

LESSONS FROM DANIEL

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PREFACE

Editor's Note: We appreciate the work Brother David Franklin has put forth to write this study book.

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest**: Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation—abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: Definitions of references pulled from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.

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This document has been formatted, proofed, and its verbiage modernized so as to save it into an easily read and/or printed electronic format.

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INTRODUCTION

In considering any Scripture prophecy, we must keep in mind the Holy Spirit's purpose in the giving of prophecy. "*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*" [Rev.19:10]. Peter said about Jesus, "*To Him give all the prophets witness*" [Act.10:43]. With these statements, the specific purpose of prophecy is made clear: It tells us of Jesus.

However, the context of this revelation of Jesus Christ is the foretelling of future events, a subject which is very exciting to the natural or carnal mind. For this reason, prophecy is often taught in a sensational manner. The earthly events foretold are given first place instead of being made a backdrop to display the glory of the Lord. By this wrong emphasis, much of the character of Christ remains only half revealed before the eyes of God's people. This was not God's desire when, by His Spirit, He gave these words to men.

Do not, then, read these lessons from Daniel with a carnal excitement, merely for the purpose of hearing some new thing. Instead, look for the familiar Christ in every scene. The great events prophesied here must be dealt with, of course; but He is at the heart of all events, causing, permitting, using, and controlling them. They show His power, authority, wisdom, and purpose in a way that only Spirit-given prophecy can do for the present. The events foretold will come, and then be over. What you learn of Christ will last eternally.

To these general thoughts on prophecy, we may add a few preliminary thoughts concerning the book of Daniel specifically.

The last 6 chapters of this book are almost entirely given to what we normally think of a prophecy, but the first 6 chapters are largely a record of events which took place in Daniel's day. Yet the entire 12 chapters are prophetic.

Many times in the Old Testament, animals and physical objects took on prophetic meanings as the Spirit employed them for His own special purpose.

- Lambs became a picture of Christ's meek submission in sacrifice.
- A great boat of gopher wood, constructed by Noah, became a figure of the protection from judgment which is found in Christ.

These and other Old Testament types show that prophecy need not always be expressed by words alone.

Many times, also, actual happenings in the lives of God's people became prophecies. Abraham offered up Isaac and, in a figure, received him from the dead [Heb.11:17-19]. What a picture of the offering and resurrection of Christ! Ezekiel acted out many of his prophecies as the Lord told him what to do. In these and other cases, both man and event were incorporated into something which transcended either: they became prophecy.

In Daniel's lifetime, about 600 years before Christ, God brought about a change in the national situation of Israel which has never been altered in all the years since. Israel ceased to be an independent nation, and fell under the domination of the Gentiles. Even when Cyrus allowed those Jews who wished to do so to

return to the land of promise, they continued to be under the authority of Gentile kings. Today, at the end of this age, Israel is again reaching out for an independent position in the world, and yet Israel depends upon the support of friendly Gentile governments for its national survival. What took place in Daniel's day, then, set in motion certain forces and established certain relationships which can still be observed in our day.

Daniel became a prophetic picture of the godly Jew living under the rule of unbelieving and sometimes hostile Gentiles. He was not just a figure or symbol of what godly Israelites would have to face under Gentile dominion; he lived the reality of it. Thus, at the beginning of the times of the Gentiles (of which we will say more later), Daniel's life served as a means to show, by prophetic parallel, what Israel may expect to face.

Before we leave this thought, it would be well to ask the question, "Who is the Israel to whom the lessons of Daniel are directed?" This may seem to be a question whose answer is so simple that asking it is absurd. Not so. Paul said, *"They are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children"* [Rom.9:6-7].

We must begin answering our question with the knowledge that the Jew has no special place of privilege during the course of this age.

Some have referred to people of Jewish extraction who have received Christ as "completed Jews." That term has no more validity than "completed Irishman" or "completed American". Salvation is not a matter of completing an unfinished work in either Jew or Gentile; it is a starting over.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." [2Co.5:17a]

And,

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all." [Col.3:11]

So, you see, during The Church Age, when true godliness comes in, the one who used to be a Jew is now something quite different in Christ.

Even the oft quoted phrase *"to the Jew first and also to the Gentile"* is, for the course of this age, more a historical fact than a matter of doctrine or practice. The book of Acts closes with Paul's expressing what he knew to be an age-lasting finality in Israel's national rejection of Christ, saying, *"Be it known therefore unto you (that is, because of their unbelief), that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it"* [Act.28:26].

This does not exclude the Jew, for Paul also said, *"Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite"* [Rom.11:1]. It is simply that all men are on an equal plane of opportunity. *"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him* [Rom.10:12].

Now, if not all are Israel, simply on the basis that they are of Israel; and if the Jew who is saved in this age ceases to have, in the eyes of God, any distinction from the saved Gentile; and if, for the course of The Church Age, the Lord sees no difference between the unsaved Jew and the unsaved Gentile; if all these

things be true, whose difficulties are foreshadowed and prophesied in the person of Daniel? Simply stated, the diminished identity of the Jew is not a permanent feature of God's plan.

This age is about to come to an end. It will end with the Lord's coming back for a people prepared for His call. At that time, the destiny of the nation of Israel will once again come center stage in the manifested workings of God's will. A Gentile usurper will arise, claim worldwide authority, and begin to persecute God's people. Some of the Jews will compromise with this man, but some, having recognized him, will separate themselves. (We shall see these things in Daniel's writings). It will be this latter company of godly Israelites who will see the final lessons of Daniel fulfilled in the earth. The Bible does not lead us to believe that any Church-Age believers will be on the earth during that period.

"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." [Rom.2:29]

God will never lower His spiritual standard so as to deal with men only on the basis of their national origin. Even in that time to come, when Israel will regain a national, spiritual place of prominence, God will require a separation of heart, separation unto Christ (see Phi.3:3). If Daniel's life foreshadows and announces anything or anyone (and it does), then it speaks to saved Israelites at the beginning of the next age.

Yet this book is not admonition to the Jews only. The Gentile characters in this book are given an unusual prominence. In fact, a major portion of this book [Dan.2:4 through Dan.7:28] is written in a Gentile language. Daniel stands alone in the Old Testament in containing such a clearly directed message to the Gentiles. Others spoke of Gentile affairs and sometimes pronounced prophecies of judgment upon them. Jonah even preached old Nineveh into a state of repentance. Nevertheless, Daniel, by reason of place, time, language, and the character of his prophecies, has a message concerning the course of Gentile civilization that no other Old Testament prophet gives.

This book tells us Gentiles what we may expect for the course of the times of the Gentiles. And, if we are wise and receive it, this book will tell the Gentiles just **Who** it was that put the reins of government into their hands, and **Who** will give those reins back to Israel.

I trust that you will enjoy this study of the book of Daniel. As stated earlier, it is my desire to go beyond merely studying events, and it is my hope that you will take the same look-behind-the-scenes viewpoint with me. It is not that, for certain purposes, a study of another sort would be unprofitable or incomplete. Not at all. But here we desire to delve into the more eternal aspects of God's prophetic purpose.

Finally, read these lessons as they are written: with a Bible close at hand for the reading of the Scriptures commented on or referred to in the course of our studies. God's Word has power to effect spiritual change in your life. No comment on Scripture can ever have the force or authority of the Bible itself.

DANIEL 1

It is tempting to take the simplest view possible of this first chapter of Daniel. There is such a sweet display of the spiritual character of Daniel and his 3 companions; good, practical lessons for daily living may be derived from the story. If we dig a little deeper into the spiritual strata which the Lord laid down here, however, we find something more.

Let us begin by realizing that **Babylon** is one of the most prominent, prophetic figures in all of Scripture. The name of this city appears from Genesis to Revelation, being referred to, by name, in 20 of the 66 books of the Bible. What does it represent? We will let the Bible, itself answer that question for us.

The first mention of **Babylon** is found in Genesis 11:1-9. It is there called “*Babel*.” I have no explanation for the use of “*Babel*” in Genesis, and “*Babylon*” elsewhere; it is the same word in the original Hebrew.

Notice this passage in Genesis 11:4 and 6:

“And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. [Gen.11:4]

“And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.” [Gen.11:6]

The difference between man’s viewpoint and God’s viewpoint is remarkable. “*They*” were confidently saying one thing; God, with concern and sadness, was saying something completely different.

God will not allow mankind to accomplish everything it has imagined to do. Before the flood, He said concerning the human race, “*Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*” [Gen.6:5]. After that judgment was past, it still had to be said, “*The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth*” [Gen.8:21]. Man’s thinking cannot change, apart from grace. The religious and political alliance which brought forth the city and **tower of Babel** was born in the imagination of man, not in the mind of God; it could not have a good end result with such an evil beginning. Thus, God put a stop to it.

It is not a popular notion, especially in religion, but the fact is this: When men unite to accomplish anything on their own, it is sin and rebellion. If the Lord is not the sole Head of any labor or purpose, **it is rebellion** [Eph.1:22]. If any work, even a **good work**, has its origin simply in a **good idea**, and that good idea is then presented and carried out as being spoken by the Lord **it is sin** [Rom.10:17, 14:23]; no endeavor which He has not spoken into being is truly good.

If this seems too narrow or hard, consider Proverbs 21:4: “*An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.*” Where God is not center and source, sin touches even the most wholesome and useful activities of man.

The sad, necessary outcome of the building project at Babel is told in Genesis 11:7-9:

"Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."

We can see in this first look at Babylon, that the very name given to it carried a definite, God-ordained meaning. **Babel**, or **Babylon**, means "*confusion*." It was applied to a false system of outward religious agreement, with good-sounding purposes, very active in reaching its own goals, and having a somewhat successful appearance (until judgment fell). It seemed good, yet it was confusion.

Not only was their language confounded and confused, their plans were turned to confusion as well. They planned for human unity, for reaching to the heavens by means of great human works. Instead, they were scattered abroad, so totally disunited that they could no longer even communicate with one another. Their only touch with heaven was when the hand of God poured out judgment upon them and their works.

Mark it down and believe it, **man-made unity always ends in confusion, division, and judgment**. Men begin with a confused purpose, seeking to make a name for themselves instead of exalting the name of God, making plans in agreement with each other instead of finding out what He has to say. It can be no great wonder that confusion is both the name and the result which God settles on such efforts.

All of this begins to form God's picture of Babylon, human religion at its highest and worst. Let us begin to apply the figure to the account before us in Daniel 1.

Daniel and his companions found themselves, not by their own choice, in Babylon. It was, by this time, the center of a great empire: a vigorous, successful, highly religious association of men. It was also the center of a totally heathen civilization. Knowing, as they did, that God had allowed them to be brought to Babylon, they did not try to topple that towering system of godless, worldly power; they simply trusted God to protect them in a place from which it was not yet His will that they escape. They did not even rail against the ungodly education which was thrust upon them; they knew the truth which God had revealed to Israel, and had no fear that their faith might be destroyed by the challenge of untruth.

Just prior to the awful period called **Jacob's Trouble** and the **Great Tribulation**, Israelites will again find themselves in a situation where Babylon seems to dominate. They will have to recognize, as Daniel did, that they will be there because of their national sins.

In the last picture of Babylon given in Scripture, that great, false system of religion is revealed in the guise of a gorgeously arrayed, supremely wealthy woman of great political power. Beautiful and successful, but vile, blasphemous and filled with violence. It is a different form than Babylon of old, but the basics are the same: Something which is attractive, which seems good, but which is against the purposes of the God of grace. This will be the system that Israel will have to contend with.

During that period, choices will have to be made. Compare Revelation 7:1-8 and 14:1-5 with the parable in Matthew 25:1-13. The parallel should be unmistakable. The oil speaks plainly of the Holy Spirit; so does the seal [Eph.1:14]. Israel, through the ministry of the 2 witnesses [Rev.11:3-13] must choose between the sleep-bringing delicacies of Babylon's table, and the fullness of the Spirit promised by God's Word. Many will not choose rightly. Those who do not see clearly the urgency of their time and who waste that time will be the foolish virgins—saved, but not in the heavenly marriage party, as the 144,000 will be.

The choice facing Daniel and his companions was whether or not they should eat of the king's meat. Who is the king of Babylon? Whose meat is to be shunned as nourishment?

Paul told the Ephesians, *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* [Eph.6:12]. The words [high..places](#) would better be translated *"heavenly places."* The verse just previous makes it clear that the devil, wily and wicked, is head over the spiritual hierarchy of darkness. There can be no doubt that Satan was and will be the hidden king of the Babylonian systems of this world.

The real issue, of course, is not that of physical food at all, though that was definitely an issue in Daniel's day. God had forbidden certain foods as unclean to His people Israel [Lev.11, Deu.14, etc.]. We see, in this age that The Law, majestic and powerful though it was, is simply a great tool for teaching man his need of a Savior; this was God's whole intention for The Law. [Gal.3:24]. We are not under The Law-teacher, but the experience of those who labored under its burden are *"ensamples"* (examples) of spiritual import.

"Now all these things happened unto them for [ENSAMPLES](#); and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." [1Co.10:11]

The real issue which the Lord raises in the example of Daniel is a spiritual matter which is only pictured in figure by food and the dietary laws which God gave to Israel.

In a good sense, food speaks mainly of 4 things:

1. First, it speaks of sound teaching, based solely in God's holy Word [Pro.10:21, 1Co.3:2, Heb.5:11-14, 1Pe.2:2-4, etc.].
2. Second: it speaks of the unity and fellowship we have together with God's people. [1Co.10:17].
3. Third, it speaks of doing God's will [Joh.4:32-34].
4. Finally, it speaks of Christ Himself, on whom we feed, as we identify with Him and take His Word for our own [Joh.6:27, 35, 53].

In the bad sense, food seems to carry the same sort of meanings, but perverted and corrupted by Satan. Jesus told his disciples, *"take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"* [Mat.16:6]. He spoke of bad doctrine (see also Gal.5:9-10). 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 shows bad fellowship leavening the *"whole lump"*

(or bread loaf), the fellowship and worship of an entire assembly. The sobering admonition of 1 Corinthians 10:19-22 urges believers to recognize that certain works and actions, though harmless in themselves, are from the table of devils when done out of God's will. And when Peter contradicted the Word of Jesus, the rebuke, "*Get thee behind me Satan,*" made it clear that Peter, though saved, had momentarily linked himself with the wrong leader [Mat.16:23].

These things were written largely for the admonition of believing Israelites in a perilous time which is soon to come upon the earth, but we may profit by them also. Spiritual principles do not change; in any age, the meat and drink of Babylon's awful ruler is to be avoided.

Those who love us may warn of loss, even as the prince of eunuchs warned Daniel; do not despise those who give such warnings, but know that those who love you do not always see God's purposes. For those who trust themselves to Him, His will and His Word, there will be no loss when the great day of reckoning appears. When they stand to commune with their King of kings, they will be revealed as wiser than all others of His realm.

DANIEL 2

DANIEL 2:1-15

Daniel 2 records the dream which announced clearly, and for the first time, the course of the times of the Gentiles.

This dream was not given to a Jew, but to a Gentile. This is a thing to be wondered at; as it has been God's pattern that the great revelations come through the Jew. Romans 3:2 says, "*unto them were committed the oracles of God.*" True, it was a Jew who interpreted the dream, but why did God involve a Gentile in the process at all? Paul describes the general condition of the heathen, Gentile peoples like this: "*Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*" [Eph.2:12]. No matter how much it might injure our Gentile pride, we should accept the fact that God must have had a very good reason to make use of a Gentile, even a royal Gentile, in this way.

For the Jew, the lesson is fairly easy to arrive at. Once before, it is recorded that God gave a dream to a Gentile king, that king being Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, during the life of Joseph. As a direct result of that dream, Joseph gained great prominence, but the events which the dream foretold brought his father and brothers to Egypt where their descendants became slaves, lowly subjects of an ungodly nation. The giving of the message to Pharaoh instead of to Joseph served notice that the family of Israel was going to find itself in a secondary position for a time. The parallel between that occasion and the one before us should be fairly clear.

God wants the Jew to know the times in which they dwell. The knowledge revealed in this dream and the prophecies which follow are greatly beneficial to all who understand them, no matter what age they live in; but for the Jew in a time soon to come, this is **survival knowledge**. No righteous Jew during the

Tribulation Period will be able to go forward spiritually without an understanding of the times and events which will then beset them.

Beginning in [Daniel 2:4](#), the record shifts from Hebrew to Chaldean, the common language of the Babylonian court and empire; these words are written for Gentile attention. Their lesson of warning and admonition will be self-evident as we consider them. We, who are of Gentile stock according to the flesh, must understand this message if we are to stand truly and fully in faith, believing God to perform all of His will—He has something to say to us as a people.

Let us pause here, and consider what is important about this dream. Is it the event itself, the manner in which God spoke?

In 1978 I was given a new Bible as a gift. It had a leather cover. It was given in a box, and the box was wrapped in brightly colored paper. Fine cover, sturdy box, pretty paper—they could not compare with the record of truth which they enclosed. Do not be dazzled by dreams and visions; be gripped by the truth they reveal.

Special dealings of God are indeed things to see and to wonder at; they witness His grace. Yet no dream, vision, or other miracle assures that any particular heart will seek after God.

- Balaam had visions and heard the Word of the Lord, yet he did not accept God's Word in faith (read Jud.1:11, Rev.2:14).
- The rich man, attempting to intercede from hell on behalf of his brothers, was told that if they did not believe Moses and the prophets, they would not believe if one were raised from the dead and witnessed to them. (in Luk.16:27-31 this was proven to be a literal truth at the resurrection of Christ Jesus.)

All do not have a Bible with a durable, leather cover, and not all received their Bible boxed and gift wrapped, but if yours is a good Bible (not a poor translation or a paraphrase), it has the witness of truth in it. We may never be given an experience like the one described here, but we do have Nebuchadnezzar's dream, just as surely as if it had come to us in a night vision; and, we have the message it contained in Daniel 2.

In [Daniel 2:3](#), Nebuchadnezzar is quoted as telling his magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers, *"I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream"* [Dan.2:3]. Here is something which sets this man apart. Having had a message from the Lord, he *"was troubled to know."* He did not remember the dream, much less understand it, yet he was moved at heart. Many with great opportunities to hear plainly spoken truth are not stirred as was this man who had nothing but a forgotten dream. Of course, like many others, Nebuchadnezzar was mistaken in his choice of where to go for the knowledge he craved.

The wise teachers of Babylon can speak much on many topics, but they are shut out of revelations of true godliness. The course they followed to conceal their ignorance was both reasonable to the natural man, and predictable to the spiritual.

First it was, “*Tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation*” [Dan.2:4]. Only God can create or reveal something by faith where there is nothing apparent to work with. Not having access to Him, they had to have something to get them started, a place from which to reason.

Then, when threatened with death if they did not show both the dream and its interpretation, it was, “*There is not a man upon the earth who can show the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things*” [Dan.2:10]. Their answer, then, ran roughly like this:

“You are asking for a miracle. We cannot produce it; therefore it cannot be produced. Others do not want such things; therefore you should be satisfied to do without as well.”

Nothing was their fault. Thus, do the wise of Babylon ever explain their failure to those who come to them for spiritual enlightenment?

“For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.” [Dan.2:12]

What Nebuchadnezzar had threatened, he now decreed. We should not fault Nebuchadnezzar too greatly for his fierce wrath against these charlatan magicians and sorcerers. We cannot say he was righteous in it, for he was not a saved man. Still, we can see his viewpoint. He had spared no expense in educating and caring for the needs of men who were supposed to be helpful when his own, ordinary, mental wisdom failed; he had not gotten his money's worth.

Then too, from God's point of view, a ruler “*is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*” [Rom.13:4]. Consider the type of men who made up the bulk of those condemned by King Nebuchadnezzar:

- **Magicians**—Magicians had withstood Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh [Exo.7-8].
- **Astrologers**—Astrology is nearly always associated in some way with idolatry when it is mentioned in the Scripture.
- **Sorcerers**—The Law instructed, “*Thou shalt not suffer a witch (sorcerer) to live*” [Exo.22:18]. “*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools*” [Rom.1:22].

No, we cannot fault Nebuchadnezzar for dealing roughly with these spiritual deceivers.

Like most who have been disappointed by Babylonian religious wisdom, Nebuchadnezzar went too far. **Daniel 3:13** shows that Daniel and his fellows were to be slain with all the wise men of Babylon. And why not? In education, in position, in title, and in all that seemed to count, Daniel and his fellows seemed to him very like the pretenders who knew nothing; they looked like just a few more wise men hypocrites. The king, not knowing God, did not know how to distinguish between the wisdom that is from above, and that which is earthly [Jam.3:15-17].

For all that he was “troubled to know,” this heathen king was no different from any other sinner; “*There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God*” [Rom.3:9]. He had most assuredly found that some who claimed wisdom had none, but then he made the common, self-righteous assumption that **none** who were called wise were of value. Daniel and his godly friends were therefore included in the decree of death. Arioch, captain of the king’s guard came to arrest Daniel, and Daniel found himself literally face-to-face with his executioner. Any man, Jew or Gentile, in any age whatsoever, must know how to trust in the one true God at such a time.

In part, Paul told Timothy that he wrote to him, “*that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God*” [1Ti.3:15]. A man’s walk among those who are God’s household is not the worst part of life. If men need special teaching for a sweet aspect of their walk, how much more do they need it when walking through the treacherous bog of worldly and hostile men? Only God can teach a man how to behave in the face of one who is bitter against the empty, worldly, superstitious, religious wisdom, but who knows not the other kind. This is precisely what will be faced when the man of sin is revealed:

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

He will seek to overthrow every system of religion and wisdom but his own. In his eyes, Israelites, who will then be standing for God, will seem to be no more than the other religious groups which he will despise and destroy. Then, as in Daniel’s day, the only hope for the faithful Jew will be to know the truth which God has revealed, **even though that truth will have been forgotten by the Gentiles who at first received it**. Then, as in Daniel’s day, the only help will come through prayer.

DANIEL 2:16-45

Daniel very wisely did not rail against the king or the hasty decree of death. Instead, he requested time, that he might show the dream and its interpretation to the king. Having been granted a space of time, Daniel knew how to use it. He did not waste it on that which he had been taught in the king’s school for wise men; he called his 3 friends together to pray. In 1 Timothy 2:2 Paul wrote, “*Pray for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*” Daniel, too, believed that this is the way for believers to affect and counteract the decisions of government.

Notice their petition before the Lord (see Rev.18:4):

*“That Daniel and his fellows **SHOULD NOT** perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.”* [Dan.2:18b]

God answered their prayer, and showed Daniel the secret of Nebuchadnezzar’s forgotten dream.

Having had Nebuchadnezzar’s forgotten dream revealed to him, Daniel did not immediately rush to show his knowledge to the king. Naturally speaking it was not wise to delay, for the lives of Daniel and his friends were at stake, and they

were undoubtedly operating under a time limit. Nevertheless, Daniel took time to give thanks before God.

*"Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel **BLESSED** the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, **BLESSED** be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter." [Dan.2:19-23]*

Daniel began his prayer with specific praise and worship toward the Lord. No prayer should be without this element. In his worship and praise he expressed much of the spiritual lesson to be learned from Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

The word **blessed** [Dan.2:19-20] is translated from a Hebrew word meaning "to kneel." Daniel saw this kneeling as a "forever and ever" activity. Sadly, very few are willing to bless the God of heaven thus, whether the bowing down be of the mind and will or of the knees. Daniel gave his reason for bowing in submission to God as "wisdom and might are his"; more simply put, **He rules**. His wisdom makes the right choices; His might carries them out; none possesses either wisdom or might apart from Him, for they are His. Those who do not kneel before Him will be both unwise and weak.

There followed 3 items of praise to support Daniel's praise of God's wisdom and might [Dan.2:21-22].

1. First, "*he changeth the times and the seasons.*" Later, in Daniel 7:25, we shall see a blasphemous man who will "*think to change times and laws.*" (The word translated as **times** in Daniel 7:25 is translated **seasons** here in Daniel 2:21). That man will fail. The changing of times and seasons is exclusively in God's hands. God will shorten the days appointed to the Great Tribulation, so that saved Israel may continue on the earth [Mat.24:22]. This is in His power. Religious teachers who think to turn our present time back from grace to Law become spiritual failures, men of empty clatter [1Ti.1:6-7]. Only God can change the times and seasons; when He has done so, none can change them back.
2. Second, "*he removeth kings and setteth up kings.*" When we look at the interpretation of the king's dream, we will see that this removing and setting up of kings is the substance of the events foretold. This, in fact, is the way in which God changes the times and seasons. When this age comes to an end, the new age will be heralded by Christ's taking His throne in the heavens [Rev.4:2]. The setting up of the Gentile kings, which we will see in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, portended a great change in the times of Daniel's people—he understood this. The removing of the last of them will announce the restoring of the kingdom to Israel.
3. Third, "*he revealeth the deep and secret things.*" This is not a testimony to the overwhelming wisdom and might of rule, which will eventually force every knee to bow; this is a testimony of the graciousness of God's rule,

which brings us gladly to our knees. The Ruler of all creation chooses to share His private counsels with His servants. *“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants”* [Amo.3:7]. He can reveal things which are shrouded in darkness to us because *“the light dwelleth with him.”* David, considering God’s great wisdom, said *“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee...the darkness and the light are both alike to thee”* [Psa.139:12].

Notice to whom God reveals His secrets: *“He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.”* Daniel was such a man; he knew that *“the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction”* [Pro.1:7].

Nebuchadnezzar was *“troubled to know.”* He had not made even a beginning. So, although God desired to communicate with Nebuchadnezzar, He arranged things so that Daniel would be called in—Daniel had wisdom and understanding. Why Daniel rather than some other Israelite? Daniel gave himself entirely to the knowledge of God. There can be no revealing of the choicest secrets of the Most High to those who are careless, who ignore Scriptural truths which are already clear. We must be wise before Him.

Having rendered to God the praise and worship which was in his heart, Daniel gave a simple, heart-deep prayer of thanksgiving, and then went to tell the king about the secret of his forgotten dream.

“Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.” [Dan.2:27-30]

Daniel began by doing all he could to ensure that God would receive the greatest possible glory in the matter.

- He reminded the king that none of the wise men, astrologers, magicians, or soothsayers could answer the king when real wisdom was required [Dan.2:27]. Titles and education do not equate with wisdom. Daniel did not point out this fact from spite or ungraciousness, but for the good of the king.
- Daniel made it clear that the God of heaven (as opposed to the gods of wood and stone that the king knew) was the revealer of this and all secrets. [Dan.2:28-29].
- Neither did he risk Nebuchadnezzar’s crediting Daniel with special wisdom for recovering and interpreting the dream. He insisted it was not because he knew more than *“any living”* [Dan.2:30]. How few **wise** men refuse credit for their wisdom.

Now the unfolding of the recovered dream and its interpretation. Others have undertaken detailed studies of the fulfillment of this prophecy; we will not attempt to duplicate their efforts here. We will simply state what seems plain when we place history alongside this inspired prophecy.

- **Daniel 2:31-35** gives a clear, easy to understand picture of what Nebuchadnezzar saw in his night vision. The interpretation [Dan.2:26-45] is likewise clear and simple.
- **The image** which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream represented a succession of kings and kingdoms.
- The **head of gold** represents Nebuchadnezzar (and the empire over which he ruled).
- The **breast and arms of silver** depict Cyrus and the Medio-Persian Empire.
- In the **belly and thighs of brass**, we see Alexander the Great and the empire he gained.
- The **legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay** are the Roman Empire.

This is an outline of the times of Gentile rule. The period of this Church Age, as always in Old Testament prophecy, is a hidden valley, not revealed here.

Two things should be noticed about the image.

1. First, it does not rest on its beginnings, but on its final outcome. Whether it be an age, an empire, a life, or an idea, God has ordained that all things stand or fall on the basis of their end, not on the bright promise and seeming goodness of their beginning.
2. Second, if the path of Gentile rule is shown as going downward from head to foot, it is also shown as going downward in fineness and value before God. **Daniel 2:31** speaks of an excellent brightness and a terrible form. Gentile Times have always teetered between bright hopefulness and terrible tragedy. This will grow worse (and indeed, it is growing worse) at the end of Gentile Times.

Though the iron rule of the legs is mingled in the feet with the clay of those ruled there is no break between legs and feet. No overthrow of the Roman system is seen until the very end; its finish is simultaneous with the end of Gentile Times. Since Gentiles are still the world rulers, we must accept that in God's view, the Roman system has never truly been destroyed.

This idea may be hard for you to understand, but remember, we are called on to believe God's Word, and not our own reasonings. The idea that Roman rule is not yet finished seems absurd to the natural mind, but God says that it is so. Perhaps it will help your understanding if you remember that there is still a system in Rome which has worldwide power and influence. That system has always mixed its religion with politics, and continues to do so today. It would be wrong to say that that system is all that is pictured here, but it has its part, and we see it providing continuity to Roman power.

God will destroy all of the structures of Gentile power. Today's proud civilization and order will become "*like the chaff of the summer threshing floors*" [Dan.2:35]. No fragment will remain. When the winds of change come sweeping over this earth there will be no place found for them. They will have no more power to resist than would wind-blown chaff, nor will they have any more value than chaff.

The means which God will use to effect the change will be a stone cut without hands, a stone which man will not have shaped in any way. This stone is Jesus Christ (see Mat.21:42-44, Act.4:11, Rom.9:33, 1Co.10:4, Eph.2:20, 1Pe.2:7-8]. The lesson, **God rules**; "*wisdom and might are His...He removeth kings and setteth up kings*" [Dan.2:20-21] (compare Dan.2:35 and Dan.2:44-45 with Isa.2:1-2 and Mat.21:19-21].

In prophecy, a mountain is often used to picture a kingdom or a nation. Christ Jesus, at the Head of those who worship, serve, and obey Him, will become a great mountain (kingdom) filling the whole earth. His kingdom "*shall not be left to other people*" [Dan.2:44], for He shall continually be its Head. Thank God for the eternal power of His Son!

It is sad to see so many of God's own, dear people giving their efforts to the **improvement** of the world-systems of this age. Daniel finished his interpretation by saying that "*the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure*" [Dan.2:45]. All that now is, shall pass away. Christ will utterly destroy it, replacing it with His own rule. Believe it, rejoice in it, and live accordingly.

DANIEL 2:46-3:13

The ending of Daniel 2 seems very satisfactory, with Daniel and his friends being promoted to places of high honor. Yet to the discerning eye, 2 omissions on the part of Nebuchadnezzar can be seen. These errors led to the confrontation recorded in Daniel 3.

1ST OMISSION: Nebuchadnezzar worshipped and honored Daniel [Dan.2:46], but not Daniel's God. Oh, he gave credit to the Lord, saying, "*Of a truth it is, that your God is a god of gods, and a Lord of kings*" [Dan.2:47]. But notice that it was still a matter of Daniel's God, with no real submission in his heart. Daniel had been useful to him; Daniel would be honored; Daniel would be told what a wonderful God he had; but he, Nebuchadnezzar, would go on without change, serving his own gods. What a sad omission.

2ND OMISSION: In the matter of the promotion of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, it was Daniel who suggested honoring others who honored the true God. If the king had no interest in truly honoring and accepting Daniel's God, he had even less interest in honoring God's people. Yes, he went along with Daniel when Daniel suggested that his friends be set in authority with him, probably felt good about doing so. Yet he did not recognize that if faith in God made Daniel what he was, others with that same faith were just as important as Daniel. His failure to recognize the value of all God's faithful people was another serious error.

After a period of time, Nebuchadnezzar undertook a project which brought him into direct conflict with Daniel's God, and thus, with Daniel's godly companions. He set up a huge gold idol (about 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide) and arranged a special meeting so that all his officials could join him in his idolatry. We need not look far to realize where he came up with this idea.

God gave him a dream concerning a great image, whose head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar himself; he then set up a great golden image. The parallel is too close to be mistaken. He missed the point of the dream. Instead of seeing the end of those things, taking warning and submitting to the power of God, he saw only the bright beginning and delighted in the earthly glory which he possessed. Nor can we doubt that, however the king may have represented his motives in this matter, he was acting to take the worship of men into his own power and person.

ANOTHER MISSTEP: This points up another terrible and dangerous misstep by the king. Nebuchadnezzar fell into the error which many, many others have followed. He took something good and true, which God truly had revealed to him, and produced with it something bad, something false, which was in opposition to God. How?

- Colossians 2:18 warns of a type of man who enticed people into “worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”
- 2 Peter 3:16 speaks of the writings of Paul, “In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest (twist) as they do also other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

The man of Colosse had certainly seen some true things. If only he had stuck to them, waiting on God to show more truth when he was ready for it, he would have continued very well. Instead, he chose to reason with “*his fleshly mind*.” In this, he was acting through pride and confidence in his own powers to understand things of the spirit; he was “*puffed up*.” He did come up with something to add to what God had shown to him earlier, but it was wrong. He was only making dark guesses about things he had never seen. To support such wrong conclusions, men must invariably begin to twist what has already been revealed, in order to make fit what they have decided upon. Such a course is a result of ignorance, of rejecting opportunities to learn of God and His truth. This is the path which Nebuchadnezzar followed in order to get from his God-given dream to the idolatrous image on the plain of Dura.

“Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”
[Dan.3:4-6]

Of the king's order, commanding all to worship the god he had made, little must be said. Notice 2 things:

1. First, as is often the case with that which is a corruption of truth, fear was the major inducement for the people to bow down and join him in

his error. “*A burning fiery furnace*” for those who failed to obey was the only incentive involved in this evil worship.

2. Also, music played a large part. We do not criticize music or musical instruments; David used song and instruments of music to glorify God and bless His people. The New Testament encourages us to continue in that pattern. Nevertheless, false religion can often provide more impressive instruments and orchestras than places of true worship can.

Be impressed by truth and by faithfulness to God’s revelation, and not the size of men’s idols or the quality of their music.

Before we come to the wonderful conflict which arose between this Gentile king and 3 godly Jews, perhaps we should ask what has happened to Daniel. His absence from this gathering of the empire’s most prominent men is conspicuous. Did Nebuchadnezzar excuse him from attendance at this terrible worship service? The king did seem to have a blind and ignorant respect for this man whose God he did not want. Daniel could not have been flattered by that misplaced reverence, but it might explain why he was not on the plain of Dura that day. While we cannot know with certainty where Daniel was, we may be sure that, as his 3 companions had prayed when he was moving at center stage before the king, so he was praying for them on this day.

Nebuchadnezzar gave no thought to these 3 men who were as faithful as Daniel, and who, like him, would not bow down to a false god. This seems (and was) a terrible, calloused attitude, but remember, God used it. His very act of rebellion was used and brought forth yet another demonstration of the greatness of the God of heaven and earth. It also gave us opportunity to see the testimony of faith which God had hidden in the hearts of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We might otherwise have not seen what God had done in them. Truly, we serve a great God who can turn all things, even sin, to His purpose. If you do not believe that He does this, remember the cold wickedness of the religious men who conspired to crucify Jesus. “*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*” [Rom.5:20b].

In **Daniel 2**, when the wise men did not measure up to his demands, Nebuchadnezzar’s wrath was terrible. The occasion before us was no different. **Daniel 3:13** says that when the king heard of the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to obey his wicked decree, he commanded “*in his rage and fury*” that they be brought before him. Never forget that an ungodly religion is the most brutal, bloodthirsty force on earth.

“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.” [Gal.1:13-14]

What made Paul the chief of sinners? It was the fact that he was “*exceedingly zealous*” in a religious system that rejected the plan of God. When these men would not unite with him in his religious sins, the king was ready to kill them.

Let us pause in following these events.

Satan has a plan with which he proposes to thwart the purposes of God (read 2Th.2:3-8). He will put forward a ruler of the Gentiles, who will seek to take for himself the worship which belongs to the King of the Jews. The man will be the “*beast*,” the Antichrist, the man of sin, “*who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God.*” God will not let him succeed, and indeed, he will not allow that plan to begin its course until such time as it suits Him. Satan, being in rebellion against God, keeps trying to carry out his plan before the time when God has purposed to allow it. Paul wrote, “*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work*” [2Th.2:7].

“This is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world.” [1Jo.4:4]

God has allowed Satan’s false starts and failed efforts to be used for a good purpose: they give a picture of what must come when the Antichrist takes his awful place. Thus, once again, we see in Nebuchadnezzar’s acts a foreshadowing of what will occur when God lifts His hand and allows Satan to have his way for a little time.

Concerning the false prophet who will promote the Antichrist yet to come, Revelation 13:15 says, “*And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*” Once again, we see a parallel which is too close to be mistaken.

It is not God’s primary purpose to tell men of those events or of that man. Jesus is the center of all which God would reveal to men. He warns against the false Christ, that men might trust the true Christ. Jesus Himself warned, “*Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many...Then (when the Great Tribulation comes) if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not*” [Mat.24:4-5, 23]. God wants us, and also especially Israel, to come to know and believe that Jesus is **The** Christ; that since He came in the flesh there can be no Christ but Him. Failure to accept and confess this fundamental truth is what John called “*the spirit of Antichrist*” [1Jo.4:3]. When the old Serpent starts his masquerade, parading signs and lying wonders, it will be necessary for men to let God show them the falseness of Satan’s way, lest they be deceived and caught in his net.

Of course, we should not expect to be on the earth when the evil pawn of Satan exerts his power. Revelation 3:10 says to a faithful, faith-filled body of believers, “*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*” Despite the pretensions of some of today’s popular teachers of religion, who are puffed up in their fleshly minds concerning things they have not seen, the promise of Christ means exactly what it says. God has promised to keep His faithful ones out of the time of Antichrist’s full sway on the earth; He will do it by taking them out of the earth.

God has revealed these things to us that we might see His power, His triumphant purpose. His desire for us is that we might stir up ourselves to know and believe all that He has said He will do. He works through the faith and faithfulness of His people.

DANIEL 3

DANIEL 3:14-27

"The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." [Pro.12:10b]

When Nebuchadnezzar found that the 3 Hebrew noblemen would not bow down to the god he had invented, he was willing to show them **mercy**, to give them another chance to join his rebellion against God.

- This same **mercy** was extended to Martin Luther, when religious men tried to change his stand on the Scripture fact that "*the just shall live by faith*" [Rom.1:17]. Only by the grace of God did Luther escape with his life.
- The same **mercy** was offered to John Hus, who was burned at the stake for his stand. Repeated invitations from men to join in their sins are not born of mercy or kindness.
- That same **mercy** will be extended to believing Jews by the man of sin who is yet to come; some of them will accept the offer.

Repeated invitations from men to join in their sins are not born of mercy or kindness.

The true condition of Nebuchadnezzar's heart is revealed by the last words of the offer which he made.

"And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" [Dan.3:15]

What a journey he had made, from being "*troubled to know*," to being lifted up in the same wicked pride which moved Satan to his first rebellion against the Lord.

Nebuchadnezzar did not rebel ignorantly. He had earlier acknowledged the reality, authority, and wisdom of God. Read the following prophecy concerning the end-time rebellion, when Gentile world-rulers will choose to fight openly against God, with full conscience of what they are doing.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." [Psa.2:1-4]

Oh, the madness of a pride which is moved to challenge the Almighty.

We might desire to destroy such a man, but God did not. Some human rebels can be saved.

"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." [2Ti.2:25]

The king had not made a final turn toward evil, and God was continuing to deal with him. He was about to give Nebuchadnezzar a practical demonstration

which would answer his proud question, “*And who is that God?*” Be patient with men, even as the Lord is. Sin itself need not be dealt with gently, and plain speech may sometimes be required, but God alone knows who will eventually accept His true mercy.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were unmoved by the threats of the king.

“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.” [Dan.3:16]

Paul said something similar to the Corinthians, some of whom found fault with his ministry and walk: “*But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or man’s judgment*” [1Co.4:3]. Some things are the business of no one but God. All godly men, ever since God instituted human government, have recognized that to resist the power of government is to resist the ordinance of God [Rom.13:1-2]. However, when those in power in the realm of spiritual matters command men to do that which they should not, it is no longer a question of obeying a power which God has ordained. When commanded by the high priest to stop preaching, Peter said, “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” [Act.5:29]. God’s rule takes precedence over that of men.

There is a verse in the Proverbs from which, by faulty interpretation, many have obtained false expectations concerning the ungodly:

“When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.” [Pro.16:7]

That does not necessarily mean that all our enemies will invariably be quieted and cause us no trouble here. Some who make themselves enemies will continue to fight until forced to bow the knee and confess Christ’s Lordship before the great white throne. Then, forcibly, they shall all be caused to be at peace with us. The ways which Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had chosen were pleasing to the Lord. Yet Nebuchadnezzar’s fury was unabated; his kindly look became murderous at their steadfast refusal to bow down.

The courage of these men took into account the realities of the situation.

“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” [Dan.3:17-18]

In confirming that God could deliver them from the hands of the king, they were bold, but not blind—“*But if not.*” From the testimony of Scripture and history, we see that more who take such a stand are allowed to suffer than are miraculously delivered. When we say that we count all things as loss for Him, it behooves us to realize that we may actually suffer the loss of all things. These men believed God for deliverance, but trusted Him no matter what might come. Their purpose was to honor God, not themselves.

True faithfulness in life may entail being faithful unto death. This is true, no matter what group of believers is under pressure, in whatever the age they live. Revelation 11 speaks of 2 witnesses who will minister after The Church-Age overcomers are caught away, and before the 3½ year span of the Great

Tribulation. They will stand against the increasing weight of spiritual wickedness with a testimony of bold power; but *“when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them”* [Rev.11:7-8]. This will occur at Jerusalem. Their hope will have to be fixed upon Christ Himself and upon the resurrection, not upon a positive assurance of earthly deliverances.

Nebuchadnezzar, yielding as he was to the purpose of Satan, displayed a Satanic disregard for his most loyal servants. He gave the order to heat the furnace to seven times its normal heat before the faithful Jews were thrown in [Dan.3:19]. That such a hellish flame would destroy some of his mighty men [Dan.3:22] was of no consequence to him. Only his anger at having his rebel authority challenged and thwarted mattered. How sad that men do not consider this fact when they ally themselves with the great rebel. Revelation 12:12 says, *“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”* At that hour, Satan will think nothing of expending huge numbers of his mightiest, most steadfast servants in his desperate wrath. Only God will keep him from destroying Israel, and all the human race with them.

Despite the overpowering, inescapable arrangement which Nebuchadnezzar made for destroying the three Hebrews, God purposed to show His power then, ever as it is now, and as it shall be in the coming Tribulation Period. Some He keeps **from** the fire, some He keeps **in** the fire.

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” [Rev.3:10]

The promise of Revelation 3:10 is to keep faithful believers from the Great Tribulation; the original of that verse reads, *“I also thee will keep out of the hour of trial which is about to come”* This promise is available to us. The Jewish promise for that time is given in 2 Peter 2:9, *“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation”* (Peter had the ministry of the circumcision; see Gal.1:7). His epistles will have enormous impact on the same group as the writings of Daniel will, that is, the saved Israelites of that period (noted in the **Introduction**). We know that to be delivered from the midst of a trial is not the same as being kept out of it entirely. Yet God can protect in the furnace and then deliver out of it just as effectively and ably as He can keep men from being put into the fire. He chooses which is best.

Times of fiery trial are to be expected by the Jews in that day.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” [1Pe.4:12]

Not that we do not know trials in our day, but saved Israelites are going to be Satan’s special target in a time so terrible that it will be a great blessing for saved people to die [Rev.14:13]. Still, how much better to take a place in the fire, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, than to be consumed while obeying the orders of an evil master? Speaking of the days of persecution coming upon believing Jews, Jesus said, *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* [Mat.10:28].

The 3 men whose testimony is before us would likely have missed something very wonderful if they had missed the furnace, for there they met a friend.

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." [Dan.3:24-25]

Men of a certain sort argue whether the 4th member of the little group in the furnace was an angel or Christ Himself. It really makes very little difference. Whatever the case, it was a personal revelation of Him, of His care, and of His abiding presence, even in the fire. Who would avoid life's furnaces at the expense of such a meeting? (Read Phi.1:29, 2Co.4:17, Heb.11:35.) Those who meet Him in the fire are not bound, but loose, walking, unhurt.

What does it take to humble the mighty of earth? Nebuchadnezzar was "*astonied*," amazed and devastated, when he saw the fourth man walking in the fire. Just the presence of Christ is sufficient both to deliver his saints and to conquer all others. Nothing could have brought down the pride of Nebuchadnezzar so swiftly, and yet so simply and easily, as did the sight of the fourth man in the fire. So it will be at the end of the approaching Tribulation, when Christ appears in glory. "*The brightness of His coming*" will be enough to defeat every foe" [2Th.2:8].

"And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." [Dan.3:27]

How wonderful that when the 3 men came forth from the furnace, there was no sign, by sight or smell, of what they had been through. Often, and for this very reason, doubters refuse to believe that God's most faithful saints ever go through the fire. No singed appearance or smoky stench rests upon them. With Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, only the ropes with which they had been tied were affected by the fire; they were cast in bound; they walked out free. So it is with all who walk the fires of persecution and testing with Christ and for His sake. Very often He uses those fires to deliver them from the bonds of self-will or bad habit which had kept them from walking as close to Him as both He and they wanted. We do not glorify the fire, nor do we want its destructive evidences to rest upon us, but how good are the uses to which the fire can be put.

DANIEL 3:28-4:31

Even after Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were protected and delivered from the fire, Nebuchadnezzar was not ready to yield himself to God. God had "*changed the king's word*"; this he confessed. He even forbade his subjects to speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Yet, while he declared that no other god could give deliverance as could their God, his threat to kill those who disobeyed seems less a profession of faith than an offer to protect God. He still saw both God and himself only in the light of his own little greatness. He exercised his authority to promote Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego in the province of Babylon, but did not grasp that he himself depended far more on God for his own place than these 3 men depended on him for theirs. God humbles that kind of pride.

In its entirety, **Daniel 4** is Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation, publicly detailing his final humbling before God. He was the best that can be in Gentile rulership, yet he had to be stripped of every shred of authority and reason before he would submit to God. Just so, God will finally bring a remnant of the Gentile nations to bend the knee before Him. See Isaiah 2:11-19 where the 11th verse says, *"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."*

The story here involves another prophetic dream. Being a slow learner spiritually, and possessing the illogical pride of a true Babylonian, Nebuchadnezzar commenced his search for the meaning of God's message by summoning the so-called wise men of Babylon. What confidence people maintain in humanly approved education and titles, even after seeing the emptiness of their claims! Babylon's wise ones could not or would not interpret the dream for him. *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful"* [Pro.27:6]. Whether they guessed at the meaning of the dream or not, the magicians, astrologers, and soothsayers did not make its interpretation known to Nebuchadnezzar; Satan's men find it hard to prophesy anything but smooth, deceitful words [cf.¹ Isa.30:10-11]. At last Daniel was brought, and Nebuchadnezzar told him the dream.

Read **Daniel 4:13** and **17**; each of these verses refers to holy ones and watchers. The term **holy one** can refer to God Himself, to saints (all saved people), or to angels; from the context, we believe that angels are spoken of. A watcher is just that—one who observes. Angels do more than just look on passively at the events of the human race, however. In Hebrews 1:14, they are called *"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."* Many times, in the Old and New Testament, angels intervened on behalf of **saved people**. God has set these holy ones as watchers in the sense of guardians, both to observe man and to obey God when called on to intervene in human affairs.

- Prior to the conquest of Jericho, Joshua saw an angel who was captain of the Lord's host [Jos.5:14-15].
- An angel slew an army of 185,000 Assyrians who were besieging Jerusalem [2Ki.19:35].
- An angel let Peter out from a prison cell in the middle of the night [Act.12:7-10], and so on.

"This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to WHOMSOEVER HE WILL, AND SETTETH UP OVER IT THE BASEST OF MEN." [Dan.4:17]

¹ The abbreviation **cf.** derives from the Latin verb *conferre*, while in English it is commonly read as "compare".

The things foretold by the dream would not occur as a part of the natural course of events, but were “*by the decree of the watchers.*”

- In **Daniel 4:24**, Daniel said the dream was “*the decree of the most High.*” Whether men or angels, all who partake of God’s holiness and act according to that holiness, partake also of God’s authority. Do you recall how Moses’ law was given? It came by angels [Heb.2:2]. Now, The Law dealt with every aspect of Jewish life; it had power to condemn men to death. That word spoken by angels was steadfast and of great authority. Men who do not recognize God’s authority will not accept that of those who share it; generally speaking, they will ignore any instruction or warning which is given by such authority. Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up in Babylonian pride, gave little heed to the decree of the watchers or the exhortation of Daniel.

There is one short statement in **Daniel 4:17** which many seem to miss. Concerning God’s rule over “*the kingdom of men,*” the holy one in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream said that He “*setteth up over it the basest of men.*” Nothing in history or Scripture indicates that this has changed. When the base practices of men in government are brought to light, the only reason for surprise is the shock and moral outrage it produces in some of God’s people. He has warned us that it will be so. He is causing it to be so. He rules.

After he heard this dream, Daniel “*was astonished one hour, and his thoughts troubled him*” [Dan.4:19]. The word translated **astonied** means “*stunned*” or “*stupefied.*” Daniel took no pleasure in unfolding a message of judgment to the king. Although Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem and carried him away as a captive, giving the news of impending trouble grieved Daniel. This, even more than his willingness to obey God and speak, shows us how completely Daniel was in accord with God.

Correction and judgment are not tasks the Lord would have us rush into with joy. When James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven upon rejecters, Jesus said, “*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*” [Luk.9:55]. To the scoffers of the last day and to those Jews who will believe on Christ, but wonder why He does not hasten judgment to deliver them, Peter wrote, “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” [2Pe.3:9]. Yes, there comes a day when judgment must fall, and in that hour the redeemed will rejoice in God’s holiness; until then, judgment upon the wicked is a sad and troubling thing to those who are like-minded with Christ.

We come now to the interpretation of the dream.

The picturing of men as **trees** is used from time to time in the Scripture in order to portray the spiritual character of individuals or groups. God’s faithful people are spoken of as **trees planted by the rivers of water** [Psa.1:3], as **flourishing palm trees** and **cedars of Lebanon** [Psa.92:12], etc. Israel is repeatedly pictured as a **fig tree** [Luk.13:6-9, Mat.21:18-21, Mat.24:32-34]. The great size and strength of the tree in the dream speaks of the size and strength of Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom. Was that greatness a guarantee of his continued prosperity?

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." [Mat.3:21]

The **fowls** sheltering in the branches speak of things gone wrong spiritually. In foretelling the course of The Church Age, Jesus compared it to the planting of a mustard seed (faith—Luk.17:6), which would grow into a great tree in which the **birds of the air** would lodge [Mat.13:31-32]. Satan is the "*prince of the power of the air*" [Eph.2:2].

In Matthew 13:33, Jesus spoke of the "*kingdom of God*" as being like a meal in which **leaven** is hidden and allowed to work. Leaven is a picture of sin and false doctrine because it causes a swelling in size without a growth in substance). In Matthew 13:47, He compared the "*kingdom of God*" to the netting of fish, bad ones being caught with the good ones.

Finally, speaking of the terrible end of Christendom (that which constitutes a part of The Church outwardly, in name only), Revelation 18:2 says "*Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*"

All this was prefigured in the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. Spiritual good was available within the bounds of his kingdom, but idolatry and doctrines of demons were allowed to flourish. He knew that only God's faithful men could be depended on for the unfolding of truth, but he continued to support and trust in false, deceiving men. He knew about God, but had not received Him as his own Lord. God appointed him to earthly greatness, but he had no heavenly aspirations. We see this prophetic picture being partially fulfilled in the church-world today.

In **Daniel 4:25**, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, "*They (the holy ones), shall drive thee from men*". The term of his exile was to be "*seven times*" that is, 7 years. This period of chastening would last "*till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.*" The sentence was sure, but it was tempered by God's gracious purpose; when that purpose was fulfilled, his kingdom would be restored to him [Dan.4:25-26]. And, despite this holy decree, God offered a stay in its execution, even as Nineveh had repented, delaying for many years the Divine Judgment of that city [Jon.3:10, Nah.3:7]; so also was Nebuchadnezzar offered an opportunity to break off his sins in order to lengthen his time of tranquility [Dan.4:27]. If he made any changes, they were not changes of heart; the sentence upon him was carried out just 12 months later.

At the end of this grace period, Nebuchadnezzar looked out over the great city of Babylon and made his boast:

"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" [Dan.4:30]

What a pitiful boast! He had not troubled himself to learn the prophecies God had spoken concerning the city of which he was so proud: "*And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah*" [Isa.13:19]. How sad when people are lifted up because God has appointed them a place of importance. Whatever earthly glory God gives to men can be revoked if they refuse to glorify Him.

- When Jesus' disciples were impressed with the glory of the Jewish temple, He said, "*seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*" [Mar.13:2]. Jewish unbelief had caused the glory of the Lord to cease from that place. Paul said, "*If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee*" [Rom.11:21].

God ordained that Nebuchadnezzar head a government. God ordained that the Jews should both build the temple and worship Him there. God ordained that those who name the name of Jesus should be His witnesses and the objects of His blessing. Unbelief and pride brought judgment on the first 2; so also will a Christ-rejecting **Christian Babylon** be judged.

How swiftly did the judgment come? "*While the word was in the king's mouth!*" [Dan.4:32]. 1 Thessalonians 5:3 tells what will happen in a coming time, when men will boast that they have built a structure of peace and safety in which they can exalt themselves: "*Sudden destruction cometh upon them.*" Although He be longsuffering, our Lord's judgment is swift and certain in its coming.

DANIEL 4:33-37

As sobering and terrible as God's judgment on Nebuchadnezzar was, we must still recognize it as wonderful and miraculous...even merciful. Nebuchadnezzar ate grass as oxen do, yet he did not starve; ordinarily it is impossible for men to get nourishment from grass. It brings to mind the **chastening of Jonah**, who was swallowed by a fish which the Lord had specially prepared for the task. According to the natural order of things, Jonah should have died but God had determined a gracious purpose upon his life; he was kept alive by the grace of God, in order that grace might be shown to a Gentile people. Concerning **the coming Tribulation**, Jesus said, "*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened*" [Mat.24:22]. God will not allow His judgment of Gentile rebellion to wipe out the rebellious race; He will show mercy in judgment, even as He did with Nebuchadnezzar.

Neither is it accidental that judgment was chosen which showed this sleek, proud, Gentile king as a beast of the field—unkempt, wild, and without understanding. Daniel 7 depicts each of the Gentile World Empires as beasts; the last, most rebellious one being the most violent and uncontrolled. Whether it be an individual or a great mass of human souls, when people lift themselves against their Maker, they become less than what God intended them to be...in a sense, less than human. Man was created to give joy to God; the only reasonable course open to us is submitting to His will [Rom.12:2, Rev.4:11]. To enter on any other pattern of life is to follow a road of degeneration, moving lower and lower on the scale of existence, until all that separates man from the beasts is stripped away. Reason must be stifled to follow such a path.

In "*The Pilgrim's Progress*," a man was pictured with a muck rake in his hand raking to himself straws, sticks, and dust. All the while he raked, there stood one above his head, proffering a celestial crown, but so occupied was he with raking trash together that he could not lift his eyes. So it was with Nebuchadnezzar. He thought only of his own throne, his own power, and his own works, never connecting them with the God of heaven. His eyes were so full of Babylon that when evidence of God's existence and rule was thrust into

his perception he considered Him only in an earthly manner. At last, however, Nebuchadnezzar lifted up his eyes to heaven [Dan.4:34]. Only God can limber the stiff neck of self-will and turn man's gaze heavenward.

With the upward gaze, understanding returned, and with understanding came praise to the Lord. Surely a lack of understanding is revealed in those who do not praise Him. *"He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth"* [Dan.4:35a]. God rules; He should be praised. There are no second causes in affairs over which He chooses to exercise control. Thus do overcoming saints extol Him:

"The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." [Rev.4:10-11]

Nebuchadnezzar's earthly glory could not be credited to himself, but only to God. When God chose to set him down, Nebuchadnezzar could not save his position. Armies, laws, and personal riches all worked together to keep Nebuchadnezzar in power, but God had spoken a Word. He showed His power and Lordship, and the king acknowledged Him.

Then, once Nebuchadnezzar had given God the place that was His, he could again be given the place that God had chosen for him. Do not think it strange that this man was able to take up the reins of government again after a period of "insanity." We might consider histrological examples of mentally defective rulers; we might suppose that Daniel's influence preserved the place to Nebuchadnezzar, but in the end we must see that it was exactly as the king expressed, *"And none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?"* [Dan.4:35b]. If anyone had wished to keep Nebuchadnezzar from returning to his throne, it would not have been possible to contend successfully against the will of God. In actual fact, not only did they not object, his counselors and lords sought him out [Dan.4:36].

It is noteworthy that in describing the return of his honour the king said, *"for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me"* [Dan.4:36]. When his gaze was earthward, he perceived Babylon as being for the honor of his majesty; that is, it existed to give glory to him [Dan.4:30]. Here, he had come to see at last that it was not God's will that Babylon be an ornament to the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, but that the rule of Nebuchadnezzar should add glory to his kingdom. The godly life glorifies whatever situation in which God may place it. Would that more would seek to adorn their station in life with godliness instead of using what God has given them to make themselves look good.

The prophetic parallels in the life and rule of Nebuchadnezzar are many and striking. We have seen so much in him of Gentile rule gone awry and, in a figure, of the spiritual rebellion of the Antichrist. We can see in God's sentence of judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar the foreshadowing of a day when all Gentile powers will be brought down. Nebuchadnezzar was shown a picture of that day when the great image of his first prophetic dream shattered under a blow from *"a stone...cut out without hands"* [Dan.2:34]. Why, then, since Gentile world rule will never be restored to the earth, did God allow Nebuchadnezzar

to return to his throne. Does this render the prophetic type incomplete and imperfect? By no means. Consider the following 3 points:

1ST We see in this restoration a testimony of God's grace, open to every individual. We thank God that although Nebuchadnezzar is used to foretell the rulership, rebellion, and fall of the utterly wicked man who will be Antichrist, yet he was not forced into a place where acceptance of God's grace was impossible. He could have rejected God, even in the face of the mighty works God did in his sight. Pharaoh did so (cf. Exo.7:13 and Rom.9:17—God hardened Pharaoh's heart only in the matter of letting Israel go; that alone was the thing about which Moses dealt with him. Never is it said that God hardened Pharaoh so that he could not accept His grace in matters eternal). God knows who will or will not be saved, but none is shut out of salvation by the circumstances of time, events, or earthly place. He who "*is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" [2Pe.3:9] will not allow that to be so. All who perish, including the Antichrist to come, perish because they reject Christ and not because they were shut out. It may be that God chose Nebuchadnezzar for this place, knowing that he would be saved, in order that men might see His absolute willingness to save every rebel.

2ND Is not God now visiting the Gentiles to "*to take out of them a people for his name*" [Act.15:14]? Will not many of those who are taken out become rulers together in Christ's throne [2Ti.2:12, Rev.5:8-10]? True, they cannot possibly rule as Gentiles, for such labels have no spiritual application to believers from this Church Age [Gal.3:28]. But neither, I believe, did Nebuchadnezzar rule as a Gentile after God humbled and won his heart. No more was he the most powerful brute among the wild Gentile nations; no longer did he try to maintain his dominance by the violence of a cruel nature; never again would he be the arrogant, heathen, Gentile tyrant, boasting himself in his own power. Nebuchadnezzar ruled thenceforth as God's chosen and obedient representative, even as some from this age will do one day. He went back to his throne a redeemed man.

3RD The Gentiles who will be on the earth when the Times of the Gentiles have ended will not occupy the place of an oppressed, humiliated people. They will be better off than before. "*Now if the fall of them (the Jews) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness*" [Rom.11:12]. We see this also in Nebuchadnezzar, who said, "*excellent majesty was added unto me*" [Dan.4:36]. His stature as ruler actually increased after God humbled him. Paul believed, as the Spirit showed it to him, that the Gentiles will rise higher under the preeminence of the Jews than while they themselves rule. I once left a job as a supervisor in a small furniture company to take a much lower position with a much larger company engaged in a completely different line of business. The lesser job with the larger company paid more than the "better" job with the smaller company. The Gentile nations will not lose when God appoints them a lesser place; they will undoubtedly have excellence added to them for their new submission to Christ.

Nebuchadnezzar had the heart of a true subject of the Great King. He closed this, his last statement in the Divine Record, with words to convict and persuade men whose hearts were exalted, as his once had been.

"Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." [Dan.4:37]

He praised God as "*the King of heaven*," and warned that "*those who walk in pride He is able to abase*." He spoke from painful experience. Not that he regretted the experience, for we know by his words that he had also experienced a genuine change in heart and outlook. His praise toward God bears witness of the reality of his conversion. Nevertheless, he knew that in the matter of acknowledging His Lordship, it is not a question of **if**, but of **when**. Read the testimony of Scripture:

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." [Rom.14:11]

"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." [Phi.2:11]

Those who do not bow willingly now will fall powerless in the day of judgment. How good to learn with Nebuchadnezzar the reality of God's authority over the kingdom of men.

DANIEL 5

DANIEL 5: 1-4

In **Daniel 5** we see once more that as there are prophetic dreams and visions, so there are prophetic lives and events. Of course, it may be that while the events of this chapter were taking place Daniel knew as little as Belshazzar about their long-term meaning. Nevertheless, through Babylon of old, God was showing a picture of the future, of "*Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*" [Rev.17:5]. God did not hide the connection between the two; He gave the name in Revelation, that we might see clearly His purpose in giving these glimpses of the ancient empire. The parallel images between Daniel 5 and the great harlot of Revelation are so striking as to be unmistakable to the spiritually minded.

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for SHE SAITH IN HER HEART, I SIT A QUEEN, AND AM NO WIDOW, AND SHALL SEE NO SORROW. THEREFORE SHALL HER PLAGUES COME IN ONE DAY, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." [Rev.18:7-8]

The confidence of the great harlot (who pictures corrupt and unanointed religion) will be so overblown that to those involved with her it will be inconceivable that trouble could ever come. The signs of impending destruction will seem as nothing to those who are besotted with her luxurious, tainted greatness. Yet her pride and confidence will be as false, empty, and

useless as was Nebuchadnezzar's; it will be the reason for the swift judgment that will come.

That **pride** is foreshadowed in Belshazzar's Babylon. The battle-hardened army of Darius was already encamped in a siege around the walls of the city. Babylon had thrown her best troops against that war machine and they had crumpled uselessly, scarcely slowing its march. Now she was isolated, her empire finished in all but name, and yet Belshazzar threw a grand party, inviting a thousand of the princes and mighty ones who were shut up in the cage of Babylon with him! It was not just a feast, but a drunken revel, designed to show that nothing, nothing at all could alter the glorious course of mighty Babylon.

There were reasons for this **pride**. Preparations had been made long before to ensure the survival of the city and its rulers in the event of a powerful enemy's laying a siege. The walls, which were surrounded by a moat, were so thick that several chariots could be driven abreast along the tops of the walls. Inasmuch as no battering ram could have cracked them, it must have seemed impossible that the defenses could ever be breached. An abundant supply of water, and a means of sanitation, was provided by the river Euphrates which flowed through Babylon, passing massive water gates as it entered and left the city. This seemed to give safety from thirst, as well as from the epidemics that plagued besieged cities as filth and garbage built up within their walls. Apparently, enough food supplies were laid in store within the walls that the city leaders had no qualms about squandering some of it in a luxurious feast. Of course, the small people of the streets may have been in want (such is the spiritual case of people caught in false religion), but as long as they themselves had the means of satisfying their appetites, all must have seemed well to Babylon's leaders.

There was every natural reason for confidence on Belshazzar's part, even as there will be reason for assurance on the part of the great harlot when she takes her full place of world prominence. But as Nebuchadnezzar found out, and as Belshazzar would soon discover, *"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain"* [Psa.127:1]. Apart from the blessing and help of God, there is no cause for confidence nor any hope of security. As Babylon soon fell before her enemies, scarcely offering the slightest struggle, so shall the religious harlot, the mother of harlots, be cast down by the Word of God: *"For when they shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape"* [1Th.5:3]. Those who hope to avoid the result of their spiritual harlotry hope in vain.

On the night of his downfall, Belshazzar ordered his servants to bring *"the golden and silver vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem,"* so that he, *"his princes, his wives, and his concubines"* could drink from them [Dan.5:3]. Those vessels had been dedicated to the Lord, and were set apart for exclusive use in the service of God in the temple. Most of them had undoubtedly been sprinkled with blood, the mark of their sanctification [Heb.9:21-22]. Because they had been taken by Babylon only after a protracted siege of Jerusalem (lasting a year and a half) it may be that Belshazzar brought them forth to show the scorn which he had for the siege which was threatening his own city. Foolish man, not to see that the God Who had judged Jerusalem could also judge

Babylon! What he had meant to be a testimony of his strength became a witness against his pride.

“Despise thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” [Rom.2:4]

Belshazzar’s thinking must have been of that sort. He wanted nothing to do with repentance and righteousness in time of peace or in time of trouble. He and his fathers had worshipped Nebo and Bel, and had prospered. Now that trouble had come, he believed that the solution was to serve his idols even more. The use to which Belshazzar put the golden vessels from the temple was idolatry: *“They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone”* [Dan.5:4]. Men often give credit to their own wickedness and evil deeds for the natural good which they enjoy. They do not credit the fact that their continued existence and prosperity has been due a great deal more to the patient longsuffering of a sovereign Jehovah, than to their sinful actions.

Compare this worshipping of the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone with Revelation 18:12:

“The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron and marble.”

This will be the lament of earth’s merchants, telling of the things that a fallen Babylon can no longer buy from them. Do you see the similarity between the lists of gods and list of merchandise? Colossians 3:5 speaks of *“covetousness which is idolatry.”* Such lusting after the things of the world is spiritual fornication and abomination—the worship of false gods. “But,” you may say, “Men do not bow down to such things as merchandise.” Worship, idolatrous or pure, is the giving of the heart, life, and strength—not merely the carrying out of certain forms in certain places and at certain times.

In her desire to glorify herself and live luxuriously, false religion has become a source of huge profits to commerce [Rev.18:7]. She must have the best of the best. How much more will this be true when she rides high, sitting on the back of the beast which is to come? And, when judgment threatens, her worship of merchandise and wealth will only be redoubled. By this (so she supposes) she will gain greatness, by this she will seek to remain great.

In Revelation 17:4 we read this description: *“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.”* **Gold** speaks of the attributes of God. What will such a cup be doing in the hand of the harlot, being put to such a use? It seems to speak of her taking to herself certain things which are the exclusive right and possession of God and using those things for purposes which are debased and spiritually vile.

A key identifier of false religion, then, is the taking of things which God has set apart for Himself and using them as a means to get gain to pay the merchandisers. We speak not of the scripturally taught giving of God’s people, but of the conscious and willful commercialism which even now dominates most of Christendom. Stay clear of those who put a price on so-called spirituality, who use the tools of worship as machinery to obtain money. Having

given themselves and their strength to covetous idolatry, such will stop at nothing in the service of their false gods. They will not hesitate to use the sweetest and most sacred things of God for their own, selfish ends. The implements which God has chosen for His worship are many: Prayer, preaching, music, etc. But the list always leads to the ends with the most precious vessels which God has sanctified for His use: Mankind. Revelation 18:5 finishes the list of Babylon's merchandise with the most costly commodity in which men can traffic, "*the souls of men.*"

The harlot is a flatterer, seeking to make her hearers feel good about themselves and her. According to Proverbs 5:3, "*her mouth is smoother than oil.*" Oil speaks of the Holy Spirit, Who, in kindness and love, will sometimes speak rough, plain words when we err. Loving only gain, the harlot would not do this kind of good, for she will not risk the loss of her sources of gain. No matter how comely and gorgeous the mother of harlots and her many daughters may seem, no matter how much she may offer that seems soothing or pleasurable, she is false and murderous at heart. Read of the thing that intoxicates the mother, and know that all her daughters (she has many of them) are like her:

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." [Rev.17:6a]

Any good which such systems seem to do for people, any gentle promise they give—these are merely their means of deceiving men.

"Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." [Pro.1:17]

Conybeare translated the beginning of Colossians 2:8 as follows:

"Beware lest there be any man who leads you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

How may we avoid or escape from the net of the harlot and her ministers? Only by knowing the truth of God's Word. Proverbs 2:16-19 tells the value of knowing the Word of God and one of the purposes for which it was given:

"To deliver thee from the strange woman, even the stranger which flattereth with her words; which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life."

May we learn to know that Word!

DANIEL 5:5-31

The time had come for God to exercise judgment against Babylon for her excesses. This judgment had long been prophesied; but because the longsuffering of the Lord had not rushed to destroy the sinners, and, because of the careless forgetfulness of the Babylonians regarding the power and Word of the Lord, the warnings He graciously gave were ignored. Now there was to be time no longer.

"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." [Dan.5:5-6]

In the midst of the king's revelry, at the height of the mockery he made of Jehovah, "*the part of the hand that wrote*" appeared in Belshazzar's palace and wrote upon the wall. It is said of the king, so bold and loud in his praise of false gods, so brave in his use of God's vessels for idolatry, that "*his knees smote one against another*." Thus it always is. Those who make themselves mighty in rebellion against God are finally revealed as weak. Do not be seduced or deceived by the apparent strength of Babylon the Great; when the time of judgment arrives, there will be no power to resist God's purpose. It does not take the hand of open judgment and power to accomplish this, but only the part of the hand that writes, only God's Word.

Daniel had become a stranger in the palace where Nebuchadnezzar had raised him to such a high degree. Many years before, Daniel had separated himself from the Babylonian spirit of luxurious idolatry while at the magician's school. With the passing of saved Nebuchadnezzar, the old heathen spirit of the empire seems to have reasserted itself. Not willing to be partaker of Babylon's religious superstition and carnal abuses, Daniel must have found himself outside the favored circle. When people descend into spiritual littleness, they are unwilling to find place for the spiritually great, such as Daniel. Some today question sound doctrine, saying that if it was true and good it would surely obtain a better hearing. Let them read 2 Timothy 4:3a: "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.*"

In his terror, Belshazzar called for the educated royal experts in superstition, the **wise** men. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, who had ruled with authority and power, the weak Belshazzar sought to purchase an easing of his fear—he offered the place of "*third ruler in the kingdom*" to the one who interpreted the writing.

- Although Nebuchadnezzar is called his father in **Daniel 5:11, 18**, Belshazzar was actually Nebuchadnezzar's grandson; this is not an error, but is in accord with ordinary, Scripture usage. Belshazzar ruled as coregent with his father, as the second ruler in the kingdom; thus, the place of third ruler was the highest reward he could give.

How truly Babylonian was this offer. The mother of harlots is, above all other things, a merchant with whom nothing is sacred. She is one who believes in a monetary price being placed upon everything. Babylon, with all her rulers and servants, knows nothing at all of receiving freely by grace or of a God whose knowledge and blessings cannot be bought [cf. Act.8:9-23].

If Daniel had become something of a stranger to the corridors of Babylonian power, he was not entirely forgotten. When all the wise fools of Babylon failed in trying to interpret what the hand of the Lord wrote, the queen came to the banquet house. She reminded Belshazzar that there was a man inside Babylon's walls in whom was found "*an excellent spirit*," one who had understanding, and who would certainly show the interpretation of the writing. This man, of course, was Daniel [Dan.5:10-12].

We have seen that Daniel is a representative of godly Jews living under a Gentile system of world rule. Make note of the fact that, when the time comes for God to judge Babylon, the great harlot and false church which has grown up under the hand of the Gentiles, it will be Jews who lift holy voices to proclaim God's judgment upon her and upon those who consort with her (read Rev.11).

In the Babylonian system, where it is supposed that all men can be turned from the truth for a price, it is only **logical** that men will likewise speak truth only for an appropriate fee. It is said that when an attempt was made to bribe Martin Luther into laying aside truth, the man who made the attempt was utterly amazed because Luther did not love money. Daniel was not of Babylon and he loved money no more than Luther.

"Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation." [Dan.5:17]

Daniel was always God's messenger, never a worldly courier to be flattered and bought by gold or power. Look at the Scriptures; look at religion; is truth told most clearly where the messenger cares nothing for gain or where the gospel (or something called "gospel") is merchandised?

In John 10:12-13, Jesus described the character of the religious hireling, telling how such an one cares nothing for the Lord's flock, and flees when trouble or danger threatens. Because self-interest is the religious hireling's only motive, the welfare of others means less than nothing.

I was told the story of a denominational hireling who was offered the pulpit of a larger congregation, with a larger salary attached. He called together the board of the congregation where he was supposedly serving, and said that although he hated to leave, he would go if they did not match the offer he had been given. They matched it, and he stayed.

Can you imagine having to depend on such a man for your spiritual needs? And yet many do so, not giving it a second thought.

Of course, a part of Daniel's lack of interest in the reward offered to him was pure practicality. What Belshazzar was offering had no value at all. The kingdom of Babylon was about to fall. The head of gold was about to pass down to the breast and arms of silver. How little understanding men of Babylonian religion display when they view the offices and riches of this world as prizes worth possessing. Satan sought to corrupt the incorruptible Son of God by such means, offering to Him the kingdoms of the earth; of course, Satan failed in his effort that day.

Who was it that caused Lot to desire to be a judge in the gate of Sodom? Was it God? Can it be (as some proclaim) that God is the one who causes men of religion to seek power through politics in our day? Is it possible that He who sent His Spirit and endued men with power from on high would now induce His people to seek after earthly power? No! He turns our eyes to the things which last, if we let Him do so; it is another who turns the hearts of men to things which simply will not last. True, God had put Daniel in a place of government, but Daniel never sought such a place on his own. Indeed, humanly speaking, Daniel was in Babylon against his will. (Read Mat.24:37-39.) Jesus did not

condemn normal, clean, human activities. He pointed out the foolishness of placing first value on temporal affairs when judgment is about to fall.

Before Daniel could read and interpret the sentence God had inscribed against Belshazzar and Babylon, it was necessary for him to give the righteous cause of God's judgment. He presented a message of rebuke before the king which proved that Belshazzar had wasted a lifetime of spiritual opportunity. This declaration contains a truth which all men, including saved people, would do well to learn.

"And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified."
[Dan.5:22-23]

The substance of what Daniel told the king was that men are responsible, not only to profit from God's direct dealings with themselves, but also to learn from the spiritual experience of others. Daniel listed each major step in the progress of Nebuchadnezzar:

- God gave him a throne and great power; he lifted up his heart in pride;
- God sent judgment upon him; he accepted the authority of the most high God.

The thrust which exposed the utter carelessness of Belshazzar in spiritual matters was this, "*And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this.*" Belshazzar had not truly forgotten Daniel, his teaching, and his God, but chose to ignore them.

I have counted 19 cases in Kings and Chronicles, where kings of Judah and Israel were measured (generally unfavorably) by the life of King David; they were responsible for learning from his godly life. Martin Luther, finding that all his own works left him a sinner, learned of a by-faith righteousness from the writings of Paul, to whom the Lord had revealed it directly. On one level, the Scripture is simply a record of the experiences others have had with God, recorded for our learning. Luther accepted his responsibility before God and learned what had been shown to others. Looking forward, we know that God will hold **mystery, Babylon the great** accountable for ignoring truth and righteousness, as they have been revealed to the followers of real godliness in The Church Age. Belshazzar was responsible for his spiritual ignorance because he had refused to learn the lessons of Nebuchadnezzar, his father.

Again, we are responsible to learn from the dealings of God with others, whether those dealings are recorded in Scripture or are played out in the everyday surroundings of family and acquaintance. This eliminates an excuse put forward by sinner and saint: "But the Lord never told me thus and such." Since God has told others, we are expected to make spiritual choices on that basis. This type of wisdom is exercised in matters of business, science, politics, warfare, etc. Those who engage in them without benefitting from what others have learned must generally pay the price of failure. Uzzah died

because he did not learn what God commanded Moses [Num.4:15, 2Sa.6:6-7]. Truth ignored is still truth revealed.

After this lesson, the writing and its interpretation can only be seen as right and just. "Numbered, weighed, divided."

"And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." [Dan.5:25-28]

Daniel's interpretation is self-explanatory and needs no comment here. The tragedy is not that the seat of an empire fell, but that a man rejected truth, was weighed against the glory of God [Rom.3:23], and had to be judged in righteousness for his sins. As for the kingdom, it was truly numbered in its time of existence; that same night, the city fell to the army of Darius (a general fighting under Cyrus).

It is worth noting, that Daniel did accept the things which Belshazzar had offered. While he knew better than anyone else on that night just how valueless these things were in the light of the coming judgment, he knew also that there was no harm in them of themselves. It is not the possessions and positions that earth may offer which destroy men spiritually, but their own foolish ambitions.

DANIEL 6

DANIEL 6:1-9

Remember that the first 6 chapters of Daniel are more than just a historical record. They are also prophetic pictures, which show by living parallel what Jews living in a Gentile dominated world may expect. Inasmuch as the picture is one of godly Jews, not of Church Age believers (among whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile), and since many of the prophecies of Daniel remain unfulfilled, we see this prophetic parallelism as referring to those Jews who will believe after The Church Age, but before the Millennial Kingdom of Christ is fully established on the earth.

Before us is the last of these **lived-out** prophecies from Daniel's life. It is especially important, then, that deliverance from the lion's mouth is depicted here. Peter wrote, *"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* [1Pe.5:8]. This was written at a time of great persecution near the beginning of this Church Age. Peter's real calling was to the Jews, not to the Gentiles, although God did use him to first introduce the gospel to the Gentiles [Gal.2:7-9, Act.10]. By this we conclude that Peter's letters will have great application to godly Israel during the time of persecution known as the Great Tribulation (*"Jacob's trouble"* [Jer.30:7]. Today, although we certainly face warfare, we deal far more with *"the wiles of the devil"* [Eph.6:11] and with those who *"lie in wait to deceive"* [Eph.4:14] than we do with the raging, roaring, open violence of the lion. It is from this **violence of the lion** that believing Israelites will need deliverance.

While we consider the deliverance given to Daniel, bear in mind that the miraculous manner in which he was spared from death is not the only way God delivers from that old lion, Satan. Paul wrote, probably within months or weeks of his execution under the hand of Rome, *"I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom"* [2Ti.4:17-18]. Even as he wrote, he knew that his earthly course was finished. His natural, physical deliverance from **the lion** was temporary; his preservation was not to be physical, being kept alive in the body to the coming of the Lord. He will, we know, be raised in a glorified body to take his place in the Heavenly Kingdom (as contrasted to the Earthly Kingdom which saved Israel will enjoy), but his real deliverance from the mouth of the lion is in the fact that **Satan** has no power to harm the faith or the spirit of the person who trusts in God. God has shut the lion's mouth. This is the true deliverance in any age.

Let us begin considering the details of Daniel 6 by asking why Daniel found himself in trouble. In answering this, we shall see what soon will bring persecution from the Antichrist upon a body of faithful Jews. Two words will answer: **jealousy**, and **rebellion**. Daniel had been chosen by Darius to serve as the first of all the princes of the realm. The others concealed their anger and resentment from the king (although Daniel undoubtedly was aware of it), but they wanted his place for themselves and despised the judgment of the king which did not give it to them. The reason for Darius' preferring Daniel over the others was that *"an excellent spirit was in him"* [Dan.6:3]. This excellent spirit was the life of Christ, and most especially the Holy Spirit of God. That Darius would have realized this is unlikely, but he observed an excellence in Daniel's character, and determined to give him the place for which he was qualified. It was his purpose that Daniel would have full rulership over all Babylon's realm. The servants of Satan disliked having the godly, humble Daniel at their head, even as Satan dislikes having God at his [Isa.14:13-14, Eze.28:2-3].

Once Israel begins partaking of God's **excellent spirit**, He will show that He intends to give them first place in the earth.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." [Isa.2:2-3]

The things there foretold by Isaiah will not come to pass until after the Great Tribulation. But as the mighty, anointed ministry of the 2 witnesses unfolds [Rev.11:3-6], God's earthly purpose toward Israel will become apparent to the world. The Antichrist and his cohorts will hate the Jews because power is to be taken from them and bestowed upon Jews.

It may be that Daniel's enemies also had **patriotic reasons** for their hatred. Daniel was the man who gave the announcement of the judgment upon Babylon. Further, he had never been quite like the rest of them. It would have been natural (although not reasonable or just) for charges of treachery to be pointed at Daniel by those Babylonians who despised his righteousness, his wisdom, and his God.

What accusations will be cast up concerning Israel when 2 Jewish prophets begin to declare the wrath of God against rebellious Gentile governments? The man of sin will be gaining in power and popularity; he will be hailed as a savior of mankind, and as one who can solve the terrifying political, economic, and social problems of a frightened human race.

- Will the righteous declarations of God's faithful witnesses be kindly received when they contradict the lie which the masses of humanity will want so desperately to believe?
- When their warnings are backed up by death, drought, and plagues upon those who oppose them, what will be the world's reaction toward the nation of Israel?

Many seemingly reasonable excuses will then be given for violent hatred and open persecution of the Jews, but unholy jealousy and a rejection of God's purpose will be at its heart.

The Hebrew word which is translated occasion in **Daniel 6:4-5** would better be rendered "*pretext*." Those who sought to destroy Daniel had a problem. Daniel's faithfulness was such that they could find nothing which would support any charge against him. As Daniel yielded to the excellent spirit which was in him, even the ordinary business of his daily labors was above reproach; this is a testimony indeed to the power of God at work in a life. Still, those men who plotted against Daniel were professional politicians; they knew that in the matter of damaging a man's reputation, where there is a will, there is a way. If they could not juggle the books to make right seem wrong in natural things, they would do so in spiritual things.

"We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." [Dan.6:5]

Their way of setting the king against Daniel was to propose to the king a new and flattering temporary law:

"All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions." [Dan.6:7]

Such a law would seem to carry forward the purposes of a man who was establishing his authority over a conquered people. It would demonstrate that his rule was sufficient to meet every need of those who served and obeyed him.

To the natural mind, there might seem to be good in such a law. Do you remember how the Lord depicted king Nebuchadnezzar, in **Daniel 4:12**? He was shown as a tree: "*The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.*" God has arranged it so that a ruler who rightly carries out his ordained duties becomes the source of great natural good to those who are ruled. It is important, both from the natural and the spiritual standpoints, for men to recognize this fact. Doing so will lead them to submit to those in authority, and to enjoy greater quietness and prosperity thereby.

The problem was that the decree went far beyond pointing out the power and the benefit of Darius' rule; it interfered with men's submissive worship of the Great Ruler and Supplier of all needs. Mankind always seems to go too far in pointing out whatever shreds of usefulness and earthly goodness they find in themselves. Darius was deceived by his own pride.

Describing what he had seen in a vision concerning the false prophet who will act in behalf of the Antichrist, John said, *"And he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed"* [Rev.13:15]. In Revelation 7, we see 144,000 Jews sealed. They, like Daniel will be commanded to offer their prayers to a man. They will refuse and be delivered out the den of [the lion](#). What is Satan's den? The world. In Revelation 14, we see the 144,000 gone from earth and standing upon the heavenly mount [cf. Heb.12:22]. Having been delivered from the lion's mouth, they will be highly exalted by the King Who loved them and gave Himself for them. This is the hope offered to the Jews through the narrative before us.

That not all Israel will have a part with the 144,000 is obvious. Some will not believe unto salvation soon enough. Even as not all believers today accept the seal of the infilling of the Holy Spirit [Eph.1:13], so also there will undoubtedly be saved Israelites then who will not immediately receive Him. No one is sealed who has not been filled. Canners do not seal vessels which are unfilled, nor does God do so. Those who do not receive the seal of the Holy Spirit within the first 3½ prophesied years will not have a place among the 144,000, any more than those who do not receive Christ during that period. Both the seal of the Spirit and consistency of life seem to be prerequisites for those who will escape [the lion's](#) den.

There is a lesson here for us. What opportunity is set before us in this Church Age! We may receive Jesus Christ as Savior, be filled with the Holy Spirit, live lives which are consistent with God's Word, and look forward to the joyous call, "Come up here". But what of those who waste their time of opportunity? Is God a respecter of persons? Will He make exceptions for us which He will not make for the Jews? Consider well, child of God, and may the most excellent Spirit of God speak to your heart.

DANIEL 6:10-28

Somewhat aside from the great, dispensational lessons of Daniel 6, it would seem we find a very personal picture of Daniel's spiritual commitment in a time of danger and challenge. From this picture we may all learn lessons for our individual lives. Yet taken in context, this personal picture is not utterly separate from the broader application of this 6th chapter as a picture of end-time events which will concern the renewed nation of Israel. Daniel's unswerving faithfulness becomes for us a picture of the godliness which will be necessary in that terrible time of persecution which will come upon the Jews.

The situation faced by Israelites who know the Lord in that day will be much the same as that faced by Daniel. Paul speaks of *"that man of sin...the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"* [2Th.2:3-4]. If that wicked man exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped,

he will clearly forbid the worship of any other, and will viciously punish those who engage in true prayer and worship toward Jehovah (see Rev.13:15]. Many will have to choose between faithfulness and death.

Seen in that light, it becomes clearer why Daniel did not simply leave off praying for a time, and why he did not do his praying in a more secret or private manner. The spiritual issues were just too great. Still, it is worth dealing with that issue in some detail.

- Why could not Daniel have stopped praying for 30 days?
- Why should not Israel cease to pray at all in order to avoid the wrath of Antichrist?
- Or, why should we not leave off praying when it is not convenient for us?

*"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD." [Phi.4:6]*

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." [Jam.4:17]

When Satan tried to talk Jesus into worshipping him, Jesus replied, *"For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"* [Luk.4:8]. Most people focus only on the last part of that Scripture, *"him only,"* but notice the first half, *"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God."* It is not merely avoidance of that which is bad which satisfies God, but active participation in that which is good. Many people seem to feel that as long as they do not become active partakers in false religion or unsound doctrine, it matters little whether they take time to serve God in pure and undefiled religion. Theirs is an incomplete, immature understanding of what God wants from us. The law constructed by Daniel's enemies and signed by Darius was a bad law, one which would have forced sin upon anyone who complied with it in any way whatsoever. *"Let your requests be made known,"* Daniel refused to obey man rather than God.

- Why continue to offer prayer and thanksgiving openly instead of hiding his prayers?

Surely Jesus said, *"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly"* [Mat.6:6].

It is wise in studying Scripture to let God show the whole picture of His will, and not to isolate Scripture from Scripture. For example, Paul told the Romans: *"Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God"* [Rom.14:22]. This very emphatically applies to the limited topic which was under discussion in that passage; it is not a blanket injunction against expressing your faith to others and encouraging them to partake in it. He also said, *"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted to them to speak"* [1Co.14:34]. Yet in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, he gave instructions which make it clear that he expected women to pray and prophesy publicly. The portion in 1 Corinthians 14 does not force women into a passive, inactive role, but deals with a particular point of order. Christ's instructions to pray in secret dealt with Pharisees and others who wanted praise of men for

their prayers; He never intended to say that all public prayer is wrong. He prayed publicly when the occasion called for it.

The occasion of Daniel's prayer called for a bold, open testimony, not for a fearful hiding of his devotion to the Lord. What had formerly been a matter of private communion with God had become an issue of public law. It can be as false to go to the closet for fear of man as it is to pray on a street corner for the praise of man. Either way, prayer toward God becomes secondary to approval from man. Daniel was not lacking in the commitment necessary to put God first, so he not only prayed, but also let it be known that he prayed.

Once it became clear to Darius that Daniel, in whom the excellent Spirit of God dwelt, was to be the victim of his hasty decree, he was displeased with himself, and tried to free Daniel, but failed; the law of the Medes and Persians was that no decree or statute which the king established could be changed.

"Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed." [Dan.6:14-15]

How often men learn too late that the consequences of their foolish, faithless, rebellious deeds cannot be changed by any effort on their part. There will doubtless be some who will lend their approval to the evil course of The Beast, not fully realizing where that course will lead. According to Matthew 25:31-40 some will show kindness to the Jews, doing all they can to preserve their lives; and these will have their actions duly rewarded when Christ comes in glory. Yet all they do will be insufficient to stop the man of sin once his power has been established.

How wonderful, then, that God has not the limitations of man. Darius ran to the den of lions early in the morning after Daniel had been thrown to the lions. He had passed a sleepless night, having eaten nothing, trembling for Daniel's safety and because of his own trespass against the living God. With a pain-filled voice, he called out,

"Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" [Dan.6:20b]

That is the question to be settled in every age, in every life where Satan has gained an apparently unbreakable power: Is God able to do what man cannot do, to deliver and protect His servants? Darius wanted it to be so. Seemingly a few (comparatively speaking) will hope that the God of Israel will be able to deliver them. God allows situations like this to develop so that the testimony of His power can be manifest. God closed the lions' mouths, and Daniel was delivered, even as a godly Israel shall be.

What of the persecutors of righteous Daniel? They and all who agreed with them in their plot were cast down in the place where they had thought to see Daniel's death. God opened the lions' mouths, and the destruction they had planned for a godly man became their own end.

"And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and THE LIONS HAD THE MASTERY OF THEM, AND BRAKE ALL THEIR BONES IN PIECES OR EVER THEY CAME AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DEN." [Dan.6:24]

"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" [Rom.12:29] (see also Deu.32:35, Heb.10:30-31). Do not despise vengeance for it is a part of the course which God will take. Human vengeance is corrupt and unjust, but not the vengeance of the LORD. To a troubled and somewhat confused group of Church-Age believers, Paul wrote,

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God." [2Th.1:6-8]

At the end of the time of Jacob's Trouble, the Lord Jesus Christ will make war upon The Beast, who will have poised himself for the destruction of Israel and of all godliness. The outcome? John wrote what he saw in a vision (see also Rev.20:1-3),

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse (Jesus Christ), which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." [Rev.19:20-21]

Surely *"in righteousness he doth judge and make war"* [Rev.19:11]. The armies which assemble to destroy the righteous nation shall themselves be destroyed by the Word of the Lord.

Why is the vengeance of the Lord good? Beyond the fact that His judgments are just in a way that ours can never be, His vengeance goes beyond mere revenge and becomes the instrument by which men are drawn into the righteousness of His grace. (Read the decree of Darius in Dan.6:25-47.) The destruction of Daniel's enemies became the means to introduce God's authority and power to those who otherwise would never have heard. In the day to come, the great judgment of The Beast's evil kingdom will usher in the Millennium, the glorious and absolute Kingdom of Christ, during which He will rule over all the peoples of the earth.

In 2 Kings 10:15-28, we read how Jehu met Jehonadab and asked him if his heart was right. Jehonadab replied, *"It is."* Jehu's response was, *"Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord."* What Jehonadab saw and took part in as he rode in the chariot of Jehu, was the total destruction of the house of Ahab and of all the worshippers of Baal. If the heart of the believer is right, as the heart of the Lord is right, there can be no hesitation in joining Him in His chariot of judgment. The day of open judgment is absolutely not for this hour in which I write, although we believe it will not be long in coming. Nevertheless, the question, *"Is your heart right?"* (as pertaining to our agreement with His righteous judgments) is most definitely to be answered by us now.

We thank God for every manifestation of His power, for all that He does is good and works good. Daniel prospered after these things, Israel will prosper when the hosts of Antichrist are destroyed, and thank God, we shall see prosperity never before seen when at last all things are subdued unto Christ.

DANIEL 7

DANIEL 7:1-5

Although the dream Daniel described here was a rather mysterious collection of unusual imagery, the general interpretation of it is not difficult by any means. As is always the case, the Lord Himself provides the key, not through the speculations of men, but by means of His own Word.

*"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth."
[Dan.7:17]*

As for the identity of the 4 kingdoms (empires) depicted here, history itself has interpreted the vision for us, they are...

- the Babylonian Empire (beginning with Nebuchadnezzar),
- the Medo-Persian Empire (a coalition of the Medes and Persians),
- the Grecian Empire (as established by Alexander the Great), and
- the Roman Empire.

There is nothing imaginative in this interpretation; it is only a comparison of history's fulfillment of Scripture to the Scripture's own explanation of itself.

Yet while it is good that we not exercise our human imagination while examining prophecy, we still desire to look beyond that first level of interpretation. Our desire is to know the eternal things of God, not just those things which apply to the course of earthly, human affairs.

Let us begin our considerations of Daniel 7, then, with this simple thought: [WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO SEE HERE, NOT JUST HUMAN EVENTS, BUT HUMAN EVENTS FROM THE DIVINE VIEWPOINT](#). Through the narrow window of this prophecy, we may see, in some ways, as God sees, and He sees all.

The story is told of an earthquake which happened many years ago in Europe:

In a certain, small village where most of the buildings had been destroyed, an old woman sat quietly beside the doorway of the ruin which had been her home. Everyone else was moving about the village in confusion, some shouting, some weeping, some just dazedly following the movement of the crowd. Finally, someone stopped and spoke to the old woman. "Mother, why do you sit there so quietly? Aren't you afraid of another earthquake or grieved over the loss of your home?" "No," the old woman replied calmly, "I am glad that I serve a God who has the power to shake the earth."

In like fashion, realizing that God foreknows and controls the upheavals and changes in human history, we need not be distressed by them. Instead, we can be like the old woman, and rejoice that we serve a God who has the power and wisdom to both foretell these things and bring them into subjection to His will. Through Isaiah the Lord said, *"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure"* [Isa.46:9-10] (read also Isa.42:9, Isa.45:21, Isa.48:3-7). He is in charge; He wants us to know that fact with full assurance, and to glorify Him for it.

But, to see a further aspect of God's viewpoint, notice the difference in wording between Daniel 7:3 and 17:

❶ *"And **FOUR GREAT BEASTS CAME UP FROM THE SEA**, diverse one from another."* [Dan.7:3].

❷ *"These **GREAT BEASTS**, which are four, **ARE FOUR KINGS, WHICH SHALL ARISE OUT OF THE EARTH**."* [Dan.7:17]

This is by no means a contradiction.

- The first is from Daniel's description of his dream-vision, giving exact details of the symbolic spiritual imagery which God had unfolded to his mind as he slept.
- The second is a part of God's interpretation of the dream and its symbols; it comments on and explains the hidden meaning of what Daniel had seen.

In this little portion of Scripture, we discover a symbolic picture which runs throughout Scripture prophecy: the sea. Let us consider and remember how God uses it.

Inasmuch as Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture, as we accept the leading of God's Spirit, the following Scriptures are presented to explain the image of the sea in prophecy.

"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." [Isa.57:20-21]

"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." [Rev.17:15]

Now, what does the **sea** represent? It represents the restless, turbulent, storm-tossed mass of humanity...not the godly, nor Israel, but the Gentile nations. As the winds of spiritual warfare sweep to and fro across the face of the earth, striving about the will of God, the multitudes and nations are troubled. They do not perceive the hand of God behind it all, limiting Satan's power to hurt and destroy. We who know Jesus need not be carried about by every wind of doctrine, every deceitful bit of news or philosophy which Satan uses to move and unsettle men. But, oh, the lost ones! Such are helpless, having no more power to stand firm or to keep from tossing up more mire and dirt than the sea does when it is driven by the wind.

When the Lord gave Daniel the interpretation of his dream, He changed the word **sea** to **earth**. By this He showed Daniel that the great doings of man are earthly, not heavenly. God wants men to know that their hearts should not be fixed upon nor distressed by the course of human government. That this does not fit in with the current, popular “wisdom” of political activism among so-called evangelical Christians does not alter Scripture. (Read Col.3:1-4.) Nations and governments are the “*things on the earth*.”

What may we learn of the **4 particular systems shown in this prophecy**? If you desire to know more of the political history of these kingdoms, many books are available. We will stay as much as possible within the framework of Scripture and God’s spiritual view of things.

1. **BABYLON.**

*“The first was **LIKE A LION**, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.” [Dan.7:4]*

The **lion** is a level above other beasts of prey in its courage and dignity. As a figure of spiritual things, the lion may be either good or bad, but nearly always shows someone or something which is at the head of its own order.

- Peter spoke of Satan as a **roaring lion** [2Pe.5:8]; he seems to be the chief of a terrible company of wicked spiritual beings.
- The first of the living creatures of Revelation 4 has the **face of a lion** [Rev.4:7]; the 4 living ones (translated “*beasts*” in the King James Version) are glorified human beings, those who have reached the highest place available to men [Rev.5:8-10].
- Christ, who is before all things and who shall have preeminence in all things [Col.1:17-18] is called “*the **LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH***” [Rev.5:5].

In God’s view, the Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar was the high point of Gentile dominion. Again, God’s Word is the rule by which we measure; the fact that this probably would not fit in with the currently prevailing scholarly “wisdom” does not alter what He has said.

The eagle’s wings which “*were plucked*” might at first seem to have been something good. One of the mighty overcomers in Revelation 4 was like a flying eagle. This great bird mounts higher than any other. It rides the same winds which only trouble and toss others, and by those winds it ascends to heights it could never reach by its own effort. Yet there can be a bad side to climbing higher and higher. Why has the judgment of God been pronounced upon Lucifer that wicked one?

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven.” [Isa.14:13a]

“Because thine heart is lifted up.” [Eze.28:2a]

To move higher than the place which God has offered is sin, whether in angels or men. As we have already seen in **Daniel 4**, when Nebuchadnezzar’s heart was lifted high in pride, the Most High struck him

down; his wings were plucked to keep him from going where he had no right.

God graciously used that judgment to lift Nebuchadnezzar up from the earth. All of his other flights had been earthbound, for he had never risen from the earth; lions cannot fly, not even with the wings of an eagle. This lifting up was one of the spirit; more than ever before, he knew his own, earthy littleness and limitations, but now he saw Him Who rides on “*the heavens*” [Deu.33:26, Psa.68:4, Psa.68:33]. To this lion of a king was given a man’s heart. No judgment here! As great as the lion is, man is the one creature made in God’s own image. Nebuchadnezzar, for the first time in his life, became more than a beast, thinking thoughts of praise toward God and knowing the holiness which God has ordained for men.

2. NEXT WE SEE THE MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE.

“And behold another beast, a second, LIKE TO A BEAR, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.” [Dan.7:5]

The **bear** is never mentioned in a good or noble light. It is simply a mean, vicious creature with nothing in itself to make it admirable. David spoke of having to kill a bear which robbed his father’s flock [1Sa.17:34-37]. If translated to a spiritual figure, this does not present a pleasant image of the bear; he seems there to picture Satan as the thief who enters the Father’s flock only to kill and to destroy. Speaking generally, there were few noble or elevating qualities in the Medo-Persian Empire.

Note the words, “*and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh*” [Dan.7:5]. The 3 ribs in its mouth may speak of the 3 great segments of this Kingdom: Media, Persia, and Babylonia. It certainly speaks of the fact that the rulers of this Empire held its possessions by the exercise of a bloody, violent rulership. Men who did not know God in His fullness, who did not understand His ways of judgment, might have imagined they had just cause to rebel against such a government. No, even a great system such as this can do nothing except God allows it.

In fact, the bear is pictured in Scripture on a number of occasions as an instrument by which God’s judgment is meted out. He uses all things to His own glory. Speaking of a coming judgment upon idolatrous Israel, the Lord said, “*I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart*” [Hos.13:8a]. Warning that religious but unrepentant nation, He said,

“Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him.” [Amo.5:18-19a]

Read also 2 Kings 2:23-24. We saw in **Daniel 5** that God used the Medo-Persian army to bring judgment upon Babylon. What we have not yet seen is that He also used this Empire to restore a chastened Israel to their own land. Even His rough judgments work good for His people.

3. GRECO-MACEDONIAN EMPIRE

The 3rd Empire represented in **Daniel 7** is the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great.

"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a LEOPARD, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it." [Dan.7:6]

Alexander's Empire was very short lived, becoming divided almost immediately upon his death. It was an Empire built entirely on the personality of one man; it could not survive his passing. The history of this Empire is not given much place in the record of the Scripture, nor will we give it much place here. We will, however, take time to consider the nature of the leopard, for it has an application to the 4th beast.

Concerning the 4 wings of the **leopard**-like beast which Daniel saw, Alexander had 4 great generals whose skill in battle helped his armies to "fly" swiftly toward success. The "*wings of a fowl*" mentioned here are certainly not the "*eagle's wings*" of the 1st beast. Being further down the scale of Gentile rule, Alexander did not reach the heights to which Nebuchadnezzar attained. The 4 heads would seem to speak of the leadership of Alexander's generals when they divided the Empire after his death.

What is the foremost characteristic of the leopard as a beast of prey? "*Their horses also are swifter than the leopards*" [Hab.1:8]. That passage does not refer to Alexander's army, but it does refer to one of the most notable qualities of the leopard—it is **swift**. From the first battle, which he fought in Persian territory, to the final battle which won him the throne of an Empire, Alexander's war took only 3 years.

Then too, the leopard is also known for **lying in wait for his prey**. He takes up an ambush and awaits just the right time and opportunity. When he decides that the time has come to move, he does so with terrible swiftness. The Lord said to Hosea, "*as a leopard by the way will I observe them*" [Hos.13:7]. (He spoke concerning Himself as He held back His judgment until the proper time.)

Finally, the Lord uses the leopard as a figure of that which will not change its nature. The Lord said to the people of Judah, "*can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil*" [Jer.13:23]. Of course, the Lord can change the hearts of men, but it takes a great miracle, and cannot be accomplished by the human will. There were occasions of godliness and respect toward Jehovah in the history of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian Empires. Nebuchadnezzar and Darius are the great examples of this; the hearts of these men were moved by the reality of what was revealed to them by the power of God. Alexander only worsened as he grew more powerful, finally imagining that he himself was a god. The heirs to his divided Empire did not improve. Begun in pride, self-will, and hardness of heart, the leopard empire never changed.

4. ROMAN EMPIRE

The description of the 4th **beast** is quite sketchy here.

*"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a **FOURTH BEAST, DREADFUL AND TERRIBLE, AND STRONG EXCEEDINGLY**; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." [Dan.7:7]*

It is a depiction of the Roman Empire, which was the next great power to enter the world scene. In considering the prophecies of this and Daniel 8, remember 2 things concerning the Roman Empire:

1. No system of government has ever truly replaced it. No far-flung and powerful empire has ever arisen to succeed Rome in its place at the head of world government.
2. The power and influence of Rome have never been successfully and completely brought to an end. It has been weakened, its place in the world scheme has been uncertain at times, it has had to find different (religious) means to exercise its power, but Rome survives as a center of international power today.

Thus, this last **beast** is a mystery. It bespeaks a continuing system of power which will exist and exercise increasing power in the time of the end. It is the Roman Empire, but most particularly, it is the revived Roman Empire which has not yet appeared. This will be the system which is destroyed by Jesus Christ at His coming in power.

Before we look at the horns of **the beast**, let us consider its general character. To get a more detailed description we can go to Revelation 13:1-2:

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."

The dragon is, of course, Satan (see Rev.12:9, Rev.20:2). Quite clearly, John had a vision of the last of the 4 beasts which Daniel saw. The 2 descriptions match exactly, except that John was moved by the Spirit to give more detail.

This beast (empire) shows characteristics of each of those which preceded it; it will take the "best" of each, and will therefore be very wicked indeed. The one characteristic which brings true greatness is a singleness of heart toward God. This is true of kingdoms as well as individuals. Relying on human learning, methods, and experience is degrading, no matter how wise and successful in the short term. It is by following and combining the success patterns of those which preceded it that the 4th beast will gain power. These things will also cause its downfall before the righteous Christ.

Like the leopard, this government will seize power swiftly; no move will be made until the exact moment which promises the best chance for success.

It will be **entirely Satanic in its character**, and, like the leopard, will not change its spots. Remember, incidentally, that the leopard's spots are the things which contribute the most to the outward beauty and attractiveness of this murderous beast. The spots, speaking of the unchanging evil of this Empire, will not be the thing which reveals its character; the leopard's spots actually help conceal it until it is ready to destroy.

Like the bear, this beast will have power both to seize and to hold what it desires. The **claws** of a bear are awful weapons; he can easily disembowel his prey with one deliberate move. The **strength** of a bear is such that he can break the neck of another animal with a single blow. Most terrible of all, the bear's paws can hold in a mighty embrace while the bear begins to devour its still-living victim in its own slow, deliberate manner. According to Daniel 7:19, his **nails are to be of brass**. However hard it may be for some to accept, much less understand, God will use this terrible governmental creature to bring judgment upon this rebellious, ungodly world.

Like the lion, this beast will be able to **crush** the resistance out of those whom it seizes in its mouth. The lion is said to kill by suffocation more than by any other means. He grips his prey by the neck, shaking his head and tightening his grip until all struggling ceases. If the victim is fortunate, the bite will penetrate the spinal cord and kill quickly; if not, the windpipe is crushed and death comes in an agonized, impossible struggle to draw in one last breath of air. Daniel 7:7, 19 tell us that his **teeth are of iron**. This remorseless crushing of all resistance will be through the unsoftened display of the most merciless kind of raw, brutal, governmental power.

Daniel saw this kingdom as “*dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly*”, devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping the residue into uselessness [Dan.7:7]. What this beast cannot consume and hold in its awful sway, it will utterly destroy, seemingly determined that none other shall possess what it has not the capacity to take in itself. What will be the cause for this senseless destruction? “*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time*” [Rev.12:12]. When our defeated foe is at last forced into seeing that his hope of victory over The Almighty has been vain, his rage will extend to the bounds of his power.

Daniel 7:8 tells us that the horns of the last beast are kings who shall arise:

“I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

“*Another little horn*” will arise, overthrowing 3 of the kings outright, and seeming to dominate the others by the “*great things*” which he speaks. Revelation 17:11 tells of him, saying, “*The beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*” That is, the little horn which arises after the 10, overthrowing 3 of them, will actually be one of the 7 who are not overthrown.

“*The beast that was, and is not*”; what does that mean? “*And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded unto death; and his deadly wound was healed*” [Rev.13:3]; “*the beast that*

ascendeth out of the bottomless pit" [Rev.11:7]. This king will literally die, and very apparently will enter the place of the wicked dead, here called "*the bottomless pit*." Then, by Divine Permission and by Satanic miracle, he will return to life. Thus he will be one of the 7, will die, and will then regain his former power—and more. He is counted twice, for he will ascend to power twice.

What are the "*great things*" which this "*little horn*" will speak? "*And he shall speak great words against the most High*" [Dan.7:25a]. In Revelation 13:1 we see "*upon his heads (is) the name of blasphemy*." He will speak blasphemy so powerfully, with such satanic authority, and with such a convincing manifestation of power, that the remaining kings will not resist him. As all the world follows after this "resurrected" king, he will become the embodiment of the beast, or the Empire; as it was with Alexander, the power of the Empire will be invested in his person. He will be **the beast**. He will proclaim himself to be God (blasphemy indeed), and all the unsaved inhabitants of the earth will believe him. (Read again 2Th.2:8-11.) Those who will refuse to believe the truth and to accept Jesus Christ God's Son will believe the lie and accept the Antichrist.

Were it not that we must fully know these things in order to give full glory to our conquering Lord; we might prefer to pass them over in favor of the things which immediately follow. If you would like to end your reading with a shout (read Phi.1:20 as a closing Scripture). Thank God, we do indeed look for the Christ, and not for the Antichrist.

DANIEL 7:9-28

The course the Antichrist will take regarding Israel is laid before us here:

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them."
[Dan.7:21]

"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." [Dan.7:25]

This evil ruler will hunger to possess the whole world, and will destroy everywhere he goes, but godly Israel will be the special object of his wrath.

Daniel wrote that Israel was the only group of people who could be called "*the saints*" [Dan.7:22, 25, 27]. When the prophecy is fulfilled, the body of "*saints*" (people who have been sanctified to God through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, which we know as The Church), will already be gone. Thus, the saints with whom the wicked king will make war will be an Israelitish group (see Rev.11:7, Rev.12:17).

At a time when all the world wonders after and worships **the beast**, Israel alone will deny that he is a god. They, or some of them at least, will have awakened to the true God and to their Divine Messiah, Jesus Christ. It will not be for any great wisdom or goodness in themselves that they will stand against Antichrist. Jesus said that the signs and wonders worked by the beast and the false prophet will be so utterly convincing that "*if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect*" [Mat.24:24]. It will not be possible; God, by His Spirit, will put it (the

deception of the **elect**) **beyond the realm of possibility. The beast, in order to make good on his claim that he is god**, will set out to defeat these godly Israelites who reject his claims.

Notice that as Daniel saw these things in a vision, the beast “*prevailed against them.*” Can such a thing be? Shall faithful saints of the most High go down in defeat at any time? Only outwardly, and in appearance. Yes, he will wear them out through the afflictions and anxieties of heart which he causes. And, yes, he will prevail in his earthly purposes for a time. But notice also that “*they shall be given into his hand*”; he will prevail over them only because the most High gives him permission to do so. For His own eternal purposes. God will allow this evil man to do his worst for a little while so that greater good may come to men and greater glory to Himself. “*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*” [Rom.5:20]. Sin abounded at the cross when, for a time, Satan seemed to prevail in a wicked scheme to put the Son of God to death; yet God had planned the whole thing by His grace, and all of Satan’s evil deeds worked for good to those who love God. So it will be in the time of Jacob’s Trouble.

Even as God placed a limit on the time that His Son would be held in the bonds of death, so He places a limit on how long Israel will be given into the hand of the beast: “*until a time, times, and the dividing of time*” [Dan.7:25]. That is, it will be for 1 year, plus 2 years and a half of a year—a total of 3½ years. This much time will be given to Satan to exercise his sinful dominion over the earth. Then God will step in and show Himself in behalf of His people.

After that period has been fulfilled,

“Judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.” [Dan.7:26]

And who might the “*they*” be in that prophecy? Why, the saints, of course. The beast was seen to continue “*until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High*” [Dan.7:22]. Christ Himself will be the Chief and the Leader in the overthrow of the false Christ, but His people will be with Him (see Rev.19:14). In the end, God’s faithful people must triumph through Christ. To the Israelitish saints who remain alive on the earth will be given “*the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven*” [Dan.7:27] (see Rev.20:4).

But let us return to the sitting judgment, and to the Ancient of days. Those things will precede the establishing of the earthly kingdom. Read Daniel 7:9-14 carefully noticing that in Verse 9, where it says, “*thrones were cast down*,” the proper translation would have been, “*thrones were set down—placed*” (see Rev.4:2).

It is clear from the fact that judgment was set and the books were opened before Him, that the Ancient of days pictured here is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” [Joh.5:22-23]

The Lord Jesus Christ alone is the Judge. The description of Him here, revealing a manifested glory, a fiery holiness and judgment, and the millions ministering to Him, are all evidences of His eternal deity. “*The Ancient of days*” is

no mere created being here, as some have pretended to see Christ, but the full-blown, eternal God. He is to be honoured even as the Father is honoured, in the same fullness, with the same titles, with equal reverence.

According to Daniel 7:11, Daniel seemed to watch carefully to see what would happen at this point. In this night vision, the “*little horn*” who rose up to become the Antichrist had spoken “*great words*,” strong and blasphemous statements against God. He will apparently believe and proclaim that God has no authority over him, that none can possibly sit to judge him. What Daniel saw was just as we would expect. “*I beheld even till the beast was slain and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame*” [Dan.7:11] (see Rev.19:19-20). Thus will end the career of the mightiest Gentile ruler the world shall ever see. Boasts he will make in abundance, power will be granted to him for a season, but like all other men who reject God he will fall in judgment.

What may we learn from all this, aside from “the history of the future”? Just this: “*When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him*” [Isa.59:19]. The Eternal, Almighty God has an eternal, unstoppable plan. He will allow that plan to be proven, to be tested to the extreme limits, but He will never abandon that plan. The enemy will manifest all his awful power (and God will let him do so), but it will not be power enough. The devil may have his day, but the Lord will have His eternal day. We may tremble in ourselves at the appearance of Satan’s host when he comes against us, but there has never been and never will be a cause for the saints of the Most High to abandon hope—no, not in the most terrible hour of temptation and trial. God will triumph and bestow glory upon His people.

Yet the vision is not finished. As Daniel continued to look, he said,

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the SON OF MAN came with the CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.”
[Dan.7:13]

Again, it is very clear that this is the Lord Jesus Christ. None other bears perfectly the title **Son of man** as He does. He it is who will come with the clouds of heaven. He said before the high priest and the council, “*Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*” [Mat.26:64] (see also Mat.24:30, Act.1:9-11, 1Th.4:17, Rev.1:7). Only Jesus Christ fits this prophecy.

Likewise, we need not wonder about the meaning of the “*clouds of heaven*.” Hebrews 12:1 speaks of a “*great cloud of witnesses*,” referring to the testimony of the many, faithful Old Testament saints spoken of in Hebrews 11. The clouds, with which Jesus, the Son of man will come, will be His glorified saints:

“Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” [1Th.4:14]

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”
[Col.3:4]

These, the people who have been redeemed by His blood, will bring Him forth to receive the dominion, and glory, and the kingdom which are rightfully His as their Redeemer. It is our faith in Him that allows Him to rule as the Lord over us today. God will not change the pattern in that day.

Some are troubled by the thought that both The Ancient of days and the Son of man who is brought before Him are Christ. Remember that this is a vision, a mere figurative representation of a glorious and unimaginable reality that will come. We mustn't be surprised if some parts of it do not fit easily into our limited thinking. It is not the task of Scripture to speak only of those things which we already know and understand. Beasts are kingdoms; horns are kings; Christ will present Himself with the kingdom. Scripture comments on Scripture and tells us these things are so, and we believe them. Read Revelation 1:13-16, where a description of The Ancient of days is attached to the title of the Son of man; He is one and the same personality under both titles. Read Ephesians 5:27, wherein Christ is shown presenting a glorious, spotless company to Himself as a bride. Read the Word; let God reveal it to your heart; stand in awe of this grandeur which surpasses our understanding. But above all, believe what He has said, and rejoice in believing.

DANIEL 8

DANIEL 8:1-13

Were we to read Daniel's book in its original language, we would see clearly that at the beginning of this 8th chapter the emphasis of the Holy Spirit shifts. We noted in looking at Daniel 2:4 that there the language in which Daniel wrote changed from Hebrew, the language of the Jews, to Chaldean, the language of the Gentile Empire which had conquered Israel. The events and the vision of that 2nd chapter brought Daniel in to stand before the king, and signaled that God had brought the Jewish nation into the realm of Gentile dominion. The use of a Gentile tongue to record those events served to emphasize God's purpose. With the first verse of Daniel 8 the language changes back to Hebrew. The implication is clear: God is about to reveal things which have to do with Israel's being freed from the Gentile yoke which He had placed upon them.

Although it had not yet taken place when this prophecy was given, many Israelites returned to the land in the early years of Medo-Persian rule under Cyrus. Their presence there is essential to this prophecy.

This vision casts a small segment of the things seen in the vision of the previous chapter into a different form. The **ram** of this vision is the Medo-Persian Empire, and the rough **goat** is the Grecian empire of Alexander the Great [Dan.8:20-21]. The imagery is different from Daniel 7 yet the parallels are very clear. The bear of Daniel 7:5 raised itself up on one side; the ram of Daniel 8:3 had one horn which was higher than the other. The bear had 3 ribs in his mouth; the ram pushed its dominion in 3 directions of the compass. The leopard of Daniel 7:6 is known for his fleetness; the feet of the he goat [Dan.8:5] did not touch the ground. The leopard was seen to have 4 heads; after the great horn of the goat (Alexander) was broken, 4 notable ones (kings) came up in its place.

If the connections are striking and unmistakable, so is the change in the figures used; God is emphasizing that His purpose in this vision is different from that of Daniel 7. There, He painted a portrait of the whole scope of Gentile rule, showing the Antichrist in his full, historical, worldwide context. Here, we see

only one area of detail, events of enormous importance to Israel and centering on that nation. The oppression of Israel was seen in the earlier vision, but it was not central. More weight is given to the details of Jewish suffering in [Daniel 8](#), and the evil ruler is seen as through the eyes of one standing in the place of Israel.

In the minds of some, there is a difficulty in interpreting this vision. Notice, *“Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision”* [Dan.8:17]. We must view the course of *“the little horn”* of Daniel 8:9 as occurring in the end time. The stumbling block for some is that he is not seen arising from the fourth and last beast (Empire) of Daniel 7, but rather from the Grecian Empire—the next to the last. God does not place stumbling blocks for the overthrowing of His people; He places stepping-stones to increase our faith. Let us begin by accepting the end-time interpretation commanded by God’s messenger, Gabriel, and let God take care of any difficulties which seem to arise from His explanation. Believing God’s Word always come first. Understanding follows faith, but seldom precedes it. Clearly He is the best one to comment on His own Word. Having believed His testimony that these things are a foreshadowing of the time of the end, we may then look at the historical events which make up that foreshadowing.

Alexander came to power by a swift conquest, a conquest fueled by *“choler (bitterness)”* [Dan.8:7], arising from the memory of old injuries given to Greece and Macedonia by the Medo-Persian rulers. This bitterness on the part of Alexander, combined with a remorseless ambition, sped him forward in his drive for power. No consideration was allowed to interfere with the defeat and humiliation of his enemies.

After Alexander’s death, the single-throne rulership of his Empire came to an end; it was divided into 4 parts, with an independent ruler in control of each sector (see Dan.8:8]. Yet it was not dissolved, despite the fact that it was fragmented. It no longer had a direct connection to Greece, but it continued to have a unifying Greek flavor and outlook in its culture, institutions, and exercise of power. In this we see a similarity to the 4th beast of Daniel 7: Roman power has been diminished, confused, and divided, but God does not count it to be ended.

Out of one of those 4 fragments, Syria, just north of the land of Israel, came a man called Antiochus Epiphanes, whom God marked as a prefigure of the man of sin. Notice Daniel 8:9:

“And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceedingly great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.”

God foresaw Antiochus’ movements as his army travelled from Syria into Israel. Look at a map of the region to see this. We will restrict our consideration of his deeds to the things spoken of in this prophecy. Those writings which claim to set forth the details of his quarrel against the Jews are by no means fully reliable, nor can we depend on them to give us any spiritual enlightenment. This prophetic record is sure, and marks out the matters which God counts to be significant as pointing to the time of the end.

Before all else, Antiochus’ crime was that he made himself a rebel against God.

"Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host." [Dan.8:11]

"He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes." [Dan.8:25]

Have you any doubt as to the identity of the Prince of princes? Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel, *"Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings"* [Dan.2:47]. An angel told John that the 10 kings in league with the beast shall make war with the Lamb; the Lamb is then described as *"Lord of lords, and King of kings"* [Rev.17:14]. Acts 4:26 quotes from Psalm 2:2: *"The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ."* (Read Psalm 2 in its entirety.)

For all that history records of Antiochus as a terrible persecutor of the Jews, here his every act of violence was aimed at God. His attack, as he was guided by the enemy of God and man, was 4-pronged:

1ST He moved against the people of God [Dan.8:10]. The *"host of heaven"* and *"the stars"* spoken of here are not angelic beings, but believing men and women, saved Jews (read Gen.15:5). God counts an attack against His people as an attack against Himself, even as any good ruler must. When Jesus arrested Saul as he journeyed to Damascus, He charged him thus, *"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"* [Act.9:4]. Saul had persecuted those who believed on Jesus.

2ND He set aside those things which spoke most clearly of Christ, the daily sacrifices [Dan.8:11]. It may well be true, and probably is, that he had a different explanation in his mind; Satan is the master deceiver. But to the enlightened heart, every sacrifice made under the Mosaic covenant was a prophetic testimony of the coming Savior, *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"* [Joh.1:29]. Antiochus' setting aside of that sacrifice was, in spirit, a considered effort to set aside the coming Son of God, Jesus Christ.

3RD He did violence to the Word of God, the truth [Dan.8:12]. It is said that he literally threw the scrolls of The Law to the ground and stamped upon them. Whether or not this is true, it is sure that he replaced God's Word with a fabric of heathenism and idolatrous lies, making it a capital offense even to possess the sacred writings. An attack on God? Yes, it was an interference with His personal communication to those He loved. The fellowship with His people which that communication of His Word brings is so precious to Him, that David said, *"Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name"* [Psa.138:2].

4TH And finally, he substituted a false, idolatrous worship for worship of Jehovah. This is that *"transgression of desolation"* spoken of in **Daniel 8:13**. Not taking part in this evil religion became punishable by death. False worship is always the ultimate goal of Satan. It is seen in Isaiah 14:13-14:

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I WILL EXALT MY THRONE ABOVE THE STARS OF GOD: I WILL SIT ALSO UPON THE MOUNT OF THE CONGREGATION, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH."

When Satan tempted (tested) the holy Son of God, he urged Him to worship him.

Many Israelites cooperated with Antiochus. Many did not seem to see his attack on the things of God as being all that terrible. Their motivations and the arguments by which they explained their sin are unimportant; they cooperated with devilish deeds, and therefore with the devil himself. May He ever deliver His own from ignorance of Satan's devices. Any hurt given to believers for unjust reasons, any displacing of Christ as the substance of worship and service, any abuse or degrading of truth, any giving of God's praise and honor to another—these should create deep concern in the hearts of God's people.

God would have his people to hold dear the things which He values and to oppose all which is offensive to Him. *"For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me"* [Rom.15:3]. May His people stand with Him in this.

DANIEL 8:13-27

At the end of the vision a holy one asked how long a time the events of the vision would occupy. The reply was, *"Unto two thousand and three hundred days"* [Dan.8:13-14]. Here and in [Daniel 12:11-12](#), specific, measurable periods of time are spoken of in connection with these things. Simply stated, I have never been able to satisfy myself by the Scripture as to the application of these times periods. God did not explain to the prophets of old each detail of His purpose for the Gentiles or The Church [1Pe.1:10-12]; it may be that He will not fully reveal the details of His future plans for Israel to us. This part of the vision is not dealt with in the interpretation which God gave to Daniel. Of one thing we may be sure however, He will show us all things which are a part of His revelation for us if we desire to know [Deu.29:29, Joh.16:12-13, Phi.3:15-16]. For me to go beyond this would be an intrusion on my part into things which the Lord has not revealed to me.

Daniel desired to know. He *"sought for the meaning"* and God sent Gabriel to explain the vision to him [Dan.8:16]. Yet it is good to remember always the effect that revealed truth has on the flesh. When Gabriel came near to Daniel to give him understanding, Daniel was afraid and fell on his face [Dan.8:17]. After the interpretation was given, Daniel fainted, and was sick for a number of days before he was able to undertake the business affairs of the king once again [Dan.8:27]. The things he had seen in this vision were so terrible in their meaning and implications that he was *"astonished"* by them ([astonished](#) means *"stunned"* or *"devastated"*). When God begins to show us the depth to which men allow themselves to be corrupted, or the awfulness of the destruction resulting from human sin, or the insidious way in which Satan works, the revelation is devastating. Nor did anyone else understand the vision and its effects on Daniel; those to whom God reveals His deepest secrets and purposes must usually stand alone, without the comfort of full fellowship and encouragement from those around them.

The first thing that caused Daniel grief over this vision was undoubtedly the phrase, *"when the transgressors are come to the full"* [Dan.8:23]. He knew that these would be Israelites according to the flesh. He undoubtedly recalled that when God spoke to Abram, promising Canaan to his seed, He said they would not

receive it until the 4th generation. As reason for this He said, *“For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full”* [Gen.15:16]. That is, God would not destroy the Amorites who occupied the land, until their sins overflowed, demanding a national judgment. Daniel realized that what awaits his people will come, not because of their righteousness as a people, but because of their sin. The godly will be a minority among them. Many Israelites cooperated with Antiochus Epiphanes when he sought to eradicate true godliness; these were the host that was given to him against the daily sacrifice *“by reason of transgression”* [Dan.8:12]. So it will be again. Daniel was grieved that his people, blessed by God above every other nation on earth, would stand in such utter opposition to Him.

Simply viewing the rise of that wicked king to power was another cause for great heaviness to the heart of Daniel. Sin is depressing; great sin is more so. We would not wish to view the course of sin without God’s help to endure the sorrowful knowledge it must bring. Yet we must see such things in order to understand the scope of His goodness in overthrowing Satan and all who cooperate with his schemes.

A look, then, at this one, prefigured in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes, who shall stand up to deceive and to rule over the whole world:

- He will be *“a king of fierce countenance”* [Dan.8:23]. The hardness of his heart and the harshness of his character will not be concealed; they will be written upon his countenance. When he comes to power, men will not be deceived so much by an apparent goodness in the man and his deeds, as by the fact that they will want to believe him in spite of what they see. The evil in this man will be so strongly marked that Satan will have to work a special, powerful deception in order to put him over. This will be allowed because men will have made clear their preference for lies over truth. Read again 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, which says in part, *“They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.”*
- *“Understanding dark sentences”* indicates that he will be a master of intrigue [Dan.8:23]. Notice also that *“through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand”* [Dan.8:25]. The word translated [craft](#) carries the thought of *“fraud, guile, subtlety, and treachery.”* He will be put forward as a man of great goodness and, finally, as a god. Neither God nor those who are yielded to Him work in such a way as this man will work. God’s instruction to those who have seen His purpose is, *“Wait for it; because it will surely come, and will not tarry”* [Hab.2:3]. After David was anointed king, he did not try to gain the throne by his own scheming and willingness, even when Saul tried to murder him; he waited for God to do His own will. Only on the one occasion when he turned his heart from the Lord and sinned in taking Bathsheba, did he involve himself in intrigue and treachery, first to conceal the sin and then to murder Uriah. Sin requires craftiness; righteousness doesn’t.

Do not trust a schemer and a planner, no matter how wise and successful he seems to be. This evil ruler will prosper. For the short time he is allowed to sit on the throne of power, his political success and the extent of his authority will unquestionably surpass that of any Gentile ruler who has preceded him. This will be a result of his extreme

ungodliness, not an indicator of Divine Blessing. The Scripture says of Ahithophel, a man who plotted with Absalom to overthrow David, “*The counsel of Ahithophel which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God*” [2Sa.16:23]. He knew exactly what moves should be made to defeat David, and just how and when to make those moves—he knew these things as clearly and accurately as if God had told him. But God did not tell him. His was a rebellious, worldly wisdom.

- “*His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power*” [Dan.8:24]. It is good to know where a man gets his authority. A few years ago, several men broke into a Washington, D.C. hotel suite; the consequences of that break-in eventually rocked the nation and brought down a president. Many of those involved went to prison. Yet some of the men who carried it out were told that they were working for a government agency in defense of national security. Again, it is good to know what is really behind a man. “*And the dragon gave him his power*” [Rev.13:2]. Ignorance is no excuse in a court of law; crime is still crime, whatever else may be said. How much less will failure to know that Satan is the power behind an evil man excuse his followers! Certainly we know that those who follow Antichrist will do so from accountable, willful ignorance, not excusable innocence.
- This king of fierce countenance “*shall destroy the mighty and the holy people*” [Dan.8:24]. We can see Satan’s target; he would touch God by destroying His people. The Antichrist will move against Israel—not the compromising transgressors, Israelites only in name and ancestry, but those who will be Israelites indeed, a people who will have power with God. Those Jews who have foolishly allied themselves with the Antichrist will be crushed and tossed aside, of course, but the obliteration of the godly will be his real aim. He will not perceive that God will but use him as an instrument—for judgment on the wicked and for greater rewards to the righteous. The destruction he causes will be a wonder, an amazing thing. None, or so it will appear, will be able to stand against him. Remember, he will even murder the 2 witnesses whom God will raise up against him. It will be with the godly remnant as it was with Job when God allowed Satan to move against him for a time.
- Notice one more thing about this Satanic man’s deeds before we look with relief at his end. “*By peace shall [he] destroy many*” [Dan.8:25]. Observation and Scripture teach that Satan has accomplished damage to more lives by lulling them into a false sense of worldly security or prosperity than he has through open, frontal attack. Thus does he deceive and ensnare the unwary to their hurt. May God’s people always see the need for that watchfulness which the world finds foolish [1Co.10:12].

What will be the end of this mighty man? “*He shall be broken without hand*” [Dan.8:25]. You will recall from Daniel 2, that the image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was finally shattered by a stone cut out without hands; that stone is Jesus Christ, King of kings, Lord of lords, Prince of princes. Not even in the final, all-out effort, when he is allowed to do all which his strength and wile can enable him to do, will Satan and his allies find a way to gain a victory against the Saviour of mankind. Yes, the hideous works of Satan are devastating indeed to behold,

but, like Daniel, we recover ourselves and go trusting God by the knowledge of Him whose people we are, of Him who is “*the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle*” [Psa.24:8].

DANIEL 9

DANIEL 9:1-19

Daniel received the revelation recorded in [Daniel 9:2](#) in the same way God's will is usually shown to us today—by the Scripture. Note a portion of what is said in Jeremiah:

“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” [Jer.25:11-12]

What Daniel learned and “*understood by books*” was no less startling, and much more immediate than many things revealed to him in a more dramatic fashion. The 70 years were about to expire; Israel was about to be restored to the land of the covenant. How wonderful for us to see the life of such a man as this: Aged, filled with good works, steadfast in the Lord, wonderfully used by the Lord for special revelations, and yet still searching the Scriptures and learning by them.

It is interesting however, that Israel as a whole was apparently ignorant of this prophecy. Daniel, in all his many years, had never heard anyone speak of it. Nor was the prophecy hard to interpret; people just did not know it was there. It is always so. Some of the Lord's highest truths and sweetest promises never become common knowledge. In every age, most of God's people learn the fullness of His purpose only when He brings it to pass. Much is lost by not knowing His written Word; much is gained by those who make the search for truth a life-long pursuit through His Word.

How did Daniel react after learning of this wonderful old prophecy? (Remember, it was not new, just forgotten or ignored by the majority of Israel). It must have been a joy to know of the soon-coming events, but we read no expression of joy. He did not go forth shouting the good news to all who would listen. He went only to the Lord, seeking Him in private prayer, showing every sign of deep sorrow. What a strange thing this must seem to those who have never been fully mastered by the grace of God, who have never been overwhelmed with the knowledge of His holiness. How readily his grief is understood by those who realize that God's grace toward men is inseparably joined to His holiness.

Daniel's prayer began with the confession “*We have sinned*” [Dan.9:5]. Many years before, when Solomon was dedicating the temple at Jerusalem, he prayed an anointed prayer. In that prayer, he dealt with the captivity into which Israel would eventually go, and the terms under which God would move their captors to show compassion [1Ki.8:46-50]. Take the time to read that passage, and notice especially the words of the prayer which God would heed: “*We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness.*” The Spirit of God moved Daniel to pray just this prayer. “*We have sinned.*” True, he was interceding for others, for a whole nation, but an intercessor must identify completely with the

needy ones. So did Christ take the sins of mankind on Himself; so do godly men and women bear one another's burdens in intercessory prayer.

From our viewpoint, Daniel's prayer is not only intercession, it is also an explanation of God's dealings with Israel; both in allowing the terrible judgment of the captivity to come upon them, and in restoring the nation to their own land. The parallel to Israel's present and future conditions is obvious. Israel has long endured persecution and suffering at the hands of ungodly Gentiles, much of it perpetrated falsely in the name of Christianity. The hardships will not lessen until the end of the age; they will come to a crescendo in the awful attack of Antichrist when the Jews reject his claim that he is God. After that terrible period, The Kingdom will be restored to Israel [cf. Act.1:6].

The principles expressed in this prayer show the pattern for God's dealings with Israel. The 1st such principle is the statement, "*O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face...because we have sinned against thee*" [Dan.9:8]. Righteousness belongs to God [Dan.9:7]. When His hand rests heavily in judgment upon a people, there is a righteous reason for the judgment: Sin against Him.

God had warned Israel of the consequences of departing from the covenant which He made with them. Deuteronomy 28 spoke clearly of God's promise to bless the nation as long as the people hearkened to His Word. It also spoke of **a curse** they would bring upon themselves if they did not heed His voice:

"The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy father have known." [Deu.28:36]

"Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity." [Deu.28:41]

"And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other." [Deu.28:64]

If you are not familiar with Deuteronomy 28, it would be worthwhile to read it.

Compare these things with the words of Daniel in **Daniel 9:11**: "*Therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses.*" Not every trouble which comes upon mankind is a judgment of God. Job is a grand example of suffering for righteousness sake, and such suffering is to be seen in the life of every devoted believer. However, Israel had departed from the precepts and judgments of God and refused to hear the admonitions of His servants, the prophets. Daniel did not explain or excuse the sins of Israel; he confessed those sins and repented of them before God. So must all sin be dealt with.

Now, although the children of Israel were restored to the land under Cyrus, they again turned from God. As Moses foretold, they are now scattered among all people, from one end of the earth to the other.

- Why, then, did God restore them to Palestine under Cyrus?
- Why will God restore them to their land in the future?

The present day existence of the state of Israel in no way fulfills the Scripture's promise of a total, glorious regathering (see Isa.2:2-3, Isa.11:12).

Daniel did not speak of Israel's great goodness when he prayed. He could not, because as a people they still had deep spiritual lacks. When he considered the sins of his people Daniel said, "*To us belongeth confusion of face*" [Dan.9:8]. Nor will any special merit in the nation qualify them for the future blessings God will begin to pour out on them. In fact, before they rejoice at their blessing and deliverance, Israel will first grieve for their national sins and their rebellion against God. Their reaction when Christ appears will be much like that of Daniel in this 9th chapter.

"And they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem." [Zec.12:10-11]

Daniel cried,

"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him." [Dan.9:9]

"We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies." [Dan.9:18]

There was but one reason the Lord opened the door of return to Israel in Daniel's day; there will be but one reason He will regather Israel for blessing in the Millennium. "*His mercy endureth forever.*" That sweet statement is repeated 26 times in Psalm 136, and is the single cause for His blessing upon a people who have rebelled against Him. This is the 2nd key principle in Daniel's prayer. Nor is Israel alone in having hope only in His mercy, and not in their righteousness. All the world is alike in that regard.

Another truth revealed here is that the righteousness of God enters into His mercy, even as it does into His judgment.

"O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain." [Dan.9:16a]

While it is clear to most people that there comes a time when sin must be judged by a righteous God, it is not clear to many that there are also times when it would be unrighteous for God not to show mercy, despite the fact that His people do not deserve it. Put simply, we may say that if God has promised mercy, it would not be righteous for Him to withhold that mercy. Not that He is forced to show mercy. His Word to Moses was, "*(I) will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy*" [Exo.33:19]. Once He has chosen to show mercy, however, and once He has given His Word on the matter, His own righteousness demands that His Word be fulfilled. How Satan would delight to prove God a liar on any point.

Because of this, we come to realize how completely God has linked our destiny to His own righteousness, how completely the things which benefit us are entwined with the things which honor Him. Daniel prayed that the Lord would hear his prayer "*for the Lord's sake*" [Dan.9:17]. He asked Him to forgive and "*defer not, for thine own sake*" [Dan.9:19]. Moses prayed similarly [Deu.9:26-29]. Moses and Daniel knew, as do all who intercede effectually for God's people, that even if love did not enter into it at all—and thank God that it does—He would fulfill His promise to His erring people for the sake of His own name and righteousness.

Paul said *“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us”* [2Co.1:20]. Daniel took God’s positive promises as being sure and unshakeable, despite human unfaithfulness. His grief was doubtless because of the unfaithfulness of Israel (those ongoing sins which made them unworthy), but He believed God’s Word anyway. May we exercise faith and do likewise.

DANIEL 9:20-24

We do not know how long Daniel prayed before Gabriel appeared to him. Since as he was told, *“At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth”* (that is, the commandment to go and instruct Daniel), we do know that the messenger did not arrive immediately, although the command for him to go was immediate [Dan.9:23]. Another example of this delay between the sending and the receiving of the answer is found in [Daniel 10](#), where the messenger of the Lord was 3 full weeks on the way. Do you see the need to continue seeking the Lord, to continue trusting Him for as long as it takes to receive His reply? God’s people often cease to simply pray and trust Him, not considering that He might already have commanded and sent the answer to their need. In their impatience, they cease to submit to God before receiving what He wants to give.

After all, what is prayer? Is it a matter of bringing needs to God’s attention? No. *“Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him”* [Mat.6:8]. When we make our petitions known to God, it is a submitting of ourselves to Him, a submitting of our needs to His will. By bringing the need to Him, and not to another, we bear witness that He alone is the Meeter of our needs, the Solver of our problems. Daniel did not take what he had seen in Scripture to the magicians of Babylon who would have perverted it, nor to the blind religious leaders who had failed ever to see what the Lord had said. He took his needs and desires to God and kept them there. This is not to say that prayer is the spiritual coin which purchases God’s blessing. When Gabriel explained why he had come, he said, *“I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved”* [Dan.9:23]. God gives because He loves us. We pray, primarily, because God has ordained prayer. It is His will that we pray.

The reason for stressing Daniel’s steadfast continuance in prayer is that we are no better and no wiser than he. If he needed to pray in order to receive understanding of God’s Word, then we also need to pray. Why are there so many contradictory explanations of Scripture? Because men leave off earnestly seeking the Lord as their sole means of getting wisdom. Relying on the reasonings of the mind is not enough. Looking to man-made rules of interpretation is not enough. Trusting in the opinions of religious men is not enough (read Jam.1:5.) To understand God’s revealed purpose, we must come in prayer, as He has appointed. This certainly applies to the revelation given here.

“SEVENTY WEEKS ARE DETERMINED UPON THY PEOPLE AND UPON THY HOLY CITY, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” [Dan.9:24]

Daniel’s people were Israel. Their holy city was Jerusalem, which God chose as the temple site and the place of sacrifice for Israel. (Jerusalem was holy because God made it so by His decree [Deu.12:11-14]. He does not call it a holy

city for Israel or for any other people today. In Rev.11:8, He refers to it as “*the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt.*” Sodom speaks of a perversion of God’s will and order; Egypt speaks of worldly bondage.) The word translated weeks simply means “seven.” We know weeks of years are spoken of here, and not weeks of days, by Daniel 9:25. It was to be “*seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks*” (69 weeks) from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem unto the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. It was not 483 days from that decree until Israel was offered its Messiah, but 483 years.

- What were these “*seventy weeks*” of years all about?
- Why did the Lord determine this time upon Israel, and what did He intend to accomplish during these 490 years?
- Further, who or what is at the center of these works?

In the latter part of Daniel 9:24, Daniel was given a list of 5 great gracious tasks that God had set for Himself. All the items on this Divine **Work List** have been accomplished. At the heart of any work of God we must see His Son, Jesus Christ. So it is with the prophecy before us; the works to be fulfilled were all completed in and by Jesus Christ. Let us look at these **5 works of grace** individually.

1. “*To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins.*” For those who will believe, this is fulfilled through the risen Christ. As with all of God’s spiritual works, it must be revealed by the Holy Spirit and received by faith. It cannot be seen by the reasonings of the natural mind, yet it is a real fact.

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” [1Jo.3:9]

“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” [1Jo.5:18]

This resurrection life ends sin and transgression for the believer, because it is literally Christ in us [Col.1:27]. As we receive His newness of life, it is a sinless life; it has no potential for sin. To comprehend this truth, even in a small measure, we must see that 2 natures exist side by side in the believer (read Rom.7:20, Eph.4:20-24.) The old, dead nature is still there, but for the new man sin is ended [2Co.5:17].

2. “*To make reconciliation for iniquity.*” This speaks of the work of Christ regarding sins already reckoned to our accounts. If a murderer ceases to murder, he is no less a murderer; his past misdeeds must still be dealt with. Most of us are not murderers in any outward sense, but the point is that the sins of the old creation nature must be removed from our account or we cannot be reconciled to God. Those sins created an enmity and a warfare; man rebels and God must judge. Because Christ bore our judgment, there is now peace and reconciliation for everyone that believes. (Read 2Co.5:18-19, Eph.2:14-16, Col.1:20-22.)

3. *“To bring in everlasting righteousness.”* The righteousness God imparts to His people was intended to be (and is) a never-ending righteousness. He will not allow that righteousness to cease or to be taken from us. Having dealt with both sin and the possibility of sin, there is no reason why He should not cause this to be so. Look at the sure foundation of the believer’s righteousness. *“For He (God) hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, (He) who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (Christ)”* [2Co.5:21]. Dare to believe the Word of God in this matter. Our righteousness is as sure as the righteousness of God, for it is the righteousness of God. If God may lose His righteousness, then we may lose ours. If His righteousness is everlastingly secure, then so is ours. Again, this was done through the work of Christ.
4. *“To seal up the vision and prophecy.”* What does this mean? We can be sure that it is as completely centered on Christ as the other things which God accomplished during the 490 years, yet the connection does not at first appear. It is by looking at Israel in relation to Jesus, their Messiah, that we discover the significance of this 4th thing which was foretold. The underlying truth in every vision and prophecy Daniel saw was that with the glorious coming of Christ, Gentile Empire would end and The Kingdom would be restored to Israel. This has been sealed up.

At the end of 483 years (69 weeks) Messiah was cut off [Dan.9:25-26]. He offered Himself to Israel as Messiah, and did everything possible to gather them to Himself [Mat.23:37]. They refused. When Pilate presented Him to the people in an effort to free Him, they demanded, *“Let him be crucified”* [Mat.27:22-23]. At His crucifixion, the inscription over His head read, *“This is Jesus the King of the Jews”* [Mat.27:37]. This ended 69 of the 70 weeks determined upon Israel. It is impossible to determine what even ended the next 7 years. The book of Acts does not give the kind of dates which would tell us that. Still, we can see a course of events showing Israel’s attitude toward their now-glorified Messiah and its result.

In **Acts 7**, when Stephen bore irresistible testimony of the risen Christ, his words were confirmed by great wonders and miracles; he was murdered by the Jews. As he left this life, he saw *“the Son of man standing on the right hand of God”* [Act.7:56]. Not seated, awaiting the time when all His enemies would be placed under His feet [Heb.1:13], but standing, as though ready to return. Israel’s final choice concerning the resurrected Christ was not yet recorded. In **Acts 8** there came a great persecution at Jerusalem. The believers were scattered, preaching the gospel. Jerusalem ceased to be the center of operations. In **Acts 9**, Saul of Tarsus was converted and told he would bear the name of Christ to the Gentiles. He was later known as Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles [Rom.11:13]. In **Acts 10**, under the preaching of Peter, Gentiles were converted and filled with the Holy Spirit. In **Acts 11**, God gathered a group of faithful men together; not in Jerusalem but in Antioch. In **Acts 12**, Herod killed James; this pleased the Jews, so he imprisoned Peter. In **Acts 13**, the Holy Spirit spoke to the prophets and teachers at Antioch, telling them that it was time for Saul (Paul) to begin the work to which he was called.

Notice what took place. At some point Israel finalized their national rejection of Jesus Christ. The vision of the Israelitish kingdom under Messiah was sealed until the end of The Church Age. God turned to the Gentiles. His grace turned their rejection into our opportunity [Rom.11:1-15].

There remains one more work which was accomplished.

DANIEL 9:24-27

5. The last of the 5 great works which God said He would accomplish during the 490 years was “*to anoint the most Holy*” [Dan.9:24]. Some interpret this to mean that during those 70 weeks there would be an earthly temple built in Jerusalem which would be acceptable to God. The plan God gave to Moses for The Tabernacle and the plan God gave to David for the temple had a “*most holy place*,” an innermost room where The Ark of the testimony and the Mercy Seat were. It was there the high priest went to sprinkle the blood of atonement. Concerning that place, God told Moses, “*And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony*” [Exo.25:22]. No earthly location can ever again have the significance which that place had, because another Most Holy Place has been opened in heaven.

The Most Holy Place of old was closed to all men except Israel’s high priest, who entered it only once each year. Further, it was completely concealed from view by a “*vail*” (curtain), which hung across its entrance [Exo.26:31-35]. Paul, writing in Hebrews 9:8 gave the reason why God commanded that that most holy place should be inaccessible to all but the high priest: “*The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.*” He went on to show that although God had ordained them, The Tabernacle, the temple, and all of the service which took place in them were only figures—symbols of a spiritual reality. Those figures could perfect none of God’s purposes; the reality can, does, and will.

In Hebrews 10:19-20, Paul said, “*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus... which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*” Matthew 27:51 tells what occurred at the time of Jesus’ death: “*And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*” In other words, the rending of Jesus’ body for our sins opened the way into a Most Holy Place in the heavens. It is the place where the atoning blood of Christ is fully accepted by the Father. It is the place of communion with His people. It is the place of the cherubim, which represent victorious believers in perpetual communion with God [cf. Gen.5:24], continually bowing their heads in humility and beholding the sprinkled blood which allows our communion in Christ. [cf. Exo.25:20].

What place of earthly symbols can ever compete with the heavenly reality for the title, “*Most holy place*”? The anointing of “*the most Holy*” has indeed been accomplished in and through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a finished work.

Nothing remains undone. The work is completed and so are the 70 weeks. No other conclusion fits the information which God gave to Daniel.

The time of the coming and death of Messiah is also given in connection with the 70 weeks. **Daniel 9:25** says,

"From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks."

In Ezra 1:1-4, we read the decree of Cyrus, commanding only that the temple be rebuilt; it does not fit the prophecy before us. In Nehemiah 2:5-8, we read of Artaxerxes giving the necessary orders for rebuilding Jerusalem and its wall; this is the commandment spoken of in **Daniel 9:25**. Rebuilding the city took 49 years (7 weeks of years). After 62 more weeks, or 434 years (for a total of 69 weeks, or 483 years), Jesus the Messiah came to Jerusalem in what has been called the triumphal entry. That was His official, public offer of Himself as Messiah, in fulfillment of Scripture [cf. Mat.21:1-9, Zec.9:9].

As foretold in **Daniel 9:26**, His offer was rejected by Israel, and almost immediately He was cut off—crucified. The phrase "not for himself" would better be translated "*with nothing for himself*." This speaks of the fact that "*he came unto his own, and his own received him not*" [Joh.1:11]. He and His Father foreknew this rejection and planned for it, foreordaining the work of grace during The Church Age. Working great good from Israel's tragic error [Rom.8:28, Rom.11:11-20]. Nevertheless, Israel's unbelief kept Him from something He wanted to do. He desired to gather Israel to Himself, and they refused. At His betrayal, even His disciples abandoned Him for a time. At the hour of His great sacrifice, He had nothing for Himself.

The next event prophesied here is the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. In this, we gain a clue as to the background of the one who will embody the spirit of Antichrist. Those who came to destroy were to be "*the people of the prince that shall come*." The prince that shall come is unquestionably the Antichrist, the covenant maker of Daniel 9:27. In 70 A.D., the Roman General Titus, at the head of an overwhelming flood of Roman soldiers, leveled Jerusalem. The "*people of the prince that shall come*" were Romans. This confirms again the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9 that the man of sin will be at the head of a revived Roman Empire.

The proper rendering of the end of Daniel 9:26 is: "*Unto the end wars and desolations are determined*." The history of Israel from the destruction of Jerusalem to this day is one of war and desolations. Nothing is sadder than to be on the wrong end of a prophecy of judgment. Thank God that there will also be an end of desolations for Israel.

Daniel 9:27 is thought by many to describe "*the seventieth week of Daniel*." This hinges on the idea that the 490 years were interrupted by the crucifixion, that the fulfillment of the 70th week of years is missing from Daniel 9:24-26. I cannot see a scriptural basis for that assumption. Unless one of the 70 weeks, whose events God determined, is shown by Scripture to be missing from those verses, there is no 70th week to be found in **Daniel 9:27**. If, on the other hand, the 70th week is to be found in those verses, following consecutively after week number 69, then the week mentioned in **Daniel 9:27**, wherein the Antichrist will make a treaty with Israel, is clearly a separate matter. In that case it is an error

to include that week as one of the 70 weeks mentioned earlier. Error is no light matter.

How can we be sure whether or not the 70th week has been complete? Notice that Messiah was cut off “*after*” or following the 69th week; this would be during the 70th week. Further, as we have already seen, the sealing up of the “*vision and prophecy*” of the Israelitish Kingdom under Messiah’s rule was not finished until after the cutting off of Messiah. The sealing-up, then, would have been well into the final week of years, probably at its far end. Everything points to an already fulfilled 70th week.

At the outset of the week of Daniel 9:27, “*the prince that shall come*,” the man of sin, will make a covenant with Israel—or at least, “*with many*” of Israel. This apparently is spoken of by Isaiah:

“Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves...your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.” [Isa.28:15, 18]

The sense of security which Israel will feel because of the covenant will be shattered when that wicked ruler breaks his treaty with them:

At that time he will set up the “abomination that maketh desolate” [Dan.11:31, Dan.12:11; Mat.24:15ff.]. Do not make the abomination of desolation more difficult to understand than is necessary. In 1 Kings 11:4-8 Solomon’s fall into idolatry was described; false gods were called **abominations**. The same usage is followed elsewhere. The Antichrist will set up a religion with himself as its false god [2Th.2:3-4]. In order to be consistent in his lie, it will be necessary for him to force Israel to give up all formal observances of their religion, including the sacrifice and oblation, which will have been reinstituted. This devilish religion will overspread the earth, and all the world will follow after him in it. This will be the abomination which he sets up. Because the whole earth will be involved in this idolatry, it will result in judgment on an enormous scale. After the midst (middle) of the week, this great spiritual rebellion will call forth desolation and “*great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world*” [Mat.24:21]. It is for this reason it is called “*the abomination that maketh desolate*” [Dan.12:11] (cf. Rev.13:11-15; Rev.14:9-11).

God tells all this in advance, that men may have faith in Him. At the appointed time of the consummation, a predetermined judgment will be poured upon the Antichrist, the spiritually desolate man of sin. That will occur at Jesus Christ’s return in power and glory. Thus, the glorious coming of Christ will be godly Israel’s hope in their time of trouble, even as His secret coming is our hope today.

DANIEL 10

DANIEL 10:1-12

This last prophecy is the longest single portion of the book of Daniel. It occupies all of the last 3 chapters [Dan.10-12]. It was given in the 3rd year of Cyrus, who, during his 1st year, issued a proclamation authorizing the return to Jerusalem of all the Jews who wished to go [Ezr.1:1-4]. We don't know how long the preparations for the journey took, but by the time Daniel received this revelation, the first emigration from captivity had probably taken place. Work on the new temple may already have begun [Ezr.3:8-10]. Why had Daniel not gone? We might excuse him by reason of his great age, but he needs no such excuse. Not having a visible part in one particular aspect of the Lord's work here certainly does not cut one off from full participation in His overall plan. The fact that God did not give Daniel a place in the return to the land meant only that He had a different task for him. The giving of this last, great prophecy shows that Daniel was in close harmony with God.

Notice how it was that Daniel came to receive the truth revealed in this prophecy. According to **Daniel 10:12**, Daniel set his heart to understand and to chasten himself before his God. The word here translated chasten, carries the thought of “lowering” or “abasing.” For 3 weeks, Daniel humbled himself as he sought after spiritual understanding. During that time, he ceased to anoint himself with oil, a custom necessary for comfort in the dry climate of the area. Understanding God's purposes was more important than bodily comfort. Job said, “*I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food*” [Job 23:12]. Daniel temporarily left off many foods which were usually a part of his diet. While he continued to eat such things as were needful for life and health, his **MODIFIED FAST** shows that he valued the Word of God above meat and drink. His standing in **Daniel 1**, of obedience to God's law covenant with Israel, demonstrates even more clearly the esteem in which Daniel held all of God's Word.

From the content of the prophecy and from the words of Daniel 10:14, we see what it was that Daniel set his heart to understand more fully: What would befall Israel in the last days? A question which might reasonably be asked is that of why Daniel desired so urgently to know more. Already possessed of much truth along this line, why did he want more? Here is the key:

*“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and **THE THING WAS TRUE, BUT THE TIME APPOINTED WAS LONG**; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” [Dan.10:1]*

It was not that he expected these things to have a personal application to himself; they concerned **the latter days**. Having seen the vision, he said without any expression of regret or disappointment, that “*the time appointed* (that is, for their fulfillment) *was long*.” Daniel has been gone from earth these 2,500 years, and the final stages of the prophecy still have not been fulfilled. Those who go on with God, in the sense of searching out the fullness of His purposes, do not do so at all for present, earthly blessing, at least not in the outward sense that is understood by most. Like Daniel, they do so for more far reaching motives. The deeper we go in the things of God, the fewer **practical**

applications we will find. More and more, we discover that God points us to things beyond our lives, beyond our day-to-day world, and toward an understanding of things which make present issues seem small by comparison.

"The thing was true," and Daniel was possessed of a desire for all the truth which God would make available to him, **practical** or not. The paradox, to the natural mind, is that even the less 'practical' truths have a wonderful effect on our lives. Jesus said, *"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"* [Joh.8:32]. So-called theologians of our day have invented a thing they call **liberation theology**, which teaches men to gain political freedom from men who oppress them. What folly! The truth of the Bible is our only means of real, spiritual freedom. It was not granted to Daniel to leave Babylon for Israel's homeland. God did not give him liberty to spend his labors on the reconstruction of the temple instead of continuing his work in the land of bondage, but by God's Word he was made free. Without a full measure of this kind of freedom, even saved people can become bound by sin and the cares of life [Mat.13:22, Rom.6:16]. In possessing this God-given spiritual liberty, men are free, even if they are outwardly enslaved or imprisoned [1Co.7:20-22, Phi.4:11].

The real topic of this and every God-given revelation is shown in the first Personage seen by Daniel in the vision. This One has not been missing from a single chapter of the book.

- In **Daniel 1**, He was foreshadowed in Daniel himself, willing to give his life to obey the will of God.
- In **Daniel 2**, He was the stone which became a mountain, filling the whole earth.
- In **Daniel 3**, He was represented by the fourth man in the furnace.
- **Daniel 4** set him forth as the One to whom belong thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers [Col.1:16].
- In **Daniel 5**, He was behind the scene as the Judge who weighed Belshazzar and found him wanting.
- **Daniel 6** gave a foreshadowing of the evil plot against Him, his descent into the "lion's" (Satan's) den, a place of death from which He would emerge victorious.
- In **Daniel 7**, He is *"the Ancient of days,"* and the *"one like the Son of man."*
- In **Daniel 8**, He is the *"prince of the host,"* and the *"prince of princes."*
- In **Daniel 9**, He was Messiah, cut off at the end of the 69th week.

A comparison of Daniel 10:5-6 with Revelation 1:13-18 clearly identifies this figure. John saw and described, *"One like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt...with a golden girdle...his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass...and his voice as the sound of many waters...and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."* The parallel between the 2 passages is unmistakable. In the vision John saw, this One told who He is, saying, *"I am the first and the last: I am*

he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen.” This is Jesus. Daniel set his heart to understand, and the Lord showed him His Christ. In the person of Jesus is found all that is worth knowing. Any supposed revelation of truth which does not center on Him is suspect—and more than suspect. It is sad that more of God’s people do not learn this fact.

“And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.” [Dan.10:7]

There are times when it seems otherwise, but it always comes to this when Christ is revealed—men flee to hide themselves. Paul had a wide reaching ministry, but that does not tell the whole story. When Jesus halted him on his way to Damascus, only Paul saw Him and heard what He had to say. At the end of his time here, when he was apparently on trial for his life, he wrote to Timothy, *“at my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me”* [2Ti.4:16]. Paul started alone with Christ and ended in about the same fashion.

Many are willing to receive visible, outward marks of blessing, but few, even among saved people, want to experience the full impact of the revealed Christ. That prospect frightens them. Why so? Actually, that is not a difficult question to answer:

“There remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.” [Dan.10:8]

When Christ is manifested, whether by preaching or by a vision, there is nothing in the picture which gives comfort to the fleshly nature. The beauty of the flesh is revealed as rottenness and corruption when the beauty of Holiness is seen; the strength of the flesh is shown as imaginary when the Almighty One is revealed. Neither the rejecters nor saved people, who choose a carnal path, willingly face the truth about the flesh which a genuine revelation of Christ will bring to light.

Nor was this experience all pleasure for Daniel. He found himself face down on the ground, and when he was raised up, he stood trembling.

*“Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, **FEAR NOT, DANIEL:** for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.” [Dan.10:9-12]*

He was told, *“Fear not.”* God does not waste words. If Daniel had not been afraid, the Lord wouldn’t have told him not to fear. John had the same experience on the isle of Patmos when he saw the Lord; he wrote, *“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not”* [Rev.1:17]. Even with men like John and Daniel, men living godly, sanctified lives, lives of commitment to spiritual good, the flesh can scarcely endure a real confrontation with the Holiness of the Lord. How much less will those who have no such standards of spirituality take pleasure from any deep knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Only one whose heart is humbly set to understand spiritual things will consider a full knowledge of Christ to be worth having. God cannot give His best to people more concerned with themselves and their own desires than with Him and His desires. He is heard most clearly by those who are willing to walk out of the crowd, to better hear that still, small voice. Christ gave His most complete teachings to the small group of disciples who followed most closely, those who refused to leave with the offended multitude [Joh.6:67-68], and so it will ever be. Thank God for crowds who gather in a willingness to accept at least part of His spiritual blessing! But thank God also for times alone, when He can speak to us as friend with friend.

DANIEL 10:12-21

We have before us one of the Scripture's rare glimpses into the spiritual warfare going on in the heavens. It will not do for us to speculate about these things beyond what the Scripture shows us. How quickly one can fall into error by *"intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind"* [Col.2:18]. We look into the spiritual fight by what we see in the Bible. Ephesians 6:10-18 tells us of a war against spiritual wickedness in high (heavenly) places. All our armor for the battle has to do with God's Word; we must not stray from Scripture in this battle, or we will drift into *"philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"* [Col.2:8]. If we err in this way, we shall surely be overthrown.

We have already seen, by comparing Daniel 10:5-6 with Revelation 1, that the messenger sent to Daniel from God was none other than God the Son. It was He who said, *"The PRINCE of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days"* [Dan.10:13]. This raises a difficult question, and on to which there is no answer apart from Scripture:

- Can Satan and-or his followers hinder God's purpose?

We understand this *"prince"* to be a fallen angel, one of Lucifer's followers, a ruler of the darkness of this world, involved in spiritual wickedness in the heavens.

Parts of God's dealings with Satan (and with sin) are an unrevealed mystery, but we do know some things. By studying Scripture, we learn that spiritual forces control the affairs of men. Men are ruled by evil or by God, one or the other.

"You...were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" [Eph.2:1-2]. (See also Joh.12:31, Joh.14:30, Joh.16:11, Rev.9:15-16, Rev.13:2.) The influence of spiritual authorities is too broad a topic to be dealt with fully here, but Satan and his angels exercise power over men and nations; we resist their power through faith and prayer [1Ti.2:1-3, 1Pe.5:8-9].

We know also that God has determined to utterly destroy Satan's power. *"I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub"* [Eze.28:16]. Satan is a powerful creature. He is cunning beyond human understanding. He is allowed authority in the earth which, for the present, is undeniable. Even Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, did

not bring railing accusation against him, but called on God to rebuke him [Jud.1:9]. Nevertheless, the fall of this evil being is sure; he is only a creature, but God is the Creator. On God's side, the warfare in the heavens is not to determine which party will win. He has already determined the outcome, and "*power belongeth unto God*" [Psa.62:11]. So then...

- Can Satan effectually, successfully resist God or hinder Him in His purposes?

The clear answer of Scripture is, "*No*," despite the appearance of such hindrance here in Daniel and, perhaps, in our own experiences. Yet God does not choose to overthrow Satan now, and herein lies another question:

- Why does He allow sin and wicked beings to do their work?

Of course we rest on His sovereignty. We say with Nebuchadnezzar, "*He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?*" [Dan.4:35]. Even if we do not understand God's purposes, He is still right, and has power to do what He will. This does not answer the question, but only if we see this can He show us more. In Psalm 51:4, David told why God allowed him to sin; Paul quoted him in Romans 3:4: "*That thou mightiest be justified in thy sayings, and mightiest overcome when thou art judged.*" God allows Satan's forces to work against Him and His people, at least to a degree, because Satan's failures prove God's Word to be true and His judgments to be righteous.

Next, notice that the One who appeared to Daniel said, "*Lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.*" As this rebellious angel, "*the prince of Persia*," resisted the Eternal Son of God, Michael came to assist Him. This raises yet another question, one which has moved some to reject His evident identity as He who would become the Son of Man. The question is:

- Why was it necessary for Michael to help Him? Couldn't He win the battle alone?

After becoming a man, Jesus faced Satan when He was tempted (tried and proven) in the wilderness, and vanquished him, using just the Scripture. He overcame him for us when He died and arose, cancelling the power of Satan for all who believe. Every sinful principality and power in heaven and earth was arrayed against Him, and He made a public spectacle of them, triumphantly showing their defeat by His resurrection and ascension [Col.2:15]. He has right and power over every authority, force, and name in the universe [Col.1:16-19, Phi.2:9-10]. It would be absurd to suppose that He found one of Satan's minions too powerful for Him, and had to call on an archangel for help.

But pulling together what we have already learned from this passage, we can begin to understand why Michael helped Him. **First**, we know that the evil, angelic prince of Persia withstood Him only because he was allowed to do so. **Second**, he was not destroyed out of hand only because Christ chose not to do so. **It follows, then**, that Michael came to help only because it was appointed to him to do so; God ordained that he should come and fight. This in no way implies that the battle depended on Michael's strength.

Consider other cases. God could have destroyed Goliath by miraculous power, but He allowed David to win the victory over him. David said to Goliath, "*The Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's*" [1Sa.17:47]. He knew that God did not need him to win the battle. We too are given a place of warfare by our prayers and faith. "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" [Jam.4:7]. We know that God could make Satan flee with no help from us, but this is our preparation for a place with Christ in the heavens. Revelation 19:14 shows His glorified people following Christ into the battle to defeat the beast and the false prophet, a battle which will end with Satan's being bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years. He will not **need** us to win that battle, but He will **give** us a place with Himself.

God chose to use Michael in the fight. That is enough. Michael is called the prince of Israel. He knows God's revealed will concerning that people better than anyone except the Lord Himself [Dan.10:21]. That is a part of his appointed task. He is shown as the holy angel who stands in behalf of Israel [Dan.12:1]. This standing up for Israel is clearly a stand against sinful angels who oppose God's will for that people. It will apparently be in this capacity that Michael and his angels will cast Satan and his angels out of heaven [Rev.12:7-9].

Would Daniel have seen the vision if he had ceased to pray and to humble himself before the end of the 3 weeks? In the book of Job, we see Satan insisting that Job would curse God to His face if God withheld His protection from him. He was wrong. Satan's forces did not want Daniel to receive this revelation. It is not recorded just what accusations may have been made against Daniel, but whatever the case, Daniel remained steadfast, a testimony to righteousness, giving practical proof of the value of faith.

We see again that a full revelation of Christ and His work for us humbles the flesh. Hearing of the battle fought on his behalf, Daniel could not lift his eyes from the ground. Strength was gone. He could not even speak. By the light of religion, our strength and goodness can appear sufficient; in the light of His presence, they are shown to be empty illusion. Although it is avoided by men whose religion is largely soulish and carnal, seeing the weakness and corruption which are present in us is valuable. Imaginary strength and goodness are dangerous. On a simple level, a child imagines that he knows how to cut hair; an experiment is made, resulting in a shamefaced child. And, if the issue is serious? Once, as a small boy, I imagined I could swim across a pond. If someone had not been there to help, I would have drowned. Better that I had known my weakness.

God did not leave Daniel so. In love He wants men to know their weakness so that they may possess His strength. One touched Daniel, strengthened him, and said, "*O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong*" [Dan.10:19]. Paul said, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" [Phi.4:13].

The battle with Persia's angel-prince was not finished. Part of the Lord's purpose was for a Grecian Empire to supplant the Persian Empire [Dan.10:20]. It would be years in the fulfillment, and naturally, because God had ordered this transition, the powers of darkness would bitterly oppose it. Before returning to battle, however, the Lord would show Daniel things which would become a part of the Scripture revelation concerning Israel's future. He considers it to be of

vital importance for His people to know the truth which concerns them. May we, like Daniel, agree with Him.

DANIEL 11

DANIEL 11:1-16

Daniel 11:1 emphasizes again the role God plays in the affairs of men: *“Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to strengthen him.”* It is He who sets up and puts down kings. It is He who strengthens those who are able to retain power. *“I...even I,”* He said. God will not give credit to others for the things He does.

The Lord foretold the things in this passage to point out Antiochus Epiphanes. You will recall that he was shown in **Daniel 7 and 8** as a picture of the Antichrist who is to come. The events leading up to his rule are laid out so clearly here that no one need question whether we have identified the right man as filling this place. **Daniel 11:1-19** seems to have been given for this purpose. Inasmuch as all the events prophesied up to **Daniel 11:20** have already occurred, and because the passage seems to have no other purpose than to ensure that Israel (and we) should recognize Antiochus as the man prefiguring the Antichrist, we will not look for a deeply spiritualized interpretation of these verses. Instead, on a verse-by-verse basis, we will briefly consider their accomplished fulfillment. As always, you will get the most benefit if you have an open Bible at hand while reading these comments.

Although the prophecy deals with intrigues, alliances, and military engagements covering the course of several generations, it is perfect in its accuracy. Nothing failed of all the things foretold. Men and women need never be afraid to trust God’s Word. *“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled”* [Mat.5:18]. Due to Daniel’s God-given prophecies, when the man of sin comes on the scene, godly Israel will have a clear picture of what to expect.

The arrow pointing toward Antiochus begins with the rule of 4 Persian kings, the 4th being known to us as Ahasuerus (he was the king who made Esther his wife). He used his great riches to win the cooperation of his princes and mighty men in a war against Grecia (Greece) [Dan.11:1]. Other rulers of the Persian Empire followed, but they had nothing to do with the progress of events affecting Israel and the working out of God’s great purposes. Ahasuerus’ attack on Greece and Macedonia gave cause for the hatred which moved Alexander to destroy the Persian Empire. Once this attack on Grecia occurred, no other Persian ruler really mattered. The Empire was doomed.

Alexander the great was the mighty king who stood up to *“rule with great dominion...according to his will”* [Dan.11:3]. Until the rise of the German military machine in World War II, there had never been anything to compare to Alexander’s campaign for lightning speed. His rule was the rule of one man’s will, and although he had tremendously capable men at his side, Alexander very nearly was the Empire.

None of his *“posterity”* (descendants) inherited Alexander’s dominion, nor did it continue to exist *“according to his dominion which he ruled”* [Dan.11:4]. For all his great

power, the Empire was broken; “*divided toward the four winds of heaven*” at his death. In **Daniel 8:8**, exactly the same phrase was used. His great Empire did not fall to conquest, but its political makeup was changed from a single, monolithic power base to 4 separate, independent kingdoms. The “*others*” who took control of his dominion were the 4 generals who had helped him defeat the Persians [Dan.11:4].

Only 2 of the 4 kingdoms concern us here, those of the north and the south. Israel is central to the Divine Purposes unfolded in Daniel, and is therefore used as the geographic center. Ptolemy Soter was the first “*king of the south*” after Alexander. His dominion was Egypt. The first “*king of the north*” after Alexander was Seleucus Nicator, who ruled over Syria, Lebanon, Persia, Bactria, and most of Asia Minor. The various rulers who succeeded them on the thrones of the 2 kingdoms are also referred to simply as “*the king of the north*” or “*the king of the south*.”

The king of the south gained in strength, even as the Lord foretold, and he became stronger than the king of the north [Dan.11:5]. History tells us that he marched into Israel as if on a peaceful visit, and then, on a Sabbath day, took control. Up to that time the land of Israel had pertained to the Seleucid kings of the north. Naturally, his actions created hostility between the 2 kingdoms.

After a time, in an effort to patch up their differences, the 2 kingdoms made an alliance. This took place in “*the end of years*” of the Grecian Empire, not long before the Romans took control of the area. The alliance was cemented by the marriage of Bernice, “*the kings’ daughter of the south*,” to the king of the north. There was a hindrance to this marriage in the person of Laodice, the wife of the northern king. He divorced her. Angry at being set aside, she poisoned Bernice and arranged the murders of all who were associated with her [Dan.11:6]. She then remarried the king of the north, and shortly thereafter poisoned him, setting her son on the throne in place of his father.

Bernice’s brother, one “*out of the branch of her roots*,” took the throne of Egypt. He marched on the kingdom of the north with an army to avenge the murders perpetrated by Laodice. He prevailed [Dan.11:7]. He returned home rich, apparently having taken from the king of the north everything his army could carry. It is prophesied that he would “*continue more years than the king of the north*.” Not long after his disastrous defeat at the southern king’s hands, the northern king fell from a horse and died [Dan.11:8].

Plots back in Egypt had forced the king of the south to return home and reassert his claim to the throne [Dan.11:9]. Because of this he was unable to follow up his victories.

The king of the north had left 2 sons when he died. The heir to the throne was poisoned and was replaced by his brother. This king raised a great army and marched against Egypt. Initially victorious, overflowing the territories of the southern king, he was eventually forced to flee north to his home fortress [Dan.11:10].

In **Daniel 8:7**, Alexander the Great is depicted as a he goat, “*moved with choler* (rage)” against Persia because of its invasion of Greece and Macedonia, despite the fact that the attack had not been successful. In like manner, the king of the south was “*moved with choler*” over the northern king’s failed invasion.

When he moved to avenge himself upon the north, “*a great multitude*” of soldiers was set forth against him, but that army was defeated [Dan.11:11].

In the flush of pride brought on by his great victory, the southern king executed his enemies by the thousands. This, he apparently thought, would further strengthen his hand. Remember, “*Also I (that is, the Lord), in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him*” [Dan.11:1]. God did not choose to strengthen this king of the south, and the great slaughter gained him nothing, either politically or militarily [Dan.11:12].

Following this terrible defeat, the king of the north managed to muster an army even greater than the one he had before. He borrowed vast amounts of money to finance his campaign, and again invaded the south [Dan.11:13].

With him came “*many (some of them hired) (to) stand up against the king of the south.*” At the same time Daniel was told, “*Robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision, but they shall fall.*” These were Israelites (of Daniel’s people). Their intention was to establish the vision, to set up the kingdom which God had foretold in vision and prophecy. This seems outwardly to be a very commendable desire, but outward appearances can be very deceiving. (See Joh.12:3-6 for an example of one who spoke words which seemed godly, but for a hidden and covetous reason). It was not God’s appointed time for establishing The Kingdom, and rejecting God’s timetable is rebellion, just as surely as is rejecting any other part of His plan. Their hidden motive here was spiritual robbery—they wanted to exalt themselves, not God. Such pretenders to high spirituality damage God’s people while opposing God’s purposes. Although they may go forward quite a way in their purposes, God will not allow such deceivers to succeed. He did not strengthen these rebels; and, they fell [Dan.11:14].

During his invasion, the king of the north laid siege to “*fenced (walled) cities.*” He would “*cast up a mound*” against the city wall, constructing a huge mound of earth against it. By this means he could enter even the “*most fenced cities.*” God gave no strength to the king of the south or to his “*chosen people*” (elite soldiers) and the king of the north was victorious [Dan.11:15].

His victory was complete. He did according to his own will and none could stand against him. For His own purposes God had strengthened him for a little success, though the king was evil.

I have heard it said that “When God has a dirty job to do, He can find a dirty man to do it.”

Spiritual rebellion was at work in Israel, and God used this man to destroy the rebels. The king of the north stood in Israel, “*the glorious land,*” and “*consumed*” it [Dan.11:16]. When God’s people move according to His will, nothing can finally stop them in their course. When they move against His purpose, He will not strengthen them in their sins. What a vital lesson for Israel and for us!

DANIEL 11:17-35

The king of the north, having defeated the king of the south, set his face to rule the territories he had won. He knew this would require the strength of his whole

kingdom; governing from a distance was immensely difficult. To help maintain control, he gave his daughter to the southern king as wife, “*corrupting her*” and persuading her to look after his interests instead of submitting to her own husband. Her name was Cleopatra. In the end, however, she took her husband’s part against her father, and did not “*stand on his side*” [Dan.11:17]. He lost his hold on Egypt.

The northern king was now deeply in debt from his military expeditions, and had no hope for tribute from Egypt to pay those debts. Desperately needing the plunder that conquest could bring, he moved against “*the isles*” (the Mediterranean coastal cities). He met with success until attacking the Greeks, who had a treaty with Rome. Rome’s strength and will of iron, which were characterized in **Daniel 2**, were rapidly making it a great power. A “*prince*” (the Roman consul), gave aid to the Greeks “*for his own behalf*,” to further his own political career. The king brought reproach upon the Greeks when he defeated them and put them to tribute. The Romans caused it to “*turn upon him*” by the defeat and the tribute which they inflicted upon him [Dan.11:18].

He fled home to “*the fort of his own land*,” but his financial situation was worse than ever. He had initiated 3 costly invasions, with no real profit from any of them. He owed money to those who had financed him, to his army, and to the Romans. In desperation he robbed the wealthy treasury of Jupiter. This was his “*stumble*.” The people, outraged by his impiety toward their idol god, arose violently against him, and he was killed. This was his “*fall*” [Dan.11:19].

His son became the new king of the north. To pay the debts his father had left, he became “*a raiser of taxes*.” His rule never rose any higher than this. He was honored as a ruler and had the full “*glory of the kingdom*,” but his days on the throne were comparatively few. He was killed, “*not in anger, nor in battle*,” but in cold blood by one who coveted the power he held [Dan.11:20].

Daniel 11:21 brings us to Antiochus Epiphanes. No other man in history fits the place and the events which God has described here. Only this Antiochus could possibly be the man God points out as being a true and clear figure of the Antichrist.

However, Antiochus is not a perfect picture of the man of sin. For example, Daniel 7 and 9 show that the Antichrist will come out of the remains of Roman rule; Antiochus Epiphanes was a Syrian king with his roots in Alexander’s Grecian Empire. No type, figure, or comparison is ever perfect—only useful. John called Jesus “*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” [Joh.1:29]. Jesus is not exactly like a lamb, but the lamb portrays important aspects of Jesus’ character and work. On a natural level, we might say that a tangerine is like an orange; yet a tangerine is not an orange, and however much they are alike, they are also different. So it is here. Although Antiochus gives a clear picture of the Antichrist who is to come, there were many things in his career which do not fully reflect the man of sin. We will pass over those matters without comment or dispute, accepting that the limitations of the figure are not the limits of the God who gave it. Although the comparison is not exact, in God’s judgment it is the best available.

It is worthwhile to observe the enormous contrasts between the Antichrist and the true Messiah, Jesus Christ. To the natural mind, there are great similarities

between Jesus, who suffered according to the will of His Father and arose from the dead triumphant; and the Antichrist, who will die and ascend out of the bottomless pit to head a doomed rebellion against God. To the eyes of the enlightened, the differences stand out, not the similarities.

Antiochus was a “*vile person*,” contemptible in his total lack of moral standards, and worthy only of disdain [Dan.11:21]. So it will be with the Antichrist. He will be a small, vile, blasphemous man, pushed to bigness by Satan’s power. How different from the Lord who bought us! Our High Priest is holy, harmless, and undefiled [Heb.7:26]. When the mighty, ruling, priestly overcomers worship Him they will cry, “*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things*” [Rev.4:1].

Antiochus told lies acceptable to his hearers. He came to power by “*flatteries*” and increased power by deception [Dan.11:21-23, 27]. A smooth talker, he said whatever was necessary to accomplish his ends. He used peace treaties with Israel and with Egypt to pave the way for violent conquest of those countries. The Antichrist will make a similar treaty [Dan.9:27, Isa.28:15-18]. Isaiah prophesied of that time, “*The ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly. The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant*” [Isa.33:7-8]. “*The prince of the covenant*,” apparently the Jewish leader who will make a league with Antichrist, will fall at that time [Dan.11:22]. The hallmark of Satan’s work, then, whether through Antiochus Epiphanes, the Antichrist, or any other, is a lying promise of peace, followed by the destruction of those who believe the lie.

Again, how different from the Lord Jesus Christ! He bore witness to the truth, knowing men would hate Him for it. To a group of Pharisees He said, “*Now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth...ye are of your father the devil...for he is a liar, and the father of it*” [Joh.8:40, 44]. There was no pretense in His words; every man knew where Jesus stood. In prayer He said, “*Thy word is truth*” [Joh.17:17]. He died according to that Word of truth, and according to that Word He was raised. All His promises of peace are true. Isaiah called Him “*The Prince of Peace*” [Isa.9:6]. In the final hours before His crucifixion He told His disciples, “*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you*” [Joh.14:27]. Grace and truth are the hallmarks of Christ’s work. I speak from experience when I say that He delivers on His promises. I have never regretted trusting in Him.

The Lord told Daniel, concerning Antiochus Epiphanes, “*His heart shall be against the holy covenant*” [Dan.11:28, 30]. The Antichrist, like Antiochus before him, will set himself against Israel with an implacable hatred when they reject his unrighteous demands. Here again, the gap between Christ and the Antichrist is vast. Jesus Christ the righteous loves Israel despite their present rejection. Paul said concerning Israel in our day, “*They are beloved*” [Rom.11:28]. Looking out across Jerusalem, knowing that Israel would soon cry out for His crucifixion, Jesus wept over their refusal of His offer of peace and because of the terrible judgments that He knew would come upon them [Luk.19:41-44]. The Antichrist will betray all who believe his lies, and seal his authority with the blood of others, both his followers and his opposers. Jesus Christ was betrayed by another, and made a covenant in His own blood to save all who would believe, even those who were His enemies.

The campaign of Antiochus against Israel is outlined in [Daniel 11:30-35](#). The efforts of the Antichrist will undoubtedly parallel those of Antiochus, as detailed

here and in [Daniel 7](#). Although Antiochus did indeed fulfill this prophecy up to [Daniel 11:35](#), that verse also states that there is an application to “*the time of the end*.”

The beast will begin, then, by having “*intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant*,” that is, he will seek out and consult with spiritually rebellious Jews. By his slippery flatteries and promises, he will further corrupt them, persuading them to join his evil cause. They will apparently take up arms in support of him when he sets up “*the abomination that maketh desolate*” [Dan.11:31].

Of course, not all Jews will join him...God always has a remnant. “*The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits*” [Dan.11:32]. Who will these be? No matter how many philosophers in religious garb proclaim the supposedly liberal view that men can know God apart from Jesus, it is still a lie.

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.” [1Jo.2:23]

“He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent him.” [Joh.5:23]

These will be Jews who will have accepted Jesus Christ. Due to their late acceptance of Him, most of them will be spiritually ignorant, but some (the 2 witnesses, and the 144,000) will understand God’s Word and the events around them. These will instruct others. By God’s Word their faith will be strengthened for the terrible day in which they live.

DANIEL 11:33-45

The Antichrist’s rise to power will herald a period of trouble unparalleled in human history [Dan.12:1, Mat.24:21-22]. When we consider history’s record of wars, natural catastrophes, and persecutions of believers, we must tremble at that which awaits the world. Everyone on earth will share in that awful period of travail [Rev.3:10], but the saved especially will feel its impact. Jeremiah wrote about that time, “*Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it*” [Jer.30:7]. Jacob’s Trouble! The saved of The Church will be gone! (See again Rev.3:10.) The Bible speaks of no Gentiles as trusting in or suffering for Christ in that time. We must agree with the Scriptures.

Believing Israel, then, will suffer terribly during the Great Tribulation. Some will be killed “*by the sword*,” that is, by violent use of weapons; some will be burned to death; some will perish through the cruel hardships of imprisonment and slavery. Nor will this be a thing of a few days, weeks, or months. It will continue for “*many days*” [Dan.11:33]. All the persecution during the 3½-year Tribulation will be centered against God’s remnant among Israel.

They will probably be blamed publicly for the problems that the world will face. The ungodly like to accuse the righteous of causing the calamities which result from spiritual rebellion. When, because of their idolatry, God purposed to judge Israel, Elijah agreed with Him in prayer and testimony. Their attitude when judgment came was predictable.

"And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that thou hast forsaken the commandments of the Lord." [1Ki.18:17-18]

So it will always be.

There will be some who help the Jews [Dan.11:34]. After the Tribulation, the nations will be gathered to a judgment to reveal who, among those still living on the earth, will have a place in the earthly kingdom [Mat.25:31-40]. To some, Jesus the great King will say, *"I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."* They won't be aware of having done those things for Him, and He will explain, *"Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."* Prayerful study shows that the *"brethren"* to whom Christ refers will be saved Israelites. And so they will receive *"a little help."*

Those who help will be comparatively few, but many will make an outward show of uniting with them, only to try and turn them from their faith. They will use all the smooth, blasphemous, flattering, lying arguments which will be the trademark of Antichrist. No doubt the faithful Israelites will be hated even more when they reject men's reasonings and promises, and still refuse to compromise their faith.

Do not suppose that this persecution and slaughter will be a defeat for the righteous. (Read Rom.8:35-37, 2Co.4:17.) Even the worst imaginable situation can bring victory and eternal glory to those who believe. In this age God uses earthly suffering to prepare us for heavenly rewards; He will do the same for believers then. God will allow some of those dear, Israelitish saints to fall in order *"to try them, and to purge, and to make them white"* [Dan.11:35]. He will work their good from Satan's evil [cf. Rom.8:28, Gen.50:20].

According to [Daniel 11:35](#), these things pertain *"to the time of the end,"* far beyond the day of Antiochus Epiphanes. They are *"for a time appointed,"* for the time spoken of in [Daniel 9:27](#). From here onward, the prophecy no longer views the Antichrist through Antiochus, but takes a direct look at him with no intervening typical figure. This allows us to see beyond the limitations of the type.

Satan will focus his own corrupt nature and desires into the person of this man and king Antichrist will prosper. How can he help but prosper in the present world system, which is devoted to the Satanic principles of greed, self-will, and the rejection of God? Satan's first sin was, *"I will,"* and his desire was to be like God Himself [Isa.14:12-14]. So it will be with the evil king who is called Antichrist. His deeds will be *"according to his will"*; he will *"magnify himself above every god"*; he will *"speak marvelous things against the God of gods"* [Dan.11:36].

Yet, Satan can only give success to the beast *"till the indignation be accomplished."* When God has finished pouring out His wrath upon the earth, and is ready to judge the Antichrist, all his prosperity will be over. Both David and Asaph spoke of the prosperous wicked, showing their lot to be unenviable, ending in sure judgment [Psa.37, Psa.73]. Knowing the things which trouble our thoughts, God reminds The Church over and over that there is a final reckoning beyond the scenes of earth. Surely He will remind the godly remnant of Jacob that the

Antichrist will fall and Satan's plans will crumble, "*For that that is determined shall be done*" [Dan.11:36]. God has determined to overthrow Satan and to give a kingdom to Israel. What God determines to do will be done.

Nevertheless, for His own glory, God would have Israel (and us) to see the course of this evil man who will magnify himself above every god, so the narrative continues.

The Antichrist will endeavor to break all restraints [Dan.11:37]. He will reject the god (religion) held by his fathers.

- Daniel 9:26 shows us the Antichrist will be **Roman**; for the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. He will destroy a religious system, figuratively called Babylon. In Revelation 17:18 Babylon is described to John as "*that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*" Only Rome fits those interpretive words.

No influence of women will soften the cruelty of his power. Even false gods and lying religions often put some check upon their adherents, but he will reject them all, honoring and magnifying only himself.

In [Daniel 11:38-39](#), we see something of the Antichrist's religion. He will honor [the god of forces](#), which is better translated "*the god of fortresses*"—the god of military force. In Rome of old, the emperor was worshipped as the one who controlled lives, governments, and armies. It was a **political religion**. So also with the Antichrist. In connection with his false worship it is said, "*and he will cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.*" There will be a real and sinister spiritual power in it [Rev.13:11-15], but this worship of the Antichrist seemingly will be centered on military/political force, just as was the worship of earlier Roman emperors. He will lavish a wealth of gold, silver, and precious stones upon his religion of government conquest. His claim to be God will be tied inseparably to the progress and consolidation of his earthly power.

Despite all this, the kingdom of Antichrist will not be the irresistible, monolithic power which most people imagine. It will be "*part of iron, and part of clay...partly strong, and partly broken*" [Dan.2:42]. At the height of his power, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and perhaps, Turkey will mount a rebellion against him (these occupy about the same territory as the old kings of the north and south). Ethiopia, Libya, and others (here called Edom, Moab, and Ammon) will also partially succeed in putting down the rebellion, his greatest success coming in northern Africa. His main assault will apparently be against Egypt, with Libyan and Ethiopian resistance crumbling when they see Egypt's defeat [Dan.11:42-43].

While he is still dealing with the situation in Africa, news of new trouble will come "*out of the east and out of the north*" [Dan.11:44]. Israel is northeast of Egypt. These tidings will almost surely have to do with the work of God in the hearts of His people Israel. Because faith in God will mean rejection of Antichrist's claims, he will be made furious against Israel and against God. At this point the Antichrist will overreach himself. Up to then, though his persecution of godly Jews will have been rigorous and unflagging, he apparently will not have set himself to utterly destroy the nation. It will have been a matter only of policy and politics; cold, efficient, and impersonal. But now, "*He shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many*" [Dan.11:44]. It will have become a

personal issue to him, one he decides to resolve by mass destruction of the Jews. With this decision, he will go too far and God will destroy him. His time will have run out.

He will make a last stand against God and godliness, setting up his royal encampment *“between the seas in the glorious holy mountain,”* that is, in Jerusalem [Dan.11:45]. From there he will direct forces gathered to crush earth’s last remnant of faith. Then, suddenly, without fanfare, the career of the Antichrist will be over. *“Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”* At the last, the great spiritual and natural forces which agree and conspire to give him power will not be able to help him. There will be no dramatic battle. God will destroy the man and his power as easily as we might destroy a poisonous spider and its web [cf. Isa.14:15-17]. So shall Satan’s mightiest follower be judged for rebelling against God and His Christ.

DANIEL 12

DANIEL 12:1-3

“At that time,” (during the time of the Antichrist’s rule) Michael, the angel-prince mentioned in [Daniel 10](#), will stand up to work on behalf of Israel against the powers of darkness. Then *“there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time”* [Dan.12:1]. The connection between Michael’s actions and the coming of that trouble is obvious from Revelation 12:7-12, where John records a vision of a war in heaven. Michael and his angels will fight against Satan and his angels, defeating Satan and casting him out of the heavens. Then, *“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth (Israel) and of the sea (the Gentile nations)! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”* Michael’s success against Satan will trigger Satan to greater violence than the world has ever seen.

His wrath will be directed against Israel. Revelation 12:13 says, *“When the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman.”* This woman figuratively represents a spiritual company of godly people. As far as the earth is concerned, only Israelites will then be numbered among the godly. Revelation 12:17 says, *“The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”* Satan will hate them, not simply as Jews, but as godly Jews, submitted to Christ.

Stop a moment and consider. Michael will stand up and fight for Israel. The immediate result of his efforts will be the persecution of godly Israel on a scale never before seen. Will it be worth it? To the natural mind it almost appears that it would be better if Michael would just leave well enough (or bad enough) alone! Thank God, we need not look at this or any other issue from the natural viewpoint.

In Exodus we see a similar situation. God sent Moses to Pharaoh with a demand that Israel be let go. Pharaoh had no intention of letting go of a people he considered to be his property. He responded to Moses’ message by making their tasks harder, raising work quotas, and ordering beatings when these quotas were not met. Israel bitterly resented Moses and Aaron for having

stirred up Pharaoh against them. Moses, not yet understanding the ways of God fully, cried out, *“Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all”* [Exo.5:22-23]. Yet God had a purpose and eventually delivered Israel with a strong hand. The parallels are obvious. Is it worthwhile to stir up trouble by entering into battle with Satan (see Eph.6)? Yes! Godly suffering brings deliverance, and no deliverance can come without it. Revelation 2:11 tells of the only possible way to defeat Satan: *“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death.”* That last clause cannot be left out. It is a part of the way to victory. In His message to Smyrna, the Lord Jesus Christ said, *“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”* [Rev.2:10].

God, through Michael, will set in motion a terrible war of deliverance, by which He will establish The Kingdom of His Son in Israel. Many godly Jews will suffer and die in the ensuing battles. **Daniel 12:1** goes on, *“and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”* This includes those who die. God will deliver them, but not by keeping back all effects of Satan’s wrath. Those who choose to follow Jesus in that day will have to face these hard but glorious facts.

Resurrection, the final deliverance of those who give their lives for Jesus’ sake, is the subject of **Daniel 12:2-3**. **Many** in **Daniel 12:2** could rightly be translated *“multitude.”* This would cause the passage to be rendered, *“And (the multitude) of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.”* This undoubtedly gives a truer sense of what Daniel was told, since we know that all will eventually be raised, and not just *“many.”* There will be 2 resurrections. Some will be raised to *“everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”* What this passage does not reveal is that there will be 1,000 years between the last stage of the first resurrection, and the dreadful judgment of the last resurrection.

The **first resurrection** (the resurrection to *“everlasting life”*) has several phases.

- It seems Moses was the first man raised from death; Satan disputed with Michael over his body and he later appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration [Jud.1:9, Mat.17:1-3].
- Many saints were raised with Jesus at His resurrection [Mat.27:51-53].
- In Revelation 4 is seen a glorious company of overcoming saints, the first of The Church Age to be resurrected/translated.
- Revelation 7 shows a *“great multitude, which no man could number,”* is the next group to go.
- Later, in Revelation 14, we see 144,000 Spirit-filled Jews who will be translated before the time of Jacob’s Trouble.
- Finally, in Revelation 20, John was shown the resurrection of saved Israelites whom the beast will kill for their testimony of Jesus. This is the last group to have a part in the first resurrection. *“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This (that is, the raising up of all believers) is the first resurrection”* [Rev.20:5]. This resurrection in various

companies or ranks was referred to by Paul when he wrote, *“In Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order”* [1Co.15:22-23].

The *“shame and everlasting contempt”* to which some will be raised is as everlasting and sure as the life which resurrected saints will enjoy. In his vision of the Great White Throne, at the end of the 1,000 years, John saw *“the dead, small and great, stand before God”* [Rev.20:12]. All of the saved will already be raised to everlasting life, so we know that *“the dead”* here speaks of those who have no part in the first resurrection. No child of God will stand to be judged before the Great White Throne. After an examination of the Divine Record, they will be cast into the lake of fire, the book of life first being consulted to give an official, public testimony that they had never accepted the life Christ offered to them. Their resurrection will be *“the resurrection of damnation,”* a resurrection to *“the second death”* of eternal torment [Joh.5:29, Rev.20:10-15].

As for the destiny of the saved, Daniel was told, *“They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever”* [Dan.12:3]. Two groups of saved people are indicated in that verse, but one of them is surely a part of an outgrowth of the other. We might say, “Flowers have a place of honor in my yard, and roses have a special place.” Roses are flowers, but not all flowers are roses. Those that turn many to righteousness are wise, but not all the wise turn many to righteousness. Their places show a similar distinction. *“The firmament”* simply means **the sky**. The sky contains the stars, but the stars are distinct from the sky. Many will shine with a bright beauty as the sky, but some will have a glory that stands out even in the midst of the overall beauty. Let us consider the distinction in spiritual purpose and place which is marked in this verse.

First, *“they that be wise.”* *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”* [Psa.111:10]. All who have repentant, reverential fear of God, a fear which leads men to Christ, are wise. Not that they have all reached the end of wisdom when they begin to fear God; they have only made a start. For our day, wisdom is extended by laying hold of the special truths revealed in Paul's gospel [1Co.2:6, Eph.3:1-9, Col.1:24-29, etc.]. All believers need to grow in the wisdom of God, in whatever age they live, but all who are wise will be exalted.

But there are also *“they that turn many to righteousness.”* With only this verse to consider, we might think that visible success brings reward, while faithfulness with no apparent result brings no reward. How important it is to live *“by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* [Mat.4:4, Deu.8:3]. How vital to take our spiritual hope from the whole Word of God, and not just one part or another. Noah, Job, Abraham, Jeremiah—such men as these did not seem to turn many to righteousness during their lifetimes; will they have no special place? Thankfully, God does not see as men see. *“For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband”* [Gal.4:27, Isa.54:1]. God's most fruitful people often appear to be spiritually barren.

Turning many to righteousness has more to do with our full agreement with God's Word than with immediate and visible results. In heaven it will be seen that those who are faithful to His Word have been instrumental in reaching everyone who has ever turned to righteousness, however it may appear on earth. Prayer, example, steadfastness, and faith are the tools God uses to

work His mightiest works. The God who tries men's hearts will surely know to whom the reward belongs.

DANIEL 12:4-13

As the final prophecy of his book drew to a close, Daniel was told, "*Shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end*" [Dan.12:4]. It was not time for these prophecies to be fully understood. He was told of a time when men would run to and fro, and knowledge would increase; only then would these prophecies be unsealed. Men would study, comment, and question, but until God was ready, Daniel's writings could not be entirely opened.

- Do you remember the various purposes for which God determined the 70 weeks of years upon Daniel's people?

One of them, listed in [Daniel 9:24](#), was "*to seal up the vision and prophecy.*" According to Revelation 5-8, the 7 years of the beast-covenant will be marked by Christ's loosing the seals of a book, with judgments following as each seal is opened. A part of God's purpose for Israel is sealed from men's eyes until that opening-time of the future. There is, perhaps, a parallel in the matter of God's purpose upon the Gentiles and The Church. Much was written in the Old Testament concerning these matters, yet none fully grasped what it was that God would do. God kept it hidden until the right time, though the words were in plain sight.

Daniel then saw 2 others who stood by in the vision, one of whom asked, "*How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?*" [Dan.12:6]. This was undoubtedly a question Daniel had often pondered, even as we do today.

Before we consider the answer, however, let us consider the answerer, "*the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river*" [Dan.12:7]. In [Daniel 10](#), we saw that the 1st messenger who appeared to Daniel in this vision was clearly Jesus Christ. It seems that He appears here again. Daniel saw him lift both hands to heaven "*and swore by Him that liveth for ever,*" that the time should be for such and such a period. We see a similar picture in Revelation, where one "*lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever...that there should be time no longer*" [Rev.10:5-7] (read that whole passage).

He is called there a mighty angel. The word [angel](#) simply means "*messenger,*" and is so translated a number of times in the Bible. There are also places where the translators rendered it an [angel](#) although the context clearly refers to saved people. In other passages, such as Revelation 10, Christ is referred to. We believe that it is Christ for a number of reasons, but perhaps just one will suffice: He swears by the eternal God. We are told, "*swear not at all*" [Mat.5:3]. For us to swear an oath is evil, for we have not the power to fulfill an oath. It is pride to imagine otherwise. When God made a promise to Abraham, "*Because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself*" [Heb.6:13]. When God gives His Word in this fashion there is no pride nor evil, for all His purposes are good, and He has the power to accomplish them. The One before us is called **a man**, yet He swears as only God has a right to do. Notice also that Daniel called Him "*Lord*" in [Daniel 12:8](#). This must, therefore, be Jesus Christ. His Word is sure. No messenger has more authority.

The only answer He gave to the question, “*How long shall it be?* [Dan.12:6], was: “*It shall be for a time, times, and an half,*” or 3 ½ years [Dan.12:7]. During this period, the last half of the week of Daniel 9:27, the power of the holy people will be scattered or broken. God will use the Antichrist to so bring down the pride and power of Israel that they will turn entirely to Him. Then He will be able to use that nation. But notice that there are no dates, just a duration. There is no hint of when that period will begin. That is one of God’s secrets, reserved unto Himself.

Daniel did not understand the answer, and inquired, “*O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?*” [Dan.12:8]. The word translated *what* can also mean “*where,*” “*why,*” or “*when.*” He had seen what the end would be. In **Daniel 2**, he saw the shattering of Gentile dominion and the establishing of a Divine Kingdom which shall stand forever. In **Daniel 7**, he saw that the saints of the most High (for him, and in the earthly sense, Israel) will possess The Kingdom and the Antichrist will be destroyed. Here in **Daniel 12**, he had already seen the resurrection of the just to everlasting life and glory. He knew very well what the end would be. The duration was also clear enough. He had seen 7 times (7 years) pass over Nebuchadnezzar in judgment [Dan.4:25, 32]. The time of trouble prophesied would be half that long, nor was the where or why a hidden issue. Apparently, Daniel was repeating the earlier question as he understood it. “*WHEN shall be the end?*” he asked.

The Lord replied, “*Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.*” If the words which answer the question “*WHEN?*” are found in Scripture, and I doubt it, they are surely sealed until the end time, the prophesied and unfulfilled week of years, when God will again make His schedule plain. When Daniel asked his question, he was told to go his way, to learn and to do those things which pertained to him. No other answer was given then; no other answer will be given today.

Knowing when the end will come was not a part of Daniel’s way—nor is it of ours [Mat.24:36, 44; Act.1:6-7; 1Th.5:2].

It hurts our Gentile pride to suppose there might be something which we cannot understand, but you may be sure that what God has sealed up is sealed securely until such time as He chooses to open it. Daniel served the One “*that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth*” [Rev.3:7]. We have seen earlier that although we may learn from Daniel, his message is clearly for a saved Israel of the end time. Despite all the revelation of Scripture, the wicked will not understand; they refuse to do so. Many Jews will believe and be made pure by the blood of Jesus Christ. They will be tested by their tribulations, and some will receive a great reward. The wise Israelites of that day will understand all that Daniel has written and more [cf. Mat.25:4-6; Dan.11:33]. They will know God’s will for them. Daniel had to go his way, as we must; he could know God’s will for him in his day, as we may; and in the proper time, all of the sealed secrets of this book will be understood by those for whose sakes it was written.

“What?” you may say, “Have you written about this book at such length, and yet you still call the book sealed?” Yes, I do. As an example, read Daniel 12:11-12, along with Daniel 8:14. These prophesied, specific lengths of time concern God’s schedule for the Jews, and appear to be as surely sealed to us as they were to Daniel. If you do not believe this, make the interpretation

of these verses a prayerful, standing question before the Lord. Compare these numbers of days with figures given in Revelation and elsewhere. Discuss them with wise, godly people. Look to the Hebrew text, inquiring, if necessary, through books or scholars. I have done all this and found nothing, by way of organizing, coordinating, or interpreting these numbers, which fully seem to fit the Scriptures. Nor is this the only part of Daniel which is left sealed. Anyone who studies Bible prophecy with a submissive heart must eventually sense that God will not answer all questions today any more than in Daniel's day.

So we go our way, like Daniel, "*till the end be*" [Dan.12:13]. He was told, "*Thou shalt rest.*" God led Daniel to his rest by the way of the grave. His way is in the heavens now, where he waits for the end, resting in the presence of his Lord, while we await Christ's coming here. It may be that our way, too, will lead us to heaven before the end comes. Yet it will come, and if we have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, we, like Daniel, will see that day when it arrives. It will be glorious!

Daniel was given a final promise. Though his life here would not extend to the end-time, the Lord promised that he would "*stand in (his) lot at the end of days.*" He was given positive assurance that he would possess a place of inheritance when the time came. It was not necessary to live on the earth until that time, nor to understand all that was reserved unto that time. Many questions would have to be left unanswered, many coveted truths remain hidden, but Daniel would lose nothing of what God had offered to him as an Israelite. He had been faithful. He had believed what God revealed to him. Though his lot will be different from ours, yet the same promise is made to us. Read Paul's last words in 2 Timothy 4:6-8:

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

As we who are of The Church go our way, walking in the truth that God has given for this age, we too can be sure of standing in our own order, our own place of inheritance in the end of days. Amen.

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