



The Times of the Gentiles

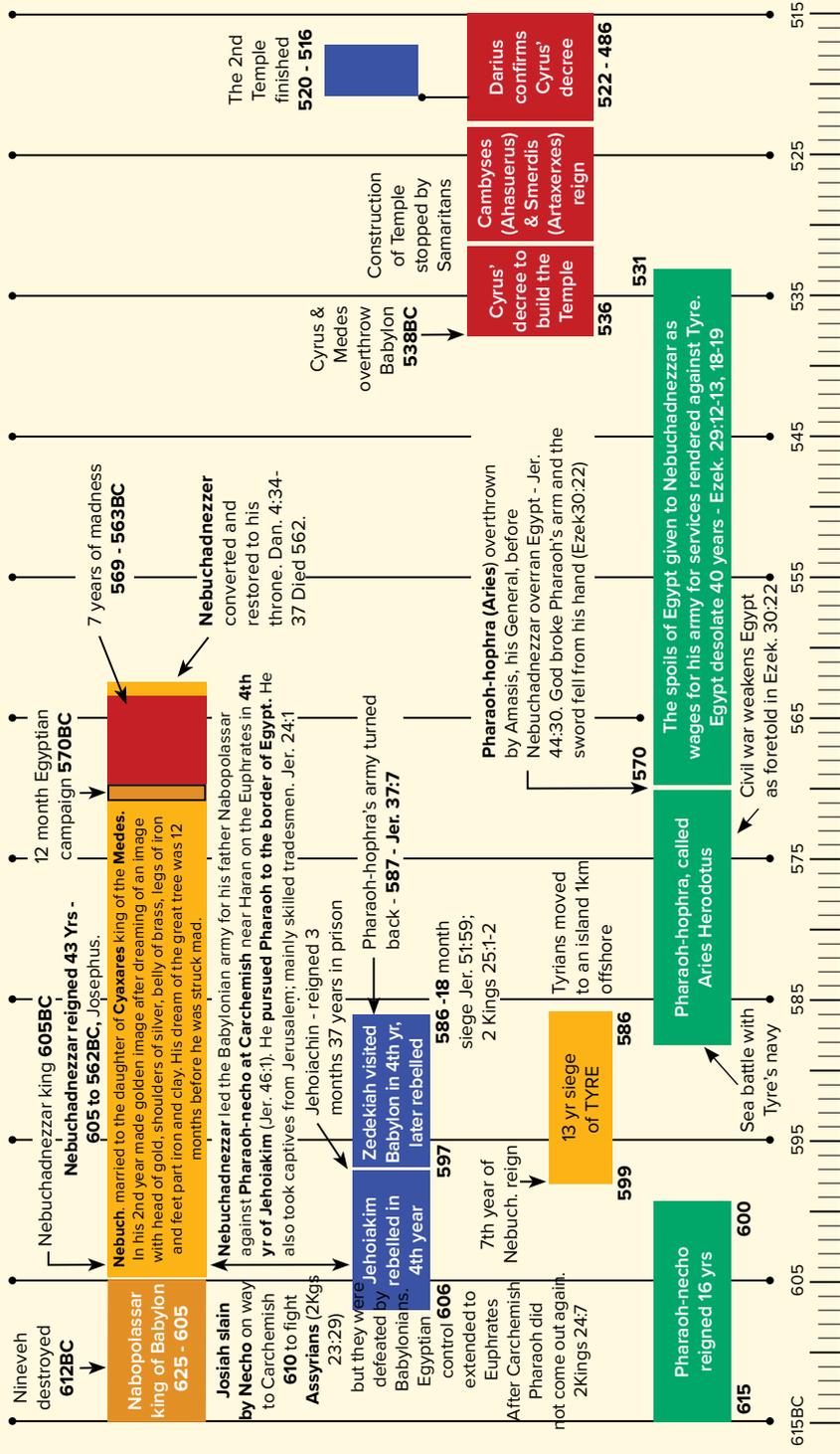
by MA Butler

PROPHECY SERIES - STUDY NO 5 FOR THE HERALD OF HOPE

Nebuchadnezzar's Testimony

"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

...Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Dan. 4:34-37).



The Times of the Gentiles

(formerly the BIG Picture of Daniel)

by

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for

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Called to higher service
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*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth”
(2Timothy 2:15)*

Chapter 1 - Introduction

THE Old Testament book of Daniel, penned over 2,500 years ago, is often considered the counterpart of the final book in the Bible, the REVELATION. In fact, in the study of Biblical prophecy one cannot be fully understood without the other. Daniel, the major book of prophecy in the Old Testament, and Revelation in the New Testament complement each other and relate powerfully to our contemporary times.

The Book of Daniel covers the “*Times of the Gentiles*” which Jesus defined as the period when “*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles*” (Luke 21:24). In 606BC Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and Jehoiakim became a vassal king. He rebelled, and Nebuchadnezzar came again. Jehoiakim was killed and Jehoiachin taken captive to Babylon. Zedekiah was then made king and swore allegiance but later rebelled hoping Egypt would support him. Nebuchadnezzar came the third time and destroyed the city and Temple.

Ezekiel prophesied that the throne of David would be “*overturned*” three times and “*it shall be no more, until He come who right it is; and I will give it Him*” (Ezek. 21:27). Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Turks and British have occupied Jerusalem. The last Gentile ruler to tread down Jerusalem will be Antichrist, a Roman prince who will be destroyed when Christ returns and the “*times of the Gentiles*” will be fulfilled.

The theme of the book is the **Sovereignty of God** in the affairs of planet earth. Furthermore **God’s timing is perfect** and His plan is right on schedule. The key verse is Dan. 4:17b,

“...that the living may know that the most high ruleth in the kingdom of men.”

Biblically, the Jew is the key to history and prophecy. In this book study we have a picture of **Gentile dominion** over the nation of Israel UNTIL God’s Kingdom of Righteousness is established on earth. Each chapter deals with Gentile dominion over Israel, yet clearly demonstrates that God is in control:

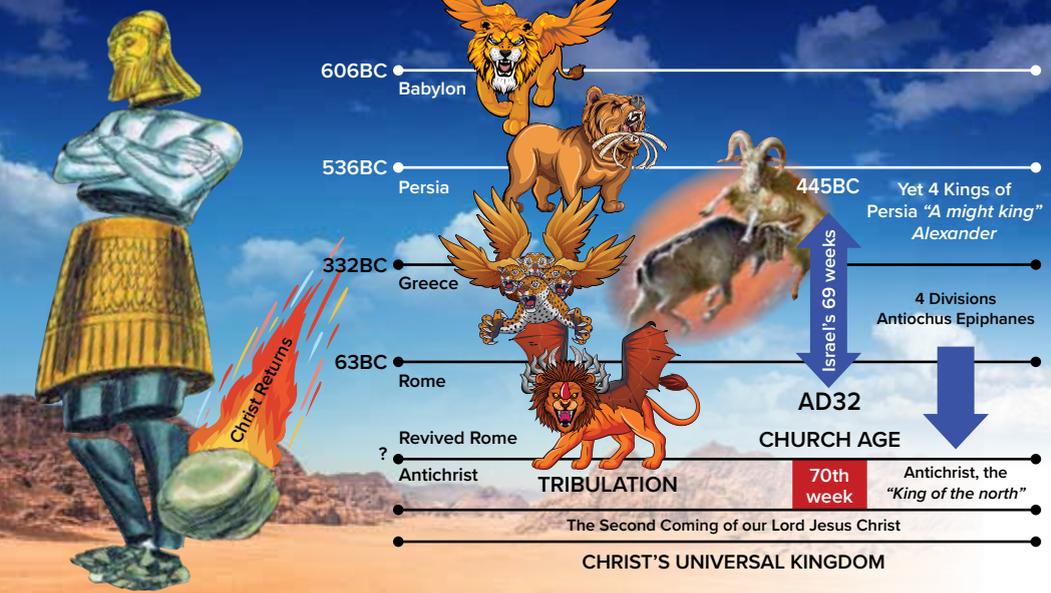
- **Daniel Chapter 1:** The chastening of Judah, the sparing of the godly remnant, and the blessing of Daniel and his friends in the 70-year Babylonian captivity, all demonstrate the providence of God as we see His purposes fulfilled even in a pagan Gentile Empire.
- **Daniel Chapter 2:** God’s sovereignty over Gentile empires is demonstrated in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Four Gentile kingdoms on earth only lead to God’s Universal Kingdom when He takes final control.

- **Daniel Chapter 3:** God's sovereignty over Gentile punishment is demonstrated. Here is related the popular story of the three Hebrew lads who refused to bow to the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar and were protected by God in the fiery furnace just as Jews in the Great tribulation will refuse to bow to the image of the Beast and will be protected.
- **Daniel Chapter 4:** God's rule over Gentile kings is demonstrated. Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful Gentile dictator on earth is humbled and brought down by a loving God; the chapter becomes a testimony, as a pagan king issues a royal edict of new found faith.
- **Daniel Chapter 5:** God's sovereignty over Gentile defences is demonstrated. Here we have the historical account of the fall of Babylon in one night after her boast that the fortress of the city was impregnable.
- **Daniel Chapter 6:** God's rule over Gentile law demonstrated in the politics of finding Daniel in the lions' den. God closed the mouths of the lions for a few hours, only to open them again to devour the corrupt Gentile leaders the following morning.
- **Daniel Chapter 7:** Here is the scene on earth from God's point of view, and the four stages of Gentile dominion over Jerusalem are described as the **bestly** effort of man to control the world in wickedness. Ultimately, the final Gentile ruler is destroyed and Christ is given everlasting dominion and righteousness reigns. Chapter 7 stands in sharp contrast with chapter 2 where man's perspective is seen.
- **Daniel Chapters 8-9:** God's chastening of Israel in the then near future under the Medo-Persian and Greek Empires is seen in chapter 8, and God's ultimate goal of blessing for Israel is amazingly predicted in chapter 9. Messiah's 1st advent, the destruction of Jerusalem, centuries of dispersion, and Israel's last 7 years all lead to Israel's conversion.
- **Daniel Chapters 10-12:** The final detailed revelation that God gives to Daniel is regarding Israel's near and far future. Chapter 11 provides amazing prophecies in intricate detail of conflicts between the northern and southern kingdoms of the Greek Empire **from** Alexander the Great down to Antiochus Epiphanes; the great type of Antichrist. Chapter 11 from verse 36 is the 1st half and chapter 12 the second half of the Great Tribulation; the ultimate overthrow of Antichrist and the establishment of Israel in Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

All the events in the book of Daniel relate to the nation of Israel - the apple

The Book of Daniel

Daniel 1 & 2 → Daniel 3-7 → Daniel 8 → Daniel 9 → Daniel 10-12



of God's eye (Zech. 2:8; Deut. 32:10); and though still blinded as a nation to God's truth, Israel is being mysteriously brought back to the land in unbelief and is the centre of world news and attention. But in this introductory chapter, let's look at a few characteristics of the man Daniel, one of the few major personalities in the Bible of whom there is not a negative word written, though he was a man just like us.

DANIEL WAS A MAN OF THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER

Though only a Jewish teenager, coming from an apostate nation to the palace of the king in a heathen land, Daniel stood for God, when chosen to be brainwashed in heathen philosophy. How could he stand? How did he know truth from error as he "...purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself"? Daniel had access to the books of Moses, the first five books in our Bible, and he had to have known the Word to stand strong. He had strong convictions based on a firm knowledge of Leviticus 11, which distinguishes between clean and unclean meat, a passage that strengthened his faith in spite of dark circumstances. This first chapter of Daniel (read it) reflects his love for the living God who was in control, and his **knowledge of the Word of God** in the spirit of his youth.

If any one thing characterised Daniel, it was his prayer life. Perhaps the most popular story in the Old Testament is Daniel in the lions' den. Why was he there? The consistency of his **prayer life** was the only thing his enemies could find to bring him down. Yet God was in control.

DANIEL WAS A HUMBLE TEAM PLAYER

Daniel was an **encourager** and was encouraged by others. Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah and Daniel were a close-knit team, and as a witness for God they stood together for the three years of chapter one. They prayed and praised God together in Dan. 2:17-23, and finally stood together through the danger of execution in the trials of chapter 3. How we need to be identified with like-minded men who love the Lord Jesus Christ and are willing to stand for the Word of God! It is impossible to get a whole team down at the same time. Together their testimony had a great impact on the whole Babylonian culture. Doubtless because of Daniel's commitment to the Word of God and his consistent prayer life, God used him in a tremendous way, and through him revealed the prophetic future of His people as well as that of the nations of the world. Yet Daniel gave all the credit to his God. It is so easy for the flesh to absorb the credit when things go right; however, Daniel acknowledges "... a God in heaven"(2:28), "*But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living...*" All his insight is glorifying the God of heaven. Daniel is characterised by **humility**.

THE CHALLENGE

As we seek to know God's truth, may our hearts be challenged with the characteristics of Daniel's life. The days of apostasy are so evident in spite of our Christian heritage as a people. God's hand of chastening and judgment will surely come. May we be found as part of the remnant, standing for the promises of the Word, exercising our privilege of prayer and communion with God, being a team player and an encourager with a humble spirit, giving all the glory to our Saviour, the risen, coming, Lord Jesus Christ! Let's exercise our faith by standing strong.

*Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm and
Dare to make it known!*

Chapter 2 - The Panorama of Prophecy

IN THIS second chapter we will look at one of the most unique prophetic passages in the Bible. Dr Harry Ironside said of Daniel Chapter 2:

“It is the ABC of prophecy. I suppose it contains the most complete, and yet the most simple, prophetic picture that we have in all the Word of God.”

Daniel’s twelve chapters can be naturally divided into two sections of six chapters each. The first six are more historic, and the latter six contain the dreams of Daniel which are prophetic.

Another feature of the book is that nearly half of the chapters (from Dan. 2:4b through Dan. 7:28) were written in the **Aramaic** language of the day. This portion is unique to the Old Testament Scriptures. In our study we will see that these chapters deal with a time when God was allowing the Gentile nations to be dominant over the nation of Israel.

Chapter 2 opens with the powerful Gentile dictator of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, dreaming;

“wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him” (Dan. 2:1).

It appears the dream suddenly turned into a nightmare, and he is shaken and awakened. Imagine the most powerful man, often looked upon in the culture as a god himself, frightened and shaken so much that his dream was apparently lost. So, concerned about the dream and its meaning, Nebuchadnezzar calls in his professional wise men and threatens them with execution if they cannot describe the dream and give its interpretation. With their inability to do so, the order for the execution of all the wise men of Babylon is issued by the king (Dan. 2:12). This order included Daniel, who, on returning to the palace, asked why *“the decree was so hasty”* (Dan. 2:15). After hearing an explanation Daniel requested an audience with the king, asking for time, after which *“he would show the king the interpretation”* (Dan. 2:16).

Daniel and his friends, went to prayer and petitioned God for the dream and its interpretation. When God gave the answer to their prayer (Dan. 2:19), Daniel and his friends immediately took time to worship and give thanks to God (Dan. 2:20-23). Next we see Daniel before King Nebuchadnezzar giving the God of heaven all the credit and glory for the revelation (Dan. 2:27-30).

THE FORGOTTEN DREAM

The next three verses (2:31-33) describe a great image, or statue of a man, that the king had seen in his dream. This obviously established Daniel's credibility in Nebuchadnezzar's eyes. The great image had:

- A head of gold
- Breast and arms of silver
- Belly and thighs of brass
- Legs of iron
- Feet of part iron and part clay

In Dan 2:34 we see **action** is added to the dream when a supernatural **stone** comes hurtling down and "*smote the image upon his feet*" and the whole structure crumbled, becoming like

"the chaff of a summer threshing floor; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them"

This is doubtless what troubled the king and brought him to the point of great concern. Finally, the stone

"became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king" (Dan. 2:35-36).

Now since Daniel had brought the reality of the dream back to the king's senses, Nebuchadnezzar had no choice but to believe the interpretation!

THE CLEAR INTERPRETATION

The key word in the interpretation is "**kingdom**" (Dan. 2:37,39,40,41,42&44). Every area of the image prophetically relates to a **kingdom**, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom.

*"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a **kingdom**. . . Thou art this head of GOLD" (Dan. 2:37-38).*

*"And after thee shall arise **another kingdom**. . . and **another third kingdom** of BRASS" (2:39).*

*"And a **fourth kingdom**. . . as IRON" (Dan. 2:40).*

*"...feet and toes CLAY IRON, the **kingdom**..." (Dan. 2:41).*

*"...shall the God of heaven set up a **kingdom**, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44).*

Just what is the dream all about? Daniel now shares these closing words with King Nebuchadnezzar :

*"God hath made known to the king what **shall come to pass hereafter**: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:45b).*

A LOOK BACK AT WORLD HISTORY

As we look back at ancient world empires in relation to Israel, the Old Testament people of God, four historical powers indeed fit the picture of Daniel's prophecy right down to the "legs of iron." Yet there are still two unfulfilled stages in the interpretation: the final kingdom of man and the kingdom of God.

First, let's note the clear prophetic dream as it relates to fulfilled history over the centuries following Daniel's day:

The prophetic word was recorded by Daniel in 603 BC, and the first four empires followed each other over the next few centuries. This is historical fact. Yet Rome was never conquered; indeed, it dissolved from perversion and corruption within, and was overrun by Germanic tribes. During the past 1,900

plus years, the power of religious and political Rome have continued **in various forms** during this present mystery Church Age.

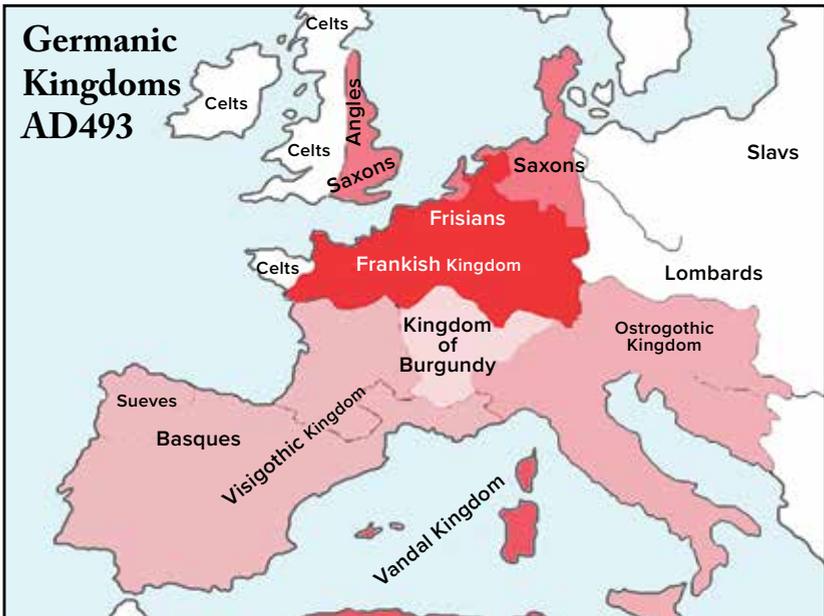
When western imperial Rome ceased in 476 AD, Germanic tribes occupied the empire and this is seen prophetically in the change from legs of iron to "*feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided*" (Dan. 2:41). An explanation of the feet and the toes of the image in the dream cannot however be fully satisfied with history, what seems to be coming together with the European Union, established on



the Treaty of Rome in the geography of the Old Roman Empire, could be the very foundation of **this last stage** of man's world dominance on planet earth. Sir Robert Anderson QC in his book *The Coming Prince* says:

“No Christian doubts that the *‘stone cut out without hands’* is typical of Christ Himself. It is equally clear that the catastrophe was to occur when the fourth empire should have become divided, and ‘partly strong and brittle.’ Therefore its fulfillment could not belong to the time of the first advent. No less clear is it that its fulfillment was to be a sudden crisis, to be followed by the establishment of *“a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.”* Therefore it relates to **events still to come**. We are dealing here, not with prophetic theories, but with the meaning of plain words. What the prophecy foretells is not the rise and spread of a spiritual kingdom in the midst of earthly kingdoms, but the establishment of **a kingdom which ‘shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms.’**”

The Second Advent of Christ will occur in the days of the “ten toes” of the image. This is the short period of the Antichrist's kingdom, a period of seven years (Dan 9:27). The parallel prophecy in chapter 7 describes the last stage of the fourth empire on earth as having “ten horns” and Rev. 17:12 tells us that *“the ten horns ... are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast”*.



There is absolutely no doubt that the Roman Empire, in its last stage, will be divided into **ten parts**, as pictured by the **ten toes** and amongst these, the final Gentile world ruler will appear. However, John wrote that, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes, Antichrist will be destroyed.

*“The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him ... **these both** were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev 19:20).*

Thus the final stage in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is the **establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth**. The mountain which fills the whole earth is symbolic of Christ’s kingdom. Isaiah writes:

*“And it shall come to pass in the **last days**, that **the mountain** of the LORD’S house shall be established in the **top of the mountains**, and shall be exalted above the hills; and **all nations** shall flow unto it ... for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa 2:2-4).*

We are presently in the mystery, “*parenthetical*” Church Age, when the nation of Israel has been temporarily set aside as God’s tool. Once the Church, the Bride of Christ, is complete, the Lord will take her to be with Himself (1 Thess 4:13-17; 1 Cor 15:51-57). The timetable of God will then turn back to the nation of Israel for the final seven years of Daniel’s 70 “weeks” of history described in Daniel chapter 9. Again, the theme of the book of Daniel is the **Sovereignty of God... God is in control... total control!**

One sad fact in chapter two is how Nebuchadnezzar responded to the supernatural. God was at work, yet when the dream had been recalled and interpreted accurately by Daniel, he worshipped Daniel (v 46)!

“The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret” (Dan. 2:47).

Nebuchadnezzar recognised Daniel’s God as a God of gods, but did not consider Him as the **only** God or his own God until after he had been struck down and lived as a beast of the field for seven years. Only then was he humbled and “*blessed the most High*” and “*praised and honoured Him*” (Dan. 4:34).

Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ states, “*I am the way, the truth and the life*” (John 14:6). He died for OUR sin; He arose from the grave three days later! He invites us, “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matt. 11:28). Consider the truth of Christ, He is the **only** Saviour and He wants to be **your personal Saviour**. He is in the life-changing, soul-saving, business.

Chapter 3 - “Bow or Burn!”

IN CHAPTER 3, we continue to follow the theme of the Sovereignty of God and see that God is in control over Gentile punishment as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are cast into the fiery furnace. God’s sovereignty is proved in a humanly impossible situation. Let’s consider the chapter from three viewpoints:

Past - the Big Picture Historically

Present - the Big Picture Practically

Future - the Big Picture Prophetically

HISTORICALLY

Bible teachers feel that the events of chapter 3 were about 20 years after the dream of chapter 2, and it appears that King Nebuchadnezzar had never forgotten the dream after Daniel revealed it to him. Yet if the great image that we see constructed here is a result of the dream, the king was defiant, even arrogant, assuming that not only the head of gold represented himself (2:38) but the entire image, thinking in his spiritual blindness that his kingdom, Babylon, would never be destroyed nor fall to any nation in spite of Daniel’s interpretation. In any event the whole image represented Babylon, and in the king’s mind it was himself, a dictator of dictators for nearly a quarter of a century.

The golden image, towering nearly 28 metres high in the desert sun outside the city walls of Babylon, was striking. The archaeologist, Oppert, is recognised by many conservative scholars as finding a large mound located 10 kilometres south-east of the city, which very well could be the ancient pedestal of the statue.

Most theologians feel the statue was wood overlaid with gold rather than a solid gold structure, though there is no doubt that there was enough gold in the kingdom to do such. In any event, Nebuchadnezzar had designed a religious system of worship and “*commanded*” (3:4) all the authorities of the kingdom that had been brought together to “*..fall down and worship the golden image...*” (3:5). This was **forced idolatry**.

A sovereign God always has His witnesses, and though they may be a small remnant, they **stand for truth**. Such was the case with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The temptation to bow down to a false God could have been strong since everybody else was bowing, but they stood. Thank God for the men who stood...stood for God, stood for truth, in spite of promised persecution.

It is interesting to see that after their godless accusers had brought them before the king, Nebuchadnezzar offered them another chance; doubtless because of their testimony of integrity in serving him over the years (3:14-15). Still Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, stood without compromise:

“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king” (Dan 3:17).

The Gentile king goes into a rage, to the point of irrational thinking commanding the furnace to be heated seven times hotter (3:19), which would hasten death rather than torture them as he expected. The order of execution was immediate and they were cast alive into the fiery furnace (3:21-23). There is the promise of persecution when believers stand for God in a wicked society.

Now the miracle that every child of God can put their trust in is demonstrated. God in His sovereignty protected them in the fire. Nebuchadnezzar, amazed, looks into the furnace to see Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, AND one *“like the Son of God”* (Dan 3:25). The writer believes this was a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ. These are big theological words, but put simply they mean the appearance of the person of Christ before His human birth over 500 years later! A promise of preservation is given to those whom God sees fit to bring through the fires. This is a miracle that we dare not try to explain; rather we choose to believe that HE IS ABLE ...and He brought them through.

Now the king, witnessing the miracle with his own eyes, calls them to *“come forth, and come hither”* (3:26), recognising the power of the God of heaven over his own power.



A sketch of the stone Colossi of Memnon erected in the plain of Thebes (Egypt) by Amenhotep III, probably shortly after the time of Moses. Nebuchadnezzar's image was 60 cubits (90 feet) high and made of gold. We do not know if the image stood on an elevated base but it was probably a structure overlaid with gold which was the practice in those days. (See Isa 40:19).

“Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any God, except their own God” (Dan 3:28).

Note carefully that the king still does not indicate in any way that he is trusting their God as his God; yet he promoted them “...in the province of Babylon” (3:30). Thus the sovereignty of God is demonstrated over Gentile punishment. Our God is in control.

PRACTICALLY

The practical lesson for believers today is the encouragement and confidence that every child of God can claim when he stands strong in his testimony. God is in control and will not forsake His own when they are going through trials and persecution from the enemy: the world (system), the flesh or the devil. It is not to say that God will take us from the trial, or even around the trial, but when we go through the fires of testing and temptation ...HE goes through it with us. It is generally true that when we are in the hottest time of our trials the Lord’s presence is most precious to us; and, too, the time that our own testimony can be most effective in a hurting world.

A great verse that we can confidently claim when we feel like we want to give up or give in, is 1 Cor. 10:13:

*“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but **God is faithful**, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*

This is a powerful verse to memorise, to meditate on, and to hide in the heart of every believer, young and old: and when the pressure is on, claim it and **STAND STRONG** in the strength of the risen, sovereign Saviour. No child of God has to bow to the enemy! How we need more Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abednegos, in this day of compromise and confusion!

PROPHETICALLY

Though the first 6 chapters of Daniel are historical, the book as a whole is a prophetic thesis. In chapter 3 we see a clear prophetic type of Scripture which parallels much of our New Testament book of Revelation.

In the case of chapter 2 the prophecy is clearly stated. At other times, as in chapter 3, it can be a **prophetic type**. Let’s briefly note a few areas of prophetic truth pictured in the passage that is literally historical.

Nebuchadnezzar the **first** world ruler can be paralleled with the **last** world

ruler, Antichrist of the future Tribulation. Note Rev 13:4, 7, 12, &15 where we see a worship system and a picture of Satan’s powerful Ecumenical Church. Those refusing to worship will be subject to death. Worship will be by compulsion. The Lord Jesus Himself refers to

“the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place” (Matt 24:15).

The fiery furnace is a picture of the Tribulation period...the 70th week of Dan 9:27. Here a peace treaty is confirmed with the Jewish people, who are then deceived and betrayed by the counterfeit “peacemaker” (Rev 12).

The three Hebrew lads picture the 144,000 Jews (Rev 7) that will be preserved through much of the future fiery trial, as well as the two witnesses who will also will be sealed, until their ministry is complete (Rev. 11).

Finally, *“the most mighty men”* (Dan 3:20) that threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, into the fiery furnace and were themselves caught in the fire of judgment (Dan 3:22), are a type of the enemies of God. They compare to the beast and the false prophet who are *“cast alive into the lake of fire”* (Rev 19:20), and later, even *“the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire”* (Rev 20:10).

The prophetic picture is of the Great Tribulation through which the Church will never pass. Those who suffer at this time will be the repentant nation of Israel and those Gentiles that are saved through their testimony. However Christians are suffering in this present Church Age and, through the centuries, many have died rather than deny the Lord.

Dear friends, how can we not believe God and trust His Word? He is sovereign. He is in total control. The fiery trial for the believer today is the fire of purification that God permits; the **fire removes the cords** that bind us but the unbeliever, the counterfeit, the deceiver will be cast into fires of eternal judgment.

The believer’s future is one of VICTORY, and our hearts ache for those who are just playing the Christian game and are not genuine. Jesus Christ’s clear message, even to a spiritually blind religious leader like Nicodemus is *“...ye must be BORN AGAIN”* (John 3:7).

Trust the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the total price for our personal sin; He is *“...the way, the truth and the life”* (John 14:6). As believers we can confidently look *“for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ”* (Titus 2:13).

Chapter 4 - A Changed Life

THE fourth chapter in this book of Daniel centres around the self-written testimony of a Gentile heathen king who once ruled the powerful world kingdom of Babylon. The chapter is unique in that it is apparently a royal declaration of a testimony that becomes part of the inspired, inerrant Word of God.

The proud king of Babylon tells of a dream which God had given him to warn him that he would be removed from his throne until he acknowledged that the most High ruled in the kingdom of men, and gave it to whomever He chose. Nebuchadnezzar writes:

“Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much...and all flesh was fed of it.

I saw in the visions... a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

*Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let **seven times** pass over him.*

This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee” (Dan. 4:10-18).



Let me challenge the reader at this point to read through the chapter a couple of times and consider a number of great Biblical doctrines (teachings). The

doctrine of PEACE is established in the first verse... how the king found it, and how he wanted to share it with the world. He begins his testimony with *"Peace be multiplied unto you"* (Dan. 4:1).

Peace of heart is that characteristic for which man searches, often without even realising it. Man seeks peace through success, power, money, popularity or fame, through music, drugs, illicit sex, education etc.

This king had it all, but no peace till he recognised the source of it. Consider also in this chapter the doctrines of God's **love, grace, longsuffering, patience** and **power**; in contrast with man's **pride, sinfulness, stubbornness, blindness** and **rejection**. Consider also the great doctrines of **repentance, salvation, regeneration, witness, and worship**. A powerful chapter of doctrines indeed!

HISTORICALLY

The subject is Nebuchadnezzar, dictator of Babylon, the world-empire's king (Dan. 2:37-38). The Lord gave His people, Judah, to Nebuchadnezzar for 70 years of chastening (1:1-2). At the end of the 70 years, when God was finished with the chastening process of His people, the kingdom of Babylon was toppled and the Jews returned to their land. God had raised up Babylon for His purpose!

Nebuchadnezzar had every opportunity to recognise and submit to the God of heaven after the miraculous recall and interpretation of the king's dream in chapter 2; yet Nebuchadnezzar, though recognising Daniel's God as a God of gods, fell short of trusting Him as his God! (2:47). Again, the miracle of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's going through the fiery furnace gave Nebuchadnezzar proof of the power of their God, yet still he didn't see his own need (3:29).

Something now has happened in chapter four as it unfolds like a gospel tract with the first three verses becoming the "introduction" on the front cover. *"My life has changed and I want to tell you about it!"*

Nebuchadnezzar's personal account of his story begins in verse four, after he has gained world power and is *"flourishing"* in his palace. From verses 4-18 we see that God has sent the king a troubling dream to warn him of coming judgment. The dream centred around a tree, the greatest living thing on earth. The tree is cut down and is personalised as a human being in verses 14 and following. Note the pronouns *"his"* and *"him"* in verses 14-16. What could it mean? Perhaps the key to the entire book of Daniel lies in the 17th verse:



“That the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”

Thus the theme of the book is the SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD; He is in control. Though Nebuchadnezzar’s professionals (verse 7) failed to understand the dream, Daniel immediately knew that God was about to humble the proud dictator. Daniel was both “*astonished*” and “*troubled*” (verse 19), so much so that he did not respond for an hour till the king pressed him for an answer.

The tree was the king, powerful and mighty on the earth, yet arrogant pride kept Nebuchadnezzar from recognising God in His sovereignty; therefore he was to be cut down, yet in the mercy of God, kept from death. Ultimately, his kingdom would be preserved (Dan. 4:22-26).

Daniel had prayed for Nebuchadnezzar, his God-given master, and now he begs the king to repent of his sins and show evidence of a changed life; but again pride keeps the king spiritually blind for twelve more months (verses 27-29). Boldly Daniel said:

“Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity” (Dan. 4:27).

The next twelve months saw Nebuchadnezzar complete his military triumphs with the conquest of the land of Egypt. His victory was made easy by a civil war in Egypt that weakened the nation as Amasis the General of the Egyptian Army, overthrew Pharaoh-hophra. Ezekiel the prophet tells us that it was God who gave the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as “*wages for his army*” for the service he rendered to the Lord when he destroyed the coastal city of Tyre in 586BC (Ezek. 29:18-20). During a 13-year siege the people of Tyre took all their treasures to an island one kilometer off shore and there were no spoils left in the coastal city for Nebuchadnezzar. It was God who broke “*the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt*” (Ezek. 30:21) and it was God who “*put a fear in the land of Egypt*” (Ezek. 30:13) so that Nebuchadnezzar could take away the vast riches of Egypt yet he failed to give God the glory and said,

*“Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom **by the might of my power**, and for the honor of my majesty?”* (Dan. 4:30).



Nebuchanezzar stripped the land of Egypt bare in 570 BC and scattered the Egyptians among the nations where they remained for 40 years never again to regain its place over the nations. It was on his triumphal return to Babylon with vast treasures that he was struck down. With pride at its peak (verse 30) God's grace brings the king to humility and he is stricken with "lycanthropy", a sudden mental illness that causes him to act like a wild animal, yet he is left with the ability to change his heart during the insanity. For seven years the king, doubtless the most powerful of ancient kings, lived in the field and ate like an animal "*till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws*" (verse 33); yet his throne remained unchallenged. Again, God was in control.

Humbled because of God's love the king is now converted...changed; and his new life begins with recognising and trusting in the God of heaven. Instant freedom is followed by praise and worship as he is now restored to his throne to tell the world that God IS SOVEREIGN (verses 34-36).

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (verse 37).

Nebuchadnezzar was restored to the throne for only one year before his long reign ended in 562 BC but his "testimony tract" is still a lesson to all of us 2,500 years after the event. Alexander Whyte's great text on Bible Characters states:

"Though long dead, King Nebuchadnezzar still speaks in the Book of Daniel, and on a thousand cylinders in the British Museum; and on every page of Daniel. So on every brick of Babylon, he that runs may read this text: *'those that walk in pride the King of heaven is able to abase'*" (p. 408).

I can hear Nebuchadnezzar saying, "*That's my story! What is yours?*"

PROPHETICALLY

Allow me to quote *The Relation of the Dream Tree to Prophecy* from Dr Lehman Strauss' commentary on Daniel, page 140-141:

"The Book of Daniel is not a collection of twelve disconnected and unrelated chapters. In addition to the historical details, and the moral and spiritual lessons to be applied to us all, the book has its clear prophetic aspect, as stated by our Lord in Matt. 24:15. We saw this first in the dream image in chapter 2, where the picture was presented of an image showing four world empires through the course of history. Babylon was to be followed by Persia, then Greece and finally Rome, and this would

be revived in the last days as the final Gentile world power which will be overthrown when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth to set up His everlasting kingdom. The main purpose of Daniel, then, is to present the times of the Gentiles, tracing the course of human government from the days of the kingdom of Babylon to our Lord's second coming.

The seven years of Nebuchadnezzar's madness reflect, in type at least, another seven-year period yet future. It is that seventieth "week" (Dan. 9:24-27), the period of seven years when the last great Gentile ruler will control the nations of the earth in his insane madness.

This is all typical and prophetic of the reign of the Antichrist between the rapture of the Church and Christ's second coming to the earth. Just as Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon succeeded in conquering the then known world, providing food and shelter for all (Dan. 4:11-12), so the ecumenical Babylon of the last days, under the Antichrist, will control all buying and selling as well as all religious activity (Rev. 13). Today this one-world government is in the making, promising to all races a great society of man-made prosperity and peace, the cessation of poverty and war."

As in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the pride of man will reach its zenith, as Antichrist will

"exalt himself and magnify himself...he shall magnify himself above all"
(Dan. 12:36-37).

When proud man reaches the pinnacle of his own effort and achievement, the Lord will cut him down. Nebuchadnezzar, the first world ruler, found grace; but Antichrist, the last world ruler, and his false prophet, will be cast into the lake of fire for ever (Rev. 19:20).

My concluding word is one of encouragement. Just as there was hope for the personal conversion of Nebuchadnezzar, so there is hope to you who read these lines. If you have not experienced a genuine conversion to God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then remember that God loves you, and He will go to extraordinary lengths to bring you to humble yourself and thus become the object of His mercy.

Do you wonder why calamity has struck your life? Have you thought that a loving God might be bringing you to the end of yourself so that you will be humbled before God? Turn to Him now, and prove that

"the Lord is good and his mercy endures for ever" (Ps. 107:1).

Chapter 5 - The Head of Gold Toppled

IN THIS chapter we see the kingdom of Babylon overthrown overnight, twenty-six years after Nebuchadnezzar's death. The second world kingdom, Medo-Persia, seen in the dream in chapter two, toppled the "head...of fine gold", replacing it with the "breast and arms of silver" (Dan. 2:32, 39-40). A number of Babylonian kings followed after Nebuchadnezzar's death as seen in the historical records.

- 1) **Nebuchadnezzar** (Died 562 B.C.).
- 2) **Evil-Merodach**, - Nebuchadnezzar's son (2 Kgs 25:27-30).
- 3) **Neglissar**, - Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law.
- 4) **Nabonidus** - Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law (Belshazzar's father).

Yet for many years there was no sign in the histories of ancient empires of a Belshazzar as recorded in the Bible, Daniel 5. This gave great fuel to the Biblical critics, who denounced the Bible as unreliable and inaccurate until scholarly research found Belshazzar's name on the *Nabonidus Cylinders*.

"The identity of Belshazzar has long caused difficulty to commentators; some have denied his historicity...The king's name, however, has now appeared upon the cuneiform documents, so that there can be no question as to his historicity. This is the first point at which this chapter exhibits its remarkable accuracy" (E.J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 115).

Thus this detail pictures a **co-regency** between the last recorded king Nabonidus, who was known for his extensive travel, and his son Belshazzar, to whom the father left his "kingly" responsibilities. These findings make the text of the Scripture clear when Belshazzar offers Daniel a position in the kingdom: "...[you] shall be **THIRD** in the kingdom." Friends, the Word of God will eventually vindicate itself of every "seeming" discrepancy.

A TOUR THROUGH CHAPTER 5

Now for a quick tour through the events of the chapter...the record of the last evening of the great Babylonian Empire during which it was toppled. In verses one to four we find the proud king Belshazzar throwing a heathen party and being defiant toward the God of heaven. He brings out the sacred vessels that had been brought from the Temple in Jerusalem by his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar 70 years previous. They "**DRANK**" (used in all four verses) from God's sacred vessels and praised the "gods of gold...silver...brass...iron...wood...stone" (Dan. 5:4). This was clear sacrilege, profanity, and wickedness.

History tells us that the powers of Media and Persia had the walled city surrounded and could have overtaken the Babylonians, except for the protective walls which made it impossible to be conquered. The food supply within the walls would have lasted for years and the fresh water from the Euphrates flowing through the city gave Belshazzar a strong sense of security, complicated by power and pride. Thus he laughed and mocked the potential conquerors and even the God of heaven. A unique supernatural phenomenon then takes place in the context of verses 5-16. Within the hour

“came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall” (Dan. 5:5).

What a shock to the king! He called in his professional interpreters, who could not understand the meaning of the four words. At last the aged Daniel was brought in and offered the position of *“the third ruler in the kingdom”* (Dan. 5:16) if he could interpret the mysterious message.



Daniel's response and interpretation is given in verses 17-29, reminding the king of his pride, and of how God had brought Nebuchadnezzar to his knees till he recognised the sovereign God (verses 20-22). The mystery words revealed immediate judgment on the sacrilege, idolatry, and wickedness of this kingdom (Dan 26-28).

"MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it.

"TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting.

"PERES; Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians".

THE HISTORICAL JUDGMENT OF CHAPTER 5

The closing verses in the chapter (vs30-31) conclude the record with the words *"IN THAT NIGHT"*, and reflect the fact that judgment came swiftly when Babylon was overthrown. History confirms this as indicated in the NABONIDUS CHRONICLE, on October 12th, 536 B.C.

The conquering armies had diverted the flow of the Euphrates River north of the city and launched a surprise attack, when the water level decreased, along the river bed which crossed the city. The gates to the river had been left open and the city's defenders were blinded by false security and pride. Within hours of the warning of God, judgment struck and *"Belshazzar [was] slain."* God's sovereignty over Gentile defenses was demonstrated.

PRACTICAL AND PROPHETICAL LESSONS

The practical lesson, as well as a prophetic insight, pictures the challenge which the apostle Paul shares:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous,boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded. Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim 3:1-4).

In a day when man's emphasis is on worldly pleasure, eating and drinking, the worship of sports, and material prosperity amidst true spiritual poverty, judgment will come. The Lord Jesus Christ will take His children home *"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"*(1 Cor15:52), followed by the tribulational judgment on earth. God is sovereign; His timing is right on schedule. Are you ready? Make sure you have put your genuine faith in the risen, coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(For a detailed study of this chapter see Dr. Renald Showers book 'THE MOST HIGH GOD'.

Chapter 6 - Victory in the Lion's Den

DANIEL in the lions' den is no doubt one of the most popular events in the Old Testament and possibly the best known story to Sunday School students. On the other hand, the clear teaching of the sovereignty of God, so obvious in this sixth-century-BC event is little understood.

THE HISTORICAL PICTURE

In considering the background and history of this popular chapter, let us look back at chapter 1 where Daniel had been taken captive as a young man and chosen to be a part of a three-year training program for intelligent young captives, who were to be educated in the Babylonian culture in the service of Nebuchadnezzar, yet Daniel stood strong in his love for the Lord and would not compromise his Biblical convictions. God honoured his commitment and Daniel was blessed of God throughout the seventy year captivity in Babylon. In chapter 5 we saw the end of the kingdom of Babylon as the Medo-Persian Empire overthrew the Babylonians on the night of October 12, 536B.C. The head of gold was toppled (See Dan. 5:30-31).

It is an amazing testimony that Daniel was so respected, in spite of his age of over eighty, perhaps even over ninety; he was placed in the most responsible position under the king of the Medes and Persians. In the opening verses (6:1-3) we find Daniel as the preferred president over the other presidents and 120 princes because of his God-given wisdom and spirit. Daniel was now second only to the Persian king.

The events of the corrupt political system now begin to unfold and the aim of his political enemies was to destroy the man of God. It was often true that a Gentile power could not tolerate a Jew being in such a high position. (Now note all the "*thens*" in over half of the verses as the story flows rapidly... doubtless altogether just a few days.) Daniel's life and background is scrutinised by his political rivals, only to find a flawless character. The only conclusion the enemy can come up with is his faithfulness to "... *the law of his God*" (v:4).

Next we see the evil plot being initiated with a lie - "...*ALL the presidents...*" (v:7). Daniel, the chief president, certainly had not agreed and these men had connived to use the test of "*loyalty to the king*" as a pretext to destroy Daniel. They proposed worship of the king alone for thirty days, with a harsh sentence imposed to ensnare Daniel (Dan. 6:4-9).

The king signs, or better, seals with his ring the new law, believing the hypocrisy of these jealous leaders he has placed over his kingdom. The uniqueness of the

law of the Medes and the Persians was that once it was sealed, it could not be altered, even by the king himself, and the deceivers knew this.

Daniel's steadfast testimony had remained true over the decades, and his **devotion to the Lord** was his top priority even though he knew a trap had been set for him (Dan. 6:10). Now the enemies of the faith spring their trap catching Daniel on his knees before the Lord. The immediate challenge now comes to the king with this new law that could not be changed, and Darius realises he has been deceived and *"was sore displeased with himself"* (Dan. 6:11-15).

Consider the contrast in this context with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in chapter three. The three men of God stood when the world bowed before the idol, but here Daniel bows before the living God when others refused to bow the knee!

The drama unfolds as the king is now forced to execute the law in spite of his great respect for the man of God. The faith of King Darius is amazing to the degree that he spends a restless night in the palace, rising early in the morning

"Is thy God able to deliver thee?"



"My God ...hath shut the lions' mouths"

to find Daniel untouched in the den of lions. The king was delighted! Daniel is drawn out of the den unharmed "because he believed in his God". Now the king is disgusted with the political corruption and has all the deceivers and their families cast to the savage lions to be devoured by those powerful beasts (Dan. 6:16-24).

As we come to the close of these first six chapters of history, the last four verses (Dan. 6:25-28) portray peace reigning over the kingdom because of the recognition of Daniel's God, the living God, who is truly sovereign in EVERY situation.

The historical context of the life of Daniel comes to a close and we read that "*Daniel prospered.*" It all began when, as a young man, he "*purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank*" (Dan. 1:8). What a powerful testimony of a godly man pursuing a godly course through life though the world was against him!

THE PRACTICAL PICTURE

This challenging chapter overflows with personal application for the life of the born-again believer today! We all face lions in our lives as we desire to be a testimony for our Lord Jesus Christ. The enemy is out to discourage and destroy our influence, our testimony, and our stand for our Saviour and the Word of God.

To identify the lions is step one in applying faith in a sovereign God and claiming victory. Perhaps your lion is physical, an incurable handicap or disease, an injury from an accident that has left deep scars. The lion could be discouragement, or a breakdown from unbelievable stress from continued worry, or trying to work out failure in your own personal life with self-effort. Could the lion be a result of slander or intense gossip from the enemy, or even "carnal" Christians in the Church?

The lions affect our spiritual growth, resulting in giving up, quitting, or doing "our own thing". The lions destroy confidence, worth and purpose in life, driving the believer to loneliness, depression, and even to the point of wondering if our faith is genuine. Are you ready to "throw in the towel?" The lions are so real!

Dear believer, God is still sovereign. He is in control. If He loves the sinner enough to send His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, to die for us, how much more does He love His own repentant children. Claim the unshakable promises.

“Casting ALL your care upon him, for he careth for you... the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”
 (1 Peter 5:7,10).

We can stand on the solid promises of the Word of God, in spite of the lions, knowing that God is sovereign. We must not trust our emotions or feelings over the truth of the written promises. In spite of the lions, claim God's victory in the challenges of life.

THE PROPHETIC PICTURE

Dr. Lehman Strauss summarises a prophetic preview of this great chapter: “Just as we have seen a prophetic foreview of things to come in chapters 2,3,and 4, so there is another prophetic glimpse in chapter 6. The deliverance of Daniel foreshadows the deliverance of another faithful Jewish remnant. Darius foreshadows the man of sin when he sits *‘in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God’* (2 Thess. 2:4). During the Tribulation the **persecution of the Jewish remnant** is Satanic, but their preservation will be supernatural (Rev. 7:3,14; 12:13-17). The parallel between the experience of Daniel and the believing remnant of Israel during the Great Tribulation is obvious.”

G. H. Lang wrote,

“All this is prophetic, a revelation of principles perpetually operating. Antichrist will claim for himself divine honors; he alone shall be worshipped. The alternative will be death (Rev. 13:14-15). Again the Tribulation saints will need endurance to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12). They who endure to the end of those dread days shall be saved physically at the descent of the Son of man (Matt. 24:13-14; Mark13:13); and at the same time the martyrs by resurrection shall all be accounted by the Lord, worthy **to rule in His kingdom.**”

C. Gaebelien wrote,

“The deliverance of Daniel once more foreshadows the **deliverance of the faithful Jewish remnant**. It is strange that expositors and teachers put the Church into this time of the end. The Church, according to the testimony of the New Testament Scripture, will no longer be on earth when this predicted time of the end comes. We have then seen that these four chapters foreshadow the moral characteristics of the Gentiles, down to the end when the stone smites the image and it will forever pass away. Self-exaltation, the pride and deification of man, impiety, blasphemy, hatred,

persecution, cruelty, and man putting himself in the place of God are the leading features.”

H. A. Ironside, commenting on chapter 6, said,

“It will be necessary now to dwell somewhat particularly upon the typical character of all this. The whole scene points us on to a time when Daniel’s people will once more be *restored to their land*, and there shall rise up among them one who will magnify himself above all that is called God and is worshipped.”

Dr. Ironside then devoted nine pages in his Lectures on Daniel to “The Faithful Remnant.”

O.B. Greene said,

“There is a deep spiritual lesson in the deliverance of Daniel from the lions’ den. Here is a picture of the **preservation of Israel** through the lions’ den of the Tribulation period under the reign of Antichrist.”

P.R. Newell wrote,

“This sixth chapter is significantly prophetic: There will presently appear upon earth a satanically energised man, of whom we will learn important details later in this book of Daniel, who is to demand in fact that which Darius was duped into demanding – worship of himself (2Thess 2; Rev 13). Such of God’s people Israel who may be there in that evil day, may well take courage from Daniel’s devotion to his God, and from his preservation from otherwise certain terrible death.”

In 1893 Edward Dennett wrote,

“The deliverance of Daniel is also typical. He prefigures the remnant; God’s faithful remnant, who will be found in Jerusalem and the land during the days of Antichrist’s fearful sway. Through the machinations of their enemies they will be cast, as it were, into the lions’ den, surrounded on all sides by the various displays of Satan’s power, and their destruction will appear to human eyes to be imminent and certain. But God will Himself protect them, and interposing for their release by the appearing of **Christ, will bring upon their enemies the very judgment** which they had designed for His people.”

Thus the sixth chapter of this great book of Daniel ends - truly HISTORICAL, PRACTICAL, and PROPHETICAL. May it stir our heart to action while our Lord Jesus tarries His coming. Remember, God is SOVEREIGN and in total control. What a powerful truth!

Chapter 7 - Earth's Warring Kingdoms

NOW we begin a new section in the prophecies of Daniel. The prophecy of chapter seven was given to God's servant in the **first year of Belshazzar**, king of Babylon, prior to the fall of the Babylonian kingdom and the handwriting on the wall of chapter five. Thus the chronology of the chapters of this book could be listed as chapters 1-2-3-4-7-8-5-9-6-10-11-12. This second half of the book of Daniel could be called the Prophetic Visions of the Prophet himself. It comprises some of the most interesting reading in the entire Bible, the theme continues to be THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD in His dealings with the nation of Israel.

In chapter seven, after Nebuchadnezzar's death yet during the world rule of the Babylonian Empire, God gives Daniel a picture of the overall Gentile dominion over His chosen people, Israel. This parallels the subject dealt with in chapter two, the difference being that chapter two is written from man's point of view, whereas chapter seven presents God's view of the same events. In chapter two man sees himself as a powerful figure in the great image of the statue; chapter seven, however, shows God's view of man's power as warring beasts rising up to overthrow one another.

MAN'S VIEW OF THE KINGDOMS ON EARTH - DANIEL 2

In our study of chapter 2 we saw the prophetic kingdoms pictured in the head of gold, arms and breast of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and legs of iron, culminating with the feet and toes of part iron and part clay. The dream then moved into action when a stone cut without hands appeared and crushed the last kingdom into powder. The interpretation revealed that the four world kingdoms were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, followed by a still future kingdom that would be crushed by the Stone, or God's kingdom. Note Daniel's comment at the end of 2:45, "*God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter, and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure*".

GOD'S VIEW OF THE KINGDOMS ON EARTH - DANIEL 7

Let's parallel the image with the beast of chapter seven, and we will see even more detail from God's point of view. Daniel is introduced to four great beasts, and according to Daniel 7:17 they are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. Let's identify them in relation to the historical record.

THE FIRST BEAST - BABYLON

The first beast in verse 4 was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. This is using the image of the king of the beasts and the eagle, the most powerful of the creatures of the air. These mighty animals correspond to the head of gold and the power of the Babylonian Kingdom. Perhaps the plucking of the wings, lifted up and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it, could refer to Nebuchadnezzar himself after his chapter-four conversion.



THE SECOND BEAST - MEDO-PERSIA

The bear of verse five raised up on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it, and they said thus unto it, *“Arise, devour much flesh”*. This clearly parallels the second world empire of the breast and arms of silver in chapter two. Historically it is the Medo-Persian Empire. Raising itself up on one side would reflect that eventually Persia would become the dominant power, and the three ribs in its mouth seem to be the conquering of Babylon, Media and Persia. These three nations made up the original Persian Empire. The empire was aptly described as massive and slow-moving like a large bear, and in its conquest of Greece they fielded a military force estimated by some ancient historians at 2,500,000 men - devouring much flesh or capturing many people.



THE THIRD BEAST - GREECE

The third beast is presented to us in verse six and pictures a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings as a fowl and also four heads; and dominion was given to it. Here we see a clear prophecy of the Grecian Kingdom conquering the Persians under the leadership of Alexander the Great. Like the leopard, his army was known for its speed, springing upon its prey (enemy). Looking back



into the historical account of this era, it baffles the mind to realise just how quickly Alexander conquered the world, ultimately dying at the young age of 33. After Alexander's short reign and death, the vast empire from Macedonia to Africa in the south, and eastward to India, was **divided into the four geographical areas** of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia etc, and part Greece etc, each being under the control of one of his four leading generals; thus the four heads of the leopard. The king of Egypt was known as the **king of the south** and the king of Syria, the **king of the north**.

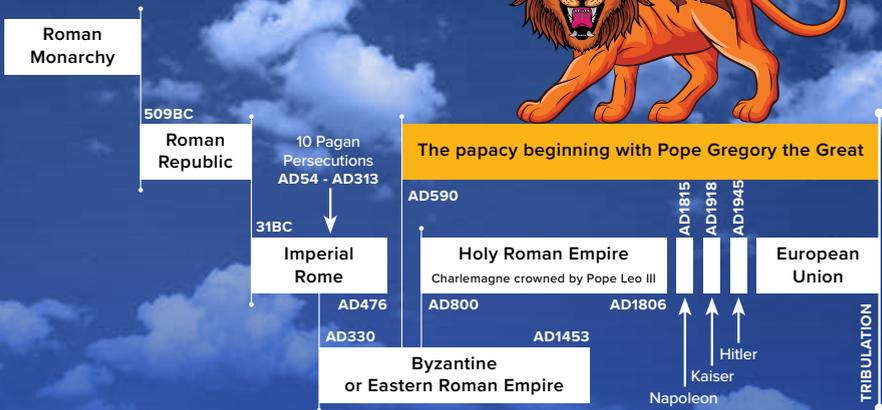
It is interesting to note here the last phrase in verse six, "...and dominion was given to it". As much as it appears that man is in control of circumstances, indeed God is the Sovereign Ruler. Note also the accuracy of the prophetic word in the speed and the four-fold division of the Grecian Empire predicted hundreds of years before it took place. Indeed, God is in control and knows the end from the beginning, with all the little details!

THE FOURTH BEAST - ROME STAGE 1 AND 2

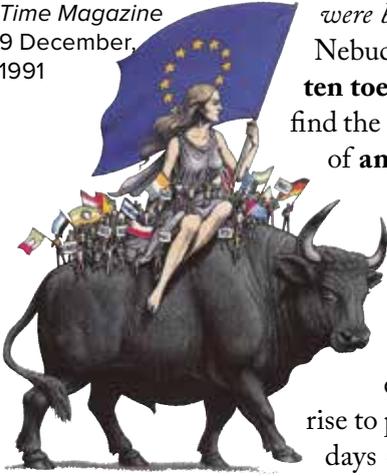
Daniel has described the first three beasts very carefully, but the fourth beast captures his attention. After identifying this nondescript beast, we see his serious concern developing in verse nineteen and following. The 23rd verse interprets this kingdom which was "diverse from all the beasts that

The Roman Empire

The 4th World Empire



Time Magazine
9 December,
1991



were before it; ” and when we study the parallel with Nebuchadnezzar’s Image of chapter two, we see the **ten toes** coming from the iron legs and feet. Here we find the “**ten horns**” (verse 7) and an additional revelation of **another “little horn**” (verse 8). History shows this fourth kingdom as the Roman Empire which is never completely conquered.

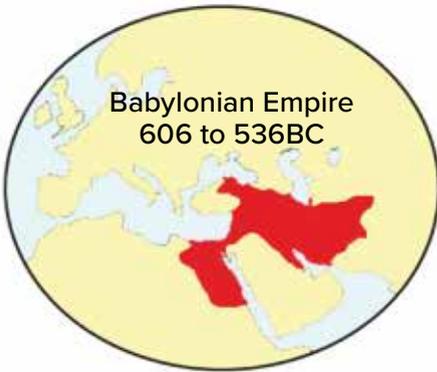
The serious student of Scripture will recognise that the intervening present age, or “mystery” Church Age (Eph. 3:1-9), comes between the early stages of this fourth kingdom and its later rise to power in its ten-stage confederacy in the closing days of man’s beastly rule on earth. **The little horn appears in the final stage**, and is the dominant

personality described in verses 9, 21, & 24 thro’ 26. The Apostle Paul labels this person the “*man of sin*” in his description in 2 Thess. 2:3-4, and Jesus referred to his idol as the “*abomination of desolation*” (Matt. 24:15), quoting Dan. 9:27. Zechariah sees him as the “*idol shepherd*” (Zech. 11:17), and Daniel points out that he is “*the (Roman) prince which shall come*” (Dan. 9:27) identified with the people who destroyed the “*city and sanctuary*” in AD 70 which gives us another link between Antichrist and the fourth kingdom of Rome. This is the final dictator of the future Tribulation before the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth to reign. The Tribulation is detailed in Revelation chapters 6-20, and is commonly known as the “70th week of Daniel”. We will deal with this subject in more detail in chapter 9.

It is not until we come to the New Testament, Revelation chapter 17, that we learn how Antichrist’s rise to power is directed by the “*harlot woman*” (apostate Christendom) who rides the Beast, and is called “**mystery Babylon the Great**” (v 5). The figure of a woman riding a beast is used of the European Union as the picture above indicates; it was one of a number of pictures used in an article on the formation of the EU in *Time Magazine* 9 December 1991. The woman in Rev. 17 is seen sitting on the “*seven mountains*” of Rome (v 9), is both political and religious (v 1-2), has international

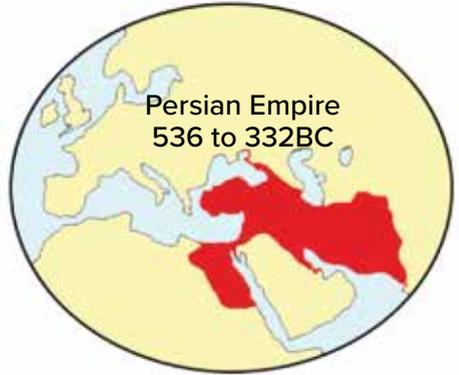


EU coin



Babylonian Empire
606 to 536BC

Babylon



Persian Empire
536 to 332BC

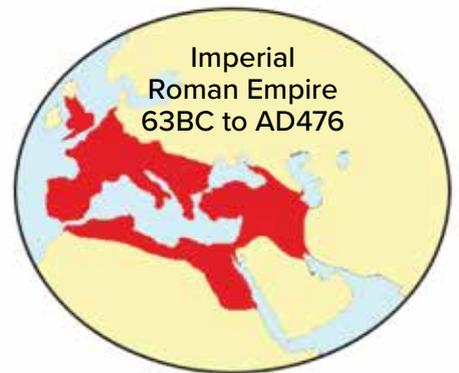
Persia



Grecian Empire
after Alexander
306 to 63BC

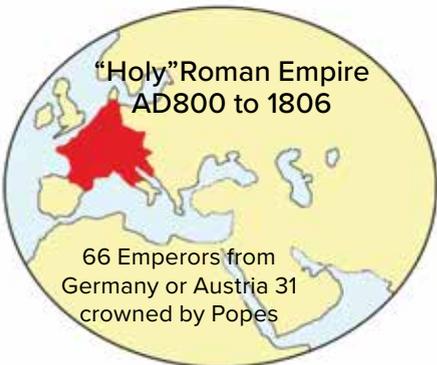
Macadonian Kingdom
Grecian Kingdom
Ptolemaic Kingdom
Seleucid Kingdom

Greece after Alexander



Imperial
Roman Empire
63BC to AD476

Imperial Rome



“Holy” Roman Empire
AD800 to 1806

66 Emperors from
Germany or Austria 31
crowned by Popes

Holy Roman Empire



The EU will
finally consist of
only ten nations

Revived Roman Empire

connections (v 1), possesses great wealth (v 4), is guilty of the death of the “*martyrs of Jesus*”(v 6), and in John’s day is described as “*that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth*” (v 18).

All of the above clues as to the identity of the harlot woman point to the Vatican and it is the Roman Catholic Church that is **guiding** the formation of the Revived Roman Empire. The Pope will not be the Antichrist for Antichrist and the 10 kings who support him will eventually burn the harlot woman (Rev. 17:16-17; Rev. 18). Antichrist will be the final political leader over the revived Roman Empire.

The woman therefore refers to the idolatrous religion of Rome which began with the pagan Roman “*mystery religions*” and in 600AD developed into the Papacy which today is the guiding force behind the Revived Roman Empire known as the European Union. It was established on the 1957 **Treaty of Rome**.

It is quite clear therefore that Antichrist will arise for a “*short space*” of time (Rev. 17:10), actually seven years, as the last ruler of the Roman Empire after the Church has been caught away at the Rapture. Paul makes it clear that the Great Tribulation, known as the “*Day of the Lord*”, “**shall not come, except there come (the) falling away first**” (lit. ‘**the departure first**’), and that man of sin be revealed” (2Thess. 2:1-11). When the Church is “*taken out of the way*” Antichrist will be revealed as the head of Europe which will be **divided into ten parts** as seen in the “*ten toes*” of the image and “*ten horns*” of the fourth beast (Rome).

THE ANCIENT OF DAYS - THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The final kingdom is presented in verses 9 through 14 and 27-28, and would parallel verses 2:44-45 , “*a kingdom which shall never be destroyed*” (Note the duplicate wording at the end of Dan. 7:14).

The scene in this context parallels Revelation 4 and 5, with the saints around the throne of God prior to the execution of Divine judgment on earth. The “*Ancient of days*” appears to characterise God the Father distinct from God the Son who appears in verse 13:

“And there was given him (Christ) dominion, and glory, and a kingdom”.

Thus we find in this context: The scene in heaven is viewed and the introduction given to the final judgments on earth (vs. 9-10).

The little horn, the Antichrist, the last ruler on earth is judged and “*his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame*”(vs. 10-12). John sees the Beast and

the False Prophet “*cast alive into a lake of fire*” when Christ comes to reign (Rev. 19:20). The “*Beast*” of Revelation 13 and 17 is the “*Little Horn*” of Daniel 7.

The Son of Man, the promised Messiah, comes to establish the everlasting kingdom (v:13-14). Compare this statement with the context of verse 27.

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him”
(Dan. 7:27).

A CLOSING CHALLENGE

Daniel closes the vision with verse 28, “*troubled*”. But today, nearly 2,500 years after this great prophetic portion of inspired Scripture was written, it can relate to a much broader picture because of our privileged access to the whole Word of God and the evidence of prophecy fulfilled in history.

The context of the vision deals with the nation of Israel and the coming seven-year Tribulation. Today, this unique people are back in their land, for the first time in over 1,900 years.

Since the nation of Israel’s rejection of the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, God has raised up a mystery called-out people to be the remnant witness, known as the Church. To be part of God’s true Church, we must be “*born from above*” by putting our faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who paid the price, a perfect sacrifice for our sin. Three days later He conquered death, proving Himself to be the Son of God (I Cor. 5:3-4).

Once the Church has finished her mission God will take her home. Every born-again believer, dead and living, will be “*caught up*” with the Saviour, as clearly taught in I Cor. 15:51-54 and I Thess. 4:13-17. Then God will centre His focus on the nation of Israel and bring a remnant to Himself through the first half of the last seven years of Great Tribulation. It is the “*time of Jacob’s trouble*” (Jer. 30:7).

The prophetic picture and the current news seem to point to the fact that God’s timing is close to taking the true Church home, and dealing again with the nation of Israel that He loves!

“When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory”
(Psalm 102:16).

May our hearts be challenged to be students of the prophetic Word, and to share the great truth of a triumphant Christ with a lost, confused world.
GOD IS SOVEREIGN and HIS TIMING IS PERFECT!

Chapter 8 - A Ram, a Goat and a Little Horn

THE eighth chapter of the book of Daniel is most amazing with a detailed prophetic picture of Israel's near future, yet it was predicted 200 years before many of the events took place. The clear wording and fulfillment of the prophecies dares the critical, liberal scholar, who tries his best to "late-date" the Book of Daniel, to accept the supernatural inspiration of this book. This "scoffer" attempts to say that Daniel was written after its predictions took place.

Let's examine the Background, the Vision, and the Interpretation, as well as the Historical Record of this chapter, as we continue studying the BIG PICTURE of the Book of Daniel with the great theme of the sovereignty of God!

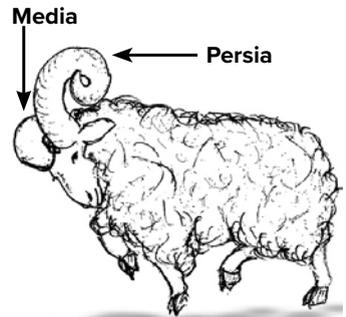
BACKGROUND

The language of this eighth chapter reverts to Hebrew because the emphasis is now on God's chosen people, Israel, and their place in His prophetic plan. From chapter 2:4 through the seventh chapter, the original language was Aramaic, the language of the Gentile nations which is unique in the Old Testament Scriptures. Remember too the chronology here was prior to the events of chapter five, and prior to the fall of the Babylonian Empire, and in the third year (8:1) of the Babylonian king Belshazzar (two years after the vision of chapter 7:1).

Also we want to note how the prophecies of chapter eight are an enlargement of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar's statue regarding the second and third kingdoms (Persia and Greece), "...his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass" (2:32b). This also parallels part of Daniel's vision in our previous study of the second and third warring beasts -the bear and the leopard (7:5-6). Note the parallels on the chart on page 36.

THE VISION OF THE RAM

From verse two, Daniel "in a vision" sees himself in the capital of the Medo-Persian Empire. The prophet immediately sees a ram with two horns growing from its head, with the latter horn growing higher than the first. The ram is seen pushing west, north, and south, and no other beast was able to stop it; it was determined to conquer.



THE VISION OF THE GOAT



As Daniel is observing, his attention is drawn to a male goat from the west which moved so swiftly toward the ram that it did not touch the ground. The goat is seen with a unique large horn "...between his eyes." (verse 5). As the action continues, the goat collides with the ram in its "*fury and choler*" (anger) and kills the ram, breaking its two horns (verses 6-7). The goat continues to gain strength, and in his prime the "*great horn was broken*", while **four horns** grew up in its place.

THE VISION OF THE LITTLE HORN

Beginning with verse nine, Daniel observes a "*little horn*" growing **out of one of the four**; this then is personified and moves to conquer the south, east, and the "*pleasant land*," (Israel) becoming great and powerful through self-exaltation (8:10-11).

THE INTERPERTATION

The interpretation context begins in verse 15 as Daniel "*...sought for the meaning, then behold there stood before me (Daniel) as the appearance of a man.*" Note this was not a "*man*", but Daniel saw the "*appearance of a man.*" This was indeed the angel Gabriel (8:16) making his first identifiable appearance in Scripture. Later, in Daniel 9:21 he appears again to Daniel, and 550 years later to Zacharias and Mary (Luke 1:19-26). Gabriel was commissioned to give Daniel understanding of the vision.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE RAM

"The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia" (8:20)

Here we do not have to speculate. The Ram clearly pictures the Medo-Persian powers as Scripture states. Though the prophetic vision took place during Babylonian rule near BC 550, this empire was later overthrown in a night – October 12, BC 536 (5:30-31) during a drunken orgy under the rule of Belshazzar. At this time the power of Media dominated, pictured by the one horn; then the latter horn, Persia, gained strength and grew higher (8:3b), becoming the dominant power. Cyrus the Persian pushed to the west and north, and later his son enlarged the kingdom to the south, conquering Egypt. The empire was vastly expanded during its 200 year rule



Sketch of image of Macedonian Goat recovered by archeologists

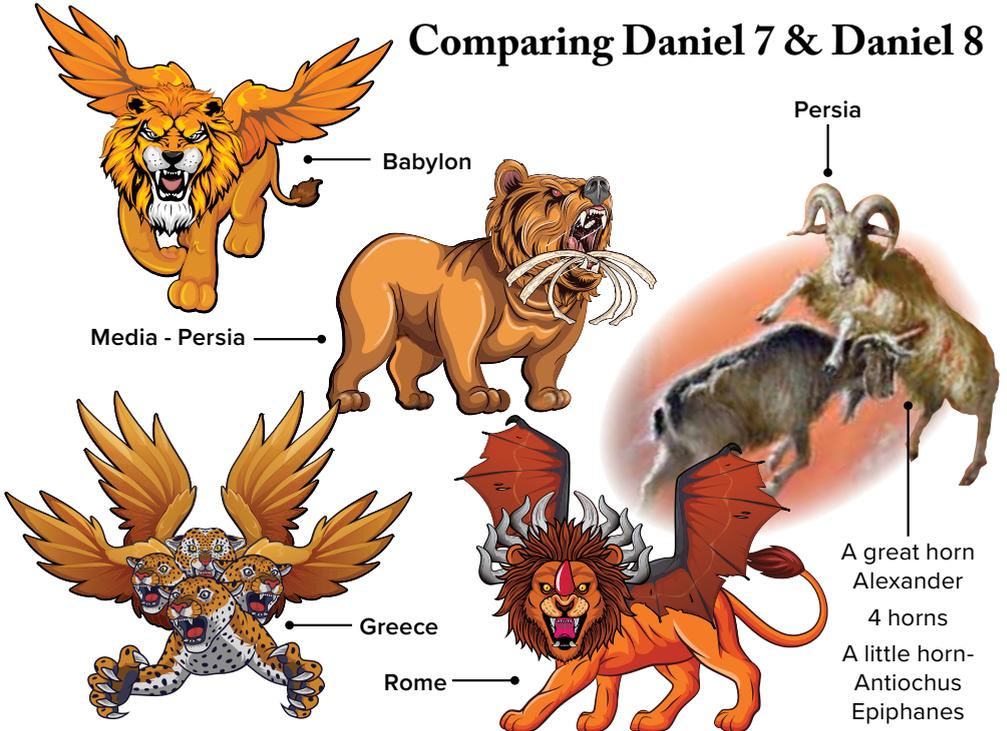
“according to his will and became great” (Dan. 8:4). It is interesting too that the Ram was imprinted on the Persian coins and on the headgear of the emperors. Again, the amazing sovereignty of God is reflected in this prophetic context!

THE HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE GOAT

“And the rough goat is the king of Grecia; and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king” (Dan. 8:21).

The sovereignty of God again is reflected in this verse in the most amazing way. Some 200 years after Daniel’s vision, Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire, the then world, in twelve brief years, giving absolute credibility to the speed predicted in the words “...and touched not the ground” (8:5). Ironically, the first Greek colony established was known as Aegea, meaning “the goat city”, and later the sea coast was named the Aegean Sea or the “Goat Sea.”

Comparing Daniel 7 & Daniel 8



The “*notable horn*” (v:5) or “*great horn*” (v:4) was “*the first king*” (v:21), young Alexander. Allow me to quote David Jeremiah in his commentary on Daniel: “When Alexander decided to take the Medes and the Persians down, he came with thirty-five thousand troops from the west, crossed over the Hellespont, and defeated the Persian army. He swept on south and took Egypt, Tyre, and Gaza, and then he retraced his steps through Syria and met an enlarged Persian army for the third time. Then he did just what the Scripture said. He threw them to the ground, stomped on them, and the Medo-Persian Empire was wiped out, just as predicted” (Dr. D. Jeremiah: *The Handwriting on the Wall* p. 161-162).

After Alexander’s premature death at only 33, the vast kingdom was divided under toing Syria, Babylon, Media, Armenia & part Cappadocia.

-Ptolemy over Egypt, Judea, Cyprus and parts of northern Africa

This fulfilled the Scripture,

“*the great horn was broken; and for it (in place of it) came up four notable ones*” (Dan 8:8).

Alexander did not realise it, but God was preparing the world to use the Greek language, a most expressive language to soon herald the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE LITTLE HORN

Daniel shares in his vision that the “*little horn*” came out of the four, and this one “...*waxed exceeding great*” (8:9). Note, do not get this “*little horn*” confused with the “*little horn*” of Dan 7:8 that grew out of the ten horns of the **Roman kingdom**. Although there is an obvious parallel here, the “*little horn*” of chapter 8 comes at the close of prophecy of the **Grecian Empire**. This proved to be Antiochus Epiphanes, who set out to conquer the world in his own effort only to be defeated by the Roman armies. History tells us that he then turned his poison power on Jerusalem and the Jews, invading the city and killing 80,000 people, then selling another 40,000 into slavery. He burned every copy of the Torah he could find, and his eleven-year rule (B.C. 175 – 163) proved his name, “*Epiphanes the Madman*.” Much of his wickedness is recorded in the first book of Maccabees. His historical hatred for the Jews prevented them from the practice of circumcision, mocked their sacrifices by the offering of a pig on the altar and scattering of its broth in the holy place. His diabolical hatred of the things of God was unparalleled in the kingdom.

Though conservative teachers feel the primary interpretation of this little horn

is the historical Antiochus Epiphanes, there undoubtedly is a broader picture here of the Antichrist of the future Tribulation prophesied in the book of Revelation. Luther commented, *“This chapter in Daniel refers to both Antiochus and Antichrist.”* We know that both exercise a supernatural demonic power; the goal of both being to exterminate the Jew and to thwart the plan of God. Yet in spite of evil powers, God’s sovereignty will prevail. In looking back on the history of the nation of Israel, we see that Pharaoh, Haman, Antiochus, Herod, and Hitler – all sought a common goal – yet they are gone and the Jew lives on!

THE BELIEVER’S CHALLENGE

Once again let us think of the accuracy of the Bible in its detailed prophecy that has been historically fulfilled to the letter! One of the greatest proofs of the infallibility of the Word of God is the survival of the Jewish nation, and we know it will continue to play a vital part in God’s plan and future programme.

The Apostle Paul challenges us in his second epistle to the Thessalonian believers,

“let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there be a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God”
(2 Thess 2:3-4).

Another will come who will deceive multitudes. The world will be thrust into chaos and wicked confusion by this evil one still to come. Once the Church, God’s born-again believers, has been taken to be with the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thess 4:16-17), it will all begin.

The Bible has been perfectly accurate; God’s timing today is right on schedule, and the prophetic future will be none the less accurate! Events are all coming to a head with the nation of Israel not only surviving, but now back in her land. At any time the Church could be taken... then the last seven years of man’s rebellious rule on earth will begin and the Antichrist will target the Jew (Dan 9:27). Man’s rule on earth will be finalised by the return of Jesus Christ to the earth with His own (Rev 19:11). Let’s be students of the Bible, believers of the Bible, and doers of the Word! God’s sovereignty and His Word will not fail!

Chapter 9 - Understanding the Seventy Sevens

THE first twenty-one verses of Dan 9 is a most powerful study on prayer, a characteristic that Daniel was greatly known for; one for which he was thrown into the “lion’s den” (chapter 5). Daniel was well known for his consistent communication with God. A rich study of the great “chapter 9’s” is found in Ezra 9, Nehemiah 9, and Daniel 9. In all three chapters we find the man of God on his knees with the Word of God, interceding for the nation of Israel, the tool of God.

However, we shall study the prophetic challenge of this ninth chapter of Daniel realising that this third vision has come as a result of Daniel’s most sincere prayer. Could Daniel have been thinking that following the 70-year captivity in Babylon, the Kingdom would be established? (2 Sam 7:16). The former verses of chapters seven and eight seem to suggest otherwise. As Daniel confesses his sin and the sin of the nation, with his heart aching to understand the future of “*thy city*” (Jerusalem) and “*thy people*” (Israel), which are “*called by thy name*” (9:19), his prayer is interrupted by Gabriel.

Gabriel’s mission was to give the beloved man of God **understanding**: Note the end of verse 22, “...*I am now come forth to give thee skill and **understanding**;*” and verse 23, “*therefore **understand**;*” and again verse 25, “*Know therefore, and **understand**...*” Over five hundred years later the Lord Jesus Himself, in recognising Daniel, adds, “...*whoso readeth, let him **understand***” (Matt 24:15). Dear friends, God has given His Word to us to **understand**. How? ...by **study** (2 Tim 2:15). Be a student of the Word of God!

These last four verses in chapter nine are filled with powerful prophetic truth as are few other contexts in Scripture, and they are “*determined (v:24) by God,*” implying a **fixed decree**. At this point let me encourage each student reading this article to read these **four verses** a few times and ask God to give His insight into this amazing “time schedule” that will usher in God’s kingdom of righteousness on earth!

(DID YOU READ THE SCRIPTURE YET? PLEASE STOP AND DO SO!)

$$70 \times 7 = 490 \text{ years}$$

$$49(7 \times 7) + 434(62 \times 7) \text{ GAP} + 7(1 \times 7) = 490 \text{ years}$$

UNDERSTANDING THE COMING KINGDOM

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” (Dan. 7:24).

To help Daniel understand God’s plan of a kingdom on earth, Gabriel shares with Daniel a time period of seventy weeks. In the Hebrew language, this is literally “*seventy sevens*,” and in this context must be “*seventy sevens*” of years, or 490 years, during which God is dealing with “*thy people*” (Israel) and “*thy holy city*” (Jerusalem) till He ultimately brings in the kingdom. Note these six phrases which relate to God’s six-fold purpose at the culmination of the 490 years:

- 1) “*...to finish the transgression...*” Till Israel’s apostasy comes to an end.
- 2) “*...to make an end of sins...*” Till Israel becomes a righteous nation.
- 3) “*...to make reconciliation for iniquity...*” Till Israel’s sin is forgiven.
- 4) “*...to bring in everlasting righteousness...*” Till Messiah’s righteous kingdom is established.
- 5) “*...to seal up the vision and prophecy...*” Till the prophecies concerning Israel are fulfilled.
- 6) “*... to anoint the most Holy (Place)...*” Till the rebuilt Tribulation Temple will be consecrated.

All these characteristics relate to the promised KINGDOM AGE.

UNDERSTANDING THE NOW PAST TENSE (V25)

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (Dan. 9:25).

Here again the challenge is to UNDERSTAND. Sixty-nine of the seventy “sevens”, or 483 years, will begin with a “*decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem*”, and will culminate with the presentation of Messiah as Prince.

Note that the seventy weeks (sevens) are clearly divided into **three distinct segments**:

- 1) **seven 7's** or 49 years;
- 2) **sixty-two 7's** or 434 years, which total sixty-nine 7's or 483 years as mentioned above;
- 3) **one 7** or 7 final years as mentioned later in verse 27. The gap before the seventieth week includes 4 days until Messiah is "*cut off*", 38 years until Jerusalem is destroyed, and a long unspecified period which is the "mystery" Church Age after which Antichrist, a Roman prince, makes a covenant with many for 7 years.

The prophetic word then becomes clear with Nehemiah's commission to build the city (Nehemiah 2:1-8). Historical records are clearly dated and documented by Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918) in his classic text *The Coming Prince*, which is recognised by most evangelical theologians and Bible teachers. The beginning date, which thus establishes the start of the 490 years is 14 March 445 BC, which was the 10th day of Nisan (on the Jewish calendar) in the 20th year of Artaxerxes.

The seven 7's (49 years) bring us to the point of **the restoration of the city of Jerusalem** as well as the close of the Old Testament Scripture of Malachi in 397 BC. First the wall is built for protection, then the houses (Neh 4:6; 5:14-16; 6:15; 7:1-4).

Next follows the 434 remaining years predicted, which bring us to "**Messiah the Prince.**" Dear friends, this is most amazing. The Lord Jesus made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the original "Palm Sunday" as the Prince presenting Himself as Israel's King. Note in your Bible Luke 19:41-44. Jesus stated on that day:

*"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in **this thy day**, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes" (v:42).*

Exactly at the close of the 483rd year, **TO THE DAY**, Jesus presented Himself as Prince Messiah to the nation of Israel, 6 April AD32, but they missed it!

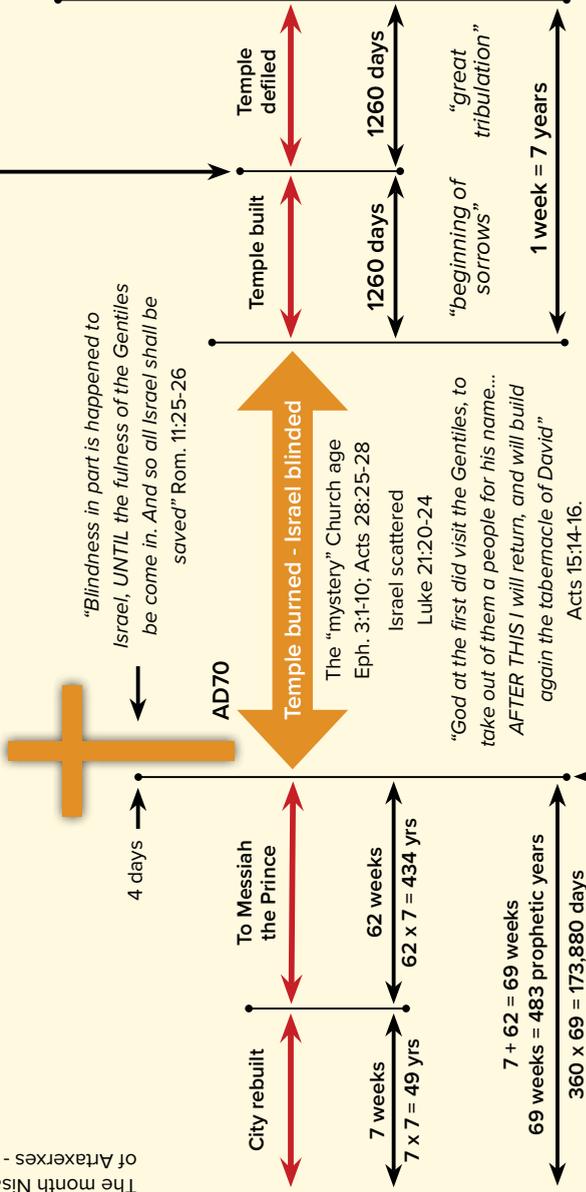
There are two lessons for us here. First, God's timing is perfect...right on the prophetic day, and this writer is convinced not only to the day, but to the hour and even to the exact moment, His will will be carried out. Secondly, why did Israel fail? They did not take heed to the Scripture; the Word of God. Daniel had recorded it so clearly, and if the Old Testament had been taken seriously and literally by the leaders they would have known that **THAT DAY Messiah the Prince would present Himself**. This "day" is the close of the second period of "sixty-two 7's" of years.

The 70 "Weeks" Prophecy – Daniel 9:24-27

SEVEN EVENTS FORETOLD AFTER THE END OF THE 69TH WEEK

1. Messiah cut off 32AD
2. The city and sanctuary destroyed AD70
3. A future Roman prince confirms a 7 year treaty
4. Temple built and sacrifices begin
5. Sacrifices cease and idol set up
6. Desolations until the end of week
7. The desolator destroyed

Decree to Rebuild Jerusalem -
The month Nisan in the 20th year
of Artaxerxes - Neh. 2:1-8 445BC



David prophesied of THIS DAY.

*“This is THE DAY which the LORD hath made (**appointed**); we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now (**Hosanna!**), I beseech thee....Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of God” (Ps 118:24-26).*

UNDERSTANDING THE PRESENT TENSE GAP (V26)

The day of Christ’s presentation to Israel is followed by two events which clearly precede the last seven of years as indicated in verse 26.

*“And **after** (the) threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and **the people of the prince that shall come** shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”*

This verse begins with “*And after,*” which means “*after*” the sixty-two 7’s time period mentioned in the previous verse. To understand the prophecy here, we must see there is **a clear gap**, or break in the chronology of the 490 years, between the 69th and the 70th “7” of years. Two events are predicted by Gabriel to Daniel that will take place **prior** to the beginning of the final seven years. First, “...*Messiah shall be cut off,*” and second, “*the city and the sanctuary*” would be destroyed.

Allow me to quote a few words from Walvoord’s commentary on Daniel:

“Christ was indeed not only ‘cut off’ from man and from life, but in His cry on the cross indicated that He was forsaken of God. The plaintive cry ‘*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*’ reveals separation from God. The additional explanation ‘*but not for himself*’ is properly translated, ‘There is nothing for him’... Nothing that rightly belonged to Him as Messiah the Prince was given to Him at that time” (pp. 229-230).

Thus the fulfillment of the prophecy that Messiah would be “*cut off*” occurred **a few days after** the triumphant entry, bringing us well into the prophetic gap between the 69th and 70th “seven.”

Daniel next states that “...**the people of the prince** (small “p” here) **that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.**”

History records for us that nearly forty years after the crucifixion the **Roman people**, under Titus, destroyed the city and the temple, scattering the Jewish people throughout the nations for more than 1,900 years. The **future prince** “*that shall come*” must therefore be a **Roman**.

If the last seven of years began immediately after Palm Sunday, then the

prophecy of the seventieth week would be meaningless for the prince that “*shall come*” in the seventieth week is identified with those people who were yet to destroy Jerusalem nearly 40 years later!

During this gap between the 69th and 70th week, we see the Church, “born again believers,” becoming the new temporary tool of God, while the nation of Israel remains in spiritual blindness. However, there is not a verse in Old Testament history or prophecy that suggests the need for the “mystery” Church. The offer to Israel to bring in the Kingdom was God’s bona fide plan. Today, we are still in this “gap” or “parentheses age” during which the Church is commissioned to make the “*God of heaven known*.”

In the Old Testament the future Church was concealed as Paul wrote:

*“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was **kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest**, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **made known to all nations for the obedience of faith**”* (Rom. 16:25-26).

UNDERSTANDING THE FUTURE TENSE (V27)

We now turn to the last seven years determined on “*thy people and thy holy city*”.

*“And he (the Roman prince that shall come) shall confirm the covenant with many for **one week**: and in the **midst of the week** he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and **for the overspreading of abominations** he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (Dan. 9:27).”*

The seventieth “7” of years is introduced with the **confirmation of a covenant with Israel**. The challenge is to identify the pronoun “*he*”; if we take this pronoun back to the closest antecedent, it is obviously the prince (small “p”) or the “*destroyer prince*”, **not** “*Messiah the Prince*”. This last seven-year period is detailed in the prophetic portion of the book of Revelation, chapters 6-19. Note Rev. 6:2, the rider on the white horse (the Antichrist) provokes the judgments of God on planet earth.

A further division of the time allotted to Jerusalem and the Jews is indicated in Dan 9:27. “*In the **midst of the week**” the **future Roman prince will break his covenant with the Jews** and “*cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease*”. So after 3 1/2 years, worship in the rebuilt Temple must cease “*for the overspreading**

of abominations". That is, for the purpose of setting up idolatrous worship in God's Temple.

This period of 3 1/2 years is indicated in Dan. 7:25 in relation to the "little horn" which comes out of the "ten horns" of the fourth kingdom, the Roman kingdom of Antichrist, and it appears in the Revelation in connection with the two Jewish prophets who minister for 1260 days at the Temple during the Tribulation in the **first half** of Israel's final seven years (Rev. 11:2-3). Also the period of Antichrist's persecution of the Jewish remnant in the Tribulation is placed at 3 1/2 years (Rev. 12:14) and his final rampage in the second half of the Tribulation is limited to 42 months (Rev. 13:5). Since John wrote the Revelation, according to Irenaeus (AD 120-202), at the **end of Emperor Domitian's reign in AD96**, it is clear that the Tribulation did not occur in AD70, as some teach, and the **70th week is yet future**.

This final seven years, or 70th week, therefore is the literal TRIBULATION referred to as "*the time of Jacob's (Israel's) trouble*" (Jer. 30:7). This is the context of Jesus' warning to the Jewish nation in Matthew 24:15:

*"When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)".*

Jesus then said:

"Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21).

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

While God's prophetic clock regarding the earthly Kingdom of Righteousness has been stopped for nearly 2,000 years, we see so much world attention centering on the city of Jerusalem, and the covenant people of Israel. We know the "*mystery*" Church will be taken just as the Apostle Paul explains in 1Cor. 15:51-52 and 1 Thess. 4:16-17. The Church Age will end, and the prophetic clock will begin again for the third and final phase of Israel's history, the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy. After that, the **KINGDOM of Righteousness** will be set up on earth by Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Friends, so many "*signs of the times*" are rapidly coming together. Jesus is coming again. He wants us to **UNDERSTAND! UNDERSTAND ???**

Chapter 10 - Conflict Behind the Scenes

THERE is a temptation for this writer to tie the last three chapters of Daniel together. This is because of the nature of the negative forces in the study of chapter 10 and the fact that chapters 10, 11, and 12 combine to form a unit in Daniel's fourth and final vision of the future of Israel. Yet each chapter is abundant in powerful insight and amazing prophetic truth, and its detail has been proven accurate through historic events. Thus, we will deal with each chapter individually.

Chapter 10 is an introduction to Daniel's burden and intense prayer to understand the future of his people. Many Jews had already returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the devastated temple in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia. Daniel now writes in the **third year of Cyrus' reign**.

This chapter goes behind the scene to the "spirit world" revealing a picture of the "conflict of the ages" between the plan of God and the opposition of Satan, between good and evil, between angelic and demonic powers and activity. Frankly, this is not an easy topic to study; yet it is the Word of God, and it is meant to be understood by the child of God. Let me encourage you to take some time with the Lord in prayer prior to your study of this revealing chapter...pray for understanding and emotional stability.

CONFLICT OF THE AGES

According to the *Canadian Army Journal*, a conscientious study of history has revealed the following figures concerning man's evil, war-like nature:

"Since 3600 BC the world has known only 292 years of peace. During this period there have been 14,531 wars, large and small, in which 3 billion 640 million people have been killed. The value of the destruction would pay for a golden belt around the world about 100 miles (160 kilometers) wide and 33 feet (10 meters) thick! Since 650 B C. there have been 1656 arms races, only 16 of which have not ended in war! The remainder have terminated in the economic collapse of the countries concerned... Since the world cast out the 'Prince of Peace', the Lord Jesus Christ, by crucifying Him almost 2000 years ago, there has not been one year without a war"(Daniel, *God's Man in a Secular Society*, D. Campbell, p. 150).

Daniel chapter 10 will give us Scriptural insight behind it all.

DANIEL'S INTENSE PRAYER (VI-3)

God, in His foreknowledge, has pre-written history, and the prophet emphasises this truth. Daniel was given understanding by God, and He desires this for all His own (10:1). The last three chapters were the result of three weeks of intense prayer for his nation, Israel.

Daniel's determination to continue to pray did not stop because of seemingly no answer from God. Indeed, his sincere prayer was heard from the first day and we can see that "prayer delayed" is not "prayer denied." We read:

"...Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard..." (v:12).

The main lesson for us is that there is a spiritual conflict going on and *"We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Eph 6:12).

DANIEL'S HEAVENLY MESSENGER (V4-12)

The geography and timing of this final vision of Daniel's prophetic book is clear (10:4), yet mystery surrounds the messenger. The scene is near the shores of the Hiddekel River (Tigris) on the twenty-fourth of the first month (our April) but a few days after the time of the Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Firstfruits.

There he beheld a "certain man" of a description that seems to parallel that of our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament prophetic book of Revelation. Note the Apostle John's description of the Saviour in Revelation 1:14-15. Perhaps this was Christ in a pre-incarnate manifestation (appearance before His human birth)....yet there is a question as to how Christ could be hindered for twenty-one days as seems to be the case described in verse thirteen when the angel *"Michael...came to help"*. Does the Lord Jesus Christ need an angel's help? Thus the evangelical scholars are divided about 50/50 on the identification of this *"...certain man"* (v:5). Was he the Christ or a created angel? Allow me to quote noted Bible teacher Lehman Strauss,

"In 1948 I was very sure; in 1958 I had reversed my former conclusion; now in 1968 I am not certain that I know just who this certain man is" (Daniel, p. 296, Strauss).

It would be unwise to be too dogmatic on the question...yet it is rich to know VICTORY came to Daniel as a result of his persistent prayer. The encouraging

words in this context are “*UNDERSTAND*” (v:11) and “*FEAR NOT*” (v:12). If we understand that God is in control we will not fear.

DANIEL’S INSIGHT INTO SPIRITUAL CONFLICT (V:13-19)

The obvious intensity of the spiritual warfare appears to be involved with “*what shall befall thy people (ISRAEL) in the latter days: for the vision is for many days*” (v:14).

Though it was well into the future in relation to Daniel’s life, it was troubling for it revealed that the conflicts and wars on earth are linked to the spiritual conflict in the unseen world.

Satan would love to destroy Israel whom God had chosen to be a “*special people unto himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth*”(Deut. 7:6-8 cp. Deut. 4:30-37). God’s whole plan for the salvation and blessing of mankind is bound up in the nation of Israel. If Satan could destroy Israel then he would destroy God’s plan of redemption and God’s promise to Abraham would not be fulfilled that “*in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed*” (Gen. 12:3).

Paul wrote of his kinsmen according to the flesh

“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 9:4-5).

Herod’s slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem was designed to kill the Lord Jesus and prevent Him from going to the cross, and during the future Tribulation, the dragon (Satan) will make war with the Jewish remnant (Rev. 12:17). Israel is the special target of Satan’s hatred and it is he who has been the author of antisemitism through the years. No nation on earth has been hated like Israel.

It is interesting to note that God has appointed Michael the archangel (chief angel) as the guardian of Israel in the conflict which rages in the unseen world, and we can be sure that he has played a major role in preserving that nation from extinction over the centuries of time. The attacks from the Gentile powers, the Papacy, Hitler, and now the Muslim nations, have all failed because of Michael’s protection for he is the “*great prince which standeth for the children of thy (Daniel’s) people*” (Dan. 12:1).

Five times we read of Michael contending for Israel, first over the body of Moses (Jude 9), then in Dan. 10:13 & 21 he helps in the conflict against the spiritual “*Prince of Persia*”.

In Daniel 12:1 he stands with Israel in the Tribulation and in Rev. 12:7 he wars with Satan and casts him and his angels into the earth.

*“And there was war in heaven: **Michael and his angels** fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth,... And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, **he persecuted the woman (Israel)** which brought forth the man child (Christ)” (Rev. 12:7-13).*

No wonder the voice of the archangel is heard at the Rapture of the Church (1Thess. 4:16) for Michael knows that Israel’s 70th week is about to commence. Daniel’s reaction to the heavenly messenger made him faint and weak, so much so that he needed another touch from on high for strength to continue (Dan. 10:10,18).

Daniel’s heart was desirous of the kingdom that was promised to King David centuries before (2 Sam. 7:16) and again through the many prophets; but now he sees there will be **prolonged conflict BEFORE the establishment of the Kingdom Age** that was described in the previous vision of Dan. 9:24 and in the prophecies of Daniel chapters 2 and 7.

DANIEL’S INSIGHT INTO THE FUTURE (V:20-21)

The purpose of these closing chapters is to give spiritual insight into the prophetic events that deal with **Daniel’s people Israel prior to the Kingdom Age**. Following the record of this encounter with Daniel the messenger and Michael would return to the conflict and the evil forces over Persia, then on to the coming conflict with Greece (v:20). Daniel was now ready for the revelation from God that is so accurate (perfect) that it reveals God’s prophetic plan to those that love Him and study His Word.

Though Daniel’s vision was nearly 2,500 years ago, the prophecy deals with the conflict around this unique people in Daniel’s “near future”, from Dan. 11:1 through 35 (which is history to us today).

Then, jumping over this present mystery Church Age, prophetic detail from Dan11:35-12:13 relates to a time yet to come. These events will fit into that final week of years of Dan. 9:27 that we know as the 70th week of years, or the Tribulation period, referred to as the “*time of Jacob’s (Israel’s) trouble*” (Jer. 30:7). Though this is future “tribulation prophecy” and won’t take place till after the

rapture of the Church, we see the dominant role Israel is playing on the world scene today after 1,900 years of being a “nationless” people. With Israel back in her land, the stage is set for the final seven years.

The conflict continues; and though the nation of Israel has been set aside during this present mystery “Church Age,” God will bring her back into world focus to fulfill EVERY detail of His Word.

Today “*the prince of this world*” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), the old Devil and enemy of the faith, will continue to try to thwart the programme of God.

When the Devil tempted the Lord Jesus in the wilderness, he showed Him
*“all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this will I give unto thee, and the glory of them: **for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it**”* (Luke 4:5-6).

Satan is the “*god of this world*” and is working behind the scenes influencing the nations, and will continue to do so till he is bound in the “*bottomless pit*” (Rev. 20:2,3) after the Tribulation.

Our weapon as God’s “*born again*” people is the WORD OF GOD, and we must be students of the book to stand strong in the faith .

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

There is no excuse for being discouraged if we are trusting in a Sovereign God, in spite of the attacks “behind the scene.” As the Bride of Christ, believers look for that mystery “catching up”(1Cor. 15:51-52; 1Thess. 4:16-17). Let us “*be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Chapter 11 - Prophecy that is Now History

OF ALL the commentators who have written an opening paragraph on Daniel 11, none have worded one better than Dr. Charles Feinberg as he states:

“It is truly a manual of divine inspiration. The events prophesied in this chapter are traced as accurately as one would have expected from a history of those times written AFTER the fact” (p. 151 – *Daniel* by Feinberg).

This is a rich statement to the credit of the accuracy of fulfilled Biblical prophecy. NO ONE could have predicted such detailed prophecy so accurately, so far in advance.....yet a SOVEREIGN GOD gave Daniel, the beloved man of God, the precise words of the future of His people. And over 500 years later, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself testified to the authenticity of Daniel (Matthew 24:15). Thus, this amazing chapter, like the rest of this book, carries out the theme: GOD IS SOVEREIGN, and indeed HE IS!! What a great truth for the believer to rest in!

This commentary will cover Dan. 11:1-35, and our closing study will continue from Dan. 11:36 through to Dan. 12:13, with prophecy yet to be fulfilled. This division follows an obvious break in the text.

Remember that all the historical, as well as prophetic writing in this book, revolves **around the unique people of Israel**. This present, mystery Church Age does not fit into this context. As we will see, Daniel’s writings jump over the gap (the Church Age) between the 69th and 70th week of years that we studied in chapter 9.

The last six chapters of this book reveal four visions that God gave Daniel, with one in each of chapters 7, 8, and 9. However, when we get to the fourth vision, it takes in the final three chapters (Daniel 10-12). Our last study (chapter 10) was indeed the introduction to this “...*scripture of truth*” (10:21) that will be laid out in unique detail in chapters 11 and 12. Thus, we must see chapters 10-12 as a unit, a major prophecy of God’s dealings with Israel from Daniel’s closing days to the future KINGDOM AGE!

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE TO XERXES (DAN. 11:2)

*“Behold, there shall stand up yet **three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all; and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia**” (Dan. 11:2).*

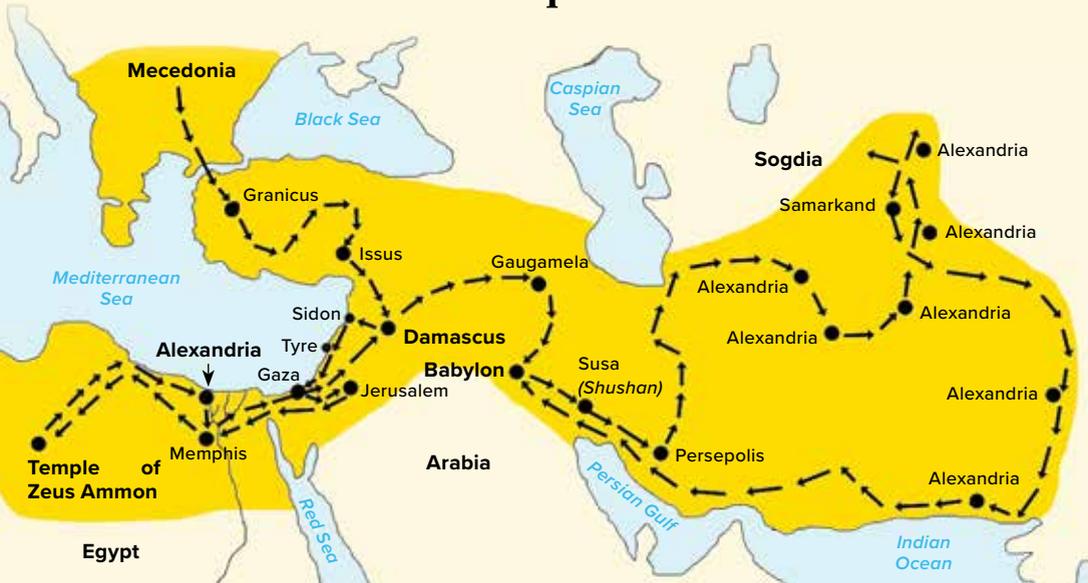
Though this verse was totally prophetic, the accuracy of the fulfillment is shown in the historical record. The three kings are Cambyses (529-522 BC), Pseudo-Smerdis(522-522 BC), and DariusI Hystaspes (522-468 BC). The fourth, "...through his riches", was the Ahasuerus Xerxes, the Persian dictator. He was known for accumulating great wealth and building up a great army to conquer Greece, only to be embarrassingly defeated at the Battle of Salamis (480 B.C.), known as one of the decisive battles of ancient history. Though there were other Persian kings after Xerxes, Daniel's prophecy stops at this point because the fourth king was the one known to "...stir up all the realm of Grecia". **The detailed prophecy relates to the Grecian era.**

GRECIAN EMPIRE UNDER ALEXANDER (DAN. 11:3-4)

"A mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion...his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity..." (Dan. 11:3-4).

The prophetic fulfillment of these two verses is clearly seen in Alexander the Great, that notable horn of the "be-goat" in Dan. 8:5-8, prophetically identified as "...king of Grecia" (Dan. 8:21). Alexander was known as a

Alexander's Conquest 333 - 323BC



military and administrative genius by conquering and commanding a great geographical area from Greece to India. It was indeed the plan of a sovereign God to influence the then-known world with the Greek culture and the most expressive language in preparation for the message of the resurrected Christ, who was to come in God's perfect timing.

The most recognised Jewish historian, Josephus, who was doubtless born during the time of Christ on earth, records in his *Antiquities of the Jews* that Alexander showed a favourable attitude toward the Jewish people. When he rode toward Jerusalem, he was met by the Jewish high priest, who impressed Alexander with the prophecies of Daniel regarding the coming of the "...king of Grecia" (8:21); writings which had been penned more than 200 years prior to this meeting.

History continues to solidify the prophetic truth as Alexander dies of alcohol as a young man of only 33, and the "*kingdom [was] broken...divided toward the four winds*" among his generals. This division was also seen in chapter 7 and resulted in:

- i) **The Seleucid Dynasty** of Syria, Babylon, Media, Armenia etc
- ii) **The Ptolemaic Dynasty** of Egypt, Judea, Cyprus and Nth Africa
- iii) **Lysenachus'** rule of Thrace, Asia Minor, and part of Cappadocia
- iv) **Cassander's** rule of Macedonia and part of Greece

Alexander's kingdom, though divided, was given "*not to his posterity,*" as his two sons and heirs, Hercules and Alexander, were murdered; thus ending Alexander's royal line. The power of a sovereign God is evidenced in the giving of this detailed prophecy over 200 years prior to its literal fulfillment.

CONFLICT BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH (DAN. 11:5-20)

"And the king of the south shall be strong...and the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement" (Dan. 11:5-6).

Keep in mind that our Scripture context in this study was completely prophetic in Daniel's day; but today we see this whole context as totally fulfilled history...exact in every detail. Though the kingdom of Greece was split into four divisions after the death of Alexander the Great, the only two powers that the prophetic record details are the King of the South (Egypt) and the King of the North (Syria). This is because of their geographic significance in relation to God's tool, Israel. Egypt was south of Israel and was ruled by the Ptolemaic Dynasty, whereas Syria, to the north of Israel, was ruled by the Seleucid Dynasty. In their many conflicts Israel became the battleground in

most cases, as it was the “middle ground.” Therefore, the prophetic writings reflect these events as they deal with His people, the Jewish remnant!

These sixteen verses (v:5-20) as well as all of this chapter are abundant in prophetic detail, much of which is historical fact today. The chart on page 54 will provide the reader with details of the kings in the north and south, but we will only comment on verses 5 and 10 for examples, then suggest further resources for personal study. The list of Kings is as follows:

Kings of the North

Seleucus Nicator
Antiochus Soter
Antiochus Theus
Seleucus Callinus
Antiochus the Great
Seleucus Philopater
Antiochus Epiphanes

See Albert Barnes' Commentary on Daniel page 212
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Kings of the South

Ptolemy Soter
Ptolemy Philadelphus
Ptolemy Euergetes
Ptolemy Philopater
Ptolemy Epiphanes
Ptolemy Philometer
Physon

THE HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT

“And the king of the south shall be strong” (v:5).

The “*King of the South*” was Ptolemy I Soter who ruled Egypt which was a strong kingdom.

“and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion”

And “*one of his* (Alexander’s) *princes*”, Seleucus Nicator, was strong above (stronger than) him.

Soter ruled Egypt to 287 B.C., and Seleucus Nicator ruled in the north from 312 B.C. to 280 B.C. Nicator had a greater dominion than Ptolemy. He first gained the leadership of Babylonia and eventually took control of Syria and the southern part of Asia Minor, thus establishing a dominion greater than Soter. Nicator or *the conquerer*, ruled from the Hellespont to the Indus. From this point Scripture focus’ on the King of the South and the King of the North. The record of events again attests to the total accuracy of the prophetic word, and to a sovereign God who revealed truth to Daniel.

“But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress” (v:10).

DANIEL Chapter 11:1-35

The Grecian Era

Lysimachus
ruled Thrace, Asia Minor, and part of Cappadocia

"In the end of years" or "at the end of some years" (11:6).

Seleucus Ceraunus
brother of Antiochus and co-regent for a while

Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Egypt four times. In 167BC he polluted the temple and sacrificed swine on the altar.

280 BC

Seleucus Nicator
ruled Syria, Media, Babylonia, Armenia, Cilicia, pt Cappadocia

261 BC

Antiochus Soter

246 BC

Antiochus Theus
(married Bernice)

226BC

Seleucus Callinus
(son of Laodice)

225BC

Antiochus the Great
(gave Cleopatra to Ptolemy to keep peace in the south while he fought Romans in Asia Minor)

187BC

Seleucus Philopater
Antiochus Epiphanes

Died 163BC

KING OF THE NORTH

KING OF THE SOUTH

Nearly 100 years of conflict between the King of the NORTH (Seleucids), and the King of the SOUTH (Ptolemys) with the Jews caught between. Judas Maccabees led the Jews and cleansed the Temple 164BC (1Macc4:52).

Four Kings of Persia
Alexander the Great

332BC

323BC

Alexander's brother,
Philip Aridaeus
died 316BC.
His son,
Alexander Aegus
died 309BC.

Ptolemy Soter
ruled Egypt, Judea, Cyprus, Phonicia, Cyrene

287BC

Ptolemy Philadelphus
(father of Bernice)

248BC

Ptolemy Euergetes

221BC

Ptolemy Philopater

204BC

Ptolemy Epiphanes
(married Cleopatra daughter of Antiochus the Great)

180BC

Ptolemy Philometer
Physcon

Ptolemy Philometer held captive by Antiochus on pretext he was helping him get the throne back from his brother Physcon

Cassander
ruled Macedonia, Thessaly, and part of Greece

THE HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT

Seleucus II Callinicus had two sons prior to his death:

-Callinicus II Ceraunus and

-Antiochus III the Great

Ceraunus, the elder son, died shortly after his father's death, leaving the northern kingdom to his brother Antiochus (the "one" in v:10), who carried on the war with Egypt exactly as the prophetic verse stated. Antiochus the Great alone (not the well-known Antiochus Epiphanes) successfully battled with the southern Ptolemies and recovered Syria from Egypt, bringing this land back into his own sovereignty. As the battles raged the land of Israel took a beating, causing the prophetic word to again become historical fact.

We could continue to go verse by verse demonstrating how prophetic truth has been fulfilled by historical facts, but we must hasten on to one of the most horrible rulers Israel has ever experienced; and here again Biblical prophecy will prove to be that of a sovereign, omniscient God.

THE MADMAN ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES (DAN. 11:21-35)

"In his place shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries."

Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the little horn of the prophecy in Dan 8:23-25, ruled only twelve years (175 B.C. -163 B.C.); however he is given a full fifteen verses of prophecy. He is not known as a strong historical figure, but because of his "vile" behaviour relating to the persecution and suffering of Israel, he is given this space in prophecy.

His ascent to power is described in Dan. 11:21-24, though his claim to the throne was not valid. The see-saw of struggles with the king of the south is predicted in verses 25-30, with the prophetic picture of Epiphanes in verses 30-35. This reflects a picture of the yet future Antichrist that is prophesied in verses 36-45.

"Therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. 11:30-31).

After a humiliating failure in his final quest for Egypt, Antiochus Epiphanes returned to Syria because of his fear of the growing Roman powers. He

stopped in Palestine en route to Syria and took out his frustrations on the Jews.

“Conspiring with apostate Jews, he stopped daily sacrifices at the Temple and desecrated the sanctuary by erecting, in place of the brazen altar, a statue of the Greek god Zeus. This was the abomination that made the temple desolate, for no faithful Jew would think of approaching such an idol to worship Jehovah (v:31)” (Campbell p. 168).

Epiphanes ordered the Temple sacrifices stopped. The practice of circumcision was halted and those observing the Sabbath were put to death. Old Testament scrolls were destroyed by decree and pigs were sacrificed on the Temple altars. This was the “*abomination of desolation*” that Antiochus Epiphanes, the madman, displayed as he pictured the future Antichrist in the verses to come. As we stop to pause at verse 35, we realise that there have been over 130 specific prophecies accurately fulfilled thus far in this chapter alone. The remaining verses of the book of Daniel deal with the prophetic future of the Jewish people, skipping over 2,000 years of the mystery Church Age between verses 35 and 36. Thus, if the first 35 verses have been fulfilled in every minute detail, the remainder of this prophecy, too, will one day be history.

Again, only a sovereign and omniscient God could give such a literal picture of the future. But He does this so that His own children can understand through committed study of His word. This kind of study will encourage, comfort, challenge, and give understanding to “born-again” believers, who are His tool in this present age to share the Author and Answer of life – the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Have you put your trust in His grace? Are you ready for His coming for His own? We trust so.

“If God knows history, then He also knows the heart of man. If God has a plan for history, then He has a design for the lives of believers. If God will intervene again in history, then Christians ought to live expectantly, in light of that great event!” (Campbell, p. 118).

For more detailed study we would recommend the following resource: *In the Final Days* by Walter K Price.

Chapter 12 - The “Time of the End”

AS WE consider our final study in this great prophetic book of Daniel, we continue to be challenged with the great theme of THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. God is in total control, and His timing is perfect. The amazing detail of the fulfilled prophecies of the Grecian Empire in the first thirty-five verses of chapter 11 can be followed with total historical accuracy.

Most conservative teachers agree that between verses 35 and 36 the context has leaped over the 2,000 years of the mystery age of God’s Church, from Antiochus Epiphanes to Antichrist. All that is said beyond verse 35 applies to the Last Days during the final seven-year period known as Israel’s 70th week. Thus the events of our context today will not actually begin till the Lord Jesus Christ takes His Church out of the world in the mystery Rapture, pictured in 1 Cor. 15:51-52 and 1 Thess. 4:15-17. Then the “*man of sin*” will be revealed as the Apostle Paul confirms in 2Thess. 2:3.

“...for that day (the Tribulation) shall not come, except there come a falling away (THE departure) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition...”

The “*man of sin*” will be introduced to the political world-scene to kick-off the final seven years, when “...*he shall confirm (strengthen) the covenant (treaty)...*” (Dan. 9:27) with Israel in the name of peace in the Middle East. Let’s look at the character, the conflicts, and the culmination of this final world dictator often referred to as the Antichrist, but before doing so we note the emergence of the Roman Empire.

THE RISE OF ROME

During the reign of Antiochus the Great (225-187 BC), the father of Antiochus Epiphanes, the King of the North declared war on Rome and sought to enlarge his empire in Asia Minor and the islands of the Aegean Sea but was defeated by a Roman Prince Scipio Asiaticus as prophesied by Daniel

“After this he shall turn his face unto the isles and shall take away many: but a prince (Scipio) for his own behalf shall cause the reproach (declaration of war) offered by him to cease” (Dan. 11:18).

Antiochus the Great was humbled by the Romans at the Battle of Magnesia in Asia Minor (190 BC) and surrendered all his lands west of the Taurus Mountains.

Later when Antiochus Epiphanes made his third and final invasion of Egypt

(167 BC), Ptolemy Physcon appealed to Rome for help and the Roman ambassadors came on *“the ships of Chittim”* (Dan. 11:30) ordering him out of Egypt. When Antiochus Epiphanes asked for time to consider, Popilius, the head of the Roman delegation, drew a circle around him in the sand and exclaimed, “Before you leave that circle, you must give me an answer which I can report to the Senate”. Antiochus Epiphanes, humbled, returned home and reeked his anger against Jerusalem on the way.

Antiochus Epiphanes therefore effectively brings us to the end of the Grecian era and the beginning of Roman dominance. It is significant that Antichrist is a future Roman prince (Dan. 9:26), is seen as the *“little horn”* of the fourth and last kingdom on earth before Christ returns (Dan. 7:23-26), and that from Dan. 11:36 to the end of chapter 12 we are in the Roman era. The Antichrist is the last-days king of the north.

THE CHARACTER OF ANTICHRIST (DAN 11:36-39)

Though the Apostle John refers to our subject as *“the Antichrist”* (1 John 2:18), there are several names throughout Scripture given to this final counterfeit messiah. Daniel calls him the *“little horn”* (Dan. 7:8). The Apostle Paul addresses him as the *“man of sin”* and *“son of perdition”* (2 Thess. 2:3) as well as *“that wicked (one)”* (2Thess. 2:8); and in the Book of Revelation, chapter 13, he is known as *“the beast.”*

The angel vividly describes to Daniel the character of this dominant, evil one in the current context of Daniel eleven.

He says he *“shall do according to his will”* (Dan. 11:36), doing his own thing, or as *“a person who will represent the acme of human self love, self will, and self exaltation.....and accordingly, the acme of insolence, impiety, and defiance toward God”* (*Bible Knowledge*, June, 1968, p. 117).

Scripture says:

“He shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god.” He “shall speak marvelous things (blasphemies) against the God of gods”(Dan. 11:36).

The Apostle John adds:

“He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven” (Rev. 13:6).

The Apostle Paul describes him:

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thess2:4).

He “*shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished...*” (Dan11:36). His time will be limited by a sovereign God.

“*Neither shall he regard the god of his fathers...for he shall magnify himself above all*” (Dan11:37). He will deny worship of anyone but himself and many will worship him (Rev 13:4,8,12,15). This one, like the Roman Caesars, will be successful in deceiving society into believing that he is deity.

He “*shall honour the god of forces*” (Dan. 11:38). Obviously he will worship military power to the point where it will become his god. He will continue to hunger for conquests that will add to his pride and arrogance.

THE CONFLICTS OF THE ANTICHRIST (DAN 11:40-44)

Antichrist’s war machine will dominate his personality, “*at the time of the end*” (Dan11:40); this is doubtless during the first half of the seven-year Tribulation period. The final three and a half years are described in Daniel chapter12, and will be the darkest time that planet earth will ever experience.

The nation of Israel has sensed a false security during the first three and a half years with a covenant that has been confirmed by the powerful head (Dan. 9:27) of the confederacy of nations that make up the Revived Roman Empire; most probably today’s European Union.

Since 6 June 2000 Israel has been an Associate Member of the EU, and in January 2000 was received into the European Regional Group of the UN. We can understand how Israel will be reassured by Antichrist’s seven-year covenant.

Thus the first half of the seven years begins with a **relative** time of peace and security, but now the action starts with the “*king of the south (Egypt)*” (Dan11:40) and the “*king of the north (Antichrist)...*”(Dan. 11:40). Antichrist sees that Israel is threatened and he moves his armies down to Egypt “*and the Libyans and Ethiopians (Sudanese) shall be his steps*” (Dan. 11:43). Jordan, which is Old Testament Edom, Moab, and Ammon shall “*escape out of his hand*”(Dan. 11:41).

While claiming victory, Antichrist is threatened: “*news out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him*” (Dan11:44). Could this be modern day Russia, “*the land of Magog*” that is foretold and detailed clearly in Ezekiel 38-39 & Joel 2 ? She moves upon the land of Israel with her Muslim allies (Iran, or ancient Persia, Libya, Sudan, and Togarmah/Turkey, etc - Ezek. 38:5); yet God uses this invasion to bring Israel to repentance, and will supernaturally destroy this northern enemy on behalf of the Jewish nation (Ezek 38:18 - 39:8). Joel says:



*"Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people,....I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen: but I will **remove far off from you the northern army**, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate (Siberia), with his face toward the east sea (Pacific Ocean), and his hinder part toward the utmost sea (Arctic), and his stink shall come up, because he hath done great things"* (Joel 2:18-20).

Ezekiel tells us that "Sheba and Dedan" (Arabia) and the "merchants of Tarshish (Britain) and the young lions thereof" (USA etc) will challenge this northern invasion saying, "Why art thou come down?" (Ezek. 38:13) but it appears that Antichrist (Europe) will not stand with Israel against this Russian/Islamic army. It may be that Russia will use blackmail to prevent European involvement for much of Europe's energy supplies are provided by Russia and Libya.

The outcome of this northern invasion is that the remnant of Israel will turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and Paul's words will be fulfilled; "*so all Israel shall be saved.*" (Rom. 11:26). The invaders will be destroyed by Divine intervention; by a global earthquake, pestilence (disease), hailstones and by total disunity among the Sunni and Shiite Islamists who will turn on each other; "*every man's sword shall be against his brother*" (Ezek. 38:19-23). Only one sixth will escape to Siberia and the land of Magog (Russia) will be burned (Ezek. 39:2,6). With such a devastating defeat the power of Russia and Islam will be broken and Antichrist will be free to move into the Middle East again.

Antichrist will have no sympathy for a believing nation of Israel and will "go forth with great fury to destroy, and to utterly make away many" (Dan. 11:44). He will break his 7-year covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27) "*in the midst of the week*" and will then set himself up as God, placing his headquarters "*between the seas*" (Mediterranean and Dead Seas), making Jerusalem his capital, "*in the glorious holy mountain*" (Dan. 11:45). This will occur at the mid-point of the 7-year Tribulation (Dan. 9:27).

THE CULMINATION OF ANTICHRIST (DAN 12)

Much detail is given prophetically of the **final three and half years** when Antichrist sets out to destroy Israel and attempts to thwart the plan of God, taking over the small geographical area of land that ties three great continents together. He will seek to control the Middle East with its oil and gas resources, and will move his headquarters into the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. At this time Satan will be "*cast unto the earth*" (Rev. 12:13) and will energise Antichrist with demonic power from the bottomless pit (Rev. 9:11; 17:8) till the return of the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming to earth (Rev. 19:11).

Finally, Antichrist "*shall come to his end, and none shall help him*" (Dan. 11:45; also see Dan. 7:11-14, 26-27, 2Thess. 2:8, Rev. 19:11-21). God's judgment will confine him to the eternal lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10), while Satan is "*cast into the bottomless pit*" (Rev. 19:20) for the duration of the millennial reign of Christ on earth (Rev. 20:2-3).

The Chronology of the Future (Dan. 12:1 - 13)

The closing chapter of Daniel is a chronology of the last 3 ½ years with the **key word** "*time*" used seven times in these few verses (12:1, 4, 9, 11).

Daniel chapter 12 is the climax to chapter 11. Both chapters must be seen together. (See "*time of the end*" Dan. 11:35,40). Ch. 12 begins with, "*At that time*". TIME is **the subject** of Dan. 12:1,4,6,7,9,11,12,&13.

This time is **the Great Tribulation**, when there shall be "*a time of trouble, such*

as never was since there was a nation”. At **this time** Israel will be finally **saved from extinction**, (being found written in the book of life) and delivered from Antichrist (Compare Matt. 24:21; Jer. 30:7; Joel 2:2).

There will be a **resurrection of saved and unsaved (v. 2)** at the end of the Tribulation. Antichrist and his followers will be slain and raised to stand before Christ and be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20-21; 14:9-11; Matt. 25:41). The Tribulation **martyrs** will also be raised to reign for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4). The living saints will go alive into the millennial kingdom. Daniel is told to “*seal the book to the time of the end*” (Dan. 12:4).

The Second Resurrection is of the unsaved and has two stages. Antichrist and his followers when Christ returns, and “*the rest of the dead*” at the end of the 1,000 year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:11-15). We know from other Scriptures there will be several stages of the First Resurrection in the Last Days.

Firstly, the Church is Raptured **before** the Tribulation (1Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-9).

Secondly, there will be the two witnesses of Rev 11 whose dead bodies are raised **during** the Tribulation.

Thirdly, the Tribulation martyrs will be raised when Christ returns at the **end of the Tribulation** (Rev. 20:4-6).

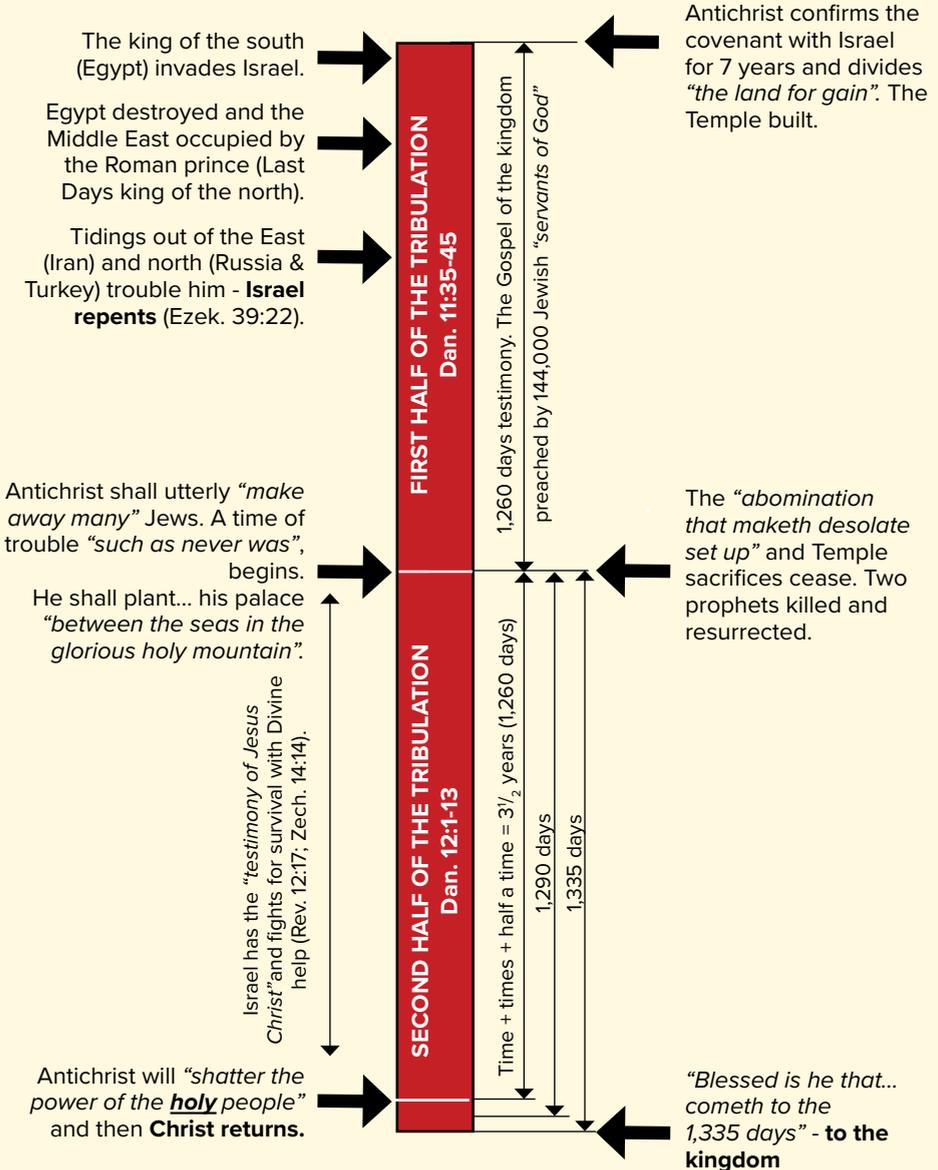
Daniel wrote 2,500 yrs ago in the 1st year of Darius the Mede and Antiochus Epiphanes reigned only 369 years after the prophecy was given. God was simply making it clear that it was not Antiochus, but a **last days** “*man of sin*” in view.

Then too, the “*time of the end*” would see men “*run to and fro*” and “*knowledge shall be increased*” (Dan. 12:4); another indicator that the Antichrist would be in **the last days** and that Antiochus Epiphanes was but a “type” of the future Antichrist.

Those who do not recognise the leap in time after Dan. 11:35 get into real trouble trying to reconcile Dan. 11:36-45 and Dan. 12:1-13. Up to Dan. 11:35 we can trace fulfilled prophecy in the historical records but after Antiochus Epiphanes there is no correlation of historical events with what is foretold. The whole message of chapter 11:36-45 and 12:1-13 makes it perfectly clear that the prophecy does not continue chronologically after Antiochus Epiphanes, but simply uses him as the springboard to introduce the Last Days “*man of sin*”.

The focus of chapter 12 is clearly on **the 2nd half** of the final 7 years of Israel’s history, for we read that when Antichrist will “*scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished*” (Dan. 12:7). So the prophecy concludes with three and a half years of awful persecution; then it will be “*FINISHED*” (Dan. 12:7).

Daniel 11:36 to 12:13



The 75 days after Christ returns provides time for the judgment of the living nations (sheep and goats-Matt. 25:32), the resurrection of Tribulation martyrs to everlasting life(Rev. 20:4), and the banishment of Antichrist and his followers "to shame and everlasting contempt"(Rev. 19:20-21).

Finally, Israel will be “*purified*” at this time (Dan. 12:10), and there will be time allowed for the **judgment of the living nations** and cleanup after the Lord returns (ie 1,290 days and 1,335 days) (Dan. 12:11-12).

To focus on the end times from a Biblical perspective is to focus on Daniel’s people Israel. Israel is the key to understanding the truth of prophecy. There are absolutely no grounds for Replacement Theology which teaches that the Church has replaced God’s Covenant nation and that all the promises made to Israel now apply to the Church. Israel will undoubtedly be an entity in the world in the Last Days and will play the central role in the final drama of the ages.

When the angel gave the prophecy of chapters 11 & 12 to Daniel he said:

*“Now I am come to make thee understand **what shall befall THY PEOPLE IN THE LATTER DAYS**: for yet the vision is for many days”* (Dan. 10:14).

Daniel was never a part of the Church, nor did he have any knowledge of it for it was a mystery “*kept secret since the world began*” (Rom. 16:25). It did not exist until Pentecost and was only then revealed by God to “*his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs and of the same body*” (Eph. 3:5-6).

The angelic message puts the matter beyond question that Daniel’s people, Israel, would be the Divine channel of witness in the Great Tribulation which clearly **did not occur in 70AD**, as some suggest, for it’s is expressly said to occur in the “*time of the end*”(Dan. 12:4 & 9), and the “*end of the days*”(Dan. 12:13).

HOW LONG?

When Antichrist persecutes Israel as described in Daniel chapter 12, she will be a redeemed and forgiven nation. Her conversion will have taken place in the first half of the seven years and Antichrist’s attempt to eradicate her will be from the mid-point of the Tribulation when he causes the “*sacrifice and oblation to cease*”. At that time God calls Israel “*the holy people*”.

*“How long shall it be to the end of these wonders (the Tribulation)? ...It shall be for **a time, times, and an half**; (3¹/₂ years) and when he (Antichrist) shall have accomplished to scatter the power of **THE HOLY PEOPLE**, all these things shall be finished”* (Dan. 12:6-7).

Today Israel is in blindness and has a “*vail upon their heart*” but “*when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away*”(2Cor. 3:15-16). At Christ’s return the Jews will be a truly “*holy people*” and John records that they will “*keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus*” (Rev. 14:12). They will say, “*Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him*” (Isa. 25:9).

Paul speaks of Israel's conversion **after** the "*fulness of the Gentiles*" (the Church) comes in at the Rapture. He clearly links this with the "*New Covenant*" which Jeremiah foretold God would make with Israel in "*those days*" when "*they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more*" (Jer. 31:31-34; Rom. 11:25-27; Heb. 8:8-12).

Dear friend, though we look for the Lord Jesus Christ and not Antichrist, yet we see the Middle East, Israel, the Jew, and Jerusalem, in the forefront of international news almost daily. This little nation of only one-tenth of one percent, or one thousandth of the world's population, with its geography not too much larger than the area of greater Sydney Australia, dominates the concern of world powers.

Such a small nation and people among over 190 nations at the United Nations and the number one issue of concern is Israel and Jerusalem. Why? Could this be God's time to bring His people back to the center of world focus? Every student of the Word of God should be stirred to action as we see all the pieces of the prophetic puzzle rapidly coming together. Though much prophecy has to do with the final seven years **after** the Church has been taken to be with our Saviour, it is a warning to us as believers as we "*see the day approaching*" that the time is short.

As we study the great prophetic truths that have been fulfilled so accurately over the centuries, it becomes obvious that the remainder will one day be history. GOD IS SOVEREIGN! Let's tell the whole world that Jesus is coming again, and it appears to be soon! MARANATHA!

How you can be Ready

- 1) **Acknowledge** you are a guilty sinner before God, unable to do anything to contribute to your salvation (Rom. 3:23, Eph. 2:8,9).
- 2) **Believe** that Jesus Christ shed His blood to satisfy the just demands of God's Law against you (Heb. 9:14) and that He rose for your justification.
- 3) **Turn** from your sin to Christ, and call upon Him to save you by His infinite grace (Rom. 10:13).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8).

Then read 1 John 5:13 & John 10:27-28).

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