

only one statement in this chapter that might seem to be a prediction. This is the declaration of Daniel's friends in verses 17-18: "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." The first half of the statement, if taken alone, might seem to be a prediction, but the last half contains the implication that God might choose to let them suffer for His sake instead of giving them physical deliverance.

Chapter 4 contains a remarkable prediction. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which Daniel interpreted as meaning that God would deprive the king of his greatness for a time and would make him live the life of an animal, but that eventually he would be restored to his sanity and given back his power. The chapter tells how the prophecy was literally fulfilled.

Chapter 5 contains a prophecy in an unusual form. A finger was seen writing on the wall. Belshazzar the king was greatly troubled because no one was able to interpret what was written. Eventually Daniel was called and he interpreted it as meaning that Belshazzar would be overthrown and his kingdom given to the Medes and Persians.<sup>1</sup> This prediction was literally fulfilled that very night.

Chapter 6 has only one statement that sounds like a prediction. By an appeal to the vanity of Darius the Mede<sup>2</sup>, Daniel's enemies persuaded the king to establish an arbitrary law, "in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be annulled" (vv. 8, 12). As a result, the king was soon forced, much against his will, to order that Daniel be put into the den of lions. When he did so he said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" (v. 16) Here the KJV reads: "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee."

While it might be suggested that Darius was led by God to make a divine prediction, it seems more likely that he merely expressed a hope. This interpretation is supported by the fact that after a sleepless night he went to the den