

## WRITER

The name Daniel means, "God is my judge." His name was later changed by the Babylonians to Belteshazzar, meaning, "protect his life." Daniel was born around 620 B.C. In 605 B.C., and at the age of fifteen, he was taken with 10,000 captives by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylonian captivity. He spent the rest of his life in captivity, dying at the age of 85 to 90 years old, sometime after the release of the first group of exiles by the Medes and Persians in 536 B.C. He was born of the tribe of Judah, and possibly a descendant of the royal Davidic family (See 1:3-6).

## DATE

The book was either written by Daniel who recounted his life and experiences, or it was written by one who was close to Daniel during his ministry. Some have suggested that the book was written during the Maccabean period, and thus place the time of writing around 165 B.C. Arguments are stronger for Daniel writing the book around 530 B.C. in order to give the fellow exiles encouragement concerning the work of God among the nations. He wanted to remind the people of God that God was in control of all things, and thus they could trust in His promises concerning their future.

If the book were written at a later date, it would have been too late to accomplish the theme of being a book of encouragement for the Jews. At the close of the book, the release of the captives was about to transpire. Daniel's prophecies were given in order to prepare the people for a turbulent history until the consummation of national Israel. This would happen in the coming and coronation of the Son of Man. The book was thus written at a time when God wanted to prepare His people for the future, and the termination of national Israel. The tribulation they would endure for the next five centuries would not be a result of sin on their part, as it was in the past. Their tribulation would be the

result of the international turmoil that would transpire between nations until the coming of the Messiah.

### **BOOK**

The book is divided into two sections. Chapters 1-6 are primarily historical in content in reference to the Babylonian Empire. Chapters 7-12 are prophetic in reference to those events that would affect the Jews until the coming of the Messiah, and shortly after, until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The prophetic revelation brings the readers to the revelation of the work and kingdom of the Christ who would ascend to the throne of God in heaven. Once the coronation had taken place, then it would be time for the end of national Israel through whom God had worked since the days of Abraham in order to bring the Messiah into the world.

The languages of the book are both Hebrew and Aramaic. The material of 1:1 – 2:4a was originally written in Hebrew, and thus specifically directed to the Jews in captivity. The material of 8:1 – 12:13 was originally written in Aramaic, the common language of the captives. This section was directed to the nations. During the period that the Jews were in captivity, Aramaic was the language of the Babylonian Empire. So when Daniel wrote concerning world events that would affect the Jews, he wrote in Aramaic, a common language of the nations. Aramaic was also a second language that was spoken by the Jews, some of whom had been in captivity for almost 150 years at the time of writing.

Portions of the book are written as apocalyptic literature. In these portions, many symbols were used to portray a message concerning the changes that would take place among the nations surrounding Palestine until the coming of the Christ. As the book of Revelation is the apocalypse of the New Testament, Daniel is the same for the Old Testament. As Revelation focuses on the evil work of the Roman Empire in its confrontation with Christianity, the book of Daniel gives a history of turmoil of the nations of the Near East until the coming of Jesus. Revelation focuses on the direct impact of Roman policies on Christianity. Daniel, on the other hand,

reveals the unfortunate indirect impact that the nations in turmoil would have on God's people in Palestine.

There is an element of mystery in the apocalyptic message of Daniel as he reveals the coming international turmoil through which the people of God would endure until the coming of the Messiah. In apocalyptic literature emphasis is not on the fulfillment of prophecy. Emphasis is on the dynamics of forces that work against one another in order to manifest the completion of God's purposes through His people. The international turmoil that is revealed through changing times is climaxed with the revelation of God's work in the affairs of man in order to accomplish His purpose. Thus the apocalyptic story often ends with national or international turmoil and God's judgment upon the wicked. Since the Jews, after their return to the land of Palestine, would endure the conflict of many surrounding nations, God wanted to encourage them with the message of Daniel. He wanted to remind them that all things were under His control.

The book of Daniel thus focuses on the sovereign reign of God over all things (See 2:47; 3:17,18; 4:28-37; 5:18-31). In the midst of turmoil, Daniel reassures the captives that God rewards faithfulness (See 1:8,9,15-21; 2:17-19,27,28,48,49; 3:12,16-18,26-30; 5:16-18,29; 6:7-12,19-24). Though His people would suffer amidst the turmoil of international affairs, God would eventually reign victorious over all evil forces (See 2:44; 7:9-12,26,27; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45; 12:13). When the Son of Man was ascended unto the Ancient of Days, God's work through Israel would be consummated (7:13,14). After the completion of the purpose for the existence of Israel, it would dissolve into the spiritual Israel, the church (Gl 3:26-29). National Israel would be terminated in the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem (See comments Mt 24).

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Babylonian Empire**

Nabopolassar (625-605 B.C.) was the first king of Babylon when the Babylonian Empire was in its early beginnings. He led the Babylonians in a defeat of the Assyrian Empire in 612 and 609 B.C. His successor, Nebuchadnezzar

zar, defeated the Assyrian/Egyptian alliance at the battle of Carchemish in 609 B.C., and thus established the Babylonian Empire that took over all the former Assyrian Empire territories. Nebuchadnezzar reigned from 605 to 561 B.C. He was succeeded by Amel-Mardu (Evil-Merodach) his son. Amel-Mardu reigned until 559 B.C. when his brother-in-law, Neriglissar assassinated him. Neriglissar reigned from 559 to 556 B.C. After him came Labashi-Marduk, the son of Neriglissar, who reigned only nine months before being assassinated. Nabonidus then seized the throne. During his reign, Belshazzar, his son, reigned coregent with his father until 539 B.C. In 539 B.C. the Babylonian Empire came to a close. The Medes and the Persians brought the Empire to a close and it was never to be in existence again.

### **Medo-Persian Empire**

At the time the kingdom of Babylon was in its twilight hours, Cyrus, the king of Ansham, overthrew the Median Empire in 550 B.C. He subsequently became the king of Persia around 547 B.C. In 539 B.C. the Medes and Persians overthrew the Babylonians. Cyrus was the king of the Medo-Persian Empire from 536-529 B.C., after which, his son, Cambyses, became king. Cambyses expanded the Persian Empire south by defeating the Egyptians. Egyptian territory remained a part of the Persian Empire until 332 B.C., the time when the Persian Empire eventually succumbed to the Greeks. Darius I (Hystaspes) was king of the Medo-Persian Empire from 521-486 B.C. He was followed by Xerxes (Ahasuerus) (485-465), Artaxerxes (465-425), Darius II (Nothus) (424-404), Artaxerxes II (Mnemon) (404-429), Artaxerxes III (Ochus) (359-338) and Darius III (Codomanus) (336-331). In 332 B.C. the Medo-Persian Empire came to an end when Alexander the Great expanded the Greek Empire to the east.

### **Rule of the Seleucidae**

When Alexander the Great unexpectedly died, the Greek Empire was divided into four regions over which Alexander's four generals ruled. The Greek rulers who directly affected the people of God in Palestine were the

Seleucidae and Ptolemy rulers. The Seleucidae ruled over Syria and most of the former Babylonian Empire to the north of Palestine and east of Syria. The rulers of the Seleucidae kingdom were the following:

- Seleucus I (Nicator) – 312-280 B.C.
- Antiochus I (Soter) – 279-261 B.C.
- Antiochus II (Theos) – 261-246 B.C.
- Seleucus II (Callinicus) – 246-226 B.C.
- Seleucus III (Ceraunus) – 226-223 B.C.
- Antiochus III (the Great) – 222-187 B.C.
- Seleucus IV (Philopator) – 186-176 B.C.
- Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) – 175-164 B.C.

### **Rule of the Ptolemies**

The Ptolemies ruled over Egypt to the south of Palestine. Palestine often became a field of conflict in the struggle between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucidae of Syria. At different times throughout these years of struggle, either one or the other had control of the land of Palestine. The following are the early Ptolemies of Egypt:

- Ptolemy I (Soter) – 322-285 B.C.
- Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) – 285-247 B.C.
- Ptolemy III (Euergetes I) – 247-222 B.C.
- Ptolemy IV (Philopator) – 222-205 B.C.
- Ptolemy V (Epiphanes) – 205-182 B.C.
- Ptolemy VI (Eupator) – 182 B.C.
- Ptolemy VII (Philometor) – 182-170 B.C.
- Ptolemy (Philometor) coregent with Ptolemy (Euergetes II) – 170-164 B.C.
- Ptolemy (Philometor) – 164-146 B.C.

Daniel gives a prophetic picture of events that transpired between the Ptolemies and Seleucidae rulers that greatly affected the lives of the Jews in Palestine during the period that led up to Rome's conquest of the region. Some important events to remember include the marriage of Antiochus II of Syria to Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II, in 248 B.C. (11:6). Wars broke out between

Ptolemy III and Seleucus II (11:7ff). Antiochus II made himself the ruler of Palestine, but was later forced to retreat because of his defeat by Ptolemy IV at Raphia in 217 B.C. In 202 B.C. Antiochus II conquered the territory of Palestine. Two years later, Egypt attempted to conquer Palestine, but was repelled (11:12,13). In 197 B.C., Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus III, married Ptolemy V (11:17). In 176 B.C., Antiochus IV became the ruler of Syria (8:9,23; 11:21). While acting on information from one called Simon, in 176 B.C. Seleucus IV sought to gain control of the temple treasures through his chief minister, Heliodorus (11:20).

The high priest, Onias III, the leader of the Chasidim, was deposed by Antiochus. Jason, a leader among the Hellenistic Jews was appointed in his place. Jason was later deposed in favor of Menelaus. Onias III was eventually assassinated (11:22; 1 Enoch 90:8; 2 Maccabees 4:33-35). In 170 B.C. Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) invaded Egypt. He initially conquered Pelusium, and later prevailed over Egypt (11:25-27; 1 Maccabees 1:16-18). At this time Jason had reappointed himself as high priest in Jerusalem. However, on his return from his conquest of Egypt, Antiochus Epiphanes deposed him, plundered the temple, and massacred many Jews (8:9,10; 11:28; 1 Maccabees 1:21-28). It was around this time that the Romans entered the picture by forcing Antiochus Epiphanes from Egypt in 169 B.C. Potilius Laenas of Rome eventually forced Antiochus Epiphanes to give up his claim on Egypt.

In 169-168 B.C. Apollonius made a surprise attack on Jerusalem, massacring many Jews and forcing many to flee for their lives. He then established a garrison of soldiers in Jerusalem for the Syrians. Antiochus Epiphanes subsequently ordered the termination of Jewish religious ceremonies, forbidding the Jews' honoring of the Sabbath and circumcision. He burned copies of the Torah and abolished sacrifices. A pagan altar was set up in the temple in 168 B.C. (8:11-13,24,25; 11:30-35). However, one year later Mattathias and his sons rose up against the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes (11:37; 1 Enoch 90:9; 1 Maccabees 2). When Mattathias died, his son, Judas,

continued the revolt against the occupation of Palestine, defeating the Syrians and killing the two Syrian generals, Apollonius and Seron (1 Maccabees 3:1-14). The cleansing of the temple took place on the 25th of Chisleu (December 25th), a little over three years after it was desecrated by Antiochus. Antiochus later sought to plunder a temple in Elymais of Persia. However, he was defeated by the residents and later died at Taboe (8:14,25; 11:45).

Daniel's detailed account concerning the turmoil of the nations in reference to the land of Palestine has led some critics to believe that the book was actually written as a history book, instead of a prophecy. But when one studies through the content of the book, there is no support for the book to have been written after the many historical events that are described by Daniel. The encouragement of its content would be valid only if it were a prophecy of things to come in the history of God's people in Palestine. In fact, the prophecies of historical events to come were so detailed that when revealed to Daniel, he fainted at their complexity and how the nations would affect the people of God. Nevertheless, there was a time coming wherein peace would be restored for a brief period of time. At that time, God would send the Messiah into the world. Rome eventually gained control of Palestine, and subsequently brought peace to the land by allowing some autonomy among the Jews. When the fullness of time came, the Redeemer for whom all God's people had been waiting was revealed (Gl 4:4).

It is our general understanding that all the prophecies and fulfillments of Daniel were directed to the people of God who were headed for a time of frustration and discouragement as victims of international turmoil. The fulfillment of the prophecies would come in the first century when the descendants of God's people in the interbiblical era would experience the fulfillment of the prophecies. There is no contextual reason to hijack these contexts for our own curiosity today in reference to the end of time, or for those who would live prior to the final coming of Jesus. We must always keep Israel in mind when interpreting prophecies that were made to Israel. God was working through Israel in order to

bring the Messiah and Savior into the world. Once this eternal plan was accomplished, then it was God's plan to terminate Israel as a race of people with whom He had a special covenant relationship. Israel was terminated in Christ (See comments Gl 3:23-26). National Israel was terminated by the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). The purpose of the prophets, therefore, was to bring the Jews and all mankind to the cross of Jesus. The prophets were sent in order to bring a remnant of Israel to the cross in order that the promises made to the fathers be fulfilled (See Gn 12:1-3).

We must not commit interpretative robbery of the prophets' prophecies in order to satisfy our curiosity of current events and our anticipation for the final coming. God's immediate historical purpose through Daniel was to spiritually lead His people through the era of captivity, and then give them encouragement through prophecy until the enthronement of the Son of Man. In Matthew 24, Jesus would later pick up where Daniel left off, and thus be more specific concerning the consummation of 2,000 years of Abrahamic history in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Once the Son of Man was enthroned in heaven in A.D. 30, God in revelation to John, again took His people through the onslaught of both Jewish and Roman persecution in order that they come forth as shining lights of righteousness. The church would then continue unto the revelation of the Son of God from heaven at the end of time. It would be then that God's people would transition into a new heaven and earth wherein dwells righteousness. Our encouragement from Daniel comes in discovering the faithfulness of God in carrying out His work as planned and foretold. We know that He is still working today in the affairs of the world to bring the church into eternal glory. Because of this work in the past, we have no need to doubt His present work to bring the saints to victory in the future.

### **History Of Peoples & Nations**

**(1:1 - 7:28)**

**Outline:** (1) Faithfulness of Daniel and friends (1:1-21), (2) Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an image (2:1-49), (3) Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (3:1-30), (4) Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a tree (4:1-37), (5) End of



Belshazzar and Babylon (5:1-31), (6) Deliverance from the lion's den (6:1-28), (7) Daniel's dream of the four beasts (7:1-28)

## Chapter 1

### FAITHFULNESS OF DANIEL & FRIENDS

**1:1,2** These two verses are in Hebrew in the original text, while 2:4 – 7:28 were written in Aramaic. The reason for this was that the portions of the book that were directed to the Jews were written in Hebrew, but the portions of the book that were written in reference to the nations were written in Aramaic, the language of the Near East world at the time of writing. **Third year of the reign of Jehoiakim:** On his way to battle with the Assyrians against the Babylonians at Carchemish, Pharaoh-necho killed Josiah. Jehoiakim was then appointed the king of Judah by Pharaoh-necho. But Jehoiakim was subdued by Nebuchadnezzar immediately after his victory over the Assyrian/Egyptian alliance at Carchemish in 609 B.C. The first captivity of the Jews followed, and thus the beginning of the end of national Israel in the land of Palestine. It was with this first captivity of Israelites that Daniel and his three friends were taken into Babylonian captivity, from which Daniel never returned.

**1:3-7** In order to consolidate his kingdom reign, Nebuchadnezzar chose the most gifted young men of his kingdom in order that they be trained for leadership. This was a political move on the part of Nebuchadnezzar in order that the Babylonian Empire be unified after the death of his father, Nabopolassar. **Gave new names:** In order to bring the Jewish young men into the pagan culture of Babylon, their names had to be changed. Daniel's name, meaning "God is my judge," was changed to Belteshazzar, meaning "the treasure (or, secrets) of Bell." Hananiah, meaning "the Lord is gracious," was changed to Shadrach, meaning "the inspiration of the sun." Mishael, meaning "one who comes from God," was changed to Meshach, meaning "one who belongs to the goddess Sheshack." Azariah, meaning "the Lord is my helper," was changed to Abednego, meaning "the servant of Nego" (the morning star).

**1:8-13 Daniel determined:** Even at this young age,

Daniel, with his three friends, were young men with convictions. The parents of these four young men did not fail in their training of their children to remain faithful to God. The convictions of the young men were so strong that they refused to go with the crowd, even under the orders of the king of Babylon. God can use young men with such great convictions. The integrity of Daniel and his friends was manifested in their convictions to stand for that which they had made a commitment. Neither peer pressure nor kings could deter them from their convictions. They refused to partake of food that was either dedicated to pagan gods, or manifested a compromise of their faith. Their names could be changed by the king, but not their convictions. **Vegetables:** Literally, seeds. The diet was generally a diet of seeds and vegetables. The ten-day hygienic diet gave the youth time for their bodies to manifest the benefits of the good diet.

**1:14-16** At the end of the ten days, the proof of the diet was confirmed in the appearance of Daniel and his three friends. **Took away the portion of their food:** We would assume that Melzar put all the youth on the same diet. We can only wonder how much complaint came from them when Melzar removed the meat and wine from their meals. We would assume that neither Daniel, nor his three friends, gained the friendship of the other youths because Melzar changed their diets. We must keep in mind that these same youths were contemporaries with Daniel and his friends as they grew up to be rulers in the Babylonian Empire. It was possibly in these early years that jealousy started to grow in their hearts toward these four righteous young men who had committed themselves to serve their God.

**1:17-21 God gave them:** This was revelation of knowledge and wisdom that increased their intellect ten times to what they could acquire through the natural processes of learning by which the other youths had to gain access to knowledge and wisdom. As God had directly given Joseph such knowledge when he was in Egypt, so Daniel and his three friends were miraculously given knowledge and wisdom in order that they be promoted in the kingdom of Babylon. **First year of King Cyrus:** This

would be Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire. The date would be 539 B.C., the date when the Medes and Persians overthrew the Babylonian Empire. Daniel continued his influence over the Babylonians until the Babylonians were overthrown. He continued his ministry to at least the third year of Cyrus (10:1).

## Chapter 2

### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM OF AN IMAGE

Beginning at 2:4, the original manuscript was written in Aramaic because the message was to the nations who affected the people of God in Palestine. The Aramaic message continues to the end of chapter 7.

**2:1-3** With the message of Daniel's vision of chapter 7, this dream of Nebuchadnezzar is the key message of the book (See comments ch 7 & Rv 13). What was revealed in this dream and Daniel's vision of chapter 7, was given for the purpose of encouraging the people of God until the coming of the Messianic age. This age would begin when the Son of Man ascended to the throne of the Ancient of Days and assumed kingdom reign over all things. Once this consummation of the ages had come, then Israel could be assured that the promises made to the fathers had been fulfilled. **Nebuchadnezzar ... commanded to call:** God was at work in all that took place on this occasion. He revealed the dream, but also knew that Nebuchadnezzar would go to extreme measures in order to have the dream revealed. His efforts to have the revelation explained by the wisest and most knowledgeable men of the Empire were futile. Such should be a warning to those modern-day prognosticators who would use their dreams to determine the future (See comments Jr 23:25-28,32; 29:8,9). God reveals His will to man through written word today. He reserves only for Himself the ability to know the future. **Magicians:** These were those who were involved in the arts of the occult. **Astrologers:** Babylon was known for these who thought that they could gain knowledge through their interpretation of the movements of the heavenly bodies. **Sorcerers:** Through their incantations, these assumed that they could gain knowledge, and thus inquire into the su-

pernatural for the purpose of controlling the behavior of men. **Chaldeans:** These were the priestly leaders of Babylon. They resorted to the incantations of the magicians, astrologers and sorcerers in order to maintain their power and control over the minds of the people. In the absence of the word of God, these misguided religionists controlled others by what they could conjure up in their own minds. It is inherent within men to be religious. But when there is an absence of the word of God, men will create gods after their own imagination and religious behavior after their own desires. Leaders who are ignorant of the word of God will use mind-controlling incantations to lead those who also do not love the word of God. Those who reject the word of God will gladly sustain those who will satisfy their idle religious curiosity (Compare comments Mk 7:1-9; 2 Th 2:10-12; 2 Tm 4:1-4).

**2:4-13** Herein is revealed a contest between the true spokesman for God and those religionists who presumed to have knowledge and experience of things concerning the supernatural. The contest was between Daniel and the Chaldeans who spoke for the magicians, astrologers and sorcerers (See comments 1 Kg 18). **Let the king tell ... the dream:** In order that Daniel be confirmed as a true spokesman for God, the situation in the context was established to prove beyond any doubt that God was working through him. Those who affirm that the book of Daniel was written as a history book, instead of a book of prophecy, deny this evidence that God used in order to confirm His messengers. Only God could reveal to Daniel the dream, and thus, only He too could reveal the interpretation. **Bargaining for time:** The false religious leaders knew that they could not reveal the dream. If they could have only know the dream, then they could have devised some sort of interpretation that would have appeased the king. They could have given a fulfillment that would come to pass long after the king was dead, and thus be secure in their positions as religious leaders. **There is no man on earth who can reveal the king's matter:** Realizing the desperate situation in which the king had placed them, the religious prognosticators sought

to defend themselves before the king. Their conclusion was correct. It was not in the power of man to reveal dreams. It could have been that the king had not really forgotten the details of the dream, but simply wanted to test those of his kingdom who presumed to know the future. If they could only reveal the dream itself, then he could have trusted their interpretation. But they failed the test, and thus were about to reap the consequences.

**They sought Daniel:** We must assume that at least some of these religious leaders were former acquaintances of Daniel when they were all young men. Because they knew of him, they sought for him. These false religious leaders had failed concerning what they had claimed to be able to do. Nebuchadnezzar, therefore, sought to rid his kingdom of all religious fakes in order that the kingdom not be plagued by religious deceivers.

**2:14-16** Daniel and his three friends, who were ranked politically high in the kingdom by this time (1:19,20), went directly to the king when he was informed concerning the king's decision. He wisely asked for time in order that the king regain his composure, as well as to bring peace of mind to all the religious leaders who were fearful for their lives. It may have also been a period of time when the religious leaders anxiously hoped for deliverance through Daniel.

**2:17-23 *Desire mercies of the God of heaven:*** The religious leaders of Babylon were tried and convicted of their presumption to know the future by consulting and scheming concerning the simple wisdom and knowledge of man. Daniel and his friends, however, were judged and proven to be true men of God. Because the wise men had totally failed with their presumptions among the people, God manifested His true messengers before all Babylon. We would assume, therefore, that though the religious prognosticators had been spared, their jealousy toward Daniel and his friends grew.

**2:24-30** Arioch immediately identified the one he had found who could interpret the dream. Daniel was identified to be one of the Israelite captives. He identified Daniel in order that there be no question in the mind of Nebuchadnezzar that the one who would interpret the

dream was not one of the religious leaders of Babylon. **A God ... who reveals secrets:** Contrary to what the religious leaders would claim, Daniel gave all credit to God for the revelation of the interpretation. Daniel knew that only God could do such a thing. **What will be in the latter days:** We must keep in mind that the dream that was given to Nebuchadnezzar was not for the sake of the Babylonian Empire. It was for the purpose of bringing comfort to the people of God. God wanted His people to know that He was still the sovereign God of the nations. In this first revelation of the book of Daniel, the prophecy is in reference to world empires. After the reconfirmation of the changes that would take place among the world empires, beginning in chapter 8 it would be revealed to Daniel the specific international struggles that would take place with the people of God in the land of Palestine. All these international affairs would be culminated with the coronation of the Messiah at the right hand of God. The Son of Man would reign from heaven over all kingdoms of this world (7:13,14; See comments 1 Tm 6:15).

**2:31-45** In this context, Daniel interpreted a God-given dream that He had revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar. The great image of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar was a prophecy of four earthly kingdom reigns or empires. **This great image:** The first kingdom was that of Nebuchadnezzar who represented the Babylonian kingdom (vss 37,38). After the Babylonian kingdom would come another, the Medo-Persian kingdom (vs 39). After the Medo-Persian kingdom, the Greek kingdom would arise (vs 39). A fourth kingdom would arise after the Greek kingdom. This was the Roman kingdom (vs 40). Daniel then interpreted that it would be in the days of the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire, that God would set up another kingdom reign. This kingdom would have authority over all the earth. However, it would not be a physical kingdom as was characteristic with the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman Empires (Lk 17:20,21). It would be a kingdom that was manifested on earth, but was not of this world (Jn 18:36). Daniel interpreted that the fourth kingdom would break in pieces, and that the kingdom that God would establish would

assume all the authority of the earthly kingdoms (vs 44; see comments Rv 21:24). It would assume sovereignty of earthly kingdoms in the sense that its sovereignty would be over all earthly kingdoms. **Kingdom:** Herein is the prophecy of a kingdom reign that would assume the totality of authority that was manifested and exercised by the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman kingdom reigns (See 1 Tm 6:15). We must keep in mind that the authority of this kingdom would not be exercised in the manner that earthly kingdoms exercise their authority. The kingdom that would be established from a heavenly reign would manifest authority on earth through the obedience of men to the word of their King (Jn 12:48; see Lk 17:20,21). The kingdom reign of verse 44 would be universal. It would extend throughout the world. There would be no limits to the expansion of its authority as the authority of the King's word was preached throughout the world. This prophecy, therefore, is speaking of a universal kingdom reign that would come in the days of the Roman kings. Though the prophecy does not explain any individual king in reference to this kingdom, the fact is that the kingdom would be universal. It would have no earthly limitations (Jn 18:35,36). We would assume, therefore, that the One who would reign with total sovereignty would exercise all authority over all things (See comments Mt 28:18; 1 Pt 3:22). The universality of the sovereignty assumes the existence of the universality of the authority of the King. We must keep in mind that in this prophecy, as well as in many of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom, the kingdom reign or sovereignty of the king is emphasized. The prophecies assume the sovereignty of the King over all things because the King's authority would extend over all things. The reason these prophecies emphasize the kingdom reign is because contrasts are being established between the earthly kingdoms that were in power at the time the prophecies were made and the sovereignty that would be manifested through the reign of the Messiah. A contrast is also being established between the limited earthly kingdoms and the response to the kingdom reign that would come from all nations during the time of the

Messiah's reign. Universal kingship assumes universal kingdom reign. And if the King is to have universal kingdom reign, then the response to the reign (church) would go throughout all nations. Verse 44 is discussing the assumption of this sovereignty. **Stone:** In verse 45, "a stone" was cut out of the mountain of kingdom reign and broke in pieces the power of earthly authorities. It did so by breaking the power of the fourth kingdom (Rome) (vss 34,35). Herein is the impact of heavenly sovereignty of the King that is manifested on earth in the hearts of men. When the will of the Father is done on earth as it was done in heaven (Mt 6:9,10), then the kingdom reign of Deity is manifested (See comments Mt 16:18,19). It is manifested to be stronger than any patriotism to any earthly kingdom. This transpired in the days of the Roman kingdom when men and women responded in great numbers to the kingdom reign of Jesus (See comments At 2:36-47). Herein is the church (the stone) and the influence of heavenly kingdom reign on earth in the hearts of men (Lk 17:20,21). One can only imagine the anticipation that was created in the minds of the Jews as they read the prophecy of this dream. They had lost their nationhood in the past because of their idolatry. They would be restored to Palestine where they would continually be occupied and harassed by the surrounding nations. But there would come a time when their God would establish a kingdom reign above all the kingdoms of the world. Therefore, in order to continue His encouragement of His people in captivity, God revealed the vision of this chapter and chapter 7 (See comments ch 7; compare comments Rv 13).

**2:46-49** Nebuchadnezzar was awestruck concerning Daniel's revelation of the meaning of the dream. He was so overwhelmed by the interpretation that we are led to believe that he actually knew the details of the dream itself, but did not know the meaning. The very fact that Daniel was able to tell him the details of the dream was enough to convince him that Daniel was a true prophet of God. Though he did not understand the fulfillment of the interpretation, he knew that Daniel had revealed what he had actually dreamed. **Worshipped:** Though



Nebuchadnezzar's worship of Daniel was misguided, his actions manifested his total confidence in Daniel. The result was what God intended for Daniel and his friends. He wanted them to be promoted in the kingdom in order to be an encouragement to the people of God in their captivity. Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel and his friends high political status, and thus God was working through them to protect his people throughout the captivity years. God used Daniel from the very first captivity to the end of the captivity in order to be a spiritual center of reference for His people. The Israelites needed a stable spiritual light in their process of repentance from idolatry to faith in the one true and living God. Daniel and his three friends provided a spiritual center of reference for God's people.

### Chapter 3

#### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLDEN IMAGE

**3:1-6** We could assume that Nebuchadnezzar conceived the idea of this image from his dream in chapter 2. He fell down before Daniel in response to Daniel's interpretation of the dream, and thus he concluded that such would be the reaction of the people to his image of gold. Whether the image was to focus worship on himself or on some pagan god, we are not told. He did want to encourage worship on the part of the people, but his pagan mind moved him to pursue such by the wrong means (See comments At 14:11-16). Since in the previous dream Daniel interpreted that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, we could conclude that the image was made by one, Nebuchadnezzar, who had little knowledge of the true and living God. In his arrogance, therefore, Nebuchadnezzar possibly sought to draw worship to himself through the image. **Height ... width:** This statue was approximately 28 meters high (90 feet) and 5.5 meters wide (18 feet). Its massive presence was commanding, and thus could be seen throughout the region from a great distance.

**3:7-18 Certain Chaldeans:** It is interesting that this priestly group of religious leaders who were previously spared from death by Daniel's interpretation of the

dream of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2, are now seeking an accusation against Daniel's friends in order that they be killed. Such is the character of religious leaders who cherish their positions and possessions more than the truth. We must also understand that the religious leaders had known the men for several years, and thus understood their beliefs. Their jealousy, therefore, moved them to rid the kingdom of their righteous influence over the people. ***Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury:*** Nebuchadnezzar's command to dictate religious behavior was challenged by the three friends of Daniel (See comments At 4:28,29). ***Who is this God who will deliver you:*** As with the contest between Daniel and the religious leaders in chapter 2, here again is a contest between the true God of Israel and the false gods in which Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians believed. In this case, God turned the accusing actions of the Chaldeans against themselves. We do not need to give you an answer: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had already determined their behavior and response to any threats that would be made toward them to compromise their principles. They trusted in God for their deliverance. But if God did not deliver them from the fiery furnace, then they still would not submit to a command to pay homage to false gods. Their example for all the Jews in captivity was more important than bowing down to a pagan idol.

**3:19-25 *Facial expression was altered:*** This was an indication of a king who lived with every command of his rule being obeyed without question. The three Jews were not being defiant. They realized that there was One greater than Nebuchadnezzar who had command over him (See comments Jn 18:36). It was to this One they must first be obedient in worship, for they knew that there were worse things than death. The message of the incident is that there is nothing on earth, neither man nor any created god after the imagination of man, who is to be worshiped. Worship is to be given only to Him who is the creator of all things. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego knew this, and thus they would not risk their destiny with the God of heaven by paying homage

to some image made out of the elements of this world that God had created. They knew the responsibility of their leadership throughout the Babylonian Empire, and thus they refused to do that which had brought the people of God into captivity in the first place, that is, idolatry. They stood faithful without any knowledge of Jesus Christ which we have today. **Like a son of the gods:** Nebuchadnezzar certainly saw a heavenly being, for its appearance was not that of a man. God had sent His Angel to protect those who stood for Him against the commandment of an earthly king.

**3:26-30 Most High God:** Though Nebuchadnezzar was correct in identifying the God of the three men, in his thinking his reference to God was only to the fact that he recognized that Israel's God was the "chief" of all gods. Nebuchadnezzar at least realized at the moment that only a true God could do what he had just witnessed. **Sent His Angel:** Whether this was one of God's angels, or the preincarnate Son of God, can be left to the speculation of the Bible student. There would certainly be no harm in believing that the One revealed with the three companions was Jesus before His incarnation. In this case, He dwelt among those of His who were in trouble. He would later be revealed through His incarnation in order to dwell among His people (Jn 1:14). In the revelation of the Son of God throughout the history of man, the Angel of God (the Son of Man) was revealed for the purpose of protection and comfort. **No other god who can deliver in this way:** There was first no other God, and second, no god created after the imagination of man could work anything that was supernatural. Nebuchadnezzar's testimony is that he had never experienced the work of the supernatural, and thus we must conclude that God would never allow man to work anything that was miraculous that would be a witness against the truth of His messengers and their message (See comments At 8:5-25). We must also not conclude that Nebuchadnezzar was a convert to monotheism. He did not believe that the only God was the God of Israel. He had a kingdom of idolaters to rule, and thus had to appease all his subjects who were hardened idolaters. However, he at least came to

the conclusion that the God of Israel was above all other gods. For this reason, he issued the decree that Israel's God be respected among all the gods of his kingdom.

## Chapter 4

### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S VISION OF A TREE

**4:1-3** This chapter is a proclamation by a pagan king who realized the sovereignty and greatness of the God of Israel. Though living as the king of a kingdom of idolaters, at least Nebuchadnezzar realized that God sets up and takes down world leaders. Nebuchadnezzar here gave his witness to the authenticity of the miraculous wonders he experienced that were a revelation of the supernatural power of God.

**4:4-18** The dream may have occurred in the latter part of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. He had conquered many nations of the world and thus built the great Babylonian Empire. He had built great fortified cities and palaces and flourished throughout his kingdom. As a person of the world, there was every reason for him to become arrogant and haughty. However, the dream greatly disturbed him. We could possibly conclude that in some way he understood the general sense of the dream. Nevertheless, he brought in the wisest men of his kingdom in order to give a correct interpretation. We would assume that if these men knew the meaning of the dream, they would certainly not tell it to this most powerful king. Since they were timid in their postulations as to what the dream meant, Nebuchadnezzar called for Daniel. Regardless of the meaning of the dream, Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel would give the true interpretation regardless of the consequences. Those who stand for the truth, regardless of the consequences, are trusted by the most pagan of men. Nebuchadnezzar explained the dream to Daniel, which dream indicated both judgment and mercy upon the "tree."

**4:19-27** *Astonished for one hour:* It could be that Daniel did not realize the full implications of the dream. To him was revealed the meaning, and the extent to which Nebuchadnezzar would be dethroned and banished to wander with the birds and beasts was not revealed. He

possibly wondered if this was the end of the Babylonian Empire. **The dream favors those who hate you:** We are not told if this was a conspiracy, or if it was the leadership of the kingdom taking control because their king lost his mind. In view of verse 25, it seems that the occasion was a conspiracy. Nebuchadnezzar was the tree that had grown strong. The Babylonian Empire became the security for many nations. Through Nebuchadnezzar's strength, many other nations of the world found their defense from invading enemies. Nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar would be cut down, though the Babylonian kingdom would continue. **The stump:** Mercy was manifested to Nebuchadnezzar in that he was eventually restored to the throne. He was not to be completely removed. **Seven times will pass:** Seven years. **Until you know:** The purpose of his dismissal from the throne was that he understand that God reigns over the kingdoms of the world. All that Nebuchadnezzar had accomplished had driven him to arrogance and hardening of heart toward the poor. He had become as those leaders of Israel in the latter times of the existence of both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel. As the king, he reigned for his own benefit, having little consideration for the subjects of his kingdom.

**4:28-33** Nebuchadnezzar had every opportunity in the presence of Daniel and his three friends to experience the miraculous manifestation of God. He failed to respond with true faith, and thus he had to reap the consequences of refusing to take advantage of the opportunity for faith. But once the dream was interpreted, God waited one year before allowing the occasion to take place that drove the king from his palace. **This great Babylon that I have built:** Nebuchadnezzar certainly built one of the greatest kingdoms of the ancient world. The city of Babylon itself was a city with walls upon which two chariots could race side-by-side. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The city had beautiful buildings and running water in many of the luxurious mansions. All this was built under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar. **He ate grass as oxen:** We are not told the particular insanity that Nebu-

chadnezzar suffered. He may have become delusional in his extreme arrogance. His extreme pride surely caused him to disconnect from the reality of humanity.

**4:34-37** Though he was the victim of his own misguided character, God's mercy was poured out upon the humbled king. Kings come to their senses only when they realize that God is in control of all things. The recording of this case history of an arrogant king was for the purpose of bringing hope to the captive Jews. Nebuchadnezzar was only a passing king in history. But God's plan of redemption for man was an eternal plan that was to be revealed a little over 500 years from the time Nebuchadnezzar lived. Nebuchadnezzar realized that God establishes and terminates both kings and kingdoms. He did not deduct that God had an eternal plan of redemption in mind that would spring forth from the people who were captives in his kingdom. We would conclude that God did not want His people in captivity to put too much trust in one who had exalted Daniel and his friends as prominent officials in the kingdom. The captivity would be for seventy years, and then Israel would again be allowed to reestablish her roots in the land of promise. The Babylonian Empire would pass from history, being remembered only through stone monuments. God only is eternal, and He only is the sovereign over all things.

## Chapter 5

### END OF BELSHAZZAR & BABYLON

**5:1-4 *Belshazzar*:** When Nebuchadnezzar died, his son, Evil-merodach came to the throne of the Babylonian Empire (See 2 Kg 25:27-30; Jr 52:31-34). However, he reigned only two years when Neriglissar, Evil-merodach's brother-in-law, led a rebellion and assassinated him. Though Neriglissar was not of royal blood, he assumed that his son, Labashi Marduk, who was born of Nebuchadnezzar's daughter whom he had married, would have a right to the throne. However, Labashi Marduk was rejected and the military leadership of the Empire enthroned Nabonidus, another son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar. Nitocris, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, gave birth to a son through Nabonidus, naming him Belshazzar. Because

Belshazzar was of royal blood, he was made a coregent king with Nabonidus three years after Nabonidus had assumed the throne. Since Belshazzar was the reigning king of the city of Babylon and its province, it was this king who encountered Daniel. The setting of the incident that took place in this context came at the end of Belshazzar's kingship over Babylon. He was a psychopathic leader who dealt murderously with any competition in his realm. Because he was the spoiled child who was brought up in the luxury of the royal family, he had little compassion for the people and those who were around him. If his reign exemplified the moral degradation of the Babylonian Empire, then it was time for it to come to a close.

**5:5-9** After fourteen years of reign in Babylon, Belshazzar had come to the end of his cruel reign. His father, Nabonidus, was engaged in battle with a coalition of armies of the Medes and Persians. The Babylonian Empire was thus in its evening hours as province by province fell to the Medes and Persians. On the evening of this event, King Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire had surrounded the city of Babylon. It was at a time as this that the foolishness of Belshazzar was manifested in the fact that he conducted a feast for all his lords within the city. ***Fingers of a man's hand came forth:*** What happened during the drunken feast was something that terrified Belshazzar and all the guests who witnessed the fingers of a man's hand inscribing a message in the plaster of the wall. Though the king promised the greatest of riches for the one who could interpret the writing, no wise man could be found. ***Third ruler in the kingdom:*** Nabonidus was the first, Belshazzar the second, and the one who correctly interpreted the writing would be the third.

**5:10-12** Since the people were in great confusion concerning the event of the writing on the wall, the queen mother, Nitocris, recalled one name, Daniel, who had interpreted dreams during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

**5:13-16** Many years had passed since Daniel was active during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was known by reputation throughout the Empire (Jr 14:14), but he was possibly marginalized in his function as an

official because of the wicked reign of Belshazzar. Nevertheless, Belshazzar had heard of Daniel, and thus sought for an interpretation of the handwriting.

**5:17-24** *Let your gifts be to yourself:* Daniel would not participate in being a hired preacher for the king. The kingdom was full of such men, and thus Daniel did not want his reputation to be associated with such hirelings. If his interpretation was based on receiving wealth, then his interpretation would have been questioned. **You ... have not humbled your heart:** Though Belshazzar knew of the humbling experience of Nebuchadnezzar because of the arrogance of his heart, he did not learn from Nebuchadnezzar's experience. Belshazzar was cruel as a leader, and thus, he would not suffer banishment or insanity for a period. Instead, he would suffer death. By drinking from the vessels of the temple of God, he was mocking the God of the Jews.

**5:25-29** The interpretation was clear. God was bringing to an end the reign of Belshazzar and the Babylonian Empire. Nabonidus, his father, had been defeated by the Medes and Persians in the field. Now the Medes and Persians were at the gate of Babylon. The kingship of Belshazzar was lacking moral fiber and leadership. And since Belshazzar was a cruel king in reference to his own officials, they aligned themselves throughout the kingdom with the Medes and Persians, or at least took a passive role, and thus allowed the city of Babylon to fall. The leaders of the kingdom were displeased with Belshazzar. They did not come to his aid in his time of need because they had been so mistreated by him during his reign. For this reason, the city fell in one night without any major battle.

**5:30,31** In the same night in which the interpretation was made, Gobryas, King Cyrus' commander, let the Medo-Persian army into the city. It has been traditionally believed that the Medo-Persian army stopped or rerouted the river that ran into the city under the walls, and then entered the city through the dry river canal. However, according to the prophets who spoke of the king's lack of favor among the people, some have believed that the gates of the city were opened from inside, allowing the Medo-Persian army to enter unchallenged.



## Chapter 6

## DELIVERANCE FROM THE LION'S DEN

**6:1-5 *Dairus*:** It could be that Cyrus was the one who conquered and expanded the Medo-Persian Empire, but he left others to govern different provinces. Darius, the Mede, could have been the initial ruling monarch who was set over the city of Babylon (Compare 9:1). He thus “received the kingdom” by the appointment of Cyrus. In archaeological records, Darius is possibly the man referred to as Gubaru who was the governor of Babylon and the area beyond the Euphrates River. ***Sought to find occasion against Daniel:*** This was an occasion for political maneuvering at its worst. Jealousy was in the heart of wicked men who sought to destroy one who was faithful to God and righteous in behavior. In a political environment where favoritism gave one the opportunity for advancement, the wicked presidents and princes developed a scheme by which they might rid the kingdom of righteous Daniel. We must keep in mind that Daniel was a very old man at this time, possibly in his late 80's. ***Concerning the law of his God:*** Daniel lived in harmony with the laws of the newly established Medo-Persian Empire, as he had under the Babylonian Empire. The moral laws of the Old Testament, therefore, were not culturally linked to the Jews. They were laws that could be obeyed regardless of the culture in which one lived.

**6:6-9** The scheme was based on flattery of Darius, but for the purpose of tricking him into condemning Daniel to the lions' den. God knew of the scheme, and thus did not inform Daniel. He wanted to teach pagan kings again through the faithfulness of His people. God turns the wicked schemes of Satan against Satan himself. ***Signed the writing:*** Once the decree was signed, it became law and could not be changed. Darius was gullible. He was a new governor of Babylon, and thus was naive concerning the wickedness of rulers within his domain of responsibility.

**6:10-17** Daniel was a devotionally courageous person. The text reads as if the decree had no consequence in his normal behavior. He continued as usual with his prayers, unaffected by what any king on earth might

decree concerning the religious behavior of the citizens (See comments At 4:28,29). The principle that Daniel upheld was that no civil government or kingdom on earth has a right to dictate the religious beliefs and behavior of the people. If such a conflict of laws should occur, the people of God have no choice but to obey God rather than men (At 4:28,29). **That Daniel:** Their resentment of the righteous Daniel was brought out in their statement to Darius. They were not only against Daniel for political reasons, but we must also assume that the righteous behavior of Daniel intimidated them. **The king ... was greatly displeased with himself:** The king finally realized that he had been caught in the foolishness of his own political naivety. He was caught in the trap of Daniel's enemies, for he had to keep the law of the Medes and Persians that he had signed into law. However, he knew that Daniel was morally righteous. In his emotional turmoil, he had to save face before the people. Against his own will, he had to cast Daniel into the lions' den. **The king sealed it:** Once the den was sealed with the king's signet, it could not be opened. If anyone broke the seal, they would suffer the penalty of death.

**6:18-24** The king knew that he had done wrong. His conscience troubled him, and thus he could not sleep. Somewhere in his thinking, he believed that the God of Daniel could deliver him from the lions, because for some reason he hurried to the den early in the morning. **God has sent His angel:** As an angel was sent to protect Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace, so here God sent His angel to be present with Daniel in the den of lions. God could have worked a miracle from a distance by closing the mouths of the lions. However, we are led to believe that the angel in this case was the preincarnate Christ, who before His incarnation, made the occasional manifestation of Himself for the comfort of the people of God. **Their children and their wives:** This was not an unusual punishment under the law of the ancients. When the leader of the family sinned, his entire family had to pay the price.

**6:25-28 All the earth:** Here, as well as in other texts, reference was to all the Medo-Persian territory. **He works**

**signs and wonders:** The miraculous event of this context explains the purpose of miracles as a sign. The saving of Daniel among the lions signalled to Darius that the supernatural was present in the life of Daniel. The Hebrew word for “wonder” explains the reaction of the beholders to the intervention of the supernatural into the world of natural laws. When God sets aside the natural laws in order to reveal the supernatural, the reaction of man is wonder and amazement. In this case, the revelation of the supernatural had its intended effect on Darius. To him, there was no question that the God of Daniel was real. **Darius ... Cyrus:** This verse explains the fact that these two kings were coregent in reign during the time of Daniel. Cyrus militarily worked to consolidate the Medo-Persian Empire, while Darius, as other appointed regional kings, sought to bring order to the conquered regions of the Empire.

## Chapter 7

### DANIEL'S DREAM OF THE FOUR BEASTS

**7:1-14 First year of Belshazzar:** This vision took place fourteen years before the fall of the Babylonian Empire. **Stirring on the great sea:** As in the book of Revelation, the “sea” is the constantly changing populations of the world. In this stirring there is change, and thus kingdoms rise and fall. It is the nature of the populations of the world to give rise to governments and empires. The people of God must always keep in mind that all governments, kingdoms and empires come and go, but God is in control of all. He is working to bring to a close His plan for the creation of this world. He is working for the redemption of those who give themselves as subjects of His sovereignty. **Four great beasts:** Change was coming in the Middle East empires. This change was the central message of the dream that was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, in chapter 2 (See 2:31-45). Nebuchadnezzar's dream was a prophecy of four world kingdoms, beginning with the kingdom of Babylon and extending to the Roman Empire. In this chapter, Daniel was given a vision of four world kingdoms to come. The prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7 are parallel, though the vi-

sion of Daniel expands the prophecy of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 7 is Daniel's personal vision from God that reflects the same message as Nebuchadnezzar's dream of chapter 2 concerning world kingdoms. Daniel saw four beasts in his vision that represented four world kingdoms. As Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel saw the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. In both visions God was allowing men on earth to know the future change in the kingdom reign of God from heaven, as well as the time when this would take place. This fact is revealed in this vision in verses 13,14. These two prophecies were key prophecies that determined the time when God would change history by changing the One who would reign over all things from heaven, beginning with the existence of the fourth kingdom. History has subsequently proved the truth of the prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7. The central purpose of both prophecies, however, was to reveal the message of consummation of Daniel 2:44 and Daniel 7:13,14. In the days of the Roman kings, Daniel interpreted that the God of heaven would "set up kingdom reign" or sovereignty. This concept is brought out in the conclusion of Daniel's vision (vss 13,14). We must understand that the central revelation of these prophecies was the kingdom reign of God that would exist throughout the change of kingdoms that took place on earth. In Daniel 2:44 it was revealed that the King in heaven would change. It is significant to notice in the text of 2:44 that the article "the" is not present before the Hebrew word that is translated "kingdom." Some translators did no wrong by adding the article. However, the concept of the establishment of "sovereign reign" would be better understood if the article were left out. What was revealed to Daniel was that in the days of the Roman kings God would set up sovereignty, as is further revealed in 7:13,14. He would establish the kingdom reign of another. When speaking of the authority of the omnipresent God over all things, emphasis should be placed on reign and rule, not on territory or location. The word "kingdom" is simply used as a metaphor to reveal the sovereignty of God over all things. Daniel's interpretation of the Daniel 7 dream, specifically what is

revealed in verses 13,14, refers to the reign and rule of the exalted Son of God from heaven as opposed to that which was manifested through the worldly kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome on earth. **They brought Him near before Him:** In reading this prophecy it is significant to understand that “in vision” Daniel was placed in heaven in order to see what transpired in heaven in reference to the sovereignty of Deity. He gives us a heavenly picture of what would happen when the Son of Man ascended to the right hand of the Father in heavenly places. The “Ancient of Days” is a reference to God, the Father. In explaining the prophecy from the viewpoint of heaven, Daniel saw the One “like the Son of Man” coming to the Father who is in heaven. Acts 1:9,10 speaks of the ascension of Jesus to the Father in a cloud. Daniel 7:13,14, therefore, is a prophecy of the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father to receive dominion, glory and sovereignty. **There was given Him dominion and glory and sovereignty:** When Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, He was given authority over all things, both in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18). It was the church that filled the earth, for the church was the assembly of those who were obedient to the sovereignty of Jesus. Christians allowed the will of God to reign in their hearts on earth as it was obeyed in heaven (See comments Mt 6:10). The Son of Man was able to accomplish this because He, the head, was in control over all things for the sake of the church (Ep 1:20-23). As the parallel vision of the dream of chapter 2, Daniel 7 refers to world kingdoms and the beginning of a divine sovereignty in the days of the fourth kingdom. Babylon was represented by the lion (vs 4). The Medo-Persian Empire was represented by the bear (vs 5). The Greek Empire was represented by the leopard (vs 6). The Roman Empire was represented by the beast that was “dreadful and terrible” (vs 7). At the conclusion of this prophecy a significant statement is made in verses 13,14. **Everlasting dominion that will not pass away:** The sovereignty or kingdom reign about which Daniel spoke was certain to be established, and subsequently, would not cease until its intended time of cessation (See 1 Co 15:26-28). As opposed to the earthly

kingdoms of the prophecy that were destroyed by greater earthly powers that always followed them, the heavenly sovereignty would never be destroyed. It could not be destroyed by men because it would not be "left to other people" to determine its existence (2:44). It is a sovereignty of God, not man. Because it is a sovereignty that is beyond this world, it cannot be destroyed by that which is of this world. Therefore, its existence is sure and steadfast. Its establishment and termination is not determined by the will of man. In the Daniel 2 dream, it was revealed that the kingdom would not be subject to the will of men (2:44). It would consume the authority that was displayed by all earthly kingdoms. Men on earth would submit to heavenly authority regardless of the presence of earthly kingdoms in which they lived. Those who submitted to the heavenly kingdom reign would be called out of the world by their submission. The stone about which Daniel spoke in chapter 2, that was cut out of the mountain without hands, was a prophecy of the church that was to come. The church would be the assembly of those who submitted to the kingdom reign of Deity (See comments Lk 17:20,21). In the prophecy of Daniel 2, Daniel made a definite distinction between the "kingdom" and the "stone." The stone "that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (2:35). Kingdom reign from heaven referred to God's authority that was manifested from heaven in order to consume the kingdoms of this world (See comments Mt 16:18,19). The kingdoms were consumed when men and women throughout the whole world submitted to the kingdom reign of the Son from heaven. The manifestation of God's kingdom reign on earth, therefore, was the church of the obedient. The power of the stone (the church) was in the power of the One who reigns with dominion over all things. It was not that the kingdom grew into a great institutional mountain on earth. The King and headship of the kingdom was always to be in heaven, not on earth. **Sovereignty:** Many translations use the word "kingdom" to refer to that which was invested in the One who ascended. Reference in the verse is not to something that would result on

earth because the Son of Man was enthroned on earth. He would have dominion, glory and sovereignty. This would be the nature of His existence and reign from heaven. The church would come into existence because the Son was sovereign over all things. Since the article "the" is not in the Hebrew text before the word "sovereignty" (kingdom), the Son of Man, therefore, would be given sovereignty. As opposed to any one nation on earth, this sovereignty would be over all peoples of the world. The people on earth would become the manifestation of His sovereignty as they allowed Jesus to reign in their hearts (Lk 17:20,21). In the fulfillment of the prophecy, therefore, the church would be the visible manifestation of the sovereignty of Jesus who is presently reigning in heaven. **Should serve Him:** The prophecy states that all peoples should serve Him. It does not say that everyone would serve Him. The statement is in the subjunctive. What the prophecy is stating is that the Son of Man would manifest universal sovereignty. The people who would submit to that sovereignty would be obedient subjects. People had the freedom to reject the sovereignty of Jesus. Nevertheless, He would have universal sovereignty over all things regardless of the disobedience of many. This prophecy is about the universal kingdom (sovereignty) of Jesus, of which the church would only be a part. The prophecy of Daniel 7:13,14 is clearly in the mind of Paul in Ephesians 1:20-22. The ascension of Jesus and His receiving sovereign reign is very significant. The word "principality" in Ephesians 1:20-22 refers to governments, individuals or personalities. What Paul stated in Ephesians 1:20-22 was the fulfillment of what was prophesied in Daniel 7:13,14. After His ascension, Jesus was seated at the ruling position of Deity in the heavenly realm. He now reigns over all things. The Father abdicated all rule to Him. Jesus' sovereign rule, therefore, He is above all principality, power, might, dominion and every name that is named. All things have been put under His feet (See comments Hb 2:8). Jesus is the head over all things for the sake of the church. The church is only one thing in this passage over which Jesus is head. Ephesians 1:20-22 is actually an encouragement

to Christians, as Daniel 7:13,14 was an encouragement to the captive Jews during the ministry of Daniel. We should be encouraged because Jesus is head over all things for the benefit of the people of God. One thing is very evident in Ephesians 1:20-22. The sovereign reign of Jesus goes beyond the church. This was the nature of the prophecies of both Daniel 2:44 and 7:13,14. God wanted to reassure the captive Jews that the One who ascended to the Ancient of Days would take control of all kingdoms of the world. A parallel passage to Ephesians 1:20-22 that reveals the fulfillment of Daniel 7:13,14 is Philippians 2:5-11. At the time Paul wrote Philippians 2:5-11, Jesus had already been highly exalted. His authority (name) is now above all authority (Mt 28:18). This means that Jesus' sovereign rule is over everything and everyone of the material world ("those on earth"). His rule is over all angels in heaven ("those in heaven"). Also, His sovereign rule is over Satan and demons ("those under the earth") (See 1 Pt 3:22). Philippians 2:9-11 clearly manifests that Jesus' present reign is beyond the church. Philippians 2:9-11 is not talking about something that is yet in our future. After the final coming of Jesus, the earth and Satan, with his angels, will be eternally destroyed (Mt 25:41). Paul is discussing something that is present; something that is happening at this very moment as the forces of Satan are active in this world. Notice also in the Philippians 2 passage that every tongue should confess Jesus. Daniel 7:13,14 also used the subjunctive to express the fact that all should be submissive to the kingdom reign of Jesus. However, all are not submissive. There are disobedient subjects in the world. Satan and his host are continually disobedient. All the disobedient in the sovereign reign of Jesus should bow down and confess His authority. But they do not. Nevertheless, the fact that they do not bow down does not mean that Jesus is not their King. The Hebrew writer stated in Hebrews 2:8 that we do not now see everything subjected to Jesus. We will not visibly see everything subjected to Jesus until the end of time (1 Co 15:26-28). In reference to events today, it may seem that things are out of control in reference to the kingdom reign of Jesus. However, when He



comes again, it will be clearly manifested that all things are under His control when He brings judgment upon all who have opposed Him. **Not be destroyed:** Daniel spoke of the sovereignty that would come after his lifetime. It would be “everlasting.” It would not be a sovereignty that would be subject to the terminating forces that press upon earthly kingdoms. In other words, God’s sovereign reign is not subject to the forces of worldly kingdoms. His kingdom is sure and steadfast (“everlasting”) and would not pass away as did the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The kingdom that originates from heaven will not be destroyed as earthly kingdoms are destroyed. It will not be destroyed because it is a sovereign reign that is manifested from heaven. And since it originates from heaven, earthly kingdoms have no influence over it.

**7:15-25 The fourth beast that was different:** The primary focus of Daniel’s vision was the fourth beast, the Roman Empire. It was during the existence of this kingdom that God would accomplish the establishment of the sovereignty that would be given to the One who ascended to the Ancient of Days (See comments Rv 13). Since the event of verses 13,14 took place during the time of the existence of the Roman kings, we would assume that the fourth beast refers to the Roman kingdom. However, some Bible students believe that reference was to the time that followed the breakup of the Greek kingdom. The ten horns were the ten rulers that followed the death of Alexander the Great. It is assumed, therefore, that the little horn was Antiochus Epiphanes. Though there is some merit to this view, the contextual support in view of verses 13,14 would lead us to conclude that the Roman Empire is in view. **Make war with the saints and prevailed against them:** In verse 21 it is stated that the horn made war with the saints. We would link this statement to Revelation 13:7 where John wrote of the sea beast that rose out of the populations of the world. “*And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.*” Revelation 13 was a prophecy in reference to the Roman Empire persecuting the early church (See comments Rv 7 & 13). We would thus link Daniel 7 and

Revelation 13 in concluding that the two contexts speak of the Roman Empire. **The saints ... will take the kingdom:** In the vision of chapter 7, emphasis was on the dominion of the kingdoms of the world. Emphasis here is on the saints who reign over the kingdoms (See comments Rm 5:17). The saints reign in life because of the Son of Man, King Jesus, who was given authority over all things (Mt 28:12; Ep 1:20-22). **Ten horns:** We could view this metaphorically, not ten literal kings in succession. The number "ten" was symbolic of completeness, and thus the kingdom of Rome would exert its complete power over the kingdoms of its era and throughout its domain. If understood as ten Caesars of the Roman Empire, then they were the reigning force who led Rome against God's people (See comment Rv 13). **Another will rise:** From the reigning power of the Roman Empire would arise an arrogant leadership that would be different from the preceding "kings" of the Empire. This leadership would be Paul's "son of destruction" (2 Th 2:3,4). This would be the "mystery of lawlessness" that was at work during the time Paul wrote (2 Th 2:7). It would be the "lawless one" that was soon to be revealed after Paul wrote to the Thessalonians (2 Th 2:8). **Wear down the saints:** The Roman Empire wore down the saints through persecution. Caesar Nero persecuted the church as a personal vendetta. However, after him came Caesar Domitian who made Christians enemies of the state. Subsequently, the Roman Empire launched state persecution against Christians because they would not submit to Caesar as Lord. They were considered insurrectionists, and thus labeled as enemies of the state. **Change times and laws:** When Caesar declared himself as lord, he instituted Roman religion. The state became antichrist by exalting itself through Caesar to assume the worship of the subjects. This put Christians in direct conflict with the state religion. However, they had to serve God and not the religious laws that were bound on all Roman citizens through the power of the state (See comments At 4:28:29). **Time and times and half a time:** There is no emphasis here on calendar time, but on a symbolic period of resistance to the saints that would eventually come to an end. The

antichrist efforts would at first be for “a time.” This is a vague statement with no specific calendar time in mind. Emphasis would be on a gradual beginning of the persecution against the saints that would later turn into what would seem to be success (“times”). The “times” does not explain the duration of the persecution, but does assume a termination. The “half a time” would be the collapse or end. The lawless one would have a beginning and an ending. It would be a time when the persecution of the saints would run its course, and then come to an end.

**7:26-28 *The court:*** See comments Rv 17:14. Once the antichrist had completed his reign of terror over the saints, the saints would have the final victory, for they reigned in life with the victorious Christ (See comments Rm 5:17). ***All dominions will serve and obey Him:*** See comments Ph 2:5-11; Ep 1:20-22 (Compare Mt 5:10).

### The Destiny Of Israel

(8:1 – 12:13)

**Outline:** (1) Vision of the ram and the goat (8:1-27), (2) Daniel's intercession for Israel (9:1-27), (3) Daniel's vision of Israel's future (10:1 – 12:13)

## Chapter 8

### VISION OF THE RAM & THE GOAT

Chapter 7 completes the Aramaic message of the book of Daniel. Chapters 1-7 were addressed to the Gentile world in which the people of God lived. Beginning with chapter 8, however, the address is in Hebrew and was addressed to the people of God who were on their way through the struggles of international turmoil that would affect them in the land of Palestine until the coming of the Messiah. This, and the following chapters, were written in order to bring encouragement to the Jews, reassuring them that God had all things under control in order to bring the Messiah into the world in the last days of national Israel.

**8:1-4** This vision was seen by Daniel two years after his vision of the four kingdoms in chapter 7 (7:1). Shushan was the summer palace of the Persian kings. It was about 250 kilometers north of Babylon. **A ram:** Contrary to the

wild beasts that were used to portray the kingdoms of previous dreams and visions, this vision conveys its message through the imagery of domesticated animals as a ram and male goat. The two horns of the ram were Cyrus (the higher) and Darius. Cyrus expanded the Medo-Persian Empire and Darius was a provincial king over Babylon. **No beast could stand before him:** No kingdom was able to withstand the expansion of the Medo-Persian Empire.

**8:5-8** Though the Medo-Persian Empire had expanded to encompass many conquered nations, the Greeks, led by Alexander the Great, pushed as a charging male goat eastward into Medo-Persian territory. **A notable horn:** Alexander the Great. **The great horn was broken:** Alexander died unexpectedly and prematurely at the age of thirty-three. His kingdom was then divided between his four generals. Lysimachus took the territories of Thrace and Bithynia, and possibly all of Asia Minor. Cassander took Macedonia and Greece. Seleucus took Syria, Babylon and the east territories. Ptolemy took Egypt, and struggled for Palestine and Arabia Petraea.

**8:9-12 A little horn:** From one of the four horns, a little horn strangely sprouted and became great. But it became great in evil, not good. The little horn arrogantly exalted itself against God and His saints. Most Bible students assume that this was the eighth king of the Seleucidae dynasty of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus Epiphanes was a man of great abilities, but ruthless and cruel. Antiochus took the title of "Epiphanes," meaning "the illustrious one." He extended his power through conflict with Ptolemy Philometor in order to take Egypt, as well as Persia and Media. His strategic conquest led him to think of himself as a great one, and thus he exalted himself. **The pleasant land:** Palestine (See 11:16; Jr 3:19; Ez 20:6). **Cast down ... the stars to the ground:** If we could use the word "stars" as a metaphor, reference could be to the seed of Abraham (Gn 15:5; 22:17). We would conclude that God's people would be cast down by Antiochus Epiphanes. **Magnified himself:** He magnified himself to the point of disgracing anything that pertained to God and His work among the Jews. When Antiochus Epiph-

anes conquered Palestine, he eventually terminated the daily sacrifices at the altar (See 1 Maccabees 1:45,46). He offered a swine on the altar and poured the broth of the swine offering around the altar. **Given over ... the regular sacrifice:** The place of sacrifice was given over by God to Antiochus who offered sacrifice to the pagan god Zeus. The text indicates that God allowed these actions to be taken by Antiochus, though we are not told why. It may have been because of some tendencies toward apostasy among the Jews. The termination of the temple sacrifices by Antiochus, therefore, may have been allowed by God in order that the religious fervor of the Jews be restored. Whatever the case, the sacrifices were eventually restored and the faithful remained unto the coming of the Messiah, which would take place about 165 years after this event.

**8:13,14** The conversation here is between two angelic beings. Daniel listened in on their conversation. The conversation naturally reflected the feelings of those who were personally involved in the wicked aggression of Antiochus Epiphanes against God's people. The question would also be the natural response of those who were enduring the persecution. **2,300 days:** The Hebrew text literally refers to 2,300 evenings and mornings. If reference is to the two sacrifices made every day, then the number of days would be half the 2,300, or 1,150 days. **The sanctuary will be cleansed:** After Antiochus made havoc of the temple, he returned to his homeland in Syria. However, after three years he returned and set up an image of a pagan god in the temple. Jerusalem was laid waste for over six years. For three of those years the temple was considered defiled. It was not until the revolt of Judas Maccabaeus, and the restoration of the temple sacrifices, that the temple was cleansed. Somewhere during this time was the 2,300 days, or 1,150 days, which period of time is difficult to determine. The cleansing of the temple and restoration of the daily sacrifices occurred on December 25, 167 B.C.

**8:15-22 Gabriel:** Gabriel was the special messenger who was sent to reveal the meaning of the vision (8:16; 9:21; Lk 1:19,26). **Make this man understand:** Without

the aid of God's angel, Daniel could not have understood the vision because he lived before the fulfillment of the events. If the book of Daniel were written after these events had taken place, then Daniel could have understood. The fact that the vision had to be explained to him is evidence that the book of Daniel was not written as a history book, but a book of prophetic history. **The time of the end:** The context will not allow us to understand this "end" as the end of the world. Reference in the historical context was to that which would transpire in reference to the end of the sacrifices at the altar in Jerusalem. Some Bible students have assumed that this end of the sacrifices of the saints of God is typical of the end of the world. It is assumed that there will yet come in the future before the coming of the Christ, a time when the living sacrifices of the saints will come to an end. When few saints exist in a world that was created specifically for the production of saints who would transition into eternity, then the world would have lost its purpose for existence, and subsequently be brought to an end. But in the historical context of the visions of Daniel, we must view the fulfillment of the prophecies in reference to God's people in the Old Testament, not God's people at the end of time. God's purpose with Israel was to bring His people to the cross of Jesus. The vehicle for doing this was the nation of Israel. When the purpose for Israel was accomplished, then the Holy Spirit would take Christians through further revelation to the end of the world. But at the time Daniel lived, God was preparing His people to accept the end of national Israel and the temple sacrifices that would come in the future. Therefore, we cannot rob the Jews of the encouragement of these prophecies that were given specifically to them in order to take them to the end of national Israel in Christ (Gl 3:26-29). **Last end of the indignation:** This statement seems to define the "end" mentioned in verse 17. It thus signified the end that Antiochus made of the sacrifices at the altar, for the historical context is in reference to the Medo-Persians, Greeks, and the history that followed the death of Alexander the Great. Reference is not to an end of our time today.

**8:23-27 Latter time of their kingdom:** This would be the last times of the reign of those who followed the Greek Empire when it was split into four divisions, which divisions were ruled by those who followed Alexander after his death. **King of fierce appearance:** Antiochus Epiphanes. **Not by his own power:** He will be allowed by God to carry out his desecration of the altar at the temple and termination of the daily sacrifices. **Broken without human means:** God put an end to the tyranny of Antiochus by causing his death. **Seal up the vision:** Though the principle nations were revealed to Daniel, the specifics of the fulfillment were not revealed. Only when the fulfillment came would people understand the meaning of the vision. It is for this reason that the fulfillment would not refer to the end of the world. At the end of the world, the saints will be delivered from this world, and thus the fulfillment would have no encouragement to those who were standing in the presence of God. Since the book of Daniel was written for the purpose of encouraging the Jews who would experience the fulfillment of the vision, then we must remain within the historical context of the Jewish people in order to determine the fulfillment of the vision. When these events were being fulfilled during the invasion and desecration of the temple by Antiochus, the Jews who were actually experiencing the fulfillment would gain encouragement by realizing that God had all things under control, and thus they must wait for the end, which end would take place when the Messiah came. The end in this context, therefore, would refer to the end of Israel in Christ (Gl 3:26-29). When Israel came to an end in Christ, it was the end of almost two thousand years of Jewish history that began with Abraham. The fullness of times had been completed (Gl 4:4), and thus the consummation of the ages was fulfilled in Christ. To the Jews, the end of Israel was almost like the end of the world to a culture of people who had experienced over two thousand years of history as the chosen people of God.

## Chapter 9

### DANIEL'S INTERCESSION FOR ISRAEL

**9:1-3 First year of Darius:** A great change had been made in international affairs among the nations. The fall of the magnificent Babylonian Empire had just occurred. Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, was killed (5:30,31). The Medes and Persians had taken over all the former Babylonian territories and were expanding the Medo-Persian Empire south into Egypt, to the east and to the west. In the midst of these kingdom transitions, Daniel was surely apprehensive, as well as all the Jewish captives who lived within the territories of the former Babylonian Empire. They were nearing the end of the seventy years of captivity that was prophesied by Jeremiah. Darius was aging, and soon all military and civil authority would be shifted to Cyrus within two years of the date given here. It was thus a time for intercessory prayer and confession on behalf of the people of God. **Jeremiah ... seventy years in the desolations:** Regardless of the international turmoil that was taking place, Daniel focused on the revelations of God that were made through Jeremiah concerning the time of the captivity (Jr 25:11).

**9:4-14 Daniel prayed for the nation.** He included himself with an entire people who had transgressed the conditions of the Sinai covenant that they had with God. They had reaped the consequences of their sin, and thus with a repentant spirit, they were on their knees asking God for forgiveness and restoration to the promised land. **God who keeps the covenant:** God had established a covenant with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. **We have sinned:** When God established the covenant with Israel, He told the nation that if they broke their conditions for keeping the covenant, He would drive them from the land into captivity (See Lv 26:14-35). However, if they would confess their transgressions and apostasy, then He would restore them to the land (Lv 26:40-45). Daniel was living in the time of the restoration (See comments Er & Ne). As a man of God, he had the responsibility, as the other prophets as Ezekiel by the River Chebar and Jeremiah in Jerusalem, who were contemporary with him, to call the people to repentance. It was a time, therefore, to call the people to repentance and remembrance of the promise of God that He would restore them to the land



(See Jr 29:10). It was a short time after this intercessory prayer, that Cyrus freed the captives and allowed them to return to their lands (2 Ch 36:21-23). Daniel was at this time an old man. He had experienced the first captivity of the southern kingdom of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. And now, he was experiencing the fulfillment of prophecy that God had promised that the repentant captives could return to the land (See comments Er & Ne). **Iniquity ... wickedly ... rebelled ... departed:** Israel had done all that was necessary to reap the consequence of an apostate nation. They had rejected the culture of righteousness that was given to them through the law of God. They had adopted the wickedness of the idolatrous nations around them, and then went beyond what the nations did in behaving wickedly. Once they forgot the law of God, there was no end to the wickedness to which they went (Hs 4:6). **The Lord has ... brought it upon us:** God was just in bringing national calamity upon Israel because of their apostasy. They had forsaken the very purpose for which He had given them birth, that is, to bring the Savior into the world. Because they forsook the purpose for their existence, they were taken from the land. From those who were taken captive, God intended to restore only a remnant through which He would bring the Messiah into the world.

**9:15-19** This prayer of Daniel manifested his leadership of the people. It was a call for the people to repent. Restoration to the land was the reward for their repentance, for within a short time King Cyrus would allow the first captives the opportunity to return to their homelands. Rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and the temple would be the symbolic act that would identify the reestablishment of the people in the land. Though they would never again enjoy the freedom of being an independent nation, Israel as a people would through the remnant consolidate the identity of Israel for the fulfillment of prophecies that were made to the fathers (See Gn 12:1-3). Though God was at the very time this prayer was made working to restore the remnant, Daniel's prayer stirred the people to confess the former wickedness of their fathers. He encouraged them to repent, and then be ready

at the call of God to return to the land. It was a time of anticipation on the part of the repentant Israelites who were at this time in history experiencing the fulfillment of prophecy in reference to their return to the land.

**9:20-23** God could have revealed to Daniel's mind the answer to his prayer. But in this case, God wanted to give Daniel understanding through a personal messenger, the angel Gabriel (See Lk 1:19,26). The sending of the angel was for his strengthening (Lk 22:43). Daniel needed to know that his prayer was in the process of being answered. God was working at that very moment through King Cyrus to release the captives and allow them to return to Palestine.

**9:24-27 *Seventy weeks:*** A week stood for a year, and thus the fulfillment of the seventy years of captivity of which Jeremiah spoke had come to an end (Jr 25:11). ***For your people and for your holy city:*** This statement identifies the ones to whom the message of this context is addressed. We must keep in mind that Cyrus was about to release the Jews in order that they return to the land of Palestine. Led by Zerubbabel, a group of 40,000 captives would return in 536 B.C. This group would be followed by another group in 457 B.C. that was led by Ezra. Nehemiah would lead another group to Palestine in 444 B.C. All would return for the purpose of reestablishing the identity of Israel. To do this, they rebuilt the city of Jerusalem and the temple (See comments Ne). All this was beginning to transpire at the time Daniel uttered his prayer. However, the Messianic era had already been introduced in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in 2:44 and Daniel's vision in 7:13,14. These returnees saw this destiny in their return. In order for the Messiah to come, they had to reestablish Israel in the land of promise. ***Seven weeks and sixty-two weeks:*** The phrase "seven weeks" is literally "sevens" in the Hebrew text, referring to the symbolic meaning of the number "seven," the numeric symbol for complete. In view of verse 27, "until the consummation that is determined," we would conclude that this is a prophecy that takes us beyond the work of the Jews to rebuild the city and reestablish the identity of Israel. Since the purpose of the existence of Israel was to

bring the Messiah and Savior into the world, then the beginning of the fulfillment of these promises to the fathers would be interwoven with the fulfillment of the prophecy of Israel's return to the land. The symbolic seven weeks would bring to an end the redemptive work of God through Israel. This would be the consummation of the purpose for which God brought forth the nation of Israel from Egyptian captivity. The Blessing that would bless all nations would naturally be included with a prophecy concerning Israel's march back to the promise land in order that God's promise to Abraham be consummated (See comments Gn 12:1-3). There are thus six prophetic statements made in this context in reference to the consummation of the redemptive work of God through the Messiah (1) **To finish the transgression:** When Jesus died on the cross, He made a sufficient sacrifice for all time for all men (See comments Hb 7:26,27). (2) **To make an end of sins:** Those who have been born again are not walking in sin, for the blood of Jesus cleanses them of all sin (See comments 1 Jn 1:7; 3:9; compare comments Jr 31:31-34). (3) **To make reconciliation for iniquity:** Through the Messiah, we have been reconciled to the Father (See comments 2 Co 5:17-19). (4) **To bring in everlasting righteousness:** The church is brought into the eternal righteousness of God, for the church has become His people and He is the God of the members (See comments 2 Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1-3,22,23,27). (5) **To seal up the vision and prophecy:** In Jesus all the prophecies concerning the redemptive work of the prophets were fulfilled (See comments Lk 24:25-27). (6) **To anoint the Most Holy:** The Messiah, the Anointed of God (the Christ), was determined to fulfill all prophecies concerning the redemptive work for the salvation of man (7:13,14; see comments At 2:36-38; 4:27,28). **Destroy the city and the sanctuary:** There are numerous speculations among Bible students concerning the "seven weeks" and the symbolism concerning the conclusion of national Israel. However, in view of what transpired with the redemptive work of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, we would conclude that Gabriel was here revealing to Daniel the finality of national Israel with the birth of spiritual Israel, the church.

National Israel would be summed up with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). There is no reason to conclude that Gabriel revealed to the Jews at this time anything in time beyond the coronation of the Son of Man who ascended to the right hand of God and was given dominion, glory and sovereignty over all things (See 2:44; 7:13,14). Once the finality of national Israel was concluded with the fulfillment of all prophecies concerning Jesus (Lk 24:25-27), then we would assume that there were no more prophecies to be fulfilled in reference to the redemptive work of Jesus. When the time came, Jesus would personally speak of His final coming at the end of time. But for Daniel's audience, this was a subject that was reserved for those who experienced the first coming of Jesus in His ministry to redeem the world. There would have been no reason to speak to the captive Jews concerning things that would happen over 2,500 years—and still counting—after the time the statements of Daniel 9 were made and written. We must always keep Luke 24:27 in mind where Jesus said that all prophecies concerning Himself had been fulfilled at the time He concluded His redemptive ministry at the cross.

## **Chapter 10**

### **DANIEL'S VISION OF ISRAEL'S FUTURE**

The last three chapters should be considered as one oracle from God that was delivered to Daniel. There is no break in the narrative as revelation was given to Daniel concerning the future events that would transpire in the history of Israel. The interpreter must keep in mind that God was bringing Israel to its finality in Christ (Gl 3:26-29). Beginning with Abraham, two thousand years of history were being brought to an end. The consummation of Israel was in the cross of the Messiah. In order to prepare the minds of the Jewish community that would experience this tremendous paradigm shift in their thinking and society, God through these prophecies of Daniel, laid the foundation for their change in thinking, and thus their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah when He came. Interpreters, therefore, have no right to rob the Jews, who lived during the ministry of Jesus and the

early church, of the fulfillment of these things that God said would transpire during their lives. We should grow in faith because of the fulfillment of these prophecies in Jesus (Rm 10:17).

**10:1-3 A message was revealed to Daniel:** This was a direct revelation to Daniel. It did not come in a dream, but in a vision. It came for the purpose of giving comfort to the people of God to whom it was initially given. It was comfort through fulfilled prophecy that would sustain them through the coming years of turmoil they would experience in their homeland until the coming of the Messiah. The revelation was concerning things that would happen to Daniel's people, the returned Jews, in the last days of national Israel. Peter was in those last days when he stood up on the Pentecost of A.D. 30 and stated that the prophecy of Joel 2:28 was fulfilled in the last days with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (See comments At 2:16,17).

**10:4-9 A certain man clothed in linen:** John, the apostle, had a similar experience in vision in Revelation 1:10-20 (See comments). The similarities of the two visions are too close to ignore the fact that what both men of God saw was the Son of God. Daniel saw the preincarnate Son. John saw the glorified Son. The metaphors used in both narratives depict the glorious nature of the Son of Man. To Daniel, He was a messenger of comfort for the future. To John, He was a messenger of comfort to the church concerning their victory over the oppression of the Roman state. **There remained no strength in me:** When a normal human being is placed in the presence of God, he collapses to the ground. Both Daniel and John had the same experience (See Rv 1:17). It is simply not possible for frail humanity to experience direct contact with Deity without a tremendous emotional and physical response of humility and worship.

**10:10-14 Greatly beloved:** No greater words could a man hear from God, which words would bear the meaning at the final judgment, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt 25:34). **Discipline yourself:** Daniel had been spiritually disciplining himself through fasting

for three weeks (vss 2,3). In response to his discipline through fasting, an angel was sent to him (See comments At 13:1-3). **The prince ... of Persia withstood me twenty-one days:** Though Daniel possibly knew what this meant, this confrontation has not been revealed to us. Whatever the situation, Michael, the archangel, intervened. He did so for the purpose of God in working among the nations to bring about His eternal plan of redemption. **Michael:** Michael is the angelic being who would contend with the Devil (Jd 9). He is the one who makes war with those nations who set themselves against the work of God (Rv 12:7-9). In this context, he was working for the people of God, the children of Israel.

**10:15-21** God was working in the affairs of the Medo-Persian Empire and the Greek Empire. He was working in a manner by which He could bring Israel again into their homeland, and then preserve them unto the coming of the Messiah. Though Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return to the land, their residence after arrival was in constant turmoil. They were opposed by the local residents who were left there after the captivity of 722/21 B.C. (the Assyrian captivity) and 586 B.C. (the Babylonian captivity). They were oppressed by the Greeks who eventually expanded the Greek Empire into Palestine. Palestine was under the control of Medes and Persians until it was taken over by the Greeks who were led by Alexander the Great. After the death of Alexander, and the breaking up of the Greek Empire, the remnants of Alexander's generals, the Ptolemies and Seleucidae continued to struggle over Palestine. Throughout these years of conflict, therefore, God's work through His angelic beings was in conflict with earthly kings who continually caused trouble for the people of God. It was a time when Michael and his angelic hosts were at war with the forces of evil that were manifested through wicked kings on earth (Compare Rv 12:7-9).

## Chapter 11

It is very encouraging to witness God's work throughout history with the nation of Israel. To begin our understanding of this work, we must remember that the

purpose of God, in the 586 B.C. Babylonian captivity of Israel, was to allow the Jews to have a great deal of time in captivity to think over how and why they ended up there. They needed time to consider the fact that as a consequence of their apostasy from God, they had given up forever their right as an independent nation in Palestine. During the time of their captivity, they certainly remembered all that God had promised them as a chosen nation at the foot of Mount Sinai. But in the promises, came warnings. Unfortunately, they ignored the warnings. Everything that God had warned them at Mount Sinai had come to pass, and thus, they found themselves in the captivity of a foreign nation. Therefore, in remembering the fact that they had turned from God and ran after gods they imagined in their minds, it was a time for repentance.

One of the saddest consequences of their apostasy was that they would indeed return and rebuild the temple, but the land of Palestine would forever be under the possession and control of foreign powers. Their independence as a free nation within the borders of Palestine was forever gone.

After a thousand years in the land of promise after Sinai, and then into captivity, first by the Assyrians in 722/21 B.C., and then by the Babylonians in 586 B.C., God had cancelled His land promise that He had established with the nation at the foot of Sinai. He would only restore the Israelites to the land upon their repentance in captivity, which He did because they did. Nevertheless, their seventy years of captivity was now coming to a close during the days of both Ezekiel and Daniel. As Jeremiah had prophesied, they were now on the brink of being delivered from captivity and returning to Palestine. However, the land would continue to be under the control of foreign powers throughout history (See comments Jr 25).

In the following years after the Daniel 11 prophecy was made, Israel was reminded that the land of Palestine would continue to be under the control of a foreign power, that is, and at first, by the Medo-Persian Empire. At the time Daniel prophesied, the fulfillment of the proph-

ecy of Isaiah 44:28 was upon them (See comments). It was now time for Daniel to be brought forward in order to reveal that the returnees had some troubling history before them, even though they would return to the land of promise.

When the Jews eventually returned, their settlement in the land of promise would not be as they might have imagined. Throughout the centuries to come after their return, the control of Palestine would go from one empire to another. In 536 B.C., the Jews returned while the land was under the control of the Medo-Persian Empire. However, God, through visions, revealed to both Daniel and King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon that the land of Palestine would go from the Babylonian Empire, and then to the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire, and finally rest in the control of the Roman Empire (See Dn 2 & 7). The descendants of the initial returnees were destined to endure through all this international conflict until they would eventually find peace of mind in the coming of the Messiah.

From the time the captives were released from the Medo-Persian Empire by Cyrus, to the "fullness of time" in the Roman Empire (See comments Gl 4:4), there would be constant turmoil in Palestine. So in order to prepare the posterity of Israel mentally for this turmoil, God revealed to the Jews who would inhabit the land, the prophetic statements of Daniel 11.

The reason Daniel laid out four centuries of events beforehand as to what would historically transpire in the land before the arrival of the Messiah, was that God wanted His people to know that no matter what may happen in the unstable world of international conflicts, He had everything under control. Therefore, the Jewish returnees must never consider at any time that anything was out of the control of God, though each generation of Jews had to endure great turmoil. In the midst of their turmoil, they must continually read the document of Daniel over and over again for encouragement. In so doing they would be grateful to God for giving them, through Daniel, a political road map to the time the Messiah would show up with eternal peace.



We must not steal this prophecy of hope in Daniel 11 away from the posterity of God's people who had to endure the historical turmoil of Palestine for four hundred years until the coming of the Messiah. Therefore, we must not apply the events that were prophesied specifically in Daniel 11 to the returnees to our own circumstances today. To do so would be prophecy theft. But we are not "prophecy thieves" who would rob a profound prophecy of hope from those to whom it originally referred during their four centuries of national turmoil until the Messiah showed up on the scene. As Christians, we have our own message of hope in the New Testament concerning the coming again of the Son of God.

We do not have to steal a prophetic message of hope from those who had to endure horrendous struggles in Palestine for four hundred years before the incarnation of the Son of God. Those saints of God of Israel struggled in order that the gospel be revealed. But for ourselves, by living with the revealed gospel in our past, we enjoy encouragement by reading about their faithfulness while they survived through international struggles. And now we know why God called Daniel to reveal these encouraging prophecies to Israel, and had them written in a book for our benefit.

The prophetic details of the history of Daniel 11 are so historically accurate that some have speculated that this record of Daniel's revelation was actually a recording of history, not a prophecy of future events. However, because the prophecy was from the Holy Spirit, we must argue that the historical events of the prophecy were a meticulous outline of historical events that would transpire until the Old Testament dispensation came to a close as a new dispensation of God's people was about to open. It was a prophecy of the consummation of national Israel in order to make way for the "Israel" of Christ (the church) in whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile (See comments Rm 9:6; Gl 3:26-29).

By knowing the international turmoil Israel would face after the captivity, the faithful Jews could be reassured that God had all things under control, and thus was working His plan to fulfill the purpose for which He

called Abraham, and subsequently, built a great nation from his seed (See comments Gn 12:1-4). The returned Jews must understand that no conflict among the nations would detour this work of God to use the nation of Israel to carry out His eternal plan to bring the Redeemer into the world. National Israel would be consummated only when God had accomplished His purpose by sending His Son into the world. National Israel was only a social vehicle that would usher into the world the One whom God would use to usher people of faith, as Abraham, out of this world. The existence of the nation of Israel, their captivity to inspire repentance, their return to the land, and finally, the coming of the redemption of the Christ, was only one link in the fulfillment of the promise that was made in Genesis 3:15 (See comments). The nation of Israel was only a special preservation of people in order to divert another world apostasy as that which was identified in Genesis 6:5.

In the context of Daniel 11, there is a general division of thought between verses 2-35 and verse 36 onward. Our secular historical records of the events follow the first section of prophecy, but from verse 36, and especially from verse 40 onward, it is difficult to follow the exact course of history of this prophetic picture. As the Jews lived through these events, they understood what was prophesied as they connect the dots between Daniel's prophecy and the fulfillment of every event.

The first section (Dn 11:2-35) takes us to the middle of the second century B.C., in particular to the year of the desecration of the temple in 165 B.C. The second section (Dn 11:36 and onward) is a prophetic picture of events that surround the kingdom of God until the consummation of the ages in the coming of the Messiah and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See Rv 13).

The historical details of Daniel's prophecy are given in order to reassure God's people in the interbiblical period that He is not unmindful of the particular struggles they had to endure. The struggles they endured are also for the benefit of the saints in any generation who also live through international struggles. We conclude that God is also working in our world today as He worked in the

world of the Jewish saints in order to bring the Messiah and Savior again into this world in order to take us out of this world and into our eternal home with Him in heaven. Though Daniel 11 was specifically written for the Jews who had to live through the interbiblical turmoil of international struggles between nations, we, too, often find ourselves in the midst of similar circumstances.

The prophesied details of Jewish history throughout the next four centuries after the return of the captives would eventually lead to the end of national Israel. At the time Daniel prophesied, Israel already had a thousand years of history, and thus, the Jews must understand that in their future, nationhood was not a permanent social structure for them as a nation. Their existence as a nation was only transitory until their purpose was consummated through the incarnation of the Son of God into this world. God, through Daniel, therefore, reassured the Israelites that something better was coming. In fact, their struggles through the next four centuries were an encouraging hope that God had something better for them than a small struggling nation of people trapped in a small parcel of land called Palestine.

In former prophecies of the Old Testament there was always a need to give specific details in the prophecies simply because such details were relevant to the purpose for which the prophecies were given. People would not understand the fulfillment if there were no historical details by which they could identify the fulfillment of the prophecies. But with the prophecy of Daniel 11, God's purpose was somewhat different. He wanted His people to identify the specific fulfillments of particular aspects of the prophecy in order that they might have a "prophetic countdown" to the coming of the Messiah.

As God took His people to the consummation of their very existence as a nation, the Jews needed to understand what was actually happening in their history as they neared the last days of national Israel. As the Jews transitioned through the ministry of Jesus, and neared the cross event, we would assume that Satan would unleash all that he had to prevent his crushing at the cross (See Gn 3:15). But the crushing came, and then faithful

Israelites had only to wait for the finality of national Israel that was also prophesied by the Messiah in Matthew 24.

Though Satan had no idea of the mystery that was to be revealed at the cross, he knew that something was up because of the nature of Daniel's prophecies – he, too, could read the Bible. He thus sought ways to destroy the identity of Israel in order to confuse the world concerning the fulfillment of the promises that were made to the Jewish fathers. If no identifiable nation of Jews existed at the time of the fulfillment of all the prophecies that were made to the Jews, then the world would mock everyone for believing such “prophetic fantasies.” We would assume, therefore, that the historical details of Daniel's prophetic message were written specifically for the encouragement of the Jews who would live through these events. The fulfillment of each detail of Daniel would teach the world that God diligently works in the affairs of this world in order to accomplish the salvational destiny of His people.

We gain faith from fulfilled prophecies because we see how God faithfully worked for His people in the past. We thus assume that He is still doing the same among His people now. However, if Daniel 11 were a prophecy of things yet to come in the history of this world, **then the entire chapter would build no faith in our lives.** Our faith is strengthened when we see in Daniel 11 the futile efforts of evil that were launched on earth to detour the eternal plan of God. These efforts were against God's plan to use national Israel to bring the eternal redemptive plan of God into reality. From what we discover in the prophecies of Daniel, we can be certain that there are similar sufferings that the saints must endure today in order for God to also bring His people into eternal glory (See Rm 8:18). Therefore, we can look back to the fulfilled prophecies of Daniel 11 and again grow in hope that God will once more bring about His promises to us.

### **SYRIA AND EGYPT IN CONFLICT**

**11:1-35** The historical events of Daniel 11:2-35 occurred primarily between Syria and Egypt. Rome enters

the picture only at the end of the conflicts between these two nations. It is then that the Roman Empire became a force of evil against the saints of God (See Rv 13).

The historical literary picture of Daniel 11 begins with Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire. The literary picture continues in history to the time after the breakup of the Greek Empire that was dissolved when Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C.

Throughout its existence as an empire, twelve kings ruled over the Medo-Persian Empire. However, only three are noted here before the fourth who rose to great wealth. The first of the four was Cambyses who began to reign in 529 B.C. Pseudo-Smerdis began to reign in 522 B.C. Darius Hystaspis began to reign in 521 B.C. The fourth is believed to be Xerxes I (or Ahasuerus of Esther 1:1), who began his reign in 485 B.C.

Xerxes I stirred up his people against the Greeks. It is believed that he took more than four years to muster an army of over two and a half million men in order to march against the Greeks. But his forces were turned back by the bravery of the Greeks at the battles of Thermopylae and Salamis. The Persians' defeat in these two battles broke the back of the Empire, which was eventually overthrown during the reign of Darius III.

Alexander the Great was the mighty king who stood up to embolden the Greek Empire, and subsequently trample down the Medo-Persian Empire. Though he would briefly reign with great power and conquer many peoples, his untimely death in 323 B.C. led to the breakup of the Greek Empire into four regions. The four regions were governed by his four generals (See Dn 8:5-8).

One of these regions was given to Ptolemy Soter (**the king of the south**), who was Alexander's general who took control of Egypt. A struggle for territory followed the breakup of the Greek Empire, particularly a struggle between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucidae (**the king of the north**) who ruled the area of Asia Minor, Syria and the former territories of Babylonia and the Medo-Persian Empire territories to the east.

For about 125 years there was a struggle between the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae, which struggle involved

the Jews in the land of Palestine. The Ptolemies of Egypt initially had control of Palestine and Phoenicia. However, when a Seleucidae king, Antiochus II, married the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, Berenice, a political alliance was made. But when Ptolemy Philadelphus died two years after the marriage, Antiochus forsook his Egyptian wife and took back his previous wife, Laodiceia. In order to have her revenge for being forsaken by Antiochus, Berenice had Antiochus murdered.

Daniel wrote: "**Out of a branch of her [Berenice] roots will one stand up**" (11:7). The struggle between the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae intensified when Berenice and her son were also eventually murdered. This led to a bloody revenge conflict that was led by her brother (1:7-9).

After Ptolemy Philadelphus came Ptolemy III, or Euergetes. In the context of Daniel 11, he was the one who came up in the place of Ptolemy Philadelphus. He made great inroads into the domain of the Syrians. During his period of reign, Egyptian power increased and Syrian power waned. Ptolemy Philadelphus sacked temples and plundered them for their idols of precious metals. He brought so much wealth back to Egypt after his campaigns that he was given the title, "Euergetes," which means "benefactor." Historians have reported that he brought back to Egypt as much as 40,000 talents of silver and as many as 2,500 idols of precious metals.

Daniel continued, "**One will come against the realm of the king of the south**" (11:9). This would be the Syrian King Seleucus Callinicus who reigned from 247 to 226 B.C. He conducted a campaign into Egypt, but was unsuccessful. Daniel added: "**His sons will be stirred up**" (11:10). The sons of Seleucus, Seleucus III and Antiochus III, sought to continue their father's efforts, but had little success. So Daniel added in prophecy: "**And one will certainly come and overflow**" (11:10). Seleucus III came to an untimely death, and Antiochus III became the sole king of Syria in 198 B.C., and thus continued the efforts of the father against Egypt.

Antiochus III made many great and rapid campaigns against Egypt. He conquered the Egyptian forces at

Sidon, swept through Palestine, and eventually attacked the Egyptian fortress at Gaza. Unfortunately, Ptolemy Philopator of Egypt was quite indifferent to his own security and international affairs at this time, and subsequently he offered little resistance to the expansion campaigns of Antiochus. But this changed when Egypt was directly threatened. When the nation was eventually threatened by the Syrians, Ptolemy Philopator stirred the Egyptian forces against the "**king of the north**" (Antiochus). He gathered an army of 73,000 men and 73 elephants to launch a defensive attack against Antiochus who had an army of 72,000 men, 6,000 horses and 102 elephants.

Daniel prophesied the result of this conflict: "**The multitude was given into his hand**" (11:11). Though Antiochus had an advantage over the Egyptians, he eventually succumbed to the Egyptian nationalists to protect their homeland. Unfortunately, Ptolemy returned to his former life of luxury in Egypt, and thus did not take advantage of his victory over the Syrians by pursuing them into Syria. This was a fatal military mistake.

Daniel revealed what would be the consequences of not following through with his initial victory, "**Then the king of the north will return**" (11:13). Antiochus III was not discouraged by his initial setback with the Egyptians. Ptolemy died and the Egyptian forces were subsequently in disarray and dissension. There were various uprisings in Egypt that weakened the power of the country. The uprisings in Egypt then stirred similar uprisings among the Jews in Palestine who were led by Tobias. However, the Jewish uprisings failed in that their rebellious actions brought on them successful efforts by outside forces that led to their continued subjugation in the years to come.

Daniel revealed, "**The king of the north will come and cast up a mount**" (11:15). Antiochus of Syria came and captured the well-fortified city of Sidon in northern Palestine. The recent uprising of the Jews stirred Antiochus to venture even further into Palestine. Daniel revealed that the Jews would be subjugated to the Syrians. When Antiochus took control of Palestine, he exempted Jerusalem of all taxes for three years, and then came back later

to impose on them one third of their former tax responsibilities. Out of the tax money, he even sent money for the service of the temple.

Daniel prophesied, "*He will also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom*" (11:17). Verse 17 speaks of some intentions of Antiochus that he would do in reference to Palestine. The mention of these intentions reminds us that God even knows the thoughts of the hearts of men who seek to lead kingdoms on earth. No thought is hidden from His omniscience.

Daniel prophesied, "*He will give him the daughter*" (11:17). Antiochus did give his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to Ptolemy Epiphanes, thinking that the daughter would be loyal to her father. But he was mistaken, for Cleopatra did not betray her husband, but rather, she betrayed her father.

Daniel continued that Antiochus would "*turn his face to the coastlands*" (11:18). Antiochus was successful in taking the coastal cities of the Mediterranean, as well as the islands. He gained control of Asia Minor. He even took control of Thrace, which conquest was resented by the Romans. Antiochus' exploits finally came to an end in 190 B.C. when the Roman general, Lucius Scipio, delivered a defeat to the Syrian forces at a battle near Magnesia. The Romans were now on the rise in the historical theater that would later involve national Israel in Palestine.

Daniel continued that Antiochus "*will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land*" (11:19). After suffering a defeat at the hands of the Roman army, Antiochus went home. After Antiochus III, came the *raiser of taxes* who would exact tribute from controlled nations in order to satisfy Rome. This Syrian king is not identified, other than the fact that Syria owed a great amount of tribute to Rome. How this affected the Jews was that a tax collector by the name of Heliodorus exacted a great amount of taxes from the Jews.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a *vile person*, became the ruler of Syria. When he became the ruler of Syria, he assumed the title, "Epiphanes" (11:21). Through deceitful means he claimed the throne of Syria, and seized control



of the Seleucid kingdom in 175 B.C.

Antiochus Epiphanes, as Daniel stated, was a vile king (11:21-35). Through cunning and deceit he expanded his autocratic kingdom (11:21-24). In order to expand his kingdom, he launched attacks against Ptolemy VI Philometor of Egypt (11:25-28). In launching these attacks against Egypt, the people of God in Palestine were caught in the middle of this international struggle (11:29-35).

Antiochus Epiphanes poured out his indignation against the Jews, terminating the daily sacrifices in Jerusalem and desecrating the temple. He placed the image of a pagan god in the temple. He stopped the practice of Jewish ceremonial laws, murdered mothers, and crucified men who practiced circumcision. Though many Jews were subjugated during this era, and thus subjected to compromise their faith, there were those who resisted, specifically a strong-hearted Jew by the name Mattathias.

### **THE JEWISH WARS**

Mattathias began a rebellion against the Syrians. When Mattathias died, his son, Judas, continued the desires of his father by leading the rebellion against Antiochus. Judas adopted the military strategy of attack and withdraw, a guerrilla type of warfare that earned him the title, "the hammer" (or, Maccabee).

It took Judas and his men only three years to eventually defeat the Syrian forces of Antiochus in Palestine, and thus restore the temple ceremonies. Specifically, in restoring the temple ceremonies, he cleansed the altar on December 25, 165 B.C. This "cleansing" continues to be celebrated by the Jews today as the Feast of Dedication, or Hanukkah.

From this time, the descendants of the Maccabees, who were subsequently called the Hasmoneans, were established as the leaders of the Jews until the time the Romans took possession of Palestine in 63 B.C. Daniel prophesied what would result from the testing of the Jews throughout this period of national conflict with outside powers. It was throughout this period of history that those who trusted in God remain strong. The

faithful leaders during this struggle became the heroes of Jewish culture. Their examples of strength in times of conflict and uncertainty ushered the small community of God's people to the end of Israel in Christ (See comments Gl 3:26-29). Though this small group of Israelites never took possession of the land of Palestine, at least they restored in a small way, through the restoration of the temple, a sense of freedom of faith (See Ez & Ne).

Eventually, when the faithful were transferred unto their final leader, King Jesus (Cl 1:13), it was time to terminate the national aspirations of the Jews that brought them out of captivity and to the feet of King Jesus. For this reason, God knew that radical Jews needed a visual demonstration that He had accomplished with purpose through national Israel. This demonstration took place in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and national Israel by the Romans, just as was prophesied by prophets as Daniel, and then by Jesus (See Mt 24).

Daniel spoke of the coming of the Messiah, "***It is yet for an appointed time***" (11:35). In this historical context, God determined the time of the rise and fall of kingdoms. He determined the time when He would bring the Messiah into the world. Through the turmoil that transpired in these last days of national Israel, God was upholding national Israel through which He would bring the Messiah into the world. This meant, however, that the Messiah would come in the last days of national Israel, and subsequently fulfill the purpose for which Israel was called into existence (See Gn 12:1-4; At 2:16,17). The revelation of the Messiah would come only when the fullness of times was completed, which times came when a babe was born in Bethlehem within two years before the death of King Herod the Great in 4 B.C. (See Comments Gl 4:4).

Preceding the coming of the Messiah, there was one who came in the wilderness of Judea who connected all the dots between prophecy and fulfillment, and thus proclaimed, "***Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand***" (Mt 3:2). And then another after him, the Messiah, came preaching, "***The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel***" (Mk 1:15). Millennia of God's work was coming together and being consummated.

## RISE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

**11:36-45** In the context of Daniel 11:36-45, Daniel wrote, “**Prosper until the indignation is accomplished**” (11:36). The end of the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes came with the rise of the Roman Empire. What begins to arise in the historical background during these days would be the fourth kingdom of the prophecy of Daniel 2 (See comments 2:44). This was the rise of the beast that was “dreadful and terrible” of Daniel’s vision of Daniel 7 (See 7:11-18). This would be the Roman Empire, during which Empire the beginning of the kingdom reign of the Messiah would be announced by Peter on the A.D. 30 Pentecost of Acts 2. The rise of the Roman Empire, the beast that was “dreadful and terrible,” would be the occasion for the consummation of national Israel. So if one were a faith-driven Jew, it was good news. But if one were a nationalists Jew, it was bad news.

The Roman Empire would eventually be an empire that would set Roman state government and religion against the work of God. This Empire would become antichrist (against Christ), and subsequently be described as such in the book of Revelation (See Rv 13). This would be the Empire of sin that would exalt itself through autocratic Caesars who claimed to be deity (See 2 Th 2:3,4).

Nevertheless, the Roman Empire continued to expand regardless of the narcissistic desires of some of its Caesars. As history marched the Empire into the coming years after Christ, the majority of the citizens became “Christian.” By the fourth century, the Christian influence in the Empire became so strong that Caesar Constantine brought relief to the Christian citizenship of the Empire with the signing of the edicts of Toleration (A.D. 311) and Milan (A.D. 313).

Of the Roman Empire, Daniel prophesied that it would be the **god of fortresses** (11:38). Rome was an empire that initially trusted in its great military strength to go forth and conquer. The arrogant military leaders of the Empire were not intimidated by the strongest armies. Daniel spoke of them as a **strange god**. The beast of Revelation 13:11 was Roman state religion that eventually brought the Roman state into conflict with the saints of

God, for the saints would not bow down and call Caesar lord (See Rv 13:11-18).

Then Daniel prophesied concerning ***the time of the end*** (11:40). In the context of the history of this prophecy, **this statement must refer to the consummation of the Jewish dispensation.** Peter stood up in the time of the end of national Israel, in the last days of the Jewish state, and announced for the first time in history that there was a new King who was reigning from heaven with all authority (See At 2:16-38). God's unique national Sinai covenant with Israel was terminated with the nailing of the Sinai law to the cross with His Son (See Rm 7:1-4). The Jewish state, as Jesus prophesied, would subsequently be physically terminated in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24).

As many people today, many Jews at the time of the fulfillment of Daniel 11, as well as with other Old Testament prophecies concerning their fulfillment, did not fully appreciate the prophecies concerning the consummation of national Israel. At least they could not accept this fact that had been prophesied by Daniel several centuries before the end that came in A.D. 70 (See Dn 2 & 7). However, when the end came, everyone at the time needed to know that the fall had been prophesied by the prophets, and thus, in the plan of God. The consummation of national Israel was so traumatic, the first century Jews found it quite hard to comprehend. It was for this reason that Peter, James, John and Andrew came to Jesus after He mentioned the event, and asked, "*Tell us when these things will be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?*" (Mk 13:4).

In preparation for this traumatic change, Daniel prophesied over four hundred years before, "***Plant the tabernacles of his palace***" (11:45). The symbolism is of setting up, as Antiochus Epiphanes, symbols of religion in the temple at Jerusalem that was located between the Mediterranean Sea and the Great Sea (the Dead Sea). These would be attempts of antichrist Roman Caesars in an effort to impose pagan religious beliefs on God's people. This happened with Antiochus Epiphanes, as well as with the Roman Caesars during their oppression of the Jews and Christianity. After A.D. 70, the faith of Chris-

tians, that the Romans often associated with Judaism, was challenged when Caesars who deified themselves imposed Roman religion on all citizens of the Roman Empire. But this, too, would come to an end. The Roman Empire itself would eventually be consummated.

In reference to any self-exalting Caesar, Daniel prophesied, "**He will come to his end**" (11:45). The purpose of the prophecies of Daniel was to bring comfort to the persecuted people of God. In order to accomplish this purpose, God's people needed to know that there would always be an end to those who would persecute them or impose pagan religious beliefs and practices on them. It is for this reason that we affirm that Daniel 11 is fulfilled prophecy. We are comforted in the fact that God delivered on His promises to the faithful Jews that "pagan oppressors" would be brought to an end.

The **time, times and half a time** (7:25), the half week (9:27), and the **time, times and half a time** mentioned in this context (12:7), all reveal an end of those who would be antichrist in reference to God's work through His people. The final end of any antichrist will be the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rv 19:20; see Zc 14:3,4). The final end of ungodly persecutors was revealed in order that the early Christians know the end of all persecutors. When the Messiah eventually came in time, the end of national Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was the consummation of national Israel. The destruction revealed that God is now working toward the end of time, which time will be announced by the sound of a trumpet (See Mt 24). The meaning of the sound of this trumpet will signal that all time has terminated.

## Chapter 12

**12:1-4** These verses speak of a consummation of an age. Some have asserted that the vision reaches forward over 2,500 years and beyond in the future to the final coming of Christ. This interpretation may have some validity, but is not necessary for several reasons. (1) Any coming of God in judgment in time is typical of Jesus' final coming at the end of time. (2) The consummation of God's work through Israel happened in the first century,

which consummation is typical of the consummation of this present age with the final coming of Jesus. (3) There is no reason why we should hijack a prophecy of comfort that was meant to encourage God's people who had to live through the conflict of nations that transpired from the time of Daniel to the coming of the Messiah. (4) We must keep in mind that through prophecy God wanted to generate anticipation in the minds of His people when they realized that the time of the fulfillment of prophecy was coming in their lifetime. Their understanding of the prophecies concerning the Messiah encouraged those in whose time the prophecies were fulfilled to accept Jesus as the Messiah. **Michael will stand up:** The archangel is here pictured as the one taking action on behalf of the people of God against evil kings and empires. It was formerly mentioned that he had a conflict with the king of Persia (10:13). At the end of time, it will be Jesus, not Michael, who will come with His angels in flaming fire to deal with evil kings and nations (See comments 2 Th 1:6-9). **A time of trouble such as never occurred:** Jesus' reference to this thought in Matthew 24:21,22 in reference to His prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 identifies that to which this statement refers. **Your people:** The vision indicates that Daniel's people, the Jews, were the ones to be delivered. Since reference would be to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, then "your people" would be those faithful descendants of Daniel's faith who would not suffer the calamity of the destruction of the Jewish state and Jerusalem (See comments Mt 24). **Written on the scroll:** The citizenship of nations was determined by those who were written on the registry of a nation. In reference to the Jewish genealogies, the genealogy of the true Jew was recorded, and thus he could trace his lineage back to his forefathers. The practice of being written in the book was also used symbolically in reference to the saints at the end of time (Ph 4:3; Rv 21:27). **Those who sleep ... will awake:** This language is certainly used in reference to the end of time (Compare Jn 5:28,29; 1 Th 4:13-18). However, the concept of a spiritual resurrection in time would also be in view because of the next statement. **Wise will shine:**

In Jesus' discussion of the finality of the Jewish state and the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 13:43, He stated that when Jerusalem was destroyed, it would then be revealed those who were the accepted of God. It would be the righteous saints who would "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom." They will shine forth to the unrighteous. However, at the end of time, the unrighteous will be taken away (Mt 24:29-41), and thus there would be no one before whom the righteous could shine forth. **Those who turn many to righteousness:** The mission of the early Christians was to go forth and preach the gospel, thus turning men from sin to righteousness (See Mk 16:15,16). This ministry will cease after the final coming of Jesus. Through the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus manifested to the world that the church was the manifestation of His kingdom reign on earth. Through the preaching of the gospel, those who feared God could be transferred into the body of God's people by obedience to the gospel (See comments Rm 6:1-6; Cl 1:13). **Until the time of the end:** This was the end of the Jewish state that occurred in the first century with the destruction of Jerusalem. The content of the book was not revealed until Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 and announced that the eternal plan of God for the salvation of all men was now made known. The mystery of God that was kept secret since the fall of man in the garden of Eden was revealed through Jesus and announced for the first time in history on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 (See comments At 2; Ep 3:3-5).

**12:5-13 The man clothed in linen:** This would be the One who appeared at the beginning of this revelation, the preincarnate Son of God. One of the angelic beings called to the other concerning how long it would be until the end of these wonders. The Son lifted His right hand to heaven in order to confirm by the eternal Father who had determined that the time of tribulation for the saints would have an end. **Power of the holy people:** When the power of the gospel had gone forth from and by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, then God would have accomplished the mission of the revealed grace of salvation to man that would continue until the final coming of the Son (See Mt 28:18,20; Mk 16:15,16; At 8:4; see com-

ments Cl 1:23). All that God had worked through the nation of Israel, beginning with the faith of Abraham (Gn 12:1-2; Rm 4:16), and continued through the building of the nation of Israel, came to pass. Thus national Israel was terminated in the first century and the good news of the grace that was revealed at the cross went forth into all the world (Mk 16:20). **Sealed until the time of the end:** When the fullness of the times had come, God sent forth His Son (See comments Gl 4:4). The mystery was then revealed (See comments Ep 3:3-5). The sealed book was opened for all men to see the contents of the mystery of God. **Many will be purified and made white and tested:** Through the preaching of the gospel, the sins of many were forgiven (See Rv 3:5; 7:14). **The wicked will do wickedly:** If reference in this context was to the end of time, then this statement would make no sense. At the end of time Jesus will cast the wicked into eternal punishment (Mt 25:41; 2 Th 1:6-9). In the historical context of these statements, however, the wicked will continue, and continue to do wickedly after the revelation of the mystery of the gospel. The fulfillment of this prophecy could happen only during the time of the consummation of the age of Israel. Those who received and obeyed the Messiah, would be the wise. Those who reject Him, would continue in their wicked ways (See comments Jn 1:11). **Abomination of desolation:** The cessation of the daily sacrifices, and the abomination of desolation in this context links us to 8:11-13, would be a reference to the work of Antiochus Epiphanes who terminated the daily sacrifices in Jerusalem. What he did in actuality, however, symbolically portrayed what would happen at the end of the Jewish state with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Rome would bring an end to the daily sacrifices with the destruction of the temple. The fact that Jesus referred to this very statement in His description of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24:15 links the two events. Jesus thus gives the interpretation. **1,280:** Many frustrated Bible students have tried to link this number to a particular period of time in history in reference to the fulfillment of this three years, six and a half months. The only possible fulfillment would be to the time of bat-



tle that Rome took to destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70, with the completion of Rome's war with the Jews that took place at Masada. **Go your way:** Daniel was not to worry himself with what was revealed. The message was shut up until its fulfillment, which fulfillment was played out in history until it was revealed in the first century. And thus the prophecy was meant for those who would experience its fulfillment, which all those who were of the faith of Abraham did unto the first century. **Rise again for your allotted inheritance at the end of the ages:** The end of the ages for national Israel would be its termination with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). This would be the end of all things for the Jews. However, some have assumed that Daniel took the thinking of the Jews to the end of time. (See comments Jn 5:28,29; 1 Th 4:13-18). However, to the Jews we must keep in mind that the end of national Israel was the end of their age. All things in reference to the Messiah, Savior and the incarnation of the Son of God was wrapped up in Jesus. Once the gospel of the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and gospel reign of the Son of God was completed, then there needed to be no more "ages" on this earth. This present age of the gospel will conclude with the resurrected and ascended Son of God is revealed from heaven. The coming of the Messiah, therefore, meant the consummation of national Israel. The Jews are now to be disseminated into church of Christ (Gl 3:26-29).

Commentary by Roger E. Dickson

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## ABREVIATIONS

### OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Ci**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**