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978-1-108-06244-2 - A Commentary on the Book of Daniel: By Jephth ibn Ali the Karaite

Edited and Translated by D. S. Margoliouth

Excerpt

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## COMMENTARY ON DANIEL.

**The book of Daniel.** This book has been attributed to Daniel in particular because it contains an account of his history and prophecy. It comprises eleven chapters.

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If we add up the years occupied by this book, they make up a total of sixty-seven : [for seventy years were occupied by the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, and Belshazzar ; all of which come within our narrative, except the first seven years of Nebuchadnezzar, as we shall see below ;] this leaves sixty-three years, to which are to be added the one year of Darius and the three years of Cyrus ; making a total of sixty-seven years.

## I.

I. It is to be observed that the reign of Jehoiakim was divided into three parts : a. *four* years during which he was subject to the king of Egypt ; b. *three* years during which he was subject to the king of Babylon (2 Kings xxiv. 1) ; [c. *three* years during which he was independent.] During these three years the king of Babylon was occupied with his Eastern expedition ; after he had rested a little, he attacked him (in the tenth year of his reign), besieged him with his army, took his city, took him prisoner, and carried away many captives with part of the vessels of the house of God (see here).

**In the third year :** not 'in the tenth year,' for the following reason. Jehoiakim had originally been subject to the king of Egypt ; then he became subject to the king of Babylon. Thus seven years passed ; and since after this he rebelled against the king of Babylon, and became an independent king, who paid homage to no other, the writer can say *in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah*, dating from the time at which he became independent. The proof of our theory of the division of Jehoiakim's reign into three parts is the statement in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4, that the king of Egypt took Jehoahaz, brother of Jehoiakim, and sent him to Egypt, and made Jehoiakim king in his stead. Now we know that he remained subject to the king of Egypt four years, and that the king of Babylon came to the throne in the fourth year of Jehoiakim ; see Jer. xxv. 1, where it is stated that the first year of Nebuchadnezzar was the fourth of Jehoiakim. In that year the king of Babylon fought with the army of the king of Egypt, which was encamped on the banks of the Euphrates (see Jer. l. c.), when Syria fell into his hands (2 Kings xxiv. 7), and Jehoiakim became subject to the king of Babylon in the fifth year of his reign.

**Came unto Jerusalem and besieged it :** he was not satisfied with sending an army against him, but led the army himself. Had Jehoiakim come out to him, he

b

[ II. 3.]

would not have besieged the city ; only the former would not submit, and locked the gates, and stood a siege, thinking that the king of Babylon would grow tired and desist. The king, however, maintained the siege until he took the city.

2. Either he *stormed* the city, as some think, or the people may have opened the gates. The latter is the more likely, as no battle is mentioned. Jehoiakim, we are told, died outside Jerusalem. Either the king of Babylon tormented him till he died, or he was killed [in some other way] ; or he may have killed himself.

**And he carried them into the land of Shinar :** i. e. rather more than three thousand men whom the king of Babylon carried away captive ; they are mentioned in Jer. lii. 28. **He brought the vessels into the treasure-house of his god :** observe that we are not told the *number* of the vessels, nor their material (gold, silver, or brass) ; doubtless they were different vessels from those taken away with Jehoiakim (2 Chron. xxxvi. 10) ; they were not used by him, but put all together in a safe place ; had he attempted to use them, God would not have permitted it, even as He did not permit Belshazzar, but shewed serious signs [of His disapproval].

3, 4. He ordered the chief of his ministers, under whose care the captive Israelites were, to choose from the whole multitude youths of this description without fixing a number ; he was to look out for all who were possessed of these characteristics, and to take them, however few or many of them there might be.

**Of the children of Israel :** i. e. of those who were not of the royal stock, or of the children of the nobles, but *of the common people*. He did not regard the fact of such a person being of the common people, when found to possess these qualities ; to shew that talented persons are not affected by the lowness of their station.

And he ordered him to take the *best looking of them* ; it would not be seemly that a person with uncomely visage should stand in his court ; such persons must have handsome features, and be comely and fair.

**Of understanding in all wisdom :** not wisdom in the Thōrā concerning 'unclean' and 'clean,' or sacrifices, as the king would not desire that. He rather desired persons of intelligence in all subjects into which intellect can enter, and studies connected therewith.

**And knowing knowledge :** most probably knowledge, like Solomon's, in the different departments of philosophy. The children of Israel were never destitute of its elements, but always taught them to their children. Even in the times of their idolatry and wickedness, the votaries of wisdom and knowledge never failed among them.

**And understanding teaching :** knowing the way to instruct others in their knowledge ; not every scholar makes a good teacher.

So he chose all those in whom were all these virtues and desirable qualities. Since this was done at the time described, it was unlikely that there would be [many] lads among them possessing these qualities.

**And such as had ability :** i. e. force of patience to stand before the king, and to abstain from expectorating, spitting, etc.

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And he ordered them to be **taught the writing and language**: that they might write it and talk it; naturally they would not know either.

Had not Ashpenaz himself possessed many of these gifts and understood them, the king would not have given him this order.

The king's object in taking these youths, so described, was twofold: (1) to gratify his fancy for men of knowledge; for it is the custom of high-minded kings to have scholars trained in their courts; (2) to be able to boast before the nations that in his court are the greatest men in the world.

5. It was not the king's purpose to corrupt their religion, as he endeavoured to do in the story of the image which he set up; he rather desired that they should have suitable diet, which would make them grow, and give them a healthy appearance. So he made their rations like his own food and drink; the best food and the choicest drink.

He also designed that he should train them three years, that they might come before the king fair in form and appearance, and acquainted with the writing and language and all that was desired of them.

6. These four are mentioned on account of their abstaining from the king's food, and the rest of their achievements. Among them were some of the seed-royal, whom the Scripture does not mention. Had these four been of it, he would have said, 'there were among them of the seed-royal,' mentioning their rank. This disproves the view that Is. xxxix. 2 refers to these.

7. He surnamed them with Chaldean names; possibly *names of honour*, since *Belteshazzar* is the name of Nebuchadnezzar's God (*inf.* iv. 5); the rest may be so too.

8. He bound himself not to eat the king's food or drink his drink, whatever the consequences might be; staking his life, just as he staked it in his prayer, and as Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah staked theirs when they would not bow down to the image. It is quite impossible that he would have staked it for a matter of no consequence as some irreligious persons have said, whom we have answered in our commentary on the commandment.

**He would not defile himself:** not, 'he would not eat;' meaning that he would not eat a meat originally pure, but defiled by [coming in contact with] uncleanness. And he made no difference between the meat (consisting of animals slaughtered by Gentiles) and the drink. Possibly the former was not from an animal naturally forbidden, nor the wine naturally forbidden; but only because it was prepared by Gentiles, though free from all taint of uncleanness. This was because he regarded the grape-juice as the original state [i.e. he regarded the wine as a transformation of grape-juice], and refused to touch that with which uncleanness was mingled.

The chief of the eunuchs is Ashpenaz. He said, 'My lord, give me not, I pray thee, food and drink which will not profit me.' But the other gave him an answer which took from him all hope that his request would be granted him.

9. **Favour and compassion** comprise two periods; the first, sc. *favour*, had been

shewn in the previous time, and consisted in various acts of kindness shewn to Daniel which he does not describe at length; the second, *compassion*, took place at that particular time, consisting in his doing him no harm or violence, nor informing the king, but excusing himself as follows.

10. He tells him that he only refuses out of fear for his life, whenever the king should send for them, wishing to observe their condition; and if he saw the faces of the others and saw their faces different, when on enquiring he found out about the change in their food, the blame would fall on Ashpenaz, while they would not be reprehended.

**According to your joy:** because the wise are habitually joyous and merry, because knowledge wastes the body and destroys it.

חֵיבָתָם, like חוּב in Ezek. xviii. 7.

11. As the chief eunuch would not grant his request, and he had bound himself to stake his life upon it, he tried the expedient of speaking to the man through whose hands this nourishment passed, in case *he* might do this for them, and try them, as we shall explain presently.

12. **Try us ten days.** A short time, of which account is scarcely taken ordinarily; in order to facilitate the matter, and render its accomplishment less arduous.

13, 14. He accepted their proposal and afterwards examined them, and found them fatter and fairer than the others who had been eating the king's food and drinking his wine. This must have been done by the Creator, who set in the grain something to supply the place of meat, and similarly in the water. Those who did not do as Daniel and his friends must either have argued that they were excused and that it was impossible for them to resist the Sultan, or they did so because they did not care about lawful and unlawful. And God sent leanness into their bodies, so that they did not fatten. This proves that God cares for His saints who are willing to suffer death for His law's sake.

**At the end of ten days,** when he found that they were increased in fairness and fatness, he continued this for a period of three years.

16. He profited by the provisions and took them for himself, without telling Ashpenaz, but doing it in secret.

פֶּתֶבַּנִּי includes bread and dainties. The word may be divided into two: פֶּתֶבַּנִּי 'bread,' and בָּנִי 'dainties,' i. e. bread and meat. **Pulse** is the substitute for it.

They took wheat for bread, and some other grain to cook, such as lentils, rice, pease, and beans, and they drank water. Of course they took grain that was not defiled; and water out of the river in clean vessels, as they wished.

17. They had already the wisdom described above; which God Almighty increased during these days with additional wisdom, in all book-learning and philosophy known by the sages and Chaldees. Daniel surpassed them by the possession of certain divine gifts, such as the interpretation of all visions. The Chaldees did not understand dreams. This was not *confined* to Daniel, since Hananiah and the rest

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were distinguished, only Daniel was the most eminent. This was all the Creator's purpose (**he gave them**), compare *inf.* ii. 21 and Prov. xx. 6.

18. At the end of the three years, during which the king had ordained that they should be nourished and instructed in the 'writing and language,' the **Chief of the Eunuchs** brought them before him, and the king began to examine them in the different departments of science, and found none among the Jewish youths like them (**all of them** refers to the Jews). This was owing to what was mentioned before—God's bestowing on them clear intelligences. Next he tells us that they were ten times better than the king's sages. Either this is a [figure of speech or else a] real number, and we are to infer that the king called all his sages before him in their presence, and bade them ask one another questions, while he heard what passed between them on each particular head; and doubtless he himself was a sage and understood the discourse, and comprehended what passed and how they surpassed all his sages ten times in breadth of knowledge: and perhaps there were among his sages men who had been studying science all their lives till they had grown old, who yet had not reached the stage of these four. All this was in order that God might exalt His servants who were sunk to the lowest depth, and because they had clung to His religion and had not indulged themselves with eating unlawful food, but had eaten grain instead. And among the philosophers there must have arisen mutterings against certain meats, 'Woe to him that eats defiled food and the preparation of the Gentiles, defiling his soul and removing it from holiness, and withdrawing it from God Almighty; who finds ways of explaining away the commandments, and eats forbidden foods, and drinks the Gentile drinks, with creeping things and abominations among them.' And there is no difference between wine and any other drink, all of them being *mashqiym*. And no person during the Captivity can possibly eat the preparation of any one whom he knows to be unfaithful in his observances in the matter of preparation of meats, so that his food is of the unclean and impure. Such cases are referred to in Lev. xx. 25 and Ps. xxxiv. 10.

21. **Was**: i. e. was in the Sultan's kingdom till the first year of Cyrus, the time when the Israelites were set free to go to the Holy Land to build the Temple; when he was set free from the duties of government and retired into religious life. He had by then grown old. As for his companions, he tells us nothing about them after the story of the image.

## II.

I. Just as we said of the 'third year of the reign of Jehoiakim' that the phrase did not refer to his reign literally, so this again does not refer to Nebuchadnezzar's *reign*, as Daniel is the person who interpreted the dream. Plainly it must refer to something else. Some have supposed it to be the *second year of Jehoiakim's captivity*, which is unlikely, because Daniel had no office till after three years; see i. 5, which shews that he licensed them after three years. Others have referred it to the *fall of Jerusalem*, imagining that he did not consider himself king till he had subdued Israel;

which is not improbable. To my mind what is most probable is that it means [the second year] *after he had become king of the entire world* (*inf.* ii. 38). Now it is well known that he took Jerusalem before he took Tyre : and Tyre before he took Egypt. It is most probable that he took Egypt in the thirtieth year of his reign. This is shewn by Ezek. xxix. 11, 'neither shall it be inhabited forty years,' etc. (cp. 13). Now it was God's decree concerning the whole of the captives that they should remain in their present condition the whole seventy years, made up by Nebuchadnezzar, his son, and his son's son (Jer. xxv. 11) ; none of them returning to his country till after the completion of these seventy years. Now Egypt was the last of his conquests, as no other king stood before him save Pharaoh ; so that the words in the **second year** will refer to the thirty-second year of his reign, thirteen years after the destruction of the Temple. In that year Ezekiel saw the form of the Temple (xl. 1) ; for Nebuchadnezzar took the Holy City and burnt the Temple in the seventeenth year of his reign ; and if Nebuchadnezzar saw the dream in the thirty-second year of his reign, there must have passed since the destruction of the Temple thirteen years, and the appearance of the dream will have taken place in the fourteenth year [after its destruction].

**Dreamed dreams.** There was only one. Our view of this phrase is that he says **dreams** because the dream contains five subjects ; i. e. it embraces the account of four kingdoms and of the empire of Israel. The same expression is used of Joseph's dream (Gen. xxxvii. 7), before he saw the second dream, and that again is because the first dream contained three subjects.

**His spirit was troubled,** because he awoke and forgot the dream, and tried to remember what he had seen, but could not remember at all. Then he slept again ; **his sleep was upon him.**

Note that there is a difference between the dream of Pharaoh and that of Nebuchadnezzar, in two respects : 1. Pharaoh saw his dream at the end of the night (Gen. xli. 8), whereas Nebuchadnezzar saw his in the middle of the night (**his sleep was upon him**) ; 2. Pharaoh remembered his dream, whereas Nebuchadnezzar forgot his. The reason of this was that Pharaoh's *dream was realized after a short time*, whereas Nebuchadnezzar's is not yet fully realized. Consequently, as the former's dream was realized after a short interval, God Almighty did not suffer him to forget it ; but as Nebuchadnezzar's was not to be realized till after a long period, God caused him to forget it, so that when the dream was told him, that might be evidence of the correctness of its interpretation.

2. These **Chaldeans** had a certain wisdom which they professed. There was left no order professing to reveal secrets, which he did not summon, demanding that they should tell him the dream which he had forgotten.

3. He desired them to tell him the dream (see ver. 2).

4. Possibly he spoke to them first in some other language than the Aramaic, but afterwards addressed them in Aramaic, as they addressed him. Then they said : *Tell thou the dream that we may tell the interpretation thereof.* They did not say, 'We cannot tell thee the dream.'



5. He said, 'First I asked you for the dream; but, as you are not satisfied with that, I ask you now for the dream and the interpretation thereof. And if ye will not shew me the dream and the interpretation thereof, ye shall be hewed in pieces, i. e. your flesh shall be cut up, and your houses become confiscate to the Sultan.

6. 'But, if you shew me the dream and the interpretation thereof, I will give you raiment and dinārs, and handsome presents, and high honours shall be bestowed upon you; but only after you have told me the dream and its interpretation.'

When they heard his promise and his threat, and could find no deliverer, they repeated their speech a second time like the first, as follows.

7. 'We stand by our first answer; we undertake to interpret it.' Again they would not say 'We cannot tell thee the dream.' When he saw them . . . , he first demanded of them the dream without promising them or threatening them; . . . afterwards, he demanded of them the dream and the interpretation thereof, and made them a promise. When they repeated their answer about the interpretation, instead of saying 'We are unable,' he said to them something different.

8, 9. **Ye are buying the time**: i. e. you are making the time pass, and imagine that I will refrain from asking you, and that you will leave me troubled in thought, with my spirit distressed, while you care not. This is because you see that the *dream has fled from me* and that I cannot remember it.

**There is but one law for you**: i. e. one judgment; I will make no difference between you; let no one imagine that I will spare you or any one of you. Others interpret: *Ye are all agreed on one thing*, i. e. to say, 'Tell us the dream, and we will interpret it,' and not to tell me the dream.

**Lying and corrupt words**: i. e. if ye do not tell me the dream, then ye will not tell me its interpretation either. Ye only say 'We will interpret the dream' to shift till the time is changed, i. e. till that with which ye are threatened is removed from you. Tell me the dream: and when ye have told it I shall know thereby that ye will tell the interpretation thereof.

The word הוֹרַמְתֶּם is from the root זָמַן, the letter ז being servile. He means, 'You have made this time different to that wherein you used to tell us that you understood secrets.' Nebuchadnezzar must have heard them say that they understood things of this sort; otherwise he would not have demanded it of them, nor would he have killed them except because before this time they had professed this; but now, when his demand had fallen upon them, and they saw no way to meet it, they said time after time, 'Tell the dream that we may interpret it,' instead of saying 'We are not equal to this;' and simply maintained that he knew the dream and was demanding of them what he remembered, or that he had seen no dream at all, and was demanding of them what he had not seen. This is why he said **lying and corrupt words**. And when they heard this last word they were forced to declare they had lied when they professed that they could reveal secrets.

10. Note that none of them ventured to address the king save *the Chaldees*,

who were the nearest to the king of them all, and spoke for the rest. They said, 'O king, we will tell thee the truth. Do not think that any man can reveal this secret, we or any beside us, neither busy thy heart with any such fancy, nor ask of us an impossibility, nor imagine of us that we understand any such thing, or that we are trying to protract the time while thy spirit is tormented. So spare us in justice. Has any of the kings that preceded thee ever demanded of his sages this thing which thou demandest of us?'

11. Appended explanation. **And there is none other**: it is clear to me that they aimed at Daniel and his fellows as professing such knowledge; then they relegate [the king] to the angels. Hence, in ver. 10, **there is no man on the dry land** (with reference to the Jewish sages); here, **none but the angels know this**. 'So be just to us and demand not of us an impossibility.'

12. When he saw that they dealt plainly with him and gave him no hope, he was wroth, and ordered the slaughter of all of them that were present in Babylon, and that others who were dispersed outside Babylon should be brought before him, after the slaughter of these, that he might hear what they had to say. The words, **and they sought Daniel and his comrades**, point to the fact that they had not been present with them during the colloquy which passed between the Chaldees and the king; and this was because they had never professed that they understood mysteries as these had professed; only the wise men of Babylon must have said, 'We and others are partners in taking the king's supplies; why should we be killed and not they? Let them be killed too.' And when the news reached Daniel, he hastened and came before the king's executioner so that he learned the matter from him, and went before the king and asked of him a respite, and promised him what he had asked of the wise men.

14, 15. ארין comes from אר like ומן ארין (Ezra v. 16); עטה comes from עצה.

מהחצפה (it is said) is from the language of the Pharisees, in which the insolent is called חציפה. He tells us that Daniel referred the counsel and the guidance to Arioch, after he had asked him to explain the matter clearly; and he took his advice and his bidding about the question, whether he should enter unto the king and ask him for a respite, or should not enter unto him for fear of the Sultan's wrath and lest he might not give him time, but order him to be slain. And Arioch, knowing that the king would give him time and would not deal hastily with him, counselled him to enter unto him. Perhaps he asked permission for him, so that he might enter in and ask him for the respite, and the king answered him favourably. The executioner had been executing the wise men of Babel one after another; and perhaps had begun with the most honourable.

16. **An interpretation**: plainly not without the dream; for the person who did not know the dream could not possibly interpret it. He could only interpret when he knew both dream and interpretation. Daniel must have promised the king what he had demanded of the wise men, both dream and interpretation; and he did so because it was plain to him, and he was convinced and assured that Almighty God had made



him forget the dream in order that He might prove the wise men of Babylon liars in their professions, and reveal the matter to Daniel, that he might magnify his people who serve the True God, Who alone sheweth dreams and revealeth secrets.

17. I. e. he told them the cause of the massacre and what he had promised the king.

18. I. e. the four stood crying to God and begging mercy of Him, in that He would reveal this secret, that they might not be killed with the rest ; for they knew that they would not be left while the others were killed, especially after Daniel's promise to the king.

19. As there was no use in the revelation of the mystery to all four of them, one of them sufficing, He revealed it to Daniel, who was the principal of them, especially as the king had not demanded that all the wise men of Babylon should shew him the dream, but if one told him, he would excuse the rest ; do you not see that Daniel said to the executioner, 'Destroy not the wise men of Babylon'? Next he tells us that when Almighty God had revealed it unto him, he blessed God for that. Evidently He shewed Daniel the dream which the king had seen, i. e. the figure of the image, and the cutting of the stone out of the mountain, and the breaking of the image and the wind carrying away its dust, and how the stone became a mighty mountain.

20 sqq. Observe that he tells us that they asked of Almighty God that He would reveal the mystery to them, that they might not be slain like the rest of the wise men of Babylon ; and he tells us that Daniel thanked Almighty God for having revealed the mystery to him, but does not record any thanksgiving by him for their deliverance from death ; because the Glory of God was to his mind more important than the deliverance of their souls ; and further, if the mystery were revealed, they were beyond doubt delivered. Then he thanked Almighty God according to what the subject of the dream suggested ; **for wisdom and might are His** : as He had furnished him with wisdom which no one else had mastered (cp. v. 23 a). Now he ascribed *wisdom* to Him in one of two senses : either he meant, 'He is the wise and mighty ;' or he meant, 'He giveth wisdom and might to whom He will' (compare for *wisdom* Prov. ii. 6, and for *power* Deut. viii. 18, Is. xl. 29). **He changeth the seasons and times** : *seasons* : i. e. seasons of the year, 'cold, heat, summer, and winter ;' *times* : i. e. night and day. No one can do this save the Creator. **He removeth kings and setteth up kings**, inasmuch as He is possessor of the whole world, He setteth up whom He will and removeth whom He will. **Removeth** is put before **setteth up**, because kings had been in the world from the beginning, ever since the reign of Nimrod, after the flood (cp. Eccl. i. 2). **He giveth wisdom unto the wise** : with the same meaning as above ; **wisdom** being intellect and discrimination, whereby mankind surpass the brutes and each other. We also learn that the wise men and sages of the world are so not of themselves, but only because God has given them their wisdom and their knowledge. **He revealeth the deep** : alluding to the unseen world which he compares to an object lying in the deep, so that it cannot be reached ; or to something hidden and concealed, so that it is unknown, with the same idea as Is. xli. 10 ; or

possibly he means, 'He revealeth what is in man's heart, which none understand save the Creator of the heart and reins, which are concealed from every one, but known to Him' (Jer. xvii. 10). **He knoweth what is in the darkness:** which is also hidden from mankind, inasmuch as the organ of sight cannot see in the dark: whereas the Creator of darkness and light knows what is in the one as He knows what is in the other (Ps. cxxxix. 12); the purpose being that He, knowing hidden things, knew what the king had seen, and had revealed it to Daniel. After mentioning these five classes, all corresponding with the matter and circumstances of the dream (*wisdom and strength* with the amount of both which He had bestowed on Daniel, *changing of seasons* with the vicissitudes undergone by Israel and other nations, shewn by the removing of a kingdom and the establishment of a kingdom contained in the dream; and so with the *revealing of secrets*, etc.), he said **O thou God of my fathers:** referring to the fathers and forefathers whom God had chosen and exalted, Who had dealt so with Daniel because he was of their offspring. He praised God for the wisdom and might which He had vouchsafed him, which had brought him to his high station before Nebuchadnezzar saw the dream; now it was a period of twenty-two years from the time that he had obtained this rank in the king's palace to the present. **And hast now made known unto me what we desired of Thee:** referring to the revelation of the king's secret (cp. *b*). He first described how God had dealt with him from the time of his standing before the king till the present crisis; then he described how He had dealt with him in the present business; and in this matter he associates his companions with himself, in contrast to the previous time, in the words, **what we desired of Thee:** i. e. I and my companions; similarly **Thou hast made known unto us.** He associates his companions with himself, to shew that, although the revelation was made to him and not to them, nevertheless it belonged to all of them, since all of them were sought for execution, and all had prayed and humbled themselves (ver. 18). After praising Almighty God for this, he went to Arioch without delay, because he had already pledged his word, and a fixed time had been appointed him by the king. Possibly he had asked of him a day and no more; and while they four stood praying, it came to pass that he fell asleep and saw the dream, and woke rejoicing, and told his companions, and they too blessed the Almighty Creator. Possibly he rose in the night, at once, and went to the king to delight him with the news, and to calm the people's horror and anguish; as doubtless the country was dismayed at the massacre of the wise men, and at the thought that the land would be left without wise men; which is one of the worse misfortunes that can befall a country.

24. He went to Arioch at once, for two reasons: (1) that he might stay the massacre; (2) that he might introduce him before the king.

25. The words, **I have found a man**, when the king must have known of Daniel certainly, are plainly a refutation of the words of the wise men: the speaker points out that by the children of the captivity, who were of inferior rank and low esteem among the wise men, behold, this secret shall be made known.

26. He had already promised the king that he would tell him the interpretation at