I have the answer to your dream troubling you; the one your magicians and wise men cannot answer but there is good news for you, oh, king, there is a God in heaven who knows all things! In order to convince you, oh, king, this is the truth, I am about to tell you, I would like to relate first some thoughts upon your mind that night when you retired for bed. Because it was these thoughts which actually produced your dream! I can see Nebuchadnezzar tug at his royal collar as he stares down at this lad, fascinated by his courage and boldness, yet speaking with such positiveness before royalty.

As Daniel continues, bit by bit the understanding of what he is saying slowly begins breaking through to the king, Oh, king, you went to bed and lay there for quite a while with certain thoughts running through your mind, pondering what would happen to your kingdom (normally why would Nebuchadnezzar be concerned over his kingdom seeing it was at its very height. Nebuchadnezzar knew from the past experience of other empires and kings how quickly fate would turn. How quickly conquered territories could band together and overthrow a ruling power. He no doubt remembers thoroughly the record of how his own father so easily with the help of the Medes upset and crushed the mighty wicked Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C., when actually only as far back as 689 B.C., just 77 short years before, because of strife between Babylon and Assyria, Assyria had completely destroyed the city of Babylon and is probably fully aware when Essarhaddon of Assyria next came to power; favored Babylon and rebuilt her city, restoring her privileges; how before his death his empire had been divided between two sons - one ruling Assyria and the other Babylon and from such a relationship conditions erupted into furious civil war, ending in the devastation of Babylon again in 648 B.C., and it was Nebuchadnezzar's father following the death of Assurbanipal of Assyria, with the help of the Medes had been able to seize the opportunity to overthrow and crush the Assyrian resistance, all by 612 B.C.),

Beloved, Daniel did not tell him this. This is actual history the king was more than familiar with and he was pondering - what about my kingdom; what about its future, not knowing the days of his kingdom were already numbered and would fall sometime later to the Medes and Persians. Recall, it was the Medes who had helped his father crush Assyria! Little did Nebuchadnezzar realize fate would permit the Medes to assist the Persians to overthrow the Babylonians! No, Nebuchadnezzar is not aware the days of his kingdom are already numbered, nor is he aware there is a God in the heavens who rules all things and has given him a dream which has disturbed him so greatly and not only explained the fate of his own empire, but there were three more world empires to follow after the downfall of his own empire.

Yes, in **verse 29**, even before Daniel touched on the dream, he told the king the thoughts in his mind that night, what should come to pass hereafter? It was the God of heaven (not one of his gods) who was showing to the king secret things which had never been known before concerning world kingdoms that should rise following his own. **Verse 30**, Daniel is careful to assure the king the secret is not given to him because of any wisdom he might possess more than someone else. Oh, no, but for their sake that the interpretation should be made known to the king; and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy own heart. In the king's mind things are slowly becoming clear and no doubt he is thinking, that is right, I remember now I was thinking along those lines about things hereafter as to what would be the fate of my kingdom, etc., I was thinking about my mighty armies which have been able to crush the Egyptian forces who tried to assist Assyria and everything else which has risen up before me has been crushed and brought under my control! Oh, think of it beloved, here stood a young man, maybe not over 20 years of age, telling a great gentile king things that were in his mind even before he went to sleep and had his

dream - things his own wise men had informed him no one but the gods would be able to do, yet here stood a lad doing exactly what they said man could not do! Can't you imagine the effect on this king's countenance, how it must have changed as he witnesses something he has never encountered before? Through all his dealings with his wise men nothing could compare with what was happening now.

INTERPRETATION OF DREAM

I can see Nebuchadnezzar prick up his ears like a pup dog and slide forward in his chair as Daniel continues, oh king, in your dream thou sawest and beheld a great image. This great image whose brightness was excellent stood before thee and the form thereof was terrible (slowly the dream is now returning to Nebuchadnezzar as Daniel continues). Never had he seen anything to compare with this! **“The image had a head of fine gold, his breast and arms were of silver; his belly and thighs were of brass; his legs of iron; his feet part iron and part clay.”** By this time Nebuchadnezzar is even more thoroughly convinced he had never witnessed anything like this. Was he standing before deity? Was what the wise men of Babylon said true when they exclaimed only the gods who have no form of flesh can reveal this to thee? Was this some god in human form standing before him revealing the very secrets of his own heart? One thing was sure, he had never encountered anything to compare with this! “You not only saw this gigantic image made of gold, silver and iron with feet mingled with iron and clay, but you saw something else oh king, you watched that image and you were so mystified by it because next you saw a huge stone cut out of a mountain (cut out without hands), and suddenly from a distance you saw that stone roll down the mountainside out into the plains and that stone didn't strike the image in the head, the stomach, nor even in the legs; that stone you saw hit him squarely in the feet, on his ten toes and it smote the image upon the feet of iron and clay and broke them to pieces! Then was the gold, silver, brass, iron and clay broken to pieces together, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor and the wind carried them away that no place has found for them, but the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. No doubt at this point Nebuchadnezzar is so flabbergasted at the ability of this lad as he wonders what can be the interpretation to such a dream?

God permitted this setting to happen in this very manner in order to set something in motion. Think of it, Nebuchadnezzar who had at his disposal the greatest of wise men Babylon could produce, at no time in his life had he ever seen such a display of wisdom. He had often watched his magicians at work with their sleight of hand magic. Have you even seen a magician pull a rabbit from a hat? Sure you have, but it wasn't because they had power to create a rabbit, was it? No, you can rest assured it was a trick of the hand, but Nebuchadnezzar knew what he was witnessing was no trick, it was the truth! Daniel continues further, are you ready for the interpretation? By now Nebuchadnezzar is probably ready for anything and no doubt for the moment has forgotten he is the king, because he feels there is something far greater than a king standing here before him. He, being a gentile, could recognize the work of deity but can see no further than the flesh of Daniel. **Verse 37, “Oh, king, thou are a king of kings: for the God of heaven has given thee a kingdom, power, and strength and glory. (38) And wherever the children of men dwell, the beast of the field and the fowls of the heaven have been given unto thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all, THOU ARE THE HEAD OF GOLD. (39) And after thee shall rise another kingdom inferior to thee and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all of the earth. (40) And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron:”** (well, by now that should explain to the king there are yet other kingdoms on the horizon.) No doubt as Daniel was explaining to Nebuchadnezzar how he was that head of gold on the image and how he was a king of kings, I imagine that made his heart swell with pride to think there was a God in heaven of whom he knew nothing who would do all this for him, for Daniel had said the God of heaven has given you the kingdoms of men. Nevertheless, after you shall arise another kingdom inferior.

3 GENTILE KINGDOMS TO FOLLOW

EACH KINGDOM REPRESENTED BY HARDER METAL

Let us examine this for a moment, how can a kingdom arise which would be inferior and yet defeat him? The head on this image was fine gold and represented Babylon, the first world empire. Gold we know is the most valuable of all metals. The next kingdom which is inferior and shall overthrow Babylon is of silver, of lesser value than gold, yet it has one advantage, it was a little harder metal which we use for silverware, knives, etc. After that kingdom will come still another one represented by still a less valuable material, brass. Brass is still a harder metal, isn't it? Watch for a moment how this applies with the culture of time. We note the advancement of man's achievements are here illustrated in each of these metals. First, we see Babylon was soft (gold), that was a period in history when men were pliable and could be dealt with, however, once we come to the silver, their temperament is getting a little harder; then we come into the brass age which is still a little harder. In other words, we find culture, learning and science becoming more and more increased as men become more and more learned in the working of their earthly metals etc. Following brass came iron, and we know it is the strongest metal of all. This represents men in the Roman Empire. With iron you can mold and temper to bring forth steel and all other kinds of hard metals. Yes, iron is the hardest element known to man! However not, when you reach the feet of the image, which is the ten toes, Daniel was heard to express them as **“in the days of these kings (verse 44) meaning, when man's time would have existed long enough on this earth, this image would be represented by ten kingdoms of men which are signified in those ten toes.”**

FIRST MENTION OF GOD SETTING UP A KINGDOM

Now the rock you saw hewn out of the mountain without hands which hit the image on the feet or ten toes mingled with clay and iron, Daniel said, was the God of heaven setting up a different kingdom here on earth which shall eventually subdue all kingdoms of the world! Please note something here, for the first time in the history of mankind throughout all the entire Middle East never had there ever been a prophecy uttered that fell on the ears of a gentile that the God of heaven one day would set up a kingdom! Note further, where it would be set up, RIGHT THERE ON EARTH! In order to begin a kingdom there would first need to be a king born. From which race did he come, this king to head God's kingdom, from out of the Jewish race of people of which Daniel was a part. Note also where, on this earth, the news of this kingdom was first announced - IN BABYLON IN A GENTILE KING'S THRONE ROOM! From the very territories from which the wise men came sometime after the birth of Jesus (possibly as many as 2 years) who had been born in Bethlehem of Judea. These wise men coming bearing gifts came from where, THE MIDDLE EAST! Somewhere from that far country of Chaldea, for these wise men were none other than astrologers and stargazers who approached Herod inquiring, where is he who is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star and have come to worship him? Those wise men no doubt remembered how the record showed Daniel, a Jew, who had lived in Babylon in the 5th Century had interpreted their king's dream wherein the interpretation of the dream was climaxed with the sign of a stone rolling down. One day that king who will head that kingdom must be born on this earth, and these wise men, who were none other than astrologers or stargazers in Christ's day, were called wise men whose forerunners in this profession sat on the council of Nebuchadnezzar.

DANIEL'S INTERPRETATION NOT TAKEN LIGHTLY

Believe me, such an interpretation as Daniel had given to Nebuchadnezzar was not something taken lightly! Indeed not! Undoubtedly it went down in the Babylonian records of the kings as one of the greatest phenomenons that ever happened. We must not think for a moment it was something pushed

into the background and soon forgotten, else why would 500 years later wise men who studied the stars (astrologers) be led by a star to the very spot where the Christ child was? Those men were watching for something and believe it or not they knew what they were looking for! They were looking for the king (of the Jews); they were looking for one who had been born king to fulfill the latter part of that interpretation of a great dream given to King Nebuchadnezzar more than 500 years before Christ was born, and in the back of their minds still hung that unfilled prophecy of the lad who interpreted the king's dream way back in the 5th Century B.C. **THAT STONE WAS JESUS WHO WAS BORN KING!** How often in the scripture was He referred to as the stone! Was He not referred to as the stone the builders rejected; the stone that would grind you to powder, etc. yet He was born of the Jewish race to fulfill that prophecy. Then one day while studying the stars in far off Chaldea these men saw something and here they came to Herod inquiring, where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star and have come to worship him! They could just as easily announced, where is he for he is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands of flesh, interpreted for our King by young Daniel, a Jewish lad, and since that time we have been watching and studying the stars to learn the time of this great event! No, it wasn't a prophecy like some we hear today spoken from God and treated so lightly or soon forgotten. 600 years had gone by since this prophecy was given and Babylonian stargazers were still on the watch for it, and scripture records how their efforts were rewarded.

DANIEL MISTAKEN FOR A GOD

Scripture informs us how once Daniel finished interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, old Nebuchadnezzar, who had never bowed before any man, bowed before this lad Daniel. What did the king see in this lad that made him bow at his feet? Never had Nebuchadnezzar been spoken to in such a manner. Sure, he had seen his magicians do their funny tricks which impressed important visitors or dignitaries. He no doubt enjoyed showing off all his cabinet, seeing he had the wisest men in all his realm, feeling I have the finest magicians and when it comes to the stargazers I have the best; the finest scientists in the world, fortune tellers, why, I have the best; soothsayers, the best in the business and they are all in my cabinet. Why their predictions hit every time. Sure, he was proud of his cabinet, of their work in the past and it was only this once things had backfired and the king stood at a point where no one (but the gods) could help him as he was informed by his wise men, **NO MAN WOULD BE ABLE TO DO SUCH A THING. THEN WHO AND WHAT WAS DANIEL? NEBUCHADNEZZAR, A GENTILE KING, COULD SEE NO FURTHER THAN THE FLESH OF DANIEL (THE PROPHET) WHO WAS USED IN THE REVEALING.** It reminds me so much of the scripture found in **Revelation 5**, which declares the Lamb of God was the only one who could open the seals, and then for someone to declare Bro. Branham was the Lamb of God simply because in 1963, he was permitted by the Holy Spirit to break into the Seals and reveal for the first time in church history that which was hidden within them, some poor people of this, like Nebuchadnezzar, could see no further than the flesh of a man. Nebuchadnezzar had been told, only the gods could do this, and here stood a young man doing it. Careful beloved, that you don't allow that roaming spirit of idolatry resting upon Nebuchadnezzar to rest upon you!

KING WORSHIPS DANIEL

Yes, this had been something God had created Himself to set something else in motion, not to cause anyone to look upon mortal flesh, and because the very secrets of the heart are being revealed make someone think this is a god in flesh standing before them! **GOD WILL GIVE HIS GLORY TO NO MAN!** Nebuchadnezzar, looking upon this lad standing before him showing absolutely no fear yet giving all due respect to his royal majesty, begins to wilt, and by the time Daniel had finished the interpretation, Nebuchadnezzar had become so flabbergasted and lost all sense of reasoning, he simply falls out of the throne chair flat on his face before Daniel and would have done oblation and sacrifice to Daniel. Why?

Simply because Nebuchadnezzar didn't think he was actually standing before just a mortal man like himself, but instead standing before this new god of whom Daniel had spoken - this God of heaven who had shown kindness to Nebuchadnezzar.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

Now, can you READ BETWEEN THE LINES? Can you see what is going on today as well as what went on yesteryear in the courts of Nebuchadnezzar as a man revealed the secrets of the heart to a gentile? Nebuchadnezzar felt this was not a man, but a god which had come down in human form because recall, when he had confronted all the wisest men in Babylon who were unable to help him, he was told only the gods can do what you ask! When he confronted his most gifted soothsayers, astrologers, Chaldeans and magicians, they all had to shake their heads and say, we can in no way interpret this dream until we know what the dream is. ONLY THE GODS CAN DO THIS! But that certainly did not mean God had to come down in human flesh, in the form of Daniel the prophet in order to answer the king! God simply revealed to His servant prophet Daniel, who was no more God than the king himself, the dream, the interpretation and also what had been on the king's mind that night before he had gone to sleep! Yet the poor flabbergasted, bug-eyed king who had never seen anything to compare with this, saw nothing but a young man standing before him, and could in no wise differentiate between the two (MAN AND GOD), thus ending up worshiping Daniel. Does this remind you of anything that is happening today? IT SHOULD!

VERSE 46 KING MISTAKES DANIEL THE PROPHET FOR DEITY

Verse 46 says, Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and worshiped Daniel and commanded they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him! For now the king is convinced there is no god like the God of heaven who is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast revealed this secret. The sad part of this story, which is so true even in our day, was this gentile king did not have enough (spiritual) insight to recognize how to differentiate what was God and what was human flesh, and I seriously wonder if we don't have that same problem with that old spirit still pestering the gentiles today. Nevertheless, you READ BETWEEN THE LINES, man is still man and God is still God, He will never change. The only man ever commanded to be worshiped was the Christ, (**Hebrews 1:6**). Man can never reason God out; man is still just as carnal in that of his reasoning in his carnal mind as he ever was. Actually, perhaps today even a little more so because man's mentality has been so molded to fit a modern scientific age and he probably isn't as pliable in this day as he would have been in that hour.

Don't do that, exclaimed Daniel to the king. I am a man just like you! Get up off your knees, oh king, worship the God of heaven, not me. I am just his servant the prophet! Beloved, the king never got over this experience of what the God of heaven had done for him in his throne room that day and truly he wanted to do something magnificent for this God of heaven. The next verses, although recorded in the following chapter, will explain to us what Nebuchadnezzar did. No doubt time and again the statement of those wise men echoed in his mind, Only the gods could do this.

POSITION OF 3 HEBREWS

To get into the story where we must READ BETWEEN THE LINES, we move from **Chapter 2** into **Chapter 3**, for it is what we have learned from **Chapter 2** that we can safely say because of this experience of how Nebuchadnezzar met the workings of the God of heaven which creates the situation in **Chapter 3**. Nebuchadnezzar knows of many gods (plural). However, he is not fully persuaded there is no god like the God of heaven since Daniel has revealed the secrets of his heart, interpreted his

dream, etc.! Although he does not know him personally the king says, there is no god like the God of Daniel and to him he has now moved up to first place among the gods, although it may not state it in exactly those words, in essence that is what he is thinking. Blessed be the God of Daniel! True, Nebuchadnezzar didn't know the first thing about this God (what he looked like or anything) other than the revealed secrets. Nevertheless, this god had accomplished more than all the deities of Babylon of whom he was familiar. He only knew there had to be a god in that young man speaking through him, thus he said blessed be the God of Daniel. The **last two verses of Chapter 2 of Daniel** must not be ignored as they set the stage for **Chapter 3**. We see Daniel refused to permit the king to worship him; the king makes Daniel a great man giving him many gifts and exalts him to the position of ruler over all the entire province of Babylon and chief of the governors of all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel, not being one to desire to hog the whole show, requests the king to do something also for Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. To this the king gladly did. So because of his gratefulness to Daniel, and because he wanted to please Daniel, he set the three Hebrew children over the affairs of the province of Babylon, but Daniel, look where he sat.

LOOK WHERE DANIEL SAT - IN THE GATE OF THE KING!

Watch closely in **Chapter 3** as we see the climax of our story unfold into even a greater event. **Chapter 3** is only a continuation of the true drama, for recall this chapter wasn't written several years later, no, of course not, it is simply a continuation of the same story. It was other men who formed the material into its present form of chapter headings, etc., not Daniel. Daniel is simply writing a continuation of the true drama.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE

Approaching **Chapter 3** what do we find? **Verse 1** tells us Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold whose height was three score cubits, its breadth six cubits and set it up in the plains of Dura, in the province of Babylon. What do you suppose this image was? Dr. Scofield, author of Scofield Bible, and other leading theologians today would have you believe, with no basic scripture foundation whatsoever, this image symbolized united religions. For a while I thought that may be true, after all it had to symbolize something, however I am convinced today the image WAS NOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH UNITED RELIGION because beloved, the key lies in the fact, though Daniel is the author of this book, he is absolutely silent in this one chapter and that is most important.

WHY DANIEL IS SILENT IN CHAPTER 3

In no part of the setting as terrible as it is, is Daniel anywhere portrayed at all. Why is Daniel's presence missing in **chapter 3**, when the king had commanded his entire kingdom to fall upon their face at a certain hour and worship this image? Could you believe Daniel would bow to a golden image or an image of any description when in **Chapter 5**, under Darius the Mede, at the risk of being fed to a den of lions he refused to worship a heathen god, yet continued to pray three times daily turning toward Jerusalem! Nebuchadnezzar has commanded everyone in his kingdom to worship this image or be cast into a fiery furnace. DID DANIEL WORSHIP THIS IMAGE? Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego would not worship the image and were thrown into the fiery furnace because they refused, but WHAT ABOUT DANIEL, WHY IS HE SILENT IN THIS CHAPTER? WAS HE ON VACATION OR PERHAPS RUNNING AN ERRAND IN SOME FAR DISTANT LAND FOR THE KING OF BABYLON AT THAT HOUR? THE ANSWER IS NO!! Yet all things point to one fact, Daniel for some reason did not have to worship the image! Why of all people in the kingdom would Daniel be excluded and all the others forced to obey?

What could Nebuchadnezzar want with such a monstrous golden image as this? We recall from history how religious Nebuchadnezzar was concerning all his other gods; rebuilding the temple of the chief god of the Babylonian province, Marduk (Bali). There is no historical evidence where Nebuchadnezzar ever tried to unite all religions into one, for the scripture declares he had many gods. In olden days when kings and rulers felt they had discovered a new deity, because to them there were so many gods, the god of wind, storm, lightning, war, love, fertility and many, many others, to let an entire empire now there was now another god around, either a cult was formed around it, a temple built in its behalf or a statue or image made to portray this newfound deity. Nebuchadnezzar never got over the great experience he received concerning this god who he felt spoke to him through Daniel, for recall what his wise men had told him; **ONLY THE GODS COULD DO WHAT HE WAS DEMANDING**. Words of wise men are not pushed aside lightly.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S ACTIONS REVEAL CHAPTER 3 & 4

Here you must read between the lines to actually get the picture of what is going on, one thing is certain, Daniel the top man in the kingdom was not required to worship the image, although all tongues, nations and people were! Soon after, Nebuchadnezzar completed his image, whatever it was, (a gift to his new found god) and the fact when God revealed Himself so mightily in protecting the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, and then again in **Chapter 4** when God touched the mind of Nebuchadnezzar causing him to wander about as an animal outside his own palace until he recognized the Most High ruleth the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomever He will. In each case we find Nebuchadnezzar writing to his entire province, not asking the people if they could find it in their hearts to honor the God of heaven but commanding them to honor and worship the God of heaven, and if he heard of anyone speaking a word against this God, he would cut them in pieces. Although they wouldn't be required to do away with all the other gods they had accumulated, they would be required to recognize this god along with all the others. Therefore, I say in **Chapter 3** as we READ BETWEEN THE LINES this image Nebuchadnezzar has erected in the plains of Dura is none other than an image to this new god he met in **Chapter 2**, who reveals secrets and this is the only way Nebuchadnezzar knows of showing appreciation to this god; it is his gift to the gods or in this case to this God. Babylon had no image of him around nor did anyone know what he looked like. Later we shall discuss what this god in image form looked like as the king didn't have the slightest idea. After all, how do you portray a god who reveals secrets of the heart? What would you make him resemble?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PATTERN TO BUILD IMAGE

Nebuchadnezzar had to have some pattern to follow and he used the only thing he could see when the great event occurred, for after all it was Daniel, five verses above before, whom he was on his face worshiping as deity commanding oblation and sweet odours, sacrifices be offered unto the God of Daniel. And since Nebuchadnezzar could not see this God and could not differentiate between Daniel, the flesh man and the God who spoke to his prophet, Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face to worship Daniel the only thing he could see and observe with his naked eye!

NEBUCHADNEZZAR MAKES DECREE TO WORSHIP IMAGE (OF DANIEL)

Nebuchadnezzar calls in all of his news staff, which today we would refer to as the press, newspapers, telegraph, radio, television and all means of communication to send the word throughout his vast empire to inform everyone at a certain hour they were expected to fall down and worship this image, that is, **ALL EXCEPT DANIEL!** **Verse 2-6** states everyone who would not worship this image at that certain hour upon hearing the orchestra (of Nebuchadnezzar day) sound forth they will be cast into the fiery furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar was proud of his achievement and everything had gone well until some jealous, envious, tattletales of his own cabinet came and informed him the 3 Hebrew children he had set over all the province did not worship the image. In other words, spies watched the Hebrew children. Why did they not watch Daniel? Because as it has been stated Daniel was not commanded to worship the image. Of course not, he would not be expected to worship his own image! Recall, it had been Daniel who requested these three Hebrew children be given some position and now the king is embarrassed, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, three head men of the province and affairs of Babylon under Daniel, has failed to worship the golden image and the king must take swift action because a king's word is law in his province. After the interpretation had been given to the dream etc., Nebuchadnezzar showered Daniel with gifts and told him he was, from that day forward, to sit with him in the gate. You see, what had been done that day drew such an attention to the king he was ready to place Daniel beside himself, wherever he sat, Daniel sat. As a matter of fact, back in the beginning Daniel, according to **Chapter 4:8**, had been named by Nebuchadnezzar after the name of Nebuchadnezzar's god. Wherever the king sat, Daniel would sit. Can't you imagine when visiting dignitaries would come into the throne room to see Nebuchadnezzar, there sat Daniel alongside the king and some of them might say, But sire, who is this who sits in such an exalted position? To this the king might reply, He is my prophet; he reveals secrets no one can reveal; there is none like Daniel in all my kingdom, including all my wise counselors!

This was Daniel's position, but as it has been stated, Daniel when he received this position remembered his three friends who were dedicated to the Most High God, and Daniel realizing and conscious of the fact God had done this only to show forth his mighty wisdom to set something in motion, requests of the king to give some position to his friends whose Babylonian names were Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. See there is not a selfish bone in Daniel's body. To this the king says, sure I can use them, and he set the three boys over the affairs of the province of Babylon. Naturally, this made the wise men and different ones who would love to have been exalted to this position themselves very jealous and they greatly envied these 3 young men because of this exalted position. After all, what had they ever done for the king; what wisdom had they ever displayed; why should they be set above the cabinet of the wise men of Babylon? However, at the time there wasn't much they could do about it, never would they dare let the king know how much they disapproved of his decision, therefore they simply waited and watched every opportunity, biding their time waiting that opportune moment wherein they might accuse these Hebrew children for some disloyal act. Finally that hour arose, the 3 Hebrew children had disobeyed the word of the king, refusing to bow and worship the golden image.

KING ACCUSES HEBREW CHILDREN OF DISLOYALTY

Chapter 3:12, says certain Chaldeans came before the king and accused the Jews of disloyalty reminding the king, they regard thee not, nor serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up. To this the king was furious to think he had three high officials in his province who would not obey his word. Nebuchadnezzar was embarrassed to think he had placed these three men in such high positions making them his personal governors representing his province in that huge city of Babylon. They had not even graduated from the king's school, God had maneuvered this. Beloved, this is what I call real diplomacy. Politicians today will do any amount of undermining scheming, crooked dealing to get a man in office. No doubt it was also done in Babylon as it is done in Washington, London, in fact the whole world over. But oh my, here we see God doing certain things to get his men in key positions, how marvelous, he can maneuver and use a slight bit of diplomacy of His own to create certain situations and they say to his man, come on I want you here or there. When men will try a hundred different directions and still can't make the grade, God simply placed this dream upon Nebuchadnezzar's heart to life Daniel into that high position, and in turn Daniel requested the king and he exalted the three

Hebrew children who had never been trained for such offices, placing them in these key positions telling them, you are my personal governors over all the province of Babylon, you are in the capitol city, it is your jurisdiction; you pass whatever legislation you need to get things done; a new bridge, sewer, road, build it. Want to grow trees in certain areas, it is your job. Sure, that causes jealousy in the cabinet membership. That bunch of Chaldeans, soothsayers, politicians couldn't wait to get something on the Hebrew children and now they have the thing that is going to finish their administration and get them completely out of the picture, THEY THINK! Furthermore, this should place them in very good grace, informing on these traitors to the wishes of the king.

As we continue reading between the lines, Daniel takes up his new position and the three Hebrew children assume theirs, however it won't be long until such a moral issue enters the picture, the Hebrew children (but not Daniel) are forced to make a grave decision, they will NOT WORSHIP THE IMAGE! We see as we read between the lines Nebuchadnezzar really played this thing up big. Everywhere it received top billing. As his great orchestra came out into the plains of Dura to furnish the music for the worship service, there were three Hebrew children who would not go to the worship service. In the background no doubt we could see these three Hebrew children up in their office praying earnestly before God saying, God you know we can't do that, your very first commandment teaches us we are not to make any graven image of you in any form and worship it. Surely this image represented a deity, Babylon was full of them statues, idols, temples everywhere, yet the three Hebrew children have not been commanded to worship any of these, it was only for what this new image stood in which all Babylon was being introduced to this new deity. The Hebrew children had made up their minds, whatever the cost, we can't worship it.

In the background you can hear the sound of that great orchestra as the signal is given to sound the music, and as the sound of those notes floated through the air as a signal throughout all the vast territory and province people who came to worship by the hundreds and thousands came into the plains of Dura and down to worship the golden image which definitely had to resemble something, WHAT COULD IT LOOK LIKE? I wasn't there and you weren't there, but that image had to resemble something! It wasn't just a block of gold, it was an image of something that represented the God of Daniel to the king. Meanwhile back at the governor's offices the three Hebrew children perhaps stared out the windows at times saying, it is bad but I am not going! No, they didn't bow and they didn't bend, they stood firm! They didn't come out and show themselves, yet (probably) unbeknownst to them they were being watched. That old jealous bunch of cabinet members had placed spies in key positions where they could keep a constant surveillance on them. It was a plot!

SIMILAR SITUATION

We are reminded of another time when Daniel faced the same situation, only this time it was under Darius' administration and his leaders (Cabinet Members) had watched Daniel so close trying to find something to accuse him before the king, they found him to be so faultless even though they were definitely searching for mistakes, they could find none! He was even watched when he prayed. **Chapter 6:5**, tells us these spies said we shall never find any occasion against this Daniel except we find it against him concerning the law of his God, therefore they struck upon the brainstorm to approach Darius (after the Babylonian Empire had fallen) to make a decree for 30 days that if anyone would make any petition to any other god or man save thee, oh, king, he should be cast into the den of lions. You recall how Daniel paid no attention to that decree and the spies watched him knowing exactly what he would do, he continued to pray to his God and he too was reported for this disobedience and was cast into the den of lions. However, back in **Chapter 3**, here it is Nebuchadnezzar, who is king of Babylon, and he makes a decree concerning a god that does not affect Daniel, it is only the three Hebrew children

affected here and being watched as a hawk would watch a chicken. Oh, don't you see it, can't you READ BETWEEN THE LINES and know what this image in the plains of Dura was? It is the image of Daniel! The king didn't know what the God of heaven looked like. When he tried to worship this God, recall he worshiped Daniel! THIS IS AN IMAGE OF THE MAN DANIEL, that is why Daniel isn't required to worship his own image. That is why Daniel is silent throughout the entire chapter. It wasn't something that affected Daniel, however it did affect the 3 Hebrew children, they were required to worship the image and no sooner than the worship service was over these spies made their report. Those Chaldeans came straight to the king and reported the matter saying, Oh, king, you know those three Hebrew children you put in positions over all your province, who never worships your gods nor would they go out and obey your command to worship the image, what are you going to do, oh king, this is treason? When you make a decree; that is law, a law you can't go back on. You said anyone who wouldn't worship the image would be cast into the fiery furnace and three of your loyal, faithful cabinet members didn't show up. Your majesty we think they let you down, don't you?

HEBREW CHILDREN THREATENED WITH FURNACE

My how this infuriated Nebuchadnezzar because this was most embarrassing, it makes him look bad in the eyes of his old cabinet members. The king immediately sent for Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego to come before him. I can hear Nebuchadnezzar sounding off at these young men, you sure have put me in a spot, humiliating me before my cabinet, making my judgment look bad in placing you in the high positions you have. After all it was because of your own brother's advice and his love for you I elevated and promoted you to such a high position and now look what you did, you humiliated me before my cabinet! I don't think you did me right, however I tell you what I will do, I will give you another chance. **(Verse 14-15)** Now at a certain time I am going through all this again just for you three; I will have the musicians there and when they strike up the band you better be at the worship service because after all it is only for you three I am doing this, and if you don't appear I will order the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than it has ever been and there is no god, not anything that can deliver you out of my hands, snapped the king. **(Verse 15)** I can hear Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego as they have already made up their minds what position they will take in this matter, sure they love Daniel, but they were not about to worship his image, he is no god to them, he is only a man. A Brother! A prophet, and they respect and love him. I can hear them say to the king, oh king, we want you to know how much we appreciate all you have done for us, and we don't want to be mean and ugly and show a bad spirit, and we won't stand here arguing all day about it, but our minds are made up. WE WILL NOT WORSHIP YOUR GOLDEN IMAGE. YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME GETTING THE MUSICIANS OUT THERE AGAIN BECAUSE WE WON'T BE AT YOUR WORSHIP SERVICE! OUR GOD WE ARE SURE IS ABLE TO DELIVER US OUT OF YOUR HANDS IF HE CHOOSES TO, BUT WHETHER HE DOES OR DOES NOT, ONE THING IS SURE, WE WILL NOT WORSHIP YOUR IMAGE. THEREFORE, YOU MIGHT AS WELL HEAT UP YOUR FURNACE, HURRY UP AND GET IT OVER.

3 HEBREWS CAST INTO THE FIRE

Where is Daniel all this time? Why is he not being thrown into the furnace also? You see, it is something which doesn't affect him. He isn't required to worship his own image. Let us notice what the scripture further says, **verse 20**, Nebuchadnezzar now commands his most mighty men in his army to bind the Hebrew children. You see, he called the biggest, bullied, brawniest men he had in his army to bind them. It was a fear tactic! Beloved, can't you see those huge, burly soldiers, maybe 6'6" weighing 300 lbs, muscular and with a huge sword strapped in their sides come walking in, that alone would be enough to scare you. No doubt they could pick them up and crush every bone in their body. Bind them, snapped the angry king. Notice for a moment how these three Hebrew children were bound. **Verse 21** says, they

were bound in their coats, hosed and their hats and their other garments and then they were cast into the midst of the fiery furnace. They made these men put on all their clothing, which included all their underwear, coats, socks, wrapped turbans around their head, etc. The king commanded all their clothes to be placed on their body, because once he had heated the furnace all the clothing would cause the three men, who wouldn't bow to his golden image, to ignite much quicker and burn more rapidly, therefore dressed in all their underclothes, coats, socks, turbans, nothing exposed but their hands and faces, bound by these burly soldiers while the furnace was in progress of being heated with this terrific heat seven times hotter than ever before. Then I can see the king perched on some higher level perhaps built for this special occasion to view the whole show. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego are snatched up by these huge soldiers and with them they start toward the furnace. However, the fire was so hot, flames were leaping out with such extreme heat these Babylonian soldiers couldn't get close enough to toss the Hebrew children in before their own lives were taken by the extreme heat; consumed by the flames from the pit. Nevertheless, **verse 22** says, the king's commandment was of such haste the men knew their lives were under a death sentence if they didn't carry out their assignment and the heat of the flames snuffed out their own lives in trying to fulfill their king's command.

God was absolutely causing the very thing which the king had taken to destroy God's purpose and causes it to backfire on the king. (1) The biggest, burliest, meanest looking soldiers in his kingdom have been consumed by the flames, while the three Hebrew children go tumbling down into the fiery furnace. (2) God permitted all of that clothing, which was to cause them to ignite quicker, to suddenly serve as asbestos protection (note: I did not say their clothing turned into asbestos, only that it served as a shield or asbestos protection against the flames) because the scripture says the flames only burned away the cords that bound them. God simply permitted their clothing, which was supposed to ignite quickly and consume them, to become their protection against the heat. While the heat destroyed the bonds around their feet and hands, again the king is flabbergasted and bug-eyed as he was in the day God revealed the secrets of his heart through his servant, because as he saw these huge, brawny soldiers fall backward gasping for breath, he suddenly yelled, hey didn't you put three men in there? No doubt the officers standing in the background, wiping perspiration from their face and eyes created by the extreme heat says, yes sir, we did, oh king, as you commanded. But, but, I see four in there and one is liken unto the Son of God. Therefore, as Nebuchadnezzar looked down into the blazing pit and saw the three Hebrew children walking back and forth into the midst of the extreme heat and then an extra one walking there with them which the flames had not been able to destroy, Nebuchadnezzar astonishingly calls out, Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, come out of there! Again I ask you to look at the setting, as those Hebrew children, unscorched by the flames, come walking out once again, the king realized he had come face to face with what was now the God of the three Hebrew Children. Therefore, he said blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego who has sent his angel and hath delivered thee. You see, before when he became acquainted with the God of Daniel, knowing only that he revealed secrets he simply didn't realize that same God was the God of these Hebrew children. Also.

DANIEL AND THE IMAGE

Where was Daniel all this time? Certainly he was still alive because he was alive when Darius the Mede came into power as the head of the 2nd world empire who destroyed Babylon and took over the kingdom after Belshazzar was slain. No, he hadn't gone on a vacation, he hadn't skipped the country to avoid worshiping the image, thus not being around when the three Hebrew children were thrown in the furnace, he was still in the capitol city. Why is he silent? Read between the lines and you shall see. Nebuchadnezzar was confronted by the God of Daniel as he had used Daniel that day to interpret the dream and we saw Nebuchadnezzar ready to do oblation and incense and offer sacrifice to Daniel. The king simply couldn't get over that experience and he thought, I have to do something for the God of

Daniel, therefore he thought and thought and since he didn't have any revelation on this God and couldn't see any further than the person of Daniel himself, therefore Nebuchadnezzar made an image which looked exactly like Daniel himself! Fanatical you say, not in the least. Nebuchadnezzar, being a pagan gentile king, had no idea it was wrong to make an image to the eternal God of the Jews. Why? Because that was one of the pagan's ways of honoring their deities or gods. They made images to all their deities. Nebuchadnezzar had no idea God had instructed Israel, Thou shalt make no graven image of any likeness, etc., as His very first commandment. Why? Because God doesn't dwell in any such form, but the King didn't know that! All he knew about this God was what he had seen as his heart was being revealed. Therefore, he thought to show his gratitude he would build this huge golden image. It would be his way of showing his appreciation for the great thing Daniel had done for him. Nevertheless, he was doing the wrong thing! Beloved, if God wouldn't permit the Jews to get away with such a thing, certainly He will not allow Nebuchadnezzar to get away with it either simply because he is ignorant. No, God will simply reverse this thing and through it allow Nebuchadnezzar to even get better acquainted with Him. If you could only read between the lines, beloved, you would see a perfect picture. Nebuchadnezzar could never get over that experience as Daniel had stood before him revealing his thoughts that night before he drifted off to sleep and the dream came. The secrets of his heart had been revealed and only God could do that (so says the wisest men of Babylon) therefore, I must do something outstanding and great of this God of Daniel, and naturally being a king and a world ruler at that, he must really play it up big whatever he does. However, there was one drawback, he didn't know what this God looked like, therefore in his mind he said, I know what I am going to do, I will make an image likened unto Daniel and that is what he did and placed his image in the plains of Dura. Yes, in his mind and heart he thought he was doing something great for the God of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar thought he was doing a BIG favor and to top that he would require everyone in his kingdom to worship this image or be sent to the fiery furnace. He would order everyone to bow down and worship the God of Daniel. Forcing all to worship this image was Nebuchadnezzar's way of seeing the God of Daniel was worshiped. Where was Daniel while all this was going on? Why the king would be a fool to ask Daniel to worship his own image, certainly he would! The king wouldn't require Daniel to worship his own image and that is why Daniel is silent in the **3rd chapter** and not affected. He simply wasn't required to, there was no cause for him to speak in his defense as he wasn't required to bow. Daniel happened to be only that living individual the God of heaven had so magnificently used.

Once Nebuchadnezzar had begun construction on the golden image, and perhaps not as yet fully realizing what the king planned, in my mind I can see the three Hebrew children at different times conversing with Daniel saying, wonder what the king is up to; would you have an idea, Daniel? Daniel would probably say, yes, I have a good idea, you see he never got over that thing the Lord did for him that day. Now place that statement alongside what the three Hebrew children told the king saying, Our God is able to deliver us out of your furnace. However, whether he does or doesn't is up to Him, one thing is sure, we will not bow to your image. Because of this remark Nebuchadnezzar is furious saying, if you don't I will heat the furnace seven times hotter than ever and who is the God that will deliver you out of my hands? Nebuchadnezzar thought, once I get my hands on you, you have had it. Nevertheless his thoughts are soon to be changed as he learns more about this God who reveals secrets. After the three Hebrew children were tossed into the furnace Nebuchadnezzar, surprised and astonished, saw the form of the fourth man walking in the flames also. He saw that angelic form walking around fanning back the flames from the three. While laying topside on the ground were dead corpses of his greatest soldiers scorched with heat. Looking down into the pit the king called unto Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to come forth and blessed; the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. Yes, Daniel was silent through the **3rd chapter** because he is only the living character used of God which set a stage for God to reveal himself within that great Babylonian system before a pagan king, and that king in turn desiring to do this God a favor or service made an image or pattern looked like that of Daniel. Those three

Hebrew children, knowing that and realizing the commandment of God never to worship an image, was not about to fall down and worship their God in any such fashion.

JEHOVAH GOD WORSHIPED IN SPIRIT & TRUTH, NOT IMAGES

How should man worship God? **John 4**, reveals Christ and the woman at the well in a conversation concerning this very thing. Jesus says the Father is Spirit and searches those who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth (not by making golden images unto him). Nevertheless, that is the only way pagans know how to honor their deity, erecting statues and worshipping them. Therefore, the Hebrew children refused, not because they didn't hold great respect for their brother, Daniel, they refused to worship because it was wrong. Man is man and God is God, worship God only! Undoubtedly Nebuchadnezzar felt he had a good motive yet it was not according to the revelation in the plan of God and the thing backfired on him. It will backfire on anyone foolish enough to try and worship any man as God other than the Lord Jesus Christ! Therefore, we should note what the king did once he had blessed the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, Throughout his province he sent word all the people should worship the God of these Hebrew children and praise their God. And a warning was given, if anyone said anything against their God they would be killed and their property destroyed. Perhaps later the Hebrew children explained to the king why they could not worship his golden image, that we don't know? However if we READ BETWEEN THE LINES, we will see why Daniel was silent in the **3rd chapter**. Once we come into the **4th chapter** we find the setting swing back to him as the king had still another dream, only this time he saw himself under the trees and the dew of heaven falling upon him as he was eating grass like some animal. It was Daniel again who interpreted the dream for the king. Babylon's wise men were no match for any dream of God, they simply couldn't handle it as it always required God's servant as interpreter.

20TH CENTURY GENTILES NEVER SAW IT ON THIS FASHION EITHER

Beloved, listen, this was the first time a gentile nation had ever been stirred by a display of the power of God or had ever been witnessed to by such great wisdom, manifestation and insight of God. How amazing it was to them (especially the king) how Jehovah God could take a little vessel of clay and use it in such a magnificent way. Although not so among the Jew who had seen great demonstrations of God. No, by no means was it something new to the Jewish people who carried such testimonies recorded in the scriptures of God's supernatural workings. They knew God could speak and reveal things in this manner and it was by no means anything new to them for, ever so often the God of heaven would raise up one in their midst called a prophet to speak unto them as a people in just such a manner. Therefore, in that respect the Jew was very familiar with the power and demonstration of God and here we are careful to note the reaction of the gentiles over such a demonstration as the period of the gentiles reigning over Jerusalem began. It was definitely the first time God had ever bestowed Himself in such a manner on the gentiles, and beloved, that leads me to say this, it was here in the closing of that gentile dispensation in this last Laodicean Church Age of the gentile church that God took a little, uneducated gentile sinner saved by grace and showed to this age of gentiles a mighty display of this power in also revealing the secrets of the heart!

Yes, uneducated as he was in world's terminology of education, nevertheless, he could stand on platforms across the world and tell people who they were, where they had come from; their house number, addresses and their diseases. And do you know what happened? That same old spirit of Nebuchadnezzar is still among the gentiles today! True, we have the best means of education schools of learning, etc., nevertheless that same old spirit is still here in the gentile world today. Don't think for a moment Nebuchadnezzar wasn't religious, he most certainly was! By no means was he an atheist, he

was very religious. Why, he had invited every religion of every nation in his jurisdiction into the city of Babylon. After all, was not Babylon where it all began, under Nimrod and Simeramus his companion. And to them it is only just one more deity among the collection. However, this God is different from the rest seeing he reveals things and right her in the end-time among what is supposed to be bride people who heard a message and saw things revealed I can see that very same old spirit which rested on Nebuchadnezzar as he too had never seen it on this wise, rest on a Gentile people still today. Gentiles today, like Nebuchadnezzar, were just as flabbergasted as gentiles were in that day over the working of such a god through his servant. They too neither can seem to differentiate that display of God's Power from that of the human flesh any more than could poor Nebuchadnezzar, there what do they do? They do the very next thing, simply deify the flesh of man and set something up within their own hearts, and that something is an image and that image of this man has become a god in their soul! No, they don't create a literal fiery furnace with a certain degree of heat; it is just that in their own carnal way they attack in the same way Nebuchadnezzar attacked the three Hebrew children who would not worship his image as he did and think they are right even as Nebuchadnezzar was so positive he was right! I am glad to report there are some Hebrew children who I believe had the right spirit and still have enough true revelation out of the Word of God to realize and recognize God is still God who sits in the heavens and rules the universe, yet small enough to get inside the being of a fleshly man and speak from his mouth, and see through his eyes, and work through his hands to confound man in his physical makeup, and yet still at the same time remain to be the same God in glory! Therefore, **READING BETWEEN THE LINES** we see it all started here in **Daniel 2**, and it is we ourselves who stand at the end of this dream and the revealing power of God and see that same old spirit among gentiles which always deified flesh of human beings is still in the earth working today. Recall how, beloved, because of the supernatural power of God working in Peter and Paul, they too were worshiped as Deity by the gentiles. **(Acts 10:25, 14:8-18)** God is still God who will give His glory to no one. I thank God I was privileged as one gentile to see that same God take another vessel of clay in our hour as He did Daniel in his hour. A vessel of clay who was as much human as Daniel was human. A vessel of clay that needed redemption as much as did Daniel. Daniel was in no way deity and neither was this vessel, William Marrion Branham, in any manner deity any more than the prophet Daniel, whom Nebuchadnezzar worshiped who stated before the multitude even as Daniel himself did before the king, oh king, this is not done because I possess any more wisdom than any one else, but it is or the same (cause); it is for those living today that they may know what is to befall in the latter days. Right there in **Daniel 2**, God started his prophecy concerning what one day he would do and beloved, we stand at the end of that very prophecy. That prophecy being fulfilled at the very end of this gentile dispensation where soon that stone which came rolling down the mountain out into the plains and struck the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream upon its ten toes, will soon transpire for you recall when England (along with those other three nations) placed her signature on the bottom of that agreement which the Common Market, economically those ten toes on the beast are beginning to come together. Therefore, that lets us know somewhere in a not too distant future the destiny of time will have cut out of the mountain a rock or huge stone which all the storms of time cannot hinder; it will come down and strike the image at its feet, on its ten toes and therefore the image of all gentile powers and kingdoms will vanish giving way to that one great kingdom (age) just ahead called the Millennium or glorious thousand year reign where the very God himself in the person of Jesus Christ shall rule and reign, and in that day **THE LORD SHALL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH AND THERE SHALL BE ONE LORD AND HIS NAME ONE. (Zechariah 14:9)**

BROKEN HEARTED PROPHET TELLS WHY HE LEAVES FIELD

BRUISED SERPENT MESSAGE 6-11-61

This leads me to say this morning something I wish I didn't have to say. I Am forced to say, realizing that

this is being taped to the world, but I have left the ministry for a cause that I am sorry I have to leave for and perhaps many of you have heard it. I am holding my office in leaving the field. I don't know where our Lord will lead me to and that I have no control of for what He will have for me to do I am thinking of the end of the road where I must come.

Then along life's journey I have made so many mistakes and I am very sorry from my heart of it because I guess of being human in weakness etc., causing a person to do things or say things that even they would not want to act of otherwise being the weakness of a human being while we have those times, but if there is anything that has been in my heart to do was to hear those words of our Lord Jesus Christ at the end of our journey to say it was well done my good and faithful servant. And many times I have said I would like to have been standing there when he said come unto me, but I did desire to hear is said well done. That I did not hear the voice in the original say come to me back in the times of the writing of the Bible, but I do desire to hear it said well done and if any thing I always wanted to be and the desires of my heart to be was a true servant to Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. I want my testimony to be clean, clear cut that I stood in all my mistakes I yet loved him with all my heart and do that this morning with all my heart.

And because of that it forces me to say I am leaving the ministry is because there is something that has rose up amongst the people that has caused me to do it, that is that I have been taken from my bracket of a minister or brother in being called Jesus Christ and so that would brand me as an anti-christ and I'll meet God as a quitter before I'd meet him as an anti-christ, away from him!

I heard of it a few years ago and I thought it was a joke and I met a couple of brethren, which I don't see in the meeting this morning, 2 or 3 of them in a fishing trip and they approached me by the subject to say, Bro. Branham, aren't you the anointed Messiah the Christ, and I put my arms around the neck of both brethren and oh, I said, brethren, as much as I have tried to be a true servant of Christ, I would not let you say such a thing as that and if it would ever be said of me, then I will leave the field with a clear conscience and you who would do that will be responsible for whatever soul that I would have saved during that time, see for taking me from the field, and I thought that ended it, and I heard it a few more times, but it wasn't so. And the other day in Canada a brother showed me a little ticket packed in his pocket, said William Branham is our Lord, baptizing in the name of William Branham and a little precious-fibbing enemy, it had been my enemy I would have knowed it was a joke but a precious darling brother come up to confess his sins and his wrongs and saying me as being Jesus Christ, and I have got letters at home and calls from Chicago and different places asking me if I believe that dogma.

Now I've got all kinds of letters that have come in the last few days and calls from different places all saying that I was Christ. BROTHER THAT IS A HORRIBLE, DISGRACEFUL, UNGODLY LIE OF THE DEVIL and I AM YOUR BROTHER. Now that would run any person from the field; that would make anyone that loves Christ run from the very thing! I went to the Lord here not long ago when I first heard it, about a year ago, and then he referred me to this scripture that when John came forth preaching that they hadn't had a prophet on the earth for so many years till they were all amazed in their hearts thinking that John was the Messiah, so then they went and asked him and he said he was not, you read that in **Luke 3:15**, and then so that kind of quieted down so I let it go like that, but then when it come to this then I knew that something must be done.

Now I say that the vision and the angel of the Lord that appeared at the river, if this is to be my last message or last thing to the church of the world, those things are true as far as the angel of the Lord. And I stood still and the people called me a prophet many times cause a prophet in the English many times is just a preacher, a prophesier, a foreteller of the word and etc., I stand for that cause you can just

kind a push that down, but when it comes to being called anointed Christ that was too much for me so I just couldn't stand that and so then after leaving the meeting in Canada, I found out way up in Eskimos or the Indians up there it got among them. And so it just tore me up and the trip that I had planed for so long I could not take it. I was afraid of a hunting accident, do you understand what I mean? I got so shaky, worse than I am here now, and I just couldn't stand it any longer to think that 31 years the ministry went down the devil's gutter pipe! I'm gone, there they say he is, that's exactly what all the influence it has on the people then you see where it would be, I'd be an anti-christ! And I just couldn't stand it, I thought I'd rather die here in the woods, like I fell on my gun or something, and I seen it was? (unable to understand voice, Ed.) about my little Joseph and etc., that had to be raised and I was in no condition to hunt so I just left the woods and come home and I had been home about 8 or 10 days and in such fix I thought I would lose my mind and I just asked everybody to stay away from me and let me alone and I was in such a fix and nervous and upset and all tore to pieces. I wondered if it had been some enemy of mine it would have been alright I would have laughed and gone on, but when it comes to being precious brothers and precious sisters, then is what hurt me and I said, Lord, the thing is too great for me. I'll just have to go out and leave it in your hands! I don't know nothing else to do.

A few nights ago, to make it sure I had a visitation from the Lord and I seen a previous one, a baby serpent which was yellow and black and the thing struck me in th leg, but the blood was so rich it didn't take affect on me and I looked down and there was where I had been bit before and I turned quickly and shot the thing with a gun and hit it right in the middle of the thing and the brother said, I'll turn with my gun to shoot its head off. He said, don't do that, just pick up the stick laying there by him, and when I turned to pick up the stick it wiggled into some water, just a small puddle of water and I said it cant hurt much any longer. Now because I believe the brother realizes - the brethren - what happened, I said it's mortally wounded so it'll die. And I asked many of my members of my church here in this tabernacle here - - Bro. Neville and I - came approaching us with that question. Brothers and Sisters: haven't I tried to be a true servant of Christ before you? Have not I tried to be your brother? Whatever it is it's a spirit on precious people. Many people have asked me that, but it's a spirit, and I hope that today that it receives the deadly wound and will die quickly so I can return back to the ministry. Until then, I'll ask you each one to pray for me, I don't know what I'll do, put up my place for sale, I just can't stand it, stay there and I'll go complete stark-mad and I ask you to pray for me and remember if you ever believed me to be a servant of Christ, remember that is an error it's also THUS SAITH THE LORD! It is wrong, have nothing to do with it! I AM YOUR BROTHER!!