1:8 There was nothing in the Law of Moses which specifically forbad eating or drinking these things. But Daniel would’ve been defiled in his conscience. We too should go to great lengths to always have a good conscience, even if in the eyes of the world and of other members of God’s people we appear strange.

2:19 Given the urgency of the situation, Daniel would’ve been tempted to rush in to the King with the interpretation, knowing that every second counted to save the lives of his friends and himself. But firstly he takes time to thank God; we should do the same in life’s crises.

2:21 *Wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who have understanding*- God confirms people in their wisdom and understanding. God gives more to the one who already has obtained some more (Lk. 19:25). There is an upward spiral in spiritual growth, which has God’s word as the dynamic within it.

2:23 *Made known to us*- Notice how selfless Daniel was, in feeling that the interpretation had been made known to “us”, not just him personally, because he recognized that there had been prayers of others involved, not just his- hence he later says that *we* will make known the interpretation (:36).

2:35 *No place was found for them*- Quoted in Rev. 20:11 about the present world system being destroyed at Christ's second coming.

2:39 *All the land*- The Chaldee word translated “land” here is equivalent of the Hebrew *eretz*, which is used in the Bible to refer to either ‘the land’ promised to Abraham, or the whole planet. Bible prophecy is centred around the land and people of Israel. The Gentile nations mentioned are significant only in terms of their relations with Israel. Babylon at that time ruled over the land of Israel, but not over the whole earth. The prophecy predicts how after Babylon there would come other empires who would rule over Israel. The chest of silver refers to the Medo-Persian empire, the thighs of brass to the Greeks, and the two legs of iron to the Roman empire, the two legs possibly referring to the Eastern and Western parts of the empire. After that, Israel ceased to be a nation, until in the 20th century the Jews returned and established the state of Israel. The mixture of nations represented by the feet of iron and clay will dominate Israel for a short time- in decorum with the fact that the feet of the statue were not a very large part of its total height. This may refer to a union of nations dominating Israel in the time just prior to Christ’s return. He is the stone cut out without hands (:45)- He was born of a virgin with no human hand involved. At His return He will destroy all human kingdoms and establish God’s eternal Kingdom on this earth, which shall last eternally.

2:44 Clear indication that the Kingdom of God is to be established on earth- not in Heaven.

*Crush to powder*- Alluded to by Jesus when He taught that He is the stone upon whom we either fall and are broken, or He will fall upon us and grind us to powder (Mt. 21:44). The choice we have is to fall upon Christ and become broken people, limping like Jacob by grace into His Kingdom; or to be ground to powder by the Lord at His return, in that we will share the judgments of this present world system. Hence Paul speaks of how the rejected amongst the people of God will be “condemned with the world” (1 Cor. 11:32). The crucial separation between us and the world must be made now.

2:45 The whole image stands complete in the last days; there will be a latter day Nebuchadnezzar who has beneath him a system comprising all the elements of Israel's previous dominators.

2:48 Daniel went through a yo-yo pattern of being promoted into the limelight, and then (in an unrecorded manner) slipping out of the limelight into relative obscurity, from which he was promoted again. Thus in 2:48 Daniel is made Prime Minister, in the events of Chapter 3 he seems to be strangely absent, in 4:8 Daniel is brought in to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's second dream almost as an afterthought, implying he was out of the limelight; by 5:11 King Belshazzar was unaware of Daniel, but promoted him to be third ruler in the Kingdom (5:29). Daniel was made master of the magicians by Nebuchadnezzar; but by the time his son was reigning, this had largely been forgotten (Dan. 5:12)- because Daniel evidently was nowhere near that job to which he’d been promoted. Why did Daniel slip out of the limelight? Was it not for the sake of his conscience? As a member of the Jewish community, it would have been so easy for Daniel to stay where he was, reasoning that holding down a job like that would enable him to do so much for the Truth. But he realized that his personal conscience and devotion to the spiritual life must be given number one priority if he was to help his people. There is an exact correspondence between the mind of Daniel here and the fervent believer who refuses promotion, jumps out of a career that is rubbing too strongly against the conscience...

3:1 The image of the Daniel 2 vision had described Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold, who would soon be replaced by other world empires. Nebuchadnezzar didn’t like the sound of this- and so he blasphemously made an entire image of gold, as if to imply that he would in fact never come to an end. Believing in the coming of God’s eternal Kingdom means we recognize our own frailty and mortality, and however small *our* ‘kingdom’ is in this world, it will quickly come to an end. Our focus will be on that Kingdom which is to come, rather than upon our ‘kingdom’ in this life, that very limited circle of things over which we have some power and control. Nebuchadnezzar didn’t want to accept this; he like many unbelievers tried to live within the assumption, and create the impression, that his life and ‘kingdom’ would continue for ever. See on 4:3.

3:6 Rev. 13:14,15 speaks of the beast creating an image in the last days before Christ returns, and persecuting all those who refuse to bow down to it. This is clearly alluding to what happened in Daniel’s time in historical Babylon. The essence of what we read here will therefore be seen in the last days before Christ’s return. A “herald” cried aloud to peoples of all nations and languages, and bid them worship the Babylonian image, on pain of being cast into a fiery furnace (:4). And yet in Rev. 14:9,10, an Angel herald cries to all nations and languages, warning them that if they *do* worship the image, they will be cast into the lake of fire. The Angels had observed Nebuchadnezzar’s arrogance and defiance, and many centuries later they will work out their way of parodying it in their future proclamation.

3:8 *Chaldeans*- The very astrologers (4:7) whose lives Daniel had just saved (2:12). When we do good to others, very often they aren’t merely ungrateful but positively resent us and seek to hurt us. This is a sad tendency of human nature, exemplified throughout history. If it happens to us, we must remember that it is in fact normal, and Biblical history is full of such examples, coming to their ultimate term in the Jewish hatred of their Saviour, Jesus.

3:18 Even if God didn't preserve them, they would still serve Him alone. Perhaps they had Job's words going round in their minds: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). We cannot expect nor demand Divine deliverance from our crises; our love and trust of Him lead us to accept that He truly knows best and wishes us only our eternal good in our latter end.

3:28 *Yielded their bodies*- Alluded to in Rom. 6:13,19, where we are told that at baptism we yield our bodies in service to God as our true King and Master.

3:30 Where was Daniel at this time? Sick? Weak in faith? Away on business?

4:3 *From generation to generation-* Nebuchadnezzar learnt from his mistake of wanting his kingdom to last for ever- see on 3:1. He now recognizes the truth of the vision of chapter 2; that *his* kingdom and life were so very brief, and only *God’s* Kingdom will be eternal.

4:17 The Chaldee words translated “sentence”, “decree” and “judgment decision” are all legal terms. This is an insight into the court of Heaven- presumably the matter in question was Nebuchadnezzar’s pride and his position on the Jews (Daniel’s advice in 4:27 to shew mercy to the poor may be a reference to what the King should’ve been doing to the Jews- perhaps by enabling their return to their land?). And a ‘judicial decision’ was made and “a watcher and a Holy One came down from Heaven” to operationalize it (:13). If this is the extent of Angelic attention to the heart of a Gentile king- how much more earnestly are they debating the states of our hearts and our actions, and issuing decrees for action accordingly? God doesn’t respond to the issues in our lives on autopilot, He doesn’t use standard form responses; there is real, live, active discussion about little you and me in the court of Heaven itself, with Angels sent hither and thither in response.

*The kingdom of men*- Whilst God is ultimately the King of His entire creation even now, He has given man freewill to rule the world and his own life as he wishes. Thus at present the world is comprised of "the kingdom of men". At Christ's return, "the kingdoms of the world (will) become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).  Then God's will and desires will be completely and openly performed in this earth. Hence Jesus' command for us to pray: "Your kingdom come (that) Your will be done on earth, as it is (now) in heaven" (Mt. 6:10).

*The most abased*- That most abased man was a reference to the Lord Jesus. He humbled Himself on the cross, that He might be exalted- to be King of God’s Kingdom. The equivalent Hebrew word is used in Is. 53:3 about Christ’s ultimate abasement on the cross.

4:19 Daniel in those moments must have been sorely tempted not to speak forth God’s word, suspecting it might cost him his life. We too have those moments when we struggle whether or not to open our mouth and testify as we should.

4:21 A spreading tree giving much fruit to all who took refuge under it is the very idea used by the contemporary prophet Ezekiel (Ez. 17:23) in describing the true Kingdom of *God*. This was to point up the choice available to Israel: a part in the Kingdom of God, or that pseudo-Kingdom of this world. We have the same choice today, living as we do in spiritual Babylon.

4:25 *Until you know*- The King was still struggling to accept the truth of the chapter 2 vision, that *his* kingdom and life were very limited, and he must refocus himself upon *God’s* eternal Kingdom rather than upon his *own* life and kingdom. He theoretically had accepted the truth of this in 2:47 and 3:29; but he didn’t accept it in his heart until after his humiliation (:34). We may likewise struggle to really accept the Gospel of God’s coming Kingdom as we should; for believing in it requires a radical refocus of our lives today, right away from ourselves and our own lives and ‘kingdoms’.

*Gives it to whoever He will*- The fact God gives the kingdoms of this world to whoever *He* chooses should overarch our decision making when it comes to voting in elections and being involved in politics.

4:27 Daniel prophesied in clear enough language that Nebuchadnezzar would surely be driven away from among men and live as an animal. But he goes on to plead: “let my advice be acceptable to you, and break off your sins by righteousness”- as if to say that no matter how definite and categoric the prophecy of punishment, it was after all conditional, even though the conditions weren’t even hinted at within the actual prophecy. God is *so* sensitive to human repentance.

4:32 The world is under *God’s* control, not that of demons or supposed evil beings in Heaven.

5:13 This incident is so similar to Joseph being suddenly summoned to come to the mighty king and explain a dream which was worrying him, on the recommendation of another who remembered his previous ability in interpreting dreams; and they were both rewarded by the king in similar ways (Gen. 41:14,40-42). The fact circumstances repeat within the lives repeat within the lives of God’s children and also between people, one believer experiencing strangely similar situations to what one another one has done, is all a sign that our lives are under God’s control, and they develop according to patterns which He uses and has used with others. This means that we can feel great fellowship with Bible characters, and also with other believers of our own age. Daniel must have immediately thought of Joseph as he received the command to come before the king, and would’ve been strengthened by it. Likewise the scene here in Daniel 5 of Gentiles praising their gods, mocking Yahweh, and then suddenly being destroyed was a repeat of that in Jud. 16:24.

5:20 *His spirit was hardened*- The hardening was done by God. He confirmed Nebuchadnezzar in the mental position he chose to adopt. The language is similar to how God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, after Pharaoh had hardened his own heart.

5:22 *Though you knew all this*- A classic example of how knowledge brings responsibility to God’s judgment (Lk. 12:48; Jn. 15:22).

*You, his son, Belshazzar*- Triple emphasis is given to the fact that God was watching and speaking so directly and personally to this man, whose name He knew.

5:26 *Numbered*- God allows things to happen and permits nations to prosper for specific periods of time. The number of our days is likewise numbered (Job 7:1; 14:5; 38:21). God isn’t absent from our world; everything is under amazingly tight observation and control.

5:27 Judgment is in a sense ongoing in this life; it’s not that God is indifferent now, and will weigh our case only at the last day. Right now, human lives are weighed before God.

6:10 Daniel could have just prayed privately, in his heart. Many other Jews probably did this. But he chose to continue to openly pray. He was prepared to give his life for what was only a conscience issue. We too must establish and be prepared to live by our conscience, no matter what others think. Note that Daniel and other faithful believers like David (Ps. 55:17; 119:164) prayed regularly, just as the incense (cp. prayer) was offered regularly. Regular prayer is a good discipline in the life of the believer, rather than praying only when we have the mood or in emergencies. Daniel was willing to die in justification of his habit of open, unashamed, regular prayer.

6:20 *You serve continually*- Darius was referring to Daniel’s continual prayer. Prayer is a service to God; something we can do even if we incapable of doing any more physical, external service to Him.

6:22 The mouths of the lions were closed so that they did not “destroy” Daniel; and because of this, Darius praises God, saying that His Kingdom would never be 'destroyed' (:26, same original word). Daniel was not destroyed; and thus Darius came to believe that God's Kingdom would not be destroyed. Daniel was set up as a living part and foretaste of that Kingdom, just as we too are to exemplify the life of the future Kingdom in our lives today; in this sense we ‘have eternal life’ in that we live the kind of lives which we will eternally live in God’s future Kingdom. To a far greater extent, "the Kingdom of God" is a title given to the Lord Jesus- because He in His mortal life was the essence of that Kingdom, the embodiment of the life which shall then be lived.

6:25 Note how **Daniel is presented as a type of Christ in this chapter.** 6:14 Ruler labouring not to kill a righteous man, manipulated by his own underlings = Pilate; 6:17 Den of lions- den s.w. pit Is. 14:15, where it is paralleled with the grave. 6:17 Stone sealed and put on the mouth of the cave [den]= Mt. 27:66; 6:17 the purpose could not be changed regarding Daniel's death= Jesus died by the determinate counsel of God, Acts 2:23; 6:22 An Angel sent; 6:22 'resurrection' early in the morning; 6:22 Daniel not hurt because innocency found in him = Acts 2:24; 6:23 Daniel taken up out of the den = resurrection and ascension, s.w. Ps. 139:8 who shall ascend to Heaven; 6:23 no damage was found on Daniel implies they examined his body= Lk. 24:39; 6:25,26 decree = great commission to spread the knowledge of God's Kingdom which we must fulfil after the Lord's resurrection.

7:7 Note the emphasis in Dan.7 that the fourth beast is totally different from all other beasts. The Roman empire was not so completely different from the preceding empires to warrant this description. 7:7,19 imply that the vision of the fourth beast and little horn was separate from his vision of the four beasts (:2). The first vision was of four beasts and therefore included some reference to the fourth beast, in its manifestation as the Roman empire. But "after this" (:7) there was the more detailed vision of the fourth beast and little horn. This alone implies that they were to have a special manifestation in the last days. The awesome power and strength of this system amazed Daniel, despite what he had already seen. In Daniel's first vision of the four beasts he says that they were “different one from another" (:3). But in the second vision he realized that the fourth beast "was different from all beasts that were before it" (:7), as if they were all relatively similar. The persecuting power we are about to see revealed will thus not be a political or religious power of the type previously seen in history. It is therefore almost beyond our conception of exactly how large and strong this power will be: a world superpower directing its venom against Jews and true Christians.

7:19 This describes the fourth beast as having the iron and brass metals of the image of Dan.2 in it. The fourth beast had feet and teeth, we are specifically told. The lion, representing the head of gold, had feet (:4); the bear, representing the breast of silver, had powerful teeth. Thus the fourth beast had all the characteristics of the other beasts. By it being destroyed through its ten horns being smitten by Christ's return, it is as if the image of Dan.2 is standing erect and complete in  the last days, being hit on the ten toes (cp. the ten horns of the beast) by Christ's return.

7:22 The metals of the image in Daniel 2 have their counterpart in the vision of the beasts in Daniel 7. The little stone (Christ) hits the image on the feet and then destroys all the metals together. This means that in some sense the image must stand complete in the last days. The various beasts and metals must all be in existence at the time of Christ's return in order for Him to destroy them by his coming. The little stone hits the image on its ten toes- corresponding to the ten horns of the fourth beast of Dan.7. The ten horns must in a sense be in existence at the time of Christ's coming. Amongst the horns there develops a "little horn" (:8) which persecutes the saints, but is destroyed by Christ's return (:8-11). This horn "made war with the saints… *until* the ancient of days came" (:21,22). Thus the saints will in some way be under persecution when Christ comes. This may be yet future; or it could be that the colossal moral pressure upon true Christians from every angle which we now experience is in fact effectively persecution.

7:25 “A time (a year), times (two years) and an half", i.e. 3.5 years (Dan.7:25; 12:7; Rev.12:14). The New Testament speaks of a similar period of 1,260 days -also 3.5 years (Rev.12:6; 11:3); 42 months (3.5 years) (Rev.11:2; 13:5). It seems fair to assume that they are all speaking of an identical or associated period of time. See 9:26.

8:1 There are few Bible characters who use their own name so much- but Daniel is always calling himself “I, Daniel” (7:28; 8:1,15,27; 9:2; 10:2,7; 12:5). His self-perception was very clearly that he was a Hebrew, and a witness to God’s justice / judgment. Daniel has much to teach the man or woman caught up in the corporate life, the engrossing pull of business, education or social contact. His self-perception was that he was not of his surrounding world, even though those around him wanted to see him as one of them. And further, God Himself frequently addresses Daniel by his name- “Daniel”. Daniel realized that this was how God perceived him; and he wished to perceive himself as God perceived him. And he didn’t show one face to the world, and one to God. He openly showed himself to the world as he perceived himself, and he perceived himself as God perceived him. We too should show no shadow self to this world, no appearance; but the person whom we essentially are, and whom God perceives us as being. His children, His witnesses, His people.

8:15 Daniel sought to understand the meaning of a vision; but two verses earlier, an Angel had asked another Angel for understanding of the same vision. Here surely we have the practical meaning, in Angelic terms, of God knowing our prayers and arranging the answers before we even ask them. Perhaps it was Daniel’s guardian Angel who asked a more senior Angel for the interpretation of the vision, knowing Daniel was going to be asking for it. Yet it was the second Angel who actually gave the answer to Daniel (:14). Verse 16 describes the one Angel standing at the Ulai river calling out: “Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision”. Yet at this time, Daniel himself was in vision at the Ulai river (:2). His guardian Angel was there, right in front of him. And He had foreknown Daniel’s feelings and arranged for another Angel to respond to them... and so the second Angel (Gabriel) also comes near where Daniel was standing (:17). His guardian Angel had literally called Gabriel to come over to Daniel... And all this kind of thing is going on for you and me *hourly* in the court of Heaven!

9:12 God brought the “evil” or disaster (:14); there is no personal Satan who does this, God creates both good and evil in a judicial sense (Is. 45:5-7).

9:15 *We have sinned*- So often in this prayer, Daniel associates himself with his sinful people. No matter how weak we perceive our fellow believers to be, we are part of the body of Christ as they are, and we cannot in this sense disassociate ourselves from them. When we see their sins, we should feel shame for the fact that the body of God’s people behave like this, and ask God to forgive *us*.

9:23- see on 10:2.

9:26 69 weeks is 483 days. On the basis of a day for a year, this would make 483 years. However, Jewish time is often reckoned in Lunar cycles rather than Solar, as Europeans are accustomed to. The decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem was given, according to profane history, BC457. On the basis of Lunar time, 69 weeks of years comes out at 486.5 Lunar years. Allowing for a BC/AD calendar inaccuracy of 4 years, this brings us to AD33.5 for the time of Messiah being cut off; which is exactly when Jesus was crucified, 33.5 years after his birth. The 69 weeks being split into 7 weeks and 62 weeks is understandable once it is appreciated that most Bible prophecy has some immediate reference to the period around which it was given. 7 weeks of years would come to around 50 years. According to the records of the rebuilding of Jerusalem in Ezra, Nehemiah and Haggai it would appear that the bulk of the work was done in the 50 years after the issuing of the decree for rebuilding. This mini time period would doubtless have been of great encouragement to the Jews of the time as they laboured in the rebuilding work amidst so much opposition. The final week of tribulation is hard to interpret, perhaps because if Israel had accepted Christ as Messiah as intended, it could have been fulfilled without the delay which was necessitated. One possibility is that the 3.5 year tribulation of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans between AD67 and AD70 was the half week in which the sacrifices ceased to be offered in the Jerusalem temple (:27). The remaining half week would be fulfilled in the final 3.5 year tribulation before Christ’s return (see 7:25). The jump in fulfilment from AD33 to AD70 and then to the last days is the same kind of jump in hiatus found in the gap between the legs and the feet of the image in Dan. 2, and between the succession of beasts and then the terrible beast and the little horn in Dan. 7. These are but suggestions for the interpretation of some of the hardest words in the Bible.

10:2 Verses 2 and 3 show Daniel praying for three weeks- presumably for the fortunes of Israel to be restored. As the days went by, it would have seemed natural to assume that the prayer was going unanswered. However, the Angel told him that "from the first day... your words were heard" (: 12), but the delay was because "the prince of the Kingdom of Persia withstood me (the Angel) twenty-one days"- i.e. three weeks. So his first prayer was heard, but it took the Angel three weeks to work out the answer in practice. How many of our prayers are like that! The Angel then describes how he confirmed and strengthened Darius (11:1) to the same end to enable the prayer to be answered- as if when our Angel sees someone set in a course of action which will lead to the answer of our prayer, they are confirmed and strengthened in it. The same idea is found in Dan. 9:23; a command being given from God to answer a prayer as soon as it's prayed, but there being a delay to the answer due to the Angels effecting the answer. The wonder of all this needs some reflection. Our words, the thoughts within human braincells, call forth the Angels from the court of Heaven. Our prayers may be answered immediately, but it takes time for the answers to be worked out.

10:12 An Angel is sent from Heaven to earth for the sake of human words… The prayers of a man standing at a bus stop on earth can call forth cosmic action. This is the power of prayer, and the extent of God’s sensitivity to us.

10:19 Whenever Angels appear to people on earth, they are afraid but the Angel comforts them not to fear. It will be the same when the Angel appears to gather us to meet Christ at His return.

11:3 The “mighty king” is Alexander the Great; as soon as he arose to great power, he died and his empire was split amongst his generals (:4). This is confirmation of the prophecy in Daniel 2 that the Greek empire would also pass off the scene. The rest of the chapter describes how the situation after his death developed in relation to those nations who had domination over Israel; how the mighty powers fought with each other, their fortunes ebbed and faded according to the amount of time God had assigned them.

11:25 *Not stand*- This is typical of the language found in this chapter. The rival kingdoms of men appear so powerful and stable, and are so confident- for a time. Chapter 2 has explained how human empires all pass off the scene, they cannot ‘stand’ for ever, they last only for a time, and will be finally replaced by God’s eternal Kingdom when Christ returns. Regardless of the exact details of fulfilment, the chapter gives us the general impression of the vanity of human strength, how all human beauty fades to grey, earth’s proud empires pass away, and only the things and people of God’s eternal future Kingdom will ultimately stand for ever.

11:31-36 This describes the situation at the time of the Maccabees. However, Jesus speaks of the abomination as also being set up in the last days before His return (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14). So whatever fulfilments these words had in the time e.g. of Antiochus, they were only precursors of the main fulfilment in our last days.

11:40-45 This may refer to a latter day invasion of Israel by a “king of the north”, supported by Middle Eastern powers, which will have the temple mount in Jerusalem (:45) as its target. The invader will be destroyed by the return of Christ, at which time there will be resurrection, judgment and the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth (12:1-3).

12:1 *Michael*- The Angel that represents Israel, Daniel’s people.

12:2 Immortality is thus given when Christ returns, after the resurrection and at the judgment seat of Christ- not at the moment of death.

12:3 12:3,10 draw a parallel between those having wisdom and those who turn many to righteousness. Some translates “those who are wise” as “the teachers”, reflecting the play of ideas within the Hebrew sense of ‘wisdom’- to have wisdom is axiomatically to teach it. To possess God’s Truth therefore means that we will share it with others in some form; one cannot keep good news just to themselves.

12:4 Running is an idiom for responding to God’s word (Ps. 119:32,60; 147:15; Amos 8:11,12; Hab. 2:2; 2 Thess. 3:1). In the last days there will be some who understand the prophecies which Daniel so wanted to but couldn’t (:9), and they will respond to this knowledge powerfully. The purpose of prophecy isn’t to predict the future, but so that the generation who live at the time of its fulfilment will understand (as in Jn. 13:19; 14:29).

12:7 *Time, times… -* See on 7:25.

12:10 In the last days, "the wise shall understand" (12:10). Wisdom and Daniel are clearly associated, at least eight times (Dan. 1:17; 2:13,14,18,24,27,48; Ez. 28:3); as are Daniel and a desire to understand. Yet Daniel did not fully understand his latter day prophecies; "the wise shall understand" in the last days, Daniel was comforted. In other words, there will be a 'Daniel' category in the last days who will share his wisdom, sharing the character of Daniel, and who will be given the understanding he so earnestly sought.

12:13 A promise to Daniel of personal resurrection and receiving a specific place or “lot” in God’s future Kingdom on earth.