

# **DANIEL**

## **WRITER**

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

## **DATE**

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

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

## **BOOK**

The book is divided into two sections. Chapters 1-6 are primarily historical in content in reference to the Babylonian Empire. Chapters 7-12 are prophetic in reference to those events that would affect the Jews until the coming of the Messiah, and shortly after, until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The prophetic revelation brings the readers to the revelation of the work and kingdom of the Christ

who would ascend to the throne of God in heaven. Once the coronation had taken place, then it was a time for the end of national Israel through whom God had worked since the days of Abraham in order to bring the Messiah into the world.

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

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

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

The book of Daniel thus focuses on the sovereign reign of God over all things (See 2:47; 3:17,18; 4:28-37; 5:18-31). In the midst of turmoil, Daniel reassures the captives that God rewards faithfulness (See 1:8,9,15-21; 2:17-19, 27,28,48,49; 3:12,16-18, 26-30; 5:16-18,29; 6:7-12,19-24). Though His people would suffer amidst the turmoil of international affairs, God would eventually reign victorious over all evil forces (2:44; 7:9-12,26,27; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45; 12:13). When the Son of

Man was brought unto the Ancient of Days, God's work through Israel would be consummated (7:13,14). After the completion of the purpose for the existence of Israel, it would dissolve into the spiritual Israel, the church (Gl 3:26-29). National Israel would be terminated in the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem (See comments Mt 24).

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Babylonian Empire**

Nabopolassar (625-605 B.C.) was the first king of Babylon when the Babylonian Empire was in its early beginnings. He led the Babylonians in a defeat of the Assyrian Empire in 612 and 609. His successor, Nebuchadnezzar, defeated the Assyrian/Egyptian alliance at the battle of Carchemish in 609 B.C., and thus established the Babylonian Empire that took over all the former Assyrian Empire territories. Nebuchadnezzar reigned from 605 to 561 B.C. and was succeeded by Amel-Mardu (Evil-Merodach) his son. Amel-Mardu reigned until 559 B.C. when his brother-in-law, Neriglissar assassinated him. Neriglissar reigned from 559 to 556 B.C. After him came Labashi-Marduk, the son of Neriglissar, who reigned only nine months before being assassinated. Nabonidus then seized the throne. During his reign, Belshazzar, his son, reigned coregent with his father until 539 B.C. In 539 B.C. the Babylonian Empire came to a close.

### **Medo-Persian Empire**

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

### **Rule of the Seleucidae**

When Alexander the Great unexpectedly died, the Greek Empire was divided

into four regions over which Alexander's four generals ruled. The Greek rulers who directly affected the people of God in Palestine were the Seleucidae and Ptolemy rulers. The Seleucidae ruled over Syria and most of the former Babylonian Empire to the north of Palestine and east of Syria. The rulers of the Seleucidae kingdom were the following:

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

### **Rule of the Ptolemies**

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

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

Daniel gives a prophetic picture of events that transpired between the Ptolemies and Seleucidae rulers that greatly affected the lives of the Jews in Palestine during the period that led up to Rome's conquest of the region. Some important events to remember include the marriage of Antiochus II of Syria to Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II, in 248 B.C. (Dn 11:6). Wars broke out between Ptolemy III and Seleucus II (Dn 11:7ff). Antiochus II made himself the ruler of Palestine, but was later forced to retreat because of his defeat by Ptolemy IV at Raphia in 217 B.C. In 202 B.C.

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

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

In 169-168 B.C. Apollonius made a surprise attack on Jerusalem, massacring many Jews and forcing many to flee for their lives. He then established a garrison of soldiers in Jerusalem for the Syrians. Antiochus Epiphanes subsequently ordered the termination of Jewish religious ceremonies, forbidding the Jews' honoring of the Sabbath and circumcision. He burned copies of the Torah and abolished sacrifices. A pagan altar was set up in the temple in 168 B.C. (Dn 8:11-13,24,25; 11:30-35). However, one year later Mattathias and his sons rose up against the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dn 11:37; 1 Enoch 90:9; 1 Maccabees 2). When Mattathias died, his son, Judas, continued the revolt against the occupation of Palestine, defeating the Syrians and killing the two Syrian generals, Apollonius and Seron (1 Maccabees 3:1-14). The cleansing of the temple took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Chisleu (December 25<sup>th</sup>), a little over three years after it was desecrated by Antiochus. Antiochus later sought to plunder a temple in Elymais of Persia. However, he was defeated by the residents and later died at Taboe (Dn 8:14,25; 11:45).

Daniel's detail concerning the turmoil of the nations in reference to the land of Palestine has led some critics to believe that the book was actually written as a history book, instead of a prophecy. But when one studies through the content of the book, there would be no encouraging factor for the writing of the book if it were written as a history of interbiblical events. The encouragement of its content would be valid only if it were a prophecy of things to come in the history of God's people in Palestine. In fact, the prophecies of historical events to come were so detailed that when revealed to Daniel, he fainted at their complexity and how the nations

would affect the people of God. Nevertheless, there was a time coming wherein peace would be restored for a brief period of time. At that time, God would send the Messiah into the world. Rome eventually gained control of Palestine, and subsequently brought peace to the land by allowing some autonomy among the Jews. When the fullness of time came, the Redeemer for whom all God's people had been waiting was revealed (Gl 4:4).

It is our general understanding that all the prophecies and fulfillments of Daniel were directed to the people of God who were headed for a time of frustration and discouragement as victims of international turmoil. The fulfillment of the prophecies would come in the first century when the descendants of God's people in the interbiblical era would experience the fulfillment of the prophecies. There is no contextual reason to hijack these contexts for our own needs today in reference to the end of time, or for those who would live prior to the final coming of Jesus. We must always keep Israel in mind when interpreting prophecies that were made to Israel. God was working through Israel in order to bring the Messiah and Savior into the world. Once this eternal plan was accomplished, then it was God's plan to terminate Israel as a race of people with whom He had a special covenant relationship. Israel was terminated in Christ (See comments Gl 3:23-26). National Israel was terminated by the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). The purpose of the prophets, therefore, was to bring the Jews and all mankind to the cross of Jesus. The prophets were sent in order to bring a remnant of Israel to the cross in order that the promises made to the fathers were fulfilled (See Gn 12:1-3).

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

## History Of Peoples And Nations

(1:1 – 7:28)

**Outline:** (1) Faithfulness of Daniel and friends (1:1-21), (2) Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an image (2:1-49), (3) Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (3:1-30), (4) Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a tree (4:1-37), (5) End of Belshazzar and Babylon (5:1-31), (6) Deliverance from the lion's den (6:1-28), (7) Daniel's dream of the four beasts (7:1-28)

### Chapter 1

#### FAITHFULNESS OF DANIEL AND FRIENDS

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

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

**1:8-13 Daniel determined:** Even at this young age, Daniel, with his three friends, were young men with convictions. The parents of these four young men did not fail in their training of their children to remain faithful to God. The convictions of the young men were so strong that they refused to go with the crowd, even under the orders of the king of Babylon. God can use young men with such great convictions. The integrity of Daniel and his friends was manifested in their convictions to stand for that which they had made a commitment. Neither peer pressure nor kings could deter them from their convictions. They refused to

partake of food that was either dedicated to pagan gods, or manifested a compromise of their faith. Their names could be changed by the king, but not their convictions. **Vegetables:** Literally, seeds. The diet was generally a diet of seeds and vegetables. The ten-day hygienic diet gave the youth time for their bodies to manifest the benefits of the good diet.

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

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

wisdom in order that they be promoted in the kingdom of Babylon. **First year of King Cyrus:** This would be Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire. The date would be 539 B.C., the date when the Medes and Persians overthrew the Babylonian Empire. Daniel continued his influence over the Babylonians until the Babylonians were overthrown. He continued his ministry to at least the third year of Cyrus (10:1).

## Chapter 2

### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM OF AN IMAGE

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

**2:1-3** With the message of Daniel's vision of chapter 7, this dream of Nebuchadnezzar is the key message of the book (See comments ch 7 & Rv 13). What was revealed in this dream and Daniel's vision of chapter 7, was given for the purpose of encouraging the people of God until the coming of the Messianic age when the Son of Man would ascend to the throne of the Ancient of Days and assume kingdom reign over all things. Once this consummation of the ages had come, then Israel could be assured that the promises made to the fathers had been fulfilled. **Nebuchadnezzar ... commanded to call:** God was at work in all that took place in this incident. He revealed the dream, but also knew that Nebuchadnezzar would go to

extreme measures in order to have the dream revealed. His efforts to have the revelation of God explained by the wisest and most knowledgeable men of the Empire were futile. Such should be a warning to those modern-day prognosticators who would use their dreams to determine their behavior, and specifically, the future of things (See comments Jr 23:25-28,32; 29:8,9). God reveals His will to man through written word today. The ability to know the future, He reserves only for Himself. **Magicians:** These were those who were involved in the arts of the occult. **Astrologers:** Babylon was known for these who thought that they could gain knowledge through their interpretation of the movements of the heavenly bodies. **Sorcerers:** Through their incantations, these assumed that they could gain knowledge, and thus inquire into the supernatural for the purpose of controlling the behavior of men. **Chaldeans:** These were the priestly leaders of Babylon. They resorted to the incantations of the magicians, astrologers and sorcerers in order to maintain their power and control over the people. In the absence of the word of God, these misguided religionists controlled others by what they could conjure up in their own minds. It is inherent within men to be religious. But when there is an absence of the word of God, men will create gods after their own imagination and religious behavior after their own desire. There will always be those who will seek to be financially supported by the people who seek religious leadership. Those who are ignorant of the word of God,

therefore, seek to be religious leaders for their own gain. Those who reject the word of God will gladly sustain those who will satisfy their idle religious curiosity (Compare comments Mk 7:1-9; 2 Th 2:10-12; 2 Tm 4:1-4).

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

sought to defend themselves before the king. Their conclusion was correct. It was not in the power of man to reveal dreams. It could have been that the king had not really forgotten the details of the dream, but simply wanted to test those of his kingdom who presumed to know the future. If they could only reveal the dream itself, then he could have trusted their interpretation. But they failed the test, and thus were about to reap the consequences. ***They sought Daniel:*** We must assume that at least some of these religious leaders were former acquaintances of Daniel when they were all young men. Because they knew of him, they sought for him. These false religious leaders had failed concerning what they had claimed to be able to do. Nebuchadnezzar, therefore, sought to rid his kingdom of all religious fakes in order that the kingdom not be plagued by religious deceivers.

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

**2:17-23 *Desire mercies of the God of heaven:*** The religious leaders of Babylon were tried and convicted of their presumption to know the future by consulting and scheming concerning the

simple wisdom and knowledge of man. Daniel and his friends, however, were judged and proven to be true men of God. Because the wise men had totally failed with their presumptions among the people, God manifested His true messengers before all Babylon. We would assume, therefore, that though the religious prognosticators had been spared, their jealousy toward Daniel and his friends grew.

**2:24-30** Arioch immediately identified the one he had found who could interpret the dream. Daniel was identified to be one of the Israelite captives. He so identified Daniel in order that there be no question in the mind of Nebuchadnezzar that the one who would interpret the dream was not one of the religious leaders of Babylon. ***A God ... who reveals secrets:*** Contrary to what the religious leaders would claim, Daniel gave all credit to God for the revelation of the interpretation. Daniel knew that only God could do such a thing. ***What will be in the latter days:*** We must keep in mind that the dream that was given to Nebuchadnezzar was not for the sake of the Babylonian Empire. It was for the purpose of bringing comfort to the people of God. God wanted His people to know that He was still the sovereign God of the nations. In this first revelation of the book of Daniel, the prophecy is in reference to world empires. After the confirmation of the changes that would take place among the world empires, beginning in chapter 8, it would be revealed to Daniel the specific international struggles that would take place with the people of

God in the land of Palestine. All these international affairs would be culminated with the coronation of the Messiah at the right hand of God. From heaven the Son of Man would reign over all kingdoms of this world (7:13,14; See comments 1 Tm 6:15).

**2:31-45** In this context Daniel interpreted a God-given dream that He had revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar. The great image of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar was a prophecy of four earthly kingdom reigns or empires. ***This great image:*** The first kingdom was that of Nebuchadnezzar who represented the Babylonian kingdom (vs 37,38). After the Babylonian kingdom would come another, the Medo-Persian kingdom (vs 39). After the Medo-Persian kingdom, the Greek kingdom would arise (vs 39). A fourth kingdom would arise after the Greek kingdom. This was the Roman kingdom (vs 40). Daniel then interpreted that it would be in the days of the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire, that God would set up another kingdom reign. This kingdom would have authority over all the earth. However, it would not be a physical kingdom as was characteristic with the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman Empires (Lk 17:20,21). It would be a kingdom that was manifested on earth, but was not of this world (Jn 18:36). Daniel interpreted that the fourth kingdom would break in pieces, and that the kingdom that God would establish would assume all the authority of the earthly kingdoms (vs 44; see comments Rv 21:24). It would assume sovereignty of earthly kingdoms in

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

is emphasized. The prophecies assume the sovereignty of the king over all things because the king's authority would extend over all things. The reason these prophecies emphasize the kingdom reign is because contrasts are being established between the earthly kingdoms that were in power at the time the prophecies were made and the sovereignty that would be manifested through the reign of the Messiah. A contrast is also being established between the limited earthly kingdoms with the response to kingdom reign that would come from all nations during the time of the Messiah's reign. Universal kingship assumes universal kingdom reign. And if the King is to have universal kingdom reign, then the response to the reign (church) would go throughout all nations. Verse 44 is discussing the assumption of this sovereignty. **Stone:** In verse 45, "a stone" was cut out of the mountain of kingdom reign and broke in pieces the power of earthly authorities. It did so by breaking the power of the fourth kingdom (Rome) (vss 34,35). Herein is the impact of heavenly sovereignty that is manifested on earth through the hearts of men. When the will of the Father is done on earth as it was done in heaven (Mt 6:9,10), then the kingdom reign of Deity is manifested (See comments Mt 16:18,19). It is manifested to be stronger than any patriotism to any earthly kingdom. This transpired in the days of the Roman kingdom when men and women responded in great numbers to the kingdom reign of Jesus (See comments At 2:36-47). Herein is the church (the stone) and the influence of heavenly

kingdom reign on earth in the hearts of men (Lk 17:20,21). One can only imagine the anticipation that was created in the minds of the Jews as they read the prophecy of this dream. They had lost their nationhood in the past because of their idolatry. They would be restored to Palestine where they would continually be occupied and harassed by the surrounding nations. But there would come a time when their God would establish a kingdom reign above all the kingdoms of the world. Therefore, in order to continue His encouragement of His people in captivity, God revealed the vision of this chapter and chapter 7 (See comments ch 7; compare comments Rv 13).

**2:46-49** Nebuchadnezzar was awestruck concerning Daniel's revelation of the meaning of the dream. He was so overwhelmed by the interpretation that we are led to believe that he actually knew the details of the dream itself, but did not know the meaning. The very fact that Daniel was able to tell him the details of the dream was enough to convince him that Daniel was a true prophet of God. Though he did not understand the fulfillment of the interpretation, he knew that Daniel had revealed what he had actually dreamed. **Worshipped:** Though Nebuchadnezzar's worship of Daniel was misguided, his actions manifested his total confidence in Daniel. The result was what God intended for Daniel and his friends. He wanted them to be promoted in the kingdom in order to be an encouragement to the people of God in their captivity. Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel and his friends high political sta-

tus, and thus God was working through them to protect his people throughout the captivity years. God used Daniel from the very first captivity to the end of the captivity in order to be a spiritual center of reference for His people. The Israelites needed a stable spiritual light in their process of repentance from idolatry to faith in the one true and living God. Daniel and his three friends provided a spiritual center of reference for God's people.

### Chapter 3

#### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLDEN IMAGE

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

5.5 meters wide (18 feet). Its massive presence was commanding, and thus could be seen throughout the region from a great distance.

**3:7-18 *Certain Chaldeans:*** It is interesting that this priestly group of religious leaders who were previously spared from death by Daniel's interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2, are now seeking an accusation against Daniel's friends in order that they be killed. Such is the character of religious leaders who cherish their positions and possessions more than the truth. We must also understand that the religious leaders had known the men for several years, and thus understood their beliefs. Their jealousy, therefore, moved them to rid the kingdom of their righteous influence over the people. ***Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury:*** Nebuchadnezzar's command to dictate religious behavior was challenged by the three friends of Daniel (See comments At 4:28,29). ***Who is this God who will deliver you:*** As with the contest between Daniel and the religious leaders in chapter 2, here again is a contest between the true God of Israel and the false gods in which Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians believed. In this case, God turned the accusing actions of the Chaldeans against themselves. ***We do not need to give you an answer:*** Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had already determined their behavior and response to any threats that would be made toward them to compromise their principles. They trusted in God for their deliverance. But if God did not deliver them from the fiery fur-

nace, they still would not submit to a command to pay homage to false gods. Their example for all the Jews in captivity was more important than bowing down to a pagan idol.

**3:19-25 Facial expression was altered:** This was an indication of a king who lived with every command of his rule being obeyed without question. The three Jews were not being defiant. They realized that there was One greater than Nebuchadnezzar who had command over him (See comments Jn 18:36). It was to this One that they must first be obedient in worship, for they knew that there were worse things than death. The message of the incident is that there is nothing on earth, neither man nor any created god after the imagination of man, who is to be worshiped. Worship is to be given only to Him who is the creator of all things. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego knew this, and thus they would not risk their destiny with the God of heaven by paying homage to some image made out of the elements of this world that God had created. They knew the responsibility of their leadership throughout the Babylonian Empire, and thus they recoiled at doing that which had brought the people of God into captivity in the first place, that is, idolatry. **Like a son of the gods:** Nebuchadnezzar certainly saw a heavenly being, for its appearance was not that of a man. God had sent His Angel to protect those who stood for Him against the commandment of an earthly king.

**3:26-30 Most High God:** Though Nebuchadnezzar was correct in identi-

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

who were hardened idolaters. However, he at least came to the conclusion that the God of Israel was the chief among gods. For this reason, he issued the decree that Israel's God be respected among all the gods of his kingdom.

### Chapter 4 NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S VISION OF A TREE

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

**4:4-18** The dream may have occurred in the latter part of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. He had conquered many nations of the world and built the great Babylonian Empire. He had built great fortified cities and palaces and flourished throughout his kingdom. As a person of the world, there was every reason for him to become arrogant and haughty. However, the dream greatly disturbed him. We could possibly conclude that in some way he understood the general sense of the dream. Nevertheless, he brought in the wisest men of his kingdom in order to give a correct interpretation. We would assume that if these men knew the meaning of the dream, they would certainly not tell it to

this most powerful king. Since they were timid in their postulations as to what the dream meant, Nebuchadnezzar called for Daniel. Regardless of the meaning of the dream, Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel would give the true interpretation regardless of the consequences. Those who stand for the truth, regardless of the consequences, are trusted by the most pagan of men. Nebuchadnezzar explained the dream to Daniel, which dream indicated both judgment and mercy upon the "tree."

**4:19-27** *Astonished for one hour:* It could be that Daniel did not realize the full implications of the dream. To him was revealed the meaning, but the extent to which Nebuchadnezzar would be dethroned and banished to wander with the birds and beasts was not revealed. He possibly wondered if this was the end of the Babylonian Empire. *The dream favors those who hate you:* We are not told if this was a conspiracy, or if it was the leadership of the kingdom taking control because their king lost his mind. In view of verse 25, it seems that the occasion was a conspiracy. Nebuchadnezzar was the tree that had grown strong. The Babylonian Empire became the security for many nations. Through Nebuchadnezzar's strength, many other nations of the world found their defense from invading enemies. Nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar would be cut down, though the Babylonian kingdom would continue. *The stump:* Mercy was manifested to Nebuchadnezzar in that he was eventually restored to the throne. He was not to be completely removed. *Seven*

*times will pass:* Seven years. *Until you know:* The purpose of his dismissal from the throne was that he come to understand that God reigns over the kingdoms of the world. All that Nebuchadnezzar had accomplished had driven him to arrogance and hardening of heart toward the poor. He had become as those leaders of Israel in the latter times of the existence of both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel. As the king, he reigned for his own benefit, having little consideration for the subjects of his kingdom.

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

extreme arrogance. His extreme pride surely caused him to disconnect from the reality of humanity.

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

## Chapter 5 END OF BELSHAZZAR AND BABYLON

**5:1-4 *Belshazzar:*** When Nebuchad-

nezzar died, his son, Evil-merodach came to the throne of the Babylonian Empire (See 2 Kg 25:27-30; Jr 52:31-34). However, he reigned only two years when Neriglissar, Evil-merodach's brother-in-law, led a rebellion and assassinated the king. Though Neriglissar was not of royal blood, he assumed that his son, Labashi Marduk, who was born of Nebuchadnezzar's daughter whom he had married, would have a right to the throne. However, Labashi Marduk was rejected and the military leadership of the Empire enthroned Nabonidus, another son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar. Nitocris, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, gave birth to a son through Nabonidus, naming him Belshazzar. Because Belshazzar was of royal blood, he was made a coregent king with Nabonidus three years after Nabonidus had assumed the throne. Since Belshazzar was the reigning king of the city of Babylon and its province, it was this king who encountered Daniel. The setting of the incident that took place in this context came at the end of Belshazzar's kingship over Babylon. He was a psychopathic leader who dealt murderously with any competition in his realm. Because he was the spoiled child who was brought up on the luxury of the royal family, he had little compassion for the people and those who were around him. If his reign exemplified the moral degradation of the Babylonian Empire, then it was time for it to come to a close.

**5:5-9** After fourteen years of reign in Babylon, Belshazzar had come to the end of his cruel reign. His father,

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

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

**5:13-16** Many years had passed since Daniel was active during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was known by reputation throughout the Empire (Jr 14:14), but he was possibly marginalized in his function as an official because of the wicked reign of Belshazzar. Nevertheless, Belshazzar had heard of Daniel, and thus sought for an interpretation of the handwriting.

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

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

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

## Chapter 6 DELIVERANCE FROM THE LION'S DEN

**6:1-5** *Darius:* It could be that Cyrus was the one who conquered and expanded the Medo-Persian Empire, but he left others to govern different provinces. Darius, the Mede, could have been the initial ruling monarch who was set over the city of Babylon (Compare 9:1). He thus "received the kingdom" by the appointment of Cyrus. In archaeological records, Darius is possibly the man referred to as Gubaru who was the governor of Babylon and the area beyond the Euphrates River. *Sought to find occasion against Daniel:* This was an occasion for political maneuvering at its worst. Jealousy was in the heart of wicked men who sought to destroy one who was faithful to God and righteous in behavior. In a political environment where favoritism gave one the opportunity for advancement, the wicked presidents and princes developed a scheme

by which they might rid the kingdom of righteous Daniel. We must keep in mind that Daniel was a very old man at this time, possibly in his late 80's. **Concerning the law of his God:** Daniel lived in harmony with the laws of the newly established Medo-Persian Empire, as he had under the Babylonian Empire. The moral laws of the Old Testament, therefore, were not culturally linked to the Jews. They were laws that could be obeyed regardless of the culture in which one lived.

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

**6:10-17** Daniel was a devotionally courageous person. The text reads as if the decree had no consequence in his normal behavior. He continued as usual with his prayers, unaffected by what any king on earth might decree concerning the religious behavior of the citizens (See comments At 4:28,29). The principle that Daniel upheld was that no civil government or kingdom on earth has a right to dictate the religious beliefs and behav-

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

**6:18-24** The king knew that he had done wrong. His conscience troubled him, and thus he could not sleep. Somewhere in his thinking, he believed that the God of Daniel could deliver him from the lions, because for some reason he hurried to the den early in the morning. **God has sent His angel:** As an angel was sent to protect Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace, so here God sent His angel to be present with Daniel in the den of lions. God could have worked a miracle from a distance by closing the mouths of the lions. However, we are led to believe that the angel in this case

was the preincarnate Christ, who before His incarnation, made the occasional manifestation of Himself for the comfort of the people of God. ***Their children and their wives:*** This was not an unusual punishment under the law of the ancients. When the leader of the family sinned, his entire family had to pay the price.

**6:25-28 *All the earth:*** Here, as well as in other texts, reference was to all the Medo-Persian territory. ***He works signs and wonders:*** The miraculous event of this context explains the purpose of miracles as a sign. The saving of Daniel among the lions signalled to Darius that the supernatural was present in the life of Daniel. The Hebrew word for “wonder” explains the reaction of the beholders to the intervention of the supernatural into the world of natural laws. When God sets aside the natural laws in order to reveal the supernatural, the reaction of man is wonder and amazement. In this case, the revelation of the supernatural had its intended effect on Darius. To him, there was no question that the God of Daniel was real. ***Darius ... Cyrus:*** This verse explains the fact that these two kings were coregent in reign during the time of Daniel. Cyrus militarily worked to consolidate the Medo-Persian Empire, while Darius, as other appointed regional kings, sought to bring order to the conquered regions of the Empire.

## Chapter 7

### DANIEL'S DREAM OF THE FOUR BEASTS

#### 7:1-14 *First year of Belshazzar:*

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

future change in the kingdom reign of God from heaven, as well as the time when this would take place. This fact is revealed in this vision in verses 13,14. These two prophecies were key prophecies that determined the time when God would change history by changing the One who would reign over all things from heaven, beginning with the existence of the fourth kingdom. History has subsequently proved the truth of the prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7. The central purpose of both prophecies, however, was to reveal the message of consummation of Daniel 2:44 and Daniel 7:13,14. In the days of the Roman kings, Daniel interpreted that the God of heaven would “set up kingdom reign” or sovereignty. This concept is brought out in the conclusion of Daniel’s vision (vss 13,14). We must understand that the central revelation of these prophecies was the kingdom reign of God that would exist throughout the change of kingdoms that took place on earth. In Daniel 2:44 it was prophesied that God would establish a kingdom reign. It is significant to notice in the text of 2:44 that the article “the” is not present before the Hebrew word that is translated “kingdom.” Some translators did no wrong by adding the article. However, the concept of the establishment of “sovereign reign” would be better understood if the article were left out. What was revealed to Daniel was that in the days of the Roman kings God would set up sovereignty, as is better understood from 7:13,14. He would establish kingdom reign. When speaking of the authority of the omnipresent

God over all things, emphasis should be placed on reign and rule, not on territory or location. The word “kingdom” is simply used as a metaphor to reveal the sovereignty of God over all things. Daniel’s interpretation of the Daniel 7 dream, specifically what is revealed in verses 13,14, refers to the reign and rule of the exalted Son of God from heaven as opposed to that which was manifested through the worldly kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome on earth. ***They brought Him near before Him:*** In reading this prophecy it is significant to understand that “in vision” Daniel was placed in heaven in order to see what transpired in heaven in reference to the sovereignty of Deity. He gives us a heavenly picture of what would happen when the Son of Man ascended to the right hand of the Father in heavenly places. The “Ancient of Days” is a reference to God, the Father. In explaining the prophecy from the viewpoint of heaven, Daniel saw the One “*like the Son of Man*” coming to the Father who is in heaven. Acts 1:9,10 speaks of the ascension of Jesus to the Father in a cloud. Daniel 7:13,14, therefore, is a prophecy of the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father to receive dominion, glory and sovereignty. ***There was given Him dominion and glory and sovereignty:*** When Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, He was given authority over all things, both in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18). It was the church that filled the earth, for the church was the assembly of those who were obedient to the sovereignty of Jesus. Christians allowed the will of God to

reign in their hearts on earth as it was obeyed in heaven (See comments Mt 6:10). The Son of Man was able to accomplish this because He, the head, was in control over all things for the sake of the church (Ep 1:20-23). As the parallel vision of the dream of chapter 2, Daniel 7 refers to world kingdoms and the beginning of a divine sovereignty in the days of the fourth kingdom. Babylon was represented by the lion (vs 4). The Medo-Persian Empire was represented by the bear (vs 5). The Greek Empire was represented by the leopard (vs 6). The Roman Empire was represented by the beast that was “dreadful and terrible” (vs 7). At the conclusion of this prophecy a significant statement is made in verses 13,14. ***Everlasting dominion that will not pass away:*** The sovereignty or kingdom reign about which Daniel spoke was certain to be established, and subsequently, would not cease until its intended time of cessation (See 1 Co 15:26-28). As opposed to the earthly kingdoms of the prophecy that were destroyed by greater earthly powers that always followed them, the heavenly sovereignty would never be destroyed. It could not be destroyed by men because it would not be “*left to other people*” (2:44). It is a sovereignty of God, not man. Because it is a sovereignty that is beyond this world, it cannot be destroyed by that which is of this world. Therefore, its existence is sure and steadfast. Its establishment and termination is not determined by the will of man. In the Daniel 2 dream, it was revealed that the “*kingdom would not be left to other people*”

(2:44). It would consume the authority that was displayed by all earthly kingdoms. Men on earth would submit to heavenly authority regardless of the presence of earthly kingdoms in which they lived. Those who submitted to the heavenly kingdom reign would be called out of the world by their submission. The stone about which Daniel spoke in chapter 2 that was cut out of the mountain without hands was a prophecy of the church that was to come. The church would be the assembly of those who submitted to the kingdom reign of Deity (See comments Lk 17:20,21). In the prophecy of Daniel 2, Daniel made a definite distinction between the “kingdom” and the “stone.” The stone “*that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth*” (Dn 2:35). Kingdom reign from heaven referred to God’s authority that was manifested from heaven in order to consume the kingdoms of this world (See comments Mt 16:18,19). The kingdoms were consumed when men and women throughout the whole world submitted to the kingdom reign from heaven. The manifestation of God’s kingdom reign on earth, therefore, was the church. The power of the stone (the church) was in the power of the One who reigns with dominion over all things. It was not that the kingdom grew into a great institutional mountain on earth. The King and head of the kingdom was always to be in heaven, not on earth. ***Sovereignty:*** Many translations use the word “kingdom” to refer to that which was invested in the One who ascended. Reference in the

verse is not to something that would result on earth because the Son of Man was enthroned. He would have dominion, glory and sovereignty. This would be the nature of His existence and reign. The church would come into existence because the Son was sovereign over all things. The article “the” is not in the Hebrew text before the word “sovereignty” (kingdom). The Son of Man, therefore, would be given sovereignty. As opposed to any one nation on earth, this sovereignty would be over all peoples of the world. The people on earth would become the manifestation of His sovereignty as they allowed Jesus to reign in their hearts (Lk 17:20,21). In the fulfillment of the prophecy, therefore, the church would be the visible manifestation of the sovereignty of Jesus who is presently reigning in heaven. ***Should serve Him:*** The prophecy states that all peoples should serve Him. It does not say that everyone would serve Him. The statement is in the subjunctive. What the prophecy is stating is that the Son of Man would manifest universal sovereignty. The people who would submit to that sovereignty would be obedient subjects. People had the freedom to reject the sovereignty of Jesus. Nevertheless, He would have universal sovereignty over all things regardless of the disobedience of many. This prophecy is about the universal kingdom (sovereignty) of Jesus, of which the church would only be a part. The prophecy of Daniel 7:13,14 is clearly in the mind of Paul in Ephesians 1:20-22. The ascension of Jesus and His receiving sovereign reign is very signifi-

cant. The word “principality” in Ephesians 1:20-22 refers to governments, individuals or personalities. What Paul stated in Ephesians 1:20-22 was the fulfillment of what was prophesied in Daniel 7:13,14. After His ascension, Jesus was seated at the ruling position of Deity in the heavenly realm. He now reigns over all things. The Father abdicated all rule to Him. Jesus’ sovereign rule, therefore, is above all principality, power, might, dominion and every name that is named. All things have been put under His feet (See comments Hb 2:8). Jesus is the head over all things. Jesus is the head over all things for the sake of the church. The church is only one thing in this passage over which Jesus is head. Ephesians 1:20-22 is actually an encouragement to Christians, as Daniel 7:13,14 was an encouragement to the captive Jews during the ministry of Daniel. We should be encouraged because Jesus is head over all things for the benefit of the people of God. One thing is very evident in Ephesians 1:20-22. The sovereign reign of Jesus goes beyond the church. This was the nature of the prophecies of both Daniel 2:44 and 7:13,14. God wanted to reassure the captive Jews that the One who ascended to the Ancient of Days would take control of all kingdoms of the world. A parallel passage to Ephesians 1:20-22 in manifesting the fulfillment of Daniel 7:13,14 in Jesus is Philippians 2:5-11. At the time Paul wrote Philippians 2:5-11, Jesus had already been highly exalted. His authority (name) is now above all authority (Mt 28:18). This means that Jesus’ sovereign rule is over

everything and everyone of the material world (“those on earth”). His rule is over all angels in heaven (“those in heaven”). Also, His sovereign rule is over Satan and demons (“those under the earth”) (See 1 Pt 3:22). Philippians 2:9-11 clearly manifests Jesus’ present reign that is beyond the church. Philippians 2:9-11 is not talking about something that is yet in our future. After the final coming of Jesus, the earth and Satan, with his angels, will be eternally destroyed (Mt 25:41). Paul is discussing something that is present; something that is happening at this very moment as the forces of Satan are active in this world. Notice also in the Philippians 2 passage that every tongue should confess Jesus. Daniel 7:13,14 also used the subjunctive to express the fact that all should be submissive to the kingdom reign of Jesus. However, all are not submissive. There are disobedient subjects in the world. Satan and his host are continually disobedient. All the disobedient in the sovereign reign of Jesus should bow down and confess His authority. But they do not. Nevertheless, the fact that they do not does not mean that Jesus is not their King. The Hebrew writer stated in Hebrews 2:8 that we do not now see everything under Jesus. We will not visibly see everything subjected to Jesus until the end of time (1 Co 15:26-28). At this time in history it may seem that things are out of control in reference to the kingdom reign of Jesus. However, when He comes again, it will be clearly manifested that all things are under His control when He brings judgment upon all who have opposed Him. *Not be de-*

*stroyed:* Daniel spoke of the sovereignty that would come after his lifetime as being “everlasting.” It would not be a sovereignty that would be subject to the terminating forces that press upon earthly kingdoms. In other words, God’s sovereign reign is not subject to the forces of worldly kingdoms. His kingdom is sure and steadfast (“everlasting”) and would not pass away as did the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Those kingdoms were destroyed. The kingdom that originates from heaven will not be destroyed as earthly kingdoms are destroyed. It will not be destroyed because it is a sovereign reign that is manifested from heaven. And since it originates from heaven, earthly kingdoms have no influence over it.

**7:15-25 *The fourth beast that was different:*** The primary focus of Daniel’s vision was the fourth beast, the Roman Empire. It was during the existence of this kingdom that God would accomplish the establishment of the sovereignty that would be given to the One who ascended to the Ancient of Days (See comments Rv 13). Since the event of verses 13,14 took place during the time of the existence of the Roman kings, we would assume that the fourth beast refers to the Roman kingdom. However, some Bible students believe that reference was to the time that followed the break up of the Greek kingdom. The ten horns were the ten rulers that followed the death of Alexander the Great. It is assumed, therefore, that the little horn was Antiochus Epiphanes. Though there is some merit to this view, the contextual support in

view of verses 13,14 would lead us to conclude that the Roman Empire is in view. ***Make war with the saints and prevailed against them:*** In verse 21 it is stated that the horn made war with the saints. We would link this statement to Revelation 13:7 where John wrote of the sea beast that rose out of the populations of the world. “*And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.*” Revelation 13 was a prophecy in reference to the Roman Empire persecuting the early church (See comments Rv 7 & 13). We would thus link Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 in concluding that the two contexts speak of the Roman Empire. ***The saints ... will take the kingdom:*** In this vision of chapter 7, emphasis was on the dominion of the kingdoms of the world. Emphasis here is on the saints who reign over the kingdoms (See comments Rm 5:17). The saints reign in life because of the Son of Man, King Jesus, who was given authority over all things (Mt 28:12; Ep 1:20-22). ***Ten horns:*** We could view this metaphorically, not ten literal kings in succession. The number “ten” was symbolic of completeness, and thus the kingdom of Rome would exert its complete power over the kingdoms of its era and throughout its domain. If understood as ten Caesars of the Roman Empire, then they were the reigning force who led Rome against God’s people (See comment Rv 13). ***Another will rise:*** From the reigning power of the Roman Empire would arise an arrogant leadership that would be different from the preceding “kings” of the Empire. This leadership

would be Paul’s “son of destruction” (2 Th 2:3,4). This would be the “mystery of lawlessness” that was at work during the time Paul wrote (2 Th 2:7). It would be the “lawless one” that was soon to be revealed after Paul wrote to the Thessalonians (2 Th 2:8). ***Wear down the saints:*** The Roman Empire wore down the saints through persecution. Caesar Nero persecuted the church as a personal vendetta. However, after him came Caesar Domitian who made Christians enemies of the state. Subsequently, the Roman Empire launched state persecution against Christians because they would not submit to Caesar as Lord. They were considered insurrectionists, and thus labeled as enemies of the state. ***Change times and laws:*** When Caesar declared himself as lord, he instituted Roman religion. The state became antichrist by exalting itself through Caesar to assume the worship of the subjects. This put Christians in direct conflict with the state religion. However, they had to serve God and not the religious laws that were bound on all Roman citizens through the power of the state (See comments At 4:28:29). ***Time and times and half a time:*** There is no emphasis here on calendar time, but on a symbolic period of resistance to the saints that would eventually come to an end. The antichrist efforts would at first be for “a time.” This is a vague statement with no specific calendar time in mind. Emphasis would be on a gradual beginning of the persecution against the saints that would later turn into what would seem to be success (“times”). The “times” does not explain

the duration of the persecution, but does assume a termination. The “half a time” would be the collapse or end. The lawless one would have a beginning and an ending. It would be a time when the persecution of the saints would run its course, and then come to an end.

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

### The Destiny Of Israel (8:1 – 12:13)

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

## Chapter 8 VISION OF THE RAM AND THE GOAT

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

trol in order to bring the Messiah into the world in the last days of national Israel.

**8:1-4** This vision was seen by Daniel two years after his vision of the four kingdoms in chapter 7: (7:1). Shushan was the summer palace of the Persian kings. It was about 250 kilometers north of Babylon. ***A ram:*** Contrary to the wild beasts that were used to portray the kingdoms of previous dreams and visions, this vision conveys its message through the imagery of domesticated animals as a ram and male goat. The two horns of the ram were Cyrus (the higher) and Darius. Cyrus expanded the Medo-Persian Empire and Darius was a provincial king over Babylon. ***No beast could stand before him:*** No kingdom was able to withstand the expansion of the Medo-Persian Empire.

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

**8:9-12 *A little horn:*** From one of the four horns, a little horn strangely sprouted and became great. But it be-

came great in evil, not good. The little horn arrogantly exalted itself against God and His saints. Most Bible students assume that this was the eighth king of the Seleucidae dynasty of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus Epiphanes was a man of great abilities, but ruthless and cruel. Antiochus took the title of “Epiphanes,” meaning “the illustrious one.” He extended his power through conflict with Ptolemy Philometor in order to take Egypt, as well as Persia and Media. His strategic conquest led him to think of himself as a great one, and thus he exalted himself. **The pleasant land:** Palestine (See 11:16; Jr 3:19; Ez 20:6). **Cast down ... the stars to the ground:** If we could use the metaphor of “stars” as it was used in reference to the seed of Abraham (Gn 15:5; 22:17), then we would conclude that God’s people would be cast down by Antiochus Epiphanes. **Magnified himself:** He magnified himself to the point of disgracing anything that pertained to God and His work among the Jews. When Antiochus Epiphanes conquered Palestine, he eventually terminated the daily sacrifices at the altar (See 1 Maccabees 1:45,46). When he did this, he terminated the daily sacrifices. He offered a swine on the altar and poured the broth of the swine offering around the altar. **Given over ... the regular sacrifice:** The place of sacrifice was given over by God to Antiochus who offered sacrifice to the pagan god Zeus. The text indicates that God allowed these actions to be taken by Antiochus, though we are not told why. It may have been because of some tendencies toward apostasy

among the Jews. The ravaging of the temple sacrifices by Antiochus, therefore, may have been allowed by God in order that the religious fervor of the Jews be restored. Whatever the case, the sacrifices were restored and the faithful remained unto the coming of the Messiah, which would take place about 165 years after this event.

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

**8:15-22 Gabriel:** Gabriel was the special messenger who was sent to reveal the meaning of the vision (8:16; 9:21; Lk 1:19,26). **Make this man understand:** Without the aid of God's angel, Daniel could not have understood the vision because he lived before the fulfillment of the events. If the book of Daniel were written after these events had taken place, then Daniel could have understood. The fact that the vision had to be explained to him is evidence that the book of Daniel was not written as a history book, but a book of prophetic history. **The time of the end:** The context will not allow us to understand this "end" as the end of the world. Reference in the historical context was to that which would transpire in reference to the end of the sacrifices at the altar in Jerusalem. Some Bible students have assumed that this end of the sacrifices of the saints of God is typical of the end of the world. It is assumed that there will yet come in the future before the coming of the Christ, a time when the living sacrifices of the saints will come to an end. When few saints exist in a world that was created specifically for the production of saints who would transition into eternity, then the world would have lost its purpose for existence, and subsequently be brought to an end. But in the historical context of the visions of Daniel, we must view the fulfillment of the prophecies in reference to God's people in the Old Testament, not God's people at the end of time. God's purpose with Israel was to bring His people to the cross of Jesus. The vehicle for doing this was the nation of

Israel. When the purpose for Israel was accomplished, then the Holy Spirit would take Christians through further revelation to the end of the world. But at the time Daniel lived, God was preparing His people to accept the end of national Israel and the temple sacrifices that would come in the future. Therefore, we cannot rob the Jews of the encouragement of these prophecies that were given to them in order to take them to the end of national Israel in Christ (Gl 3:26-29). **Last end of the indignation:** This statement seems to define the "end" mentioned in verse 17. It thus signified the end that Antiochus made of the sacrifices at the altar, for the historical context is in reference to the Medo-Persians, Greeks, and the history that followed the death of Alexander the Great. Reference is not to our time today and the future.

**8:23-27 Latter time of their kingdom:** This would be the last times of the reign of those who followed the Greek Empire when it was split into four divisions, which divisions were ruled by those who followed Alexander after his death. **King of fierce appearance:** Antiochus Epiphanes. **Not by his own power:** He will be allowed by God to carry out his desecration of the altar at the temple and termination of the daily sacrifices. **Broken without human means:** God put an end to the tyranny of Antiochus by causing his death. **Seal up the vision:** Though the principle nations were revealed to Daniel, the specifics of the fulfillment were not revealed. Only when the fulfillment came would people understand the meaning of the

vision. It is for this reason that the fulfillment would not refer to the end of the world. At the end of the world, the saints will be delivered from this world, and thus the fulfillment would have no encouragement to those who were standing in the presence of God. Since the book of Daniel was written for the purpose of encouraging the Jews who would experience the fulfillment of the vision, then we must remain within the historical context of the Jewish nation in order to determine the fulfillment of the vision. When these events were being fulfilled during the invasion and desecration of the temple by Antiochus, the Jews who were actually experiencing the fulfillment would gain encouragement by realizing that God had all things under control, and thus they must wait for the end, which end would take place when the Messiah came. The end, therefore, in this context would refer to the end of Israel in Christ (Gl 3:26-29). When Israel came to an end in Christ, it was the end of almost two thousand years of Jewish history, beginning with Abraham. The fullness of times had been completed (Gl 4:4), and thus the consummation of the ages was fulfilled in Christ. To the Jews, the end of Israel was almost like the end of the world to a culture of people who had experienced over two thousand years of history as the people of God.

## Chapter 9

### DANIEL'S INTERCESSION FOR ISRAEL

**9:1-3** *First year of Darius:* A great change had been made in international

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

**9:4-14** Daniel prayed for the nation. He included himself with an entire people who had transgressed the conditions of the covenant that they had with God. They had reaped the consequences of their sin, and thus with a repentant spirit, were on their knees asking God for forgiveness and restoration to the promised land. *God who keeps the covenant:* God had established a covenant with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. *We have sinned:* When God established the covenant with Israel, He told the nation that

if they broke their conditions for keeping the covenant, He would drive them from the land into captivity (See Lv 26:14-35). However, if they would confess their transgressions and apostasy, then He would restore them to the land (Lv 26:40-45). Daniel was living in the time of the restoration (See comments Er & Ne). As a man of God, he had the responsibility, as the other prophets as Ezekiel by the River Chebar and Jeremiah in Jerusalem, who were contemporary with him, to call the people to repentance. It was a time, therefore, to call the people to repentance and remembrance of the promise of God that He would restore them to the land (See Jr 29:10). It was a short time after this intercessory prayer, that Cyrus freed the captives and allowed them to return to their lands (2 Ch 36:21-23). Daniel was at this time an old man. He had experienced the first captivity of the southern kingdom of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. And now, he was experiencing the fulfillment of prophecy that God had promised the repentant captives returning to the land in 536 B.C. (See comments Er & Ne). ***Iniquity ... wickedly ... rebelled ... departed:*** Israel had done all that was necessary to reap the consequence of an apostate nation. They had rejected the culture of righteousness that was given to them through the law of God. They had adopted the wickedness of the idolatrous nations around them, and then went beyond what the nations did in behaving wickedly. Once they forgot the law of God, there was no end to the wickedness to which they went (Hs

4:6). ***The Lord has ... brought it upon us:*** God was just in bringing national calamity upon Israel because of the apostasy. They had forsaken the very purpose for which He had given them birth, that is, to bring the Savior into the world. Because they forsook the purpose for their existence, they were taken from the land. From those who were taken captive, God intended to restore only a remnant through which He would bring the Messiah into the world.

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

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

**9:24-27 *Seventy weeks:*** A week stood for a year, and thus the fulfillment of the seventy years of captivity of which Jeremiah spoke had come to a end (Jr 25:11). ***For your people and for Your holy city:*** This statement identifies the ones to whom the message of this context is addressed. We must keep in mind that Cyrus was about to release the Jews in order that they return to the land of Palestine. Led by Zerubbabel, a group of 40,000 captives would return in 536 B.C. This group would be followed by another group in 457 B.C. that was led by Ezra. Nehemiah would lead another group to Palestine in 444 B.C. All would return for the purpose of reestablishing the identity of Israel. To do this, they rebuilt the city of Jerusalem and the temple (See comments Ne). All this was beginning to happen at the time Daniel uttered his prayer. However, the Messianic era had already been introduced in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in 2:44 and Daniel's vision in 7:13,14. These returnees saw this destiny in their return. In order for the Messiah to come, they had to reestablish Israel in the land of prom-

ise. ***Seven weeks and sixty-two weeks:*** The phrase "seven weeks" is literally "sevens" in the Hebrew text, referring to the symbolic meaning of the number "seven," the numeric symbol for complete. In view of verse 27, "until the consummation that is determined," we would conclude that this is a prophecy that takes us beyond the work of the Jews to rebuild the city and reestablish the identity of Israel. Since the purpose of the existence of Israel was to bring the Messiah and Savior into the world, then the beginning of the fulfillment of these promises to the fathers would be interwoven with the fulfillment of the prophecy of Israel's return to the land. The symbolic seven weeks would bring to an end the redemptive work of God through Israel. This would be the consummation of the purpose for which God brought forth the nation of Israel from Egyptian captivity. The Blessing that would bless all nations would naturally be included with a prophecy concerning Israel's march back to the promise land in order that God's promise to Abraham be consummated (See comments Gn 12:1-3). There are thus six prophetic statements made in this context in reference to the consummation of the redemptive work of God through the Messiah (1) ***To finish the transgression:*** When Jesus died on the cross, He made a sufficient sacrifice for all time for all men (See comments Hb 7:26,27). (2) ***To make an end of sins:*** Those who have been born again are not walking in sin, for the blood of Jesus cleanses them of all sin (See comments 1 Jn 1:7; 3:9; compare comments Jr

31:31-34). (3) **To make reconciliation for iniquity:** Through the Messiah, we have been reconciled to the Father (See comments 2 Co 5:17-19). (4) **To bring in everlasting righteousness:** The church is brought into the eternal righteousness of God, for the church has become His people and He is the God of the members (See comments 2 Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1-3,22,23,27). (5) **To seal up the vision and prophecy:** In Jesus all the prophecies concerning the redemptive work of the prophets were fulfilled (See comments Lk 24:25-27). (6) **To anoint the Most Holy:** The Messiah, the Anointed of God (the Christ), was determined to fulfill all prophecies concerning the redemptive work for the salvation of man (7:13,14; see comments At 2:36-38; 4:27,28). **Destroy the city and the sanctuary:** There are numerous speculations among Bible students concerning the “seven weeks” and the symbolism concerning the conclusion of national Israel. However, in view of what transpired with the redemptive work of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, we would conclude that Gabriel was here revealing to Daniel the finality of national Israel with the birth of spiritual Israel, the church. National Israel would be summed up with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). There is no reason to conclude that Gabriel revealed to the Jews at this time anything in time beyond the coronation of the Son of Man who ascended to the right hand of God and was given dominion, glory and sovereignty over all things (See 2:44; 7:13,14).

Once the finality of national Israel was concluded with the fulfillment of all prophecies concerning Jesus (Lk 24:25-27), then we would assume that there were no more prophecies to be fulfilled in reference to the redemptive work of Jesus. When the time came, Jesus would personally speak of His final coming at the end of time. But for Daniel’s audience, this was a subject that was reserved for those who experienced the first coming of Jesus in His ministry to redeem the world. There would have been no reason to speak to the captive Jews concerning things that would happen over 2,500 years—and still counting—after the time the statements of Daniel 9 were made and written. We must always keep Luke 24:27 in mind where Jesus said that all prophecies concerning Himself had been fulfilled at the time He concluded His redemptive ministry at the cross.

## Chapter 10 DANIEL’S VISION OF ISRAEL’S FUTURE

The last three chapters should be considered as one oracle from God that was delivered to Daniel. There is no break in the narrative as revelation was given to Daniel concerning the future events that would transpire in the history of Israel. The interpreter must keep in mind that God was bringing Israel to its finality in Christ (Gl 3:26-29). Beginning with Abraham, two thousand years of history were being brought to an end. The consummation of Israel was in the cross of the Messiah. In order to prepare the minds of the Jewish community that

would experience this tremendous paradigm shift in their thinking and society, God through these prophecies of Daniel laid the foundation for their change in thinking, and thus their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah when He came. Interpreters, therefore, have no right to rob the Jews who lived during the ministry of Jesus and the early church, of the fulfillment of these things that God said would transpire during their lives. We should grow in faith because of the fulfillment of these prophecies in Jesus (Rm 10:17).

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

**10:4-9 *A certain man clothed in linen:*** John, the apostle, had a similar experience in vision in Revelation 1:10-20 (See comments). The similarities of the two visions are too close to ignore the fact that what both men of God saw was the Son of God. Daniel saw the

preincarnate Son. John saw the glorified Son. The metaphors used in both narratives depict the glorious nature of the Son of Man. To Daniel, He was a messenger of comfort for the future. To John, He was a messenger of comfort to the church concerning their victory over the oppression of the Roman state. ***There remained no strength in me:*** When a normal human being is placed in the presence of God, he collapses to the ground. Both Daniel and John had the same experience (Rv 1:17). It is simply not possible for frail humanity to experience direct contact with Deity without a tremendous emotional and physical response of humility.

**10:10-14 *Greatly beloved:*** No greater words could a man hear from God, which words would bear the meaning at the final judgment, "*Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*" (Mt 25:34). ***Discipline yourself:*** Daniel had been spiritually disciplining himself through fasting for three weeks (vss 2,3). In response to his discipline through fasting, an angel was sent to him (See comments At 13:1-3). ***The prince ... of Persia withstood me twenty-one days:*** Though Daniel possibly knew what this meant, this confrontation has not been revealed to us. Whatever the situation, Michael, the archangel, intervened on behalf of the purpose of God in working among the nations to bring about His eternal scheme of redemption. ***Michael:*** Michael is the angelic being who would contend with the Devil (Jd 9). He is the one who makes

war with those nations who set themselves against the work of God (Rv 12:7-9). In this context, he was working for the people of God, the children of Israel.

**10:15-21** God was working in the affairs of the Medo-Persian Empire and the Greek Empire. He was working in a manner by which He could bring Israel again into their homeland, and then preserve them unto the coming of the Messiah. Though Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return to the land, their residence there was in constant turmoil. They were opposed by the local residents who were left there after the captivity of 722/721 B.C. (the Assyrian captivity) and 586 B.C. (the Babylonian captivity). They were oppressed by the Greeks who eventually expanded the Greek Empire into Palestine. Palestine was under the control of Medes and Persians until it was taken over by the Greeks who were led by Alexander the Great. After the death of Alexander, and the dispersion of the Greek Empire, the remnants of Alexander's generals, the Ptolemies and Seleucidae continued to struggle over Palestine. Throughout these years of conflict, therefore, God's work through His angelic beings was in conflict with earthly kings who continually caused trouble for the people of God. It was a time when Michael and his angelic hosts were at war with the forces of evil that were manifested through wicked kings on earth (Compare Rv 12:7-9).

## Chapter 11

**11:1** The prophetic details of history in this session are an awesome revela-

tion for the purpose of giving the restored people of God to the land of Palestine reassurance that God knows their future and their struggles. By knowing and revealing the international turmoil that would face them in the future, they could be reassured that God had all things under control, and thus was working His scheme of redemption among them. No conflict among the nations would detour God's work of using His people to carry out His eternal plan of redemption. In the context, there is a division of thought between verses 2-35 and verse 36 onward. Our historical records of the events of history follow the first section of prophecy, but from verse 36, and especially from verse 40, it is difficult to determine the prophetic reference to history. The first section takes us to the middle of the second century B.C., in particular to the year of the desecration of the temple in 165 B.C. The second section is a prophetic picture of events that surround the kingdom of God until the consummation of ages in the coming of the Messiah in the first century (See comments Rv 13). The historic details of this prophecy are given in order to reassure God's people that God is not unmindful of their particular struggles they will go through. The details would also bring them to the end of national Israel in the coming of the Messiah. We must not, therefore, conclude that the mention of details in this prophecy assumes that Daniel's record is actually a history, and not a prophecy. This would be missing the message of the prophecy. In former prophecies of the Old Testament there

needed to be no specific details given in the prophecies simply because such details were not needed. However, at this time in history, as God took His people to the focal point of the purpose for their existence, they needed to know what was happening in history as they neared the consummation of God's eternal purpose for their existence. As they neared the cross, we would assume that Satan would unleash all that he had to prevent his crushing (See Gn 3:15). Though Satan had no idea of the mystery that was to be revealed through the cross, he knew that something was up because of the nature of Daniel's prophecies. He thus sought ways to destroy the identity of Israel in order to confuse the world concerning the fulfillment of the promises made to the fathers. We would assume, therefore, that the historical detail of Daniel's prophetic message was written specifically for the encouragement of the people of God before the cross. We gain faith from the fulfillment of the prophecies because we see how God faithfully worked for His people. The angelic beings were in conflict with the forces of evil that were manifested on earth to stop God from bringing His eternal scheme of redemption into reality in the first century. We can be certain that there are similar sufferings saints must go through in order for God to bring the church into eternal glory (Compare Rm 8:18).

**11:2-35** The historical events of this prophecy occurred primarily between Syria and Egypt. Rome enters the picture only at the end of the conflicts between Syria and Egypt, and then the Ro-

man Empire becomes a force of evil against the church (See comments Rv 13). The historical picture begins with Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire and continues in history to the time after the breakup of the Greek Empire that was dissolved when Alexander the Great died in 312 B.C. Twelve kings ruled over the Medo-Persian Empire during its existence. However, only three are noted here before the fourth who rose with great wealth. The first of the four was Cambyses who began to reign in 529 B.C. Pseudo-Smerdis began to reign in 522 B.C. Darius Hystaspis began to reign in 521 B.C. The fourth is believed to be Xerxes I (or Ahasuerus of Esther 1:1), who began his reign in 485 B.C. He stirred up his people against the Greeks. It is believed that he took more than four years to muster an army of over two and a half million men in order to march against the Greeks. But his forces were turned back by the bravery of the Greeks at the battles of Thermopylae and Salamis. The Persians' defeat at these battles broke the back of the Empire, which was eventually overthrown during the reign of Darius III. Alexander the Great was the mighty king who stood up to initiate the Greek Empire, and subsequently trample down the Medo-Persian Empire. Though he would briefly reign with great power and conquer many peoples, his untimely death in 323 B.C. led to the breakup of his empire into four regions. The four regions were governed by his four generals (See 8:5-8). One of these regions was given to Ptolemy Soter (the king of the south), who was

Alexander's general who took control of Egypt. A struggle for territory followed the breakup of the Greek Empire, particularly a struggle between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucidae (the kings of the north) who ruled the area of Asia Minor, Syria and the former territories of Babylonia and the Medo-Persian Empire territories to the east. For about 125 years there was a struggle between the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae, which struggle involved the Jews in the land of Palestine. The Ptolemies of Egypt initially had control of Palestine and Phoenicia. However, when a Seleucid king, Antiochus II, married the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, Berenice, a political alliance was made. But when Ptolemy Philadelphus died two years after the marriage, Antiochus forsook his Egyptian wife and took back his previous wife, Laodiceia. In order to have her revenge for being at first forsaken by Antiochus, Berenice had Antiochus murdered. ***Out of a branch of her roots will one stand up:*** The struggle between the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae intensified when Berenice and her son were murdered. This led to a bloody revenge conflict that was led by her brother as explained in verses 7-9. After Ptolemy Philadelphus came Ptolemy III, or Euergetes. In the context, he was the one who came up in the place of Ptolemy Philadelphus. He made great inroads into the domain of the Syrians. During his period of reign, Egyptian power increased and Syrian power waned. Ptolemy Philadelphus sacked temples and plundered them for their idols of pre-

cius metals. He brought so much wealth back to Egypt after this campaigns that he was given the title, "Euergetes," which means "benefactor." Historians have reported that he brought back as much as 40,000 talents of silver and as many as 2,500 idols of precious metals. ***One will come against the realm of the king of the south:*** This would be the Syrian King Seleucus Callinicus who reigned from 247 to 226 B.C. He made a campaign into Egypt, but was unsuccessful. ***His sons will be stirred up:*** The sons of Seleucus, Seleucus III and Antiochus III, sought to continue their father's efforts, but had little success. ***And one will certainly come and overflow:*** Seleucus III came to an untimely death, and Antiochus III became the sole king of Syria in 198 B.C., and thus continued the efforts of the father. Antiochus III made many great and rapid campaigns against Egypt. He conquered the Egyptian forces at Sidon, swept through Palestine, and eventually attacked the Egyptian fortress at Gaza. Unfortunately, Ptolemy Philopator was quite indifferent to security and international affairs at this time, and subsequently offered little resistance to the expansion campaigns of Antiochus. But this changed when Egypt was threatened, and he stirred the Egyptian forces against the king of the north. He gathered an army of 73,000 men and 73 elephants to launch a defensive attack against Antiochus who had an army of 72,000 men, 6,000 horses and 102 elephants. ***The multitude was given into his hand:*** Though Antiochus had an advantage over the Egyptians, he eventually succumbed

to the Egyptian force. Unfortunately, Ptolemy returned to his former life of luxury in Egypt, and thus did not take advantage of his victory over the Syrians. This was a fatal military mistake. ***Then the king of the north will return:*** Antiochus III was not discouraged by his initial setback with the Egyptians. Ptolemy died and the Egyptian forces were in disarray and dissension. There were various uprisings in Egypt that weakened the power of the country. The uprisings in Egypt then stirred similar uprisings among the Jews in Palestine who were led by Tobias. However, the Jewish uprisings failed in that their rebellious actions brought on them successful efforts by outside forces which led to their continued subjugation. ***The king of the north will come and cast up a mount:*** Antiochus came and captured the well-fortified city of Sidon. The uprising of the Jews, stirred Antiochus to venture further into Palestine. ***Power over it:*** When Antiochus took control of Palestine, he freed Jerusalem of all taxes for three years, and then imposed on them one third of their former tax responsibilities. He even sent money for the service of the temple. ***He will also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom:*** Verse 17 speaks of some intentions of Antiochus that never materialized in history. The mention of these intentions reminds us that God even knows the thoughts of the hearts of men who seek to lead kingdoms on earth. No thought is hidden from His omniscience. ***He will give him the daughter:*** Antiochus did give his daughter

Cleopatra in marriage to Ptolemy Epiphanes, thinking that the daughter would be loyal to her father. But he was mistaken, for Cleopatra did not betray her husband. ***Turn his face to the coastlands:*** Antiochus was successful in taking the coastal cities of the Mediterranean, as well as the islands. He gained control of Asia Minor. He had even taken control of Thrace, which was resented by the Romans. Antiochus' exploits finally came to an end in 190 B.C. when the Roman general, Lucius Scipio, delivered a defeat to the Syrian forces at a battle near Magnesia. ***He will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land:*** After suffering a defeat at the hands of the Roman army, Antiochus went home. ***Then will stand up in his place:*** After Antiochus III, came the "raiser of taxes" who would exact tribute from controlled nations in order to satisfy Rome. This Syrian king is not identified, other than the fact that he owed a great amount of tribute to Rome. How this affected the Jews was that a tax collector by the name of Heliodorus exacted a great amount of taxes from the Jews. ***A vile person:*** Heliodorus vanished from history by some means, and then came Antiochus IV, who took the title "Epiphanes." Through deceit and vile means he claimed the throne of Syria, and seized control of the Seleucid kingdom in 175 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes was truly a vile king (vss 21-35). Through cunning and deceit he expanded his reign (vss 21-24). In order to expand his kingdom, he launched attacks against Ptolemy VI Philometor of Egypt (vss 25-28). In

launching these attacks against Egypt, the people of God in Palestine were caught in the middle (vss 29-35). He poured out his indignation against the covenant people, terminating the daily sacrifices and desecrating the temple. He placed the image of a pagan god in the temple. He stopped the practice of Jewish ceremonial laws, murdered mothers, and crucified men who practiced circumcision. Though many Jews were subjugated during this era, and thus led to compromise their faith, there were those who resisted, specifically a Jew named Mattathias. Mattathias began a rebellion against the Syrians. When Mattathias died, his son, Judas, continued the desires of his father in leading the rebellion against Antiochus. Judas adopted the military strategy of attack and flee, a guerrilla type of warfare that earned him the title, “the hammer” (or, Maccabee). It took Judas and his men only three years to eventually defeat the Syrian forces of Antiochus in Palestine, and thus restore the temple ceremonies. Specifically, in restoring temple worship he cleansed the altar on December 25, 165 B.C. This cleansing continues to be celebrated by the Jews today as the Feast of Dedication, or Hanukkah. From this time, the descendants of the Maccabees, who were subsequently called the Hasmoneans, were established as the leaders among God’s people until the time the Romans took possession of Palestine in 63 B.C. **To test ... purge ... make them white:** It was throughout this period of history that those who trusted in God remained strong. These faithful became the heroes

of Jewish culture. Their examples of strength in times of conflict and uncertainty took the small community of God’s people to the end of Israel in Christ (See comments Gl 3:26-29). **It is yet for an appointed time:** In this historical context, God determined the time of the rise and fall of kingdoms. He determined the time when He would bring the Messiah into the world. Through the turmoil that transpired in these latter days, God was bringing an end to national Israel by which He would have brought the Messiah into the world. The Messiah would come in the last days of national Israel (See comments At 2:16,17). The revelation of the Messiah would come only when the fullness of times was completed, which times came when Jesus was born in Bethlehem (See comments Gl 4:4).

**11:36-45 Prosper until the indignation is accomplished:** The end of the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes would come. What begins to arise in the historical background would be the rise of the fourth kingdom of the prophecy of chapter 2 and the beast that was “dreadful and terrible” of Daniel’s vision of chapter 7. This would be the rise of the Roman Empire. This would eventually be an empire that would set Roman state and religion against the work of God through the saints of the Messiah. This empire would be antichrist in that it would set itself against the work of God through His saints, the theme of the book of Revelation (See comments Rv 13). This would be the empire of sin that would exalt itself through Caesars who

claimed to be “lord” (See comments 2 Th 2:3,4). The Roman Empire expanded itself through the desires of its particular Caesars. **God of fortresses:** It was an empire that trusted in its great military strength to go forth and conquer. The arrogant military leaders were not intimidated by the strongest armies. **Strange god:** The beast of Revelation 13:11 was the deification of Roman state religion, which brought the Roman state into conflict with the saints of God, for they would not bow down and call Caesar lord (See comments Rv 13:11-18). **The time of the end:** In the context of the history of the prophecy, this statement must refer to the end of the Jewish dispensation of history. Peter stood up in the time of the end of Israel, in the last days of the Jewish state, and announced for the first time in history the culmination of the redemptive plan of God that was fulfilled in Christ (See comments At 2:16-38). The Old Testament law was nailed to the cross (See Rm 7:1-4). The law was terminated at the cross and the Jewish state was terminated in A.D. 70. The Jews did not understand prophecies concerning the end of national Israel. However, when the end came, they needed to know that it was prophesied. **Plant the tabernacles of his palace:** The symbolism is of setting up, as Antiochus Epiphanes, symbols of religion in the temple at Jerusalem that was between the Mediterranean Sea and the Great Sea (the Dead Sea). These would be attempts of antichrist Caesars in an effort to impose pagan religious beliefs on God’s people and their faith. This happened with Antiochus Epiphanes, as well

as with the Romans during their oppression of the Jews. After A.D. 70, the faith of Christians, which Rome associated with Judaism, was challenged when Caesars who deified themselves imposed Roman religion on all citizens of the Roman Empire. **He will come to his end:** The purpose of the prophecies of Daniel was to bring comfort to the persecuted people of God. In order to accomplish this purpose, God’s people needed to know that there would always be an end to those who would persecute them or impose pagan religious beliefs and practices on them. The “time, times and half a time” (7:25), the half week (9:27), and the “time, times and half a time” mentioned in this context (12:7), all reveal an end of those who would be antichrist in reference to God’s work through His people. The final end of any antichrist will be the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rv 19:20; compare Zc 14:3,4). The revelation of this end was reserved for revelation to the early Christians concerning the end of national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Mt 24), as well as the end of the wicked at the final judgment (Mt 25:41).

## Chapter 12

**12:1-4** These verses speak of a summation of an age. Some have asserted that the vision reaches forward over 2,500 years and beyond in the future to the final coming of Christ. This interpretation may have some validity, but is not necessary for several reasons. First, any coming of God in judgment in

time is typical of Jesus' final coming at the end of time. Second, the consummation of God's work through Israel happened in the first century, which consummation is typical of the consummation of this present age with the final coming of Jesus. Third, there is no reason why we should hijack a prophecy of comfort that was meant to encourage God's people who had to live through the conflict of nations that transpired from the time of Daniel to the coming of the Messiah. Fourth, we must keep in mind that through prophecy God wanted to generate anticipation in the minds of His people when they realized that the time of the fulfillment of prophecy was coming in their lifetime. Their understanding of the prophecies concerning the Messiah encouraged those in whose time the prophecies were fulfilled to accept Jesus as the Messiah. **Michael will stand up:** The archangel is here pictured as the one taking action on behalf of the people of God against evil kings and empires. It was formerly mentioned that he had a conflict with the king of Persia (10:13). At the end of time, it will be Jesus, not Michael, who will come with His angels in flaming fire to deal with evil kings and nations (See comments 2 Th 1:6-9). **A time of trouble such as never occurred:** Jesus' reference to this thought in Matthew 24:21,22 in reference to His prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 identifies that to which this statement refers. **Your people:** The vision indicates that Daniel's people, the Jews, were the ones to be delivered. Since reference would

be to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, then "your people" would be those faithful descendants of Daniel's faith who would not suffer the calamity of the destruction of the Jewish state and Jerusalem (See comments Mt 24). **Written on the scroll:** The citizenship of nations was determined by those who were written on the registry of a nation. In reference to the Jewish genealogies, the genealogy of the true Jew was recorded, and thus he could trace his lineage back to his forefathers. The practice of being written in the book was also used symbolically in reference to the saints at the end of time (Ph 4:3; Rv 21:27). **Those who sleep ... will awake:** This language is certainly used in reference to the end of time (Compare Jn 5:28,29; 1 Th 4:13-18). However, the concept of a spiritual resurrection in time would also be in view because of the next statement. **Wise will shine:** In Jesus' discussion of the finality of the Jewish state and the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 13:43, He stated that when Jerusalem was destroyed, it would then be revealed those who were the accepted of God. It would be the righteous saints who would "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom." They will shine forth to the unrighteous. However, at the end of time, the unrighteous will be taken away (Mt 24:29-41), and thus there would be no one before whom the righteous could shine forth. **Those who turn many to righteousness:** The mission of the early Christians was to go forth and preach the gospel, thus turning men from sin to righteousness (See Mk 16:15,16). This ministry will cease after

the final coming of Jesus. Through the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus manifested to the world that the church was the manifestation of His kingdom reign on earth. Through the preaching of the gospel, those who feared God could be transferred into the body of God's people by obedience to the gospel (See comments Rm 6:1-6; Cl 1:13). ***Until the time of the end:*** This was the end of the Jewish state that occurred in the first century with the destruction of Jerusalem. The content of the book was not revealed until Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 and announced that the eternal plan of God for the salvation of all men was now made known. The mystery of God that was kept secret since the fall of man in the garden of Eden was revealed through Jesus and announced for the first time in history on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 (See comments Ep 3:3-5).

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

16:15,16; At 8:4; see comments Cl 1:23). All that God had worked through the nation of Israel, beginning with the faith of Abraham (Gn 12:1-2; Rm 4:16), and continued through the building of the nation of Israel, came to pass. Thus national Israel was terminated in the first century and the good news of the grace that was revealed at the cross went forth into all the world (Mk 16:20). ***Sealed until the time of the end:*** When the fullness of the times had come, God sent forth His Son (See comments Gl 4:4). The mystery was then revealed (See comments Ep 3:3-5). The sealed book was opened for all men to see the contents of the mystery of God. ***Many will be purified and made white and tested:*** Through the preaching of the gospel, the sins of many were forgiven (See Rv 3:5; 7:14). ***The wicked will do wickedly:*** If reference in this context was to the end of time, then this statement would make no sense. At the end of time Jesus will cast the wicked into eternal punishment (Mt 25:41; 2 Th 1:6-9). In the historical context of these statements, however, the wicked will continue, and continue to do wickedly after the revelation of the mystery of the gospel. The fulfillment of this prophecy could happen only during the time of the consummation of the age of Israel. Those who received and obeyed the Messiah, would be the wise. Those who reject Him, would continue in their wicked ways (See comments Jn 1:11). ***Abomination of desolation:*** The cessation of the daily sacrifices and the abomination of desolation in this context links us to 8:11-13, and thus would be a reference

to the work of Antiochus Epiphanes who terminated the daily sacrifices in Jerusalem. What he did in actuality, however, symbolically portrayed what would happen at the end of the Jewish state with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Rome would bring an end to the daily sacrifices with the destruction of the temple. The fact that Jesus referred to this very statement in His description of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24:15 links the two statements. Jesus thus gives the interpretation. **1,280:** Many frustrated Bible students have tried to link this number to a particular period of time in history in reference to the fulfillment of this three years, six and a half months. The only possible fulfillment would be to the time of battle that Rome took to destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70,

with the completion of Rome's war with the Jews that took place at Masada. **Go your way:** Daniel was not to worry himself with what was revealed. The message was shut up until its fulfillment, which fulfillment came in the first century. And thus the prophecy was meant for those who would experience its fulfillment, which all those who were of the faith of Abraham did in the first century. **Rise again for your allotted inheritance at the end of the ages:** The end of the ages for national Israel would be its termination with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). This would be the end of all things for the Jews. However, some have assumed that Daniel took the thinking of the Jews to the end of time. (See comments Jn 5:28,29; 1 Th 4:13-18).