

# Daniel 5:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

## Analysis

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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

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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

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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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

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שָׁתַּיִן בְּרִמְלֹכַת אֶתְּנָאָרְדָּרְיָה  
And Darius the Median took the kingdom old years  
H1868 H4077 H6902 H4437 H1247 H8140

שָׁתַּיִן וְתָרְפִּין  
being about threescore and two  
H8361 H8648

## Additional Cross-References

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**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;

