

Daniel 5:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Analysis

The chapter concludes with stark simplicity: 'And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.' This verse fulfills the interpretation's final element—'thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians' (v.28). The overnight transition from Babylonian to Medio-Persian control demonstrates prophecy's accuracy and God's sovereign control over kingdoms. Babylon, thought impregnable due to massive walls and substantial supplies, fell through stratagem (Cyrus's forces diverted the Euphrates, entered via the riverbed). The timing—during Belshazzar's feast—fulfilled Isaiah and Jeremiah's prophecies of sudden judgment. Darius the Mede (possibly Cyrus's general or governor; historical identification debated) represents the shift in imperial power prophesied in chapter 2's statue (from bronze to iron) and fulfilled in history.

Historical Context

Historical sources (Herodotus, Xenophon, Berossus) confirm Babylon fell to Cyrus's Persian forces in 539 BC, apparently without major battle—treachery or stratagem enabled entrance. The Bible's account of fall during a feast aligns with classical sources. The identity of 'Darius the Mede' remains debated—possibly Gubaru (Gobryas), Cyrus's general who governed Babylon; possibly an alternative name for Cyrus himself; or possibly Cambyses II. Regardless of precise identification, the historical fact remains: Babylon fell to Medio-Persian forces exactly as prophesied (Daniel 2, 5; Isaiah 13, 21, 44-45; Jeremiah 50-51). This

fulfilled prophecy demonstrated Yahweh's sovereignty and encouraged Jewish exiles that restoration promises would likewise fulfill.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the overnight fall of 'impregnable' Babylon illustrate that no human power can resist God's determined purposes?
2. What does the precise fulfillment of multiple prophecies teach about Scripture's reliability and God's sovereignty?
3. Why does Scripture sometimes leave historical details (like Darius the Mede's precise identity) less than fully clear while emphasizing theological truths?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁנֵי יָן	כְּבָר ר	מַלְכוּתָ א	קָבַ ל	מֵדָי א	וְדָרָי וְשָׁ
years	old	the kingdom	took	the Median	And Darius
H8140	H1247	H4437	H6902	H4077	H1868
וּמֵתֵינִי:			שְׁתֵּי יָן		
and two			being about threescore		
H8648			H8361		

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 9:1 (Kingdom): In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

Daniel 6:1 (Kingdom): It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

