

Book of Daniel

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I. Introduction

The book of *Daniel* is a record of scattered events in the life of Daniel and prophetic revelations given to him, a captive Jew in Babylon during Babylon's world supremacy and the early years of the Medo-Persian Empire which followed Babylon in world supremacy. The events in Daniel's life cover a little over seventy years (606 to 630 BC). Though a captive, Daniel had great influence in both of these national powers.

Revealed in the book of *Daniel* is *God's* marvelous care for His people, Israel, and His future program for them in relation to some of the world's major empires. Because secular historical records have shown Daniel's prophecies to have been fulfilled so precise it is easy to understand what has been fulfilled and what is yet to be fulfilled.

The book of *Daniel* is positioned last among the prophets in our English *Bible* . In the Hebrew *Bible* it is included in the "Writings" (The books that are poetical in form or do not mention the name or work of a prophet.), not because it was regarded as less inspired, but because Daniel did the work of a governmental official rather than as a ministering prophet.

For *Bible* scholars interested in a study of "*last things*" it is indispensable. It is the key to an understanding of unfulfilled prophecy. One must know and understand what Daniel prophesied to get the proper meaning of *New Testament* prophecy. The symbolic language of the supernatural visions require special skill and care in determining their true meaning. *God* has not left much for us to find the meaning

because He gave much of the meaning in the interpretation of the visions. Daniel's prophecies provide a marvelous description of the "*times of the Gentiles*" (from Nebuchadnezzar until the millennial kingdom) as they relate to the "*time determined upon Israel*" (from the rebuilding of Jerusalem until Israel's sins have been put away).

You will note that I have not followed the tradition of dividing the book into two halves: **chapters 1-6** (historical); **7-12** (predictive). I believe it better to make three divisions: **chapter 1** (Introduction) - the early life of Daniel and his three companions in Babylon (written in Hebrew); **chapters 2-7** (The time of the Gentiles) written in Chaldee or Syriac (**2:4**); **chapters 8-12** (The times determined upon Israel and Jerusalem in relation to Gentile world powers) written in Hebrew.

My purpose at this time: to show the "*times of the Gentiles*" in relation to the "*time determined upon Israel and Jerusalem*" and give an outline of the whole book.

II. "The Times of the Gentiles" chapters 2-7

A. Introduction

Because of time and space allotted I will confine this treatise to two passages in this section: the interpretation given of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (**2:36-45**) and the interpretation given to Daniel's vision of the four beasts (**7:15-28**).

"*The times of the Gentiles*" is used by *Jesus (Luke 21:24)* when answering questions of His apostles concerning the destruction of the temple and things that would happen at the end of the world ("*aion*" - age). His answers are in *Luke 21*

and **Matthew 24**. Do not confuse "*the times of the Gentiles*" with "*the fullness of the Gentiles*" (**Romans 11:25**).

The "*times of the Gentiles*" refers to their national/political supremacy. This began when Israel was "*cut of*" as the chief recipient of national blessings from **God** (Jerusalem destroyed and Israel removed from their land) and it will end when all Gentile rule has been "*put down*" (at the end of the great tribulation). During that time Israel will be brought to repentance concerning the Messiah whom they killed, but not without much tribulation. When all Gentile rule has been destroyed Christ will rule the earth from David's throne for a thousand years.

The "*fullness of the Gentiles*" refers to their religious/spiritual supremacy. This began when Israel was "cut off" as the chief recipient of **God's** spiritual blessings and the Gentiles were "*grafted in*" (**Romans 11:15-25**). **Jesus** spoke of this in the parable of the vineyard (**Matthew 21:33-34**) and said (*verse 43*), "**Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation ("ethnos" - word used for Gentiles) bringing forth the fruits thereof**". Paul refers to this in **Acts 28:28** - "**Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it**". This "*fullness*" will end when Christ comes "*for His saints*": those alive will "*meet Him in the air*" along with those who are "*dead in Christ*" (**I Thessalonians 4:13-18**). This period began about **Acts 28:28** or the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, and will end at the resurrection and the rapture of the saints of this present age. When this is accomplished **God** will deal with Israel to bring them to repentance and salvation during the great tribulation.

It is evident that Daniel, like all other *Old Testament* writers, did not see this present age: "*the fullness of the Gentiles*" (the cutting off of Israel for a season and the grafting in of the Gentiles). He, like all the others, did not see this dispensation (the word means "*household management*" and refers to *God's* management of His affairs on earth) between the "*cross*" and the "*crown*" of *Jesus* Christ. This age ("*aion*" - meaning an undetermined period of time), that is sometimes called the "*church age*", was hidden from him and all other *Old Testament* prophets according to Paul (*Ephesians 2:1-12*). He prophesied that Jerusalem will be rebuilt; Messiah will be cut off; the city and sanctuary will be defiled and destroyed; many wars of desolations; a covenant between Israel and someone will be made and broken during the seventieth week, but He tells us nothing about a Jewish/Gentile body (the Lord's church/churches) nor of great Gentile nations that will be in power during this present time.

B. The Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's Forgotten Dream: 2:36-45

Verses 36-38 show that Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylon Kingdom were the head of gold.

Verse 39 says the breast and arms of silver represented the Medo-Persian Empire which replaced Babylon as ruler of the world. This verse also tells us that the Medo-Persian Empire would be overcome by Greece. This was the belly and thighs of brass in the image. Greece embraced both the east and the west and this is represented in the two thighs. Some say the east/west division came during the Roman Empire in 364 AD when Emperor Valentinian I ruled in the east and Julian's rule had ended in the west. The Roman Empire had been unstable many years before this. There had been east/west

divisions and many internal disorders before and after Constantine moved the seat of the Roman government to Byzantium. There was another reunification in 395 AD.

Verses 40-43 describes the legs of iron and the toes of part iron and part clay (tile). Greece was followed by the Roman Empire which also embraced both the east and the west. Obviously, this kingdom is more important to this prophecy because more is given concerning it.

Daniel did not give a full history of the first three empires; neither is the total history of the Roman Empire given. He describes its history when it was strong like iron and embraced both the east and the west. He describes it when it and the rest of the image will be destroyed by a kingdom set up by **God**. This in the time of the toes (part iron and part clay/tile).

Some imagine that the destruction of what this image represented took place when the Roman Empire was destroyed by Christianity. It takes a lot of imagination and no Scripture to think this. Daniel's prophecies have been fulfilled too precise for such an interpretation. In fact, Christianity did not destroy the Old Roman Empire; neither has it been victorious over world governments; neither has it ever filled the world. The Western Roman Empire ceased when the barbarian, Odoacer, overcame it and was declared king of Italy in 476 AD. The Eastern Roman Empire was not destroyed until 1453. AD Daniel is consistent with other **Old Testament** prophets: not seeing nor giving any history of this fourth empire during the time Israel is "cut-off" religiously/spiritually (called: "the fullness of the Gentiles").

The ten toes must represent the history of a revived Roman Empire or some kind of coalition of those east/west people

involved in the Old Roman Empire. This will come into existence when **God** begins to deal with Israel to bring them to repentance and reception of Christ as their Messiah. This stage is described as being divided because of the diverse elements: iron and clay (tile). No doubt this represents the diverse elements of the coalition such as: race, political idealism, and sectional interest with no real unity. It may not be a revival of the Roman Empire, as some think, but it will consist of the people who descend from that kingdom and it will have the appearance of that kingdom's power.

Verses 44-45 give the real clue to the time of the end of the fourth kingdom. From the Scriptures and historical facts this phase of the fourth kingdom (the toe stage) must be yet future. Nothing like it has appeared in history. Gentile supremacy has not been destroyed. **God** has not yet set up a kingdom that has filled the earth.

John, in the book of **Revelation**, reveals many things concerning this kingdom of iron and clay. His visions are very much in harmony with Daniel's predictions. One must stretch the imagination to find a fulfillment of this kingdom in the historical past.

C. The Interpretation of Daniel's Vision of Future World History: 7:15-28

Daniel's vision is of the nations that surround the "great sea" (Mediterranean), making his vision a Middle East affair. He is told that the four beasts are four kings (kingdoms) that will finally be overcome by a kingdom for the saints of the "Most High".

Daniel requests and receives special information concerning the fourth kingdom. He asks for information concerning some things that were not given in the vision: nails that were brass; a horn that was stronger than the others, that waged war with the saints, prevailing against them; and about the judgment that was given to the saints.

The interpretation is given in *verses 23-25*. This fourth kingdom will be different from the other kingdoms in that it will devour the whole earth. The ten horns are kingdoms that will be simultaneous in their reigns (supported by *Revelation 13:1; 17:12*) but are a part of the fourth kingdom. This fourth kingdom appears to be a coalition of nations. One horn shall arise, overcome three of these kingdoms and try to change times and laws. The king will be a blasphemer and he will war against the saints (*Revelation 13:7*) for "*a time and times and the dividing of time*" (3 1/2 years; 42 months; 1260 days - *Revelation 11:2-3;13:5*). This is identical to the half-week of *Daniel 9:27* and refers to the last 3 1/2 years preceding the coming of Christ in glory. The world has not yet seen such a kingdom. There are some things that have occurred lately that closely resemble it. Russia incorporated several nations in the Soviet Union. Though that union seems to be breaking-up, it is not dead yet, and remember, iron and clay (tile) do not adhere together very good. Several nations in Europe have formed a "Common Market" primarily for economic reasons, and, remember, this (economics) is also a necessary ingredient. The European nations need Arab oil and the Arabs need Europe's manufacturing power. These will have to bargain with one another. As rapidly as events happen, I believe things could quickly fall-into-place for such a coalition to appear. *God's* timetable will be on time, that is for sure!

Verses 26-28 show *God's* kingdom overcoming this fourth kingdom; especially, the horn of *verse 24*. Terminology demands the fifth kingdom to be an earthly/political kingdom regardless of its spiritual nature. This is consistent with the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, other *Old Testament* prophecies, and the prophecies of the *New Testament*. The fifth kingdom is contrasted to the preceding kingdoms in that it will be an everlasting kingdom with all its powers and people serving *God*. It will be a marvelous day for this world when all the kingdoms of men are gone and only one King rules supreme: *God's* Son, Israel's Messiah, and the saints' Redeemer.

III. The Times Determined Upon Israel and Jerusalem in Relation to the Gentiles. Chapters 8-12.

A. An Overview of These Five Chapters: A. An Overview of These Five Chapters:

Chapter eight tells of some things related to Israel, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The ram with two horns that pushed westward, northward, and southward was the expansion of the Medo-Persian Empire for nearly 200 years. During that time some of the Israelites returned to Palestine and rebuilt the city of Jerusalem and the temple in it.

A he-goat came from the west that had a notable horn and it destroyed the ram. This he-goat was Greece and the horn was Alexander the Great. When Alexander died his kingdom was divided between his four generals. Out of these kingdoms came a "*little horn*" (Antiochus Epiphanes) that became powerful over the east (Syria), the south (Egypt), and "*pleasant land*" (Palestine). He took away the Jewish daily

sacrifice and desolated the sanctuary. He was a type of the Antichrist who will reign during the great tribulation (*Revelation 11:2; 13:5-7*). *Jesus* refers to an incident during the tribulation that will be like this in *Matthew 24:15*.

Chapter nine presents the "time determined upon Israel and Jerusalem". I will go more in detail about this in comments later on *9:24-27*.

Chapter ten gives Daniel's vision of *God's* glory and how Daniel prepared himself for the angel's revelation that is recorded in chapter eleven. This chapter shows there is Satanic influence behind political and social conditions in the world. There are struggles among spirit beings as well as the warfare of the saints with the spiritual world. (*Ephesians 6:12*).

Chapter eleven gives the history from Darius of Persia to the "time of the end". There were four important kings of Medo-Persia (*verse 2*). The fourth important king, Xerxes I (he may be the Ahasuerus of Esther 1) had an ill-fated expedition against Greece. The third world empire, Greece, became a world power under Alexander the Great (*verse 3*). His kingdom was divided into four kingdoms (*verse 4*). There was a lot of struggling among those four kingdoms for total world power. During those struggles (*verses 5-20*) a "vile person" (*verse 21*) rose to power (*verses 21-27*) and battled the king of the south (described in *chapter eight*). At that time he (Antiochus Epiphanes) was opposed by Rome (*verse 30*) and told to go home. As he returned home he polluted the Jewish temple and took away their daily sacrifice (*30-35*). He died soon afterward and the period from his death until the Antichrist is found in the phrase: "even to the time of the end."

Verses 36-39 are about another king who appears in the "time of the end". This king is Paul's "man of sin" (**II Thessalonians 2:3**) and John's beast/Antichrist (**Revelation 13:1-10**) whom Antiochus Epiphanes foreshadowed. History has not revealed any king that has fulfilled the prophecies of these verses. This king (**36-39**) will be an absolute ruler and will set himself up to be worshipped. This, Antiochus Epiphanes never did.

Verses 40-45 describes the final world war. Other nations object to this king's (that coalition of nations from the Old Roman Empire) power and his actions to control the whole world. The armies of the south and from the north "push at him." He will enter Palestine (*verse 41 - "the glorious land"*). He hears of an eastern army coming (**Revelation 16:12-24**) and prepares for them (**44,45**). He comes to his end as do all the other powers in the great "Battle of Armageddon" (**Revelation 16:14-16; 19:11-19; Joel 3:9-16; Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-4; Matthew 24:27-30; Daniel 2:34-35, 45**).

Chapter twelve verse four ends the section that began with *chapter ten*. *These verses* are future and relate to the same time as the previous verses: "the time of the end." They are about the "great tribulation" that will come at the end of this present age and the resurrections that are associated with it (**Revelation 20**). Unprecedented trouble in the "last days" is clearly taught in both the *Old* and *New Testaments*. The message to Israel: you will go through the time of "Jacob's trouble" and will be delivered out of it. The message to *New Testament* saints: you will be delivered from that time of wrath (**I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9**). The "great tribulation" (time of Jacob's trouble) does two things: prepares Israel to receive their Deliverer and destroy Israel's enemy.

B. The Times Determined Upon Israel and Jerusalem: 9:24-27

Daniel understood from Jeremiah's prophecy that Jerusalem would be desolate for seventy years. This time was about completed and Daniel began to pray for Israel's return and re-establishment. Jeremiah's 70 years may be accounted for in two ways: the first deportation (606 BC) to the first return (536 BC), or from the destruction of the temple (586 BC) to the completion of the rebuilt temple (516 BC).

While Daniel was confessing Israel's sin and seeking *God's* forgiveness Gabriel came to give him understanding of Israel's future. He told Daniel there were six things that were determined upon Israel in a time frame of "seventy weeks" (better: seventy sevens). If the sevens were years that would be 490 years to be distributed in the following manner: 49 years; 434 years; 7 years. Those six things are:

1. *"Finish the transgression"* - bring an end to Israel's apostasy and sin.
2. *"Make and end of sin"* - either take away Israel's sin or bring it to judgment.
3. *"Make reconciliation for iniquity"* - the cross of Christ is the basis for reconciliation, but the actual reconciliation of Israel will not be until they mourn concerning Him whom they have pierced.
4. *"Bring in everlasting salvation"* - Christ accomplished this at Calvary, but the *Bible* is clear that the millennial kingdom will usher righteousness into the world.
5. *"Seal up the vision and prophecy"* - the termination or cessation of both oral and written proph-

ecy which was done when John wrote the final "amen" in **Revelation 22:21**.

6. "Anoint the most holy" this could mean the temple built by Zerubbabel, sanctification of the temple desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, or the millennial temple.

The first sixty-nine weeks (483 years) covered from "the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince". During that time the streets and the walls were rebuilt in troublesome times.

There were four decrees from the Persians that involved the returning Jews to Jerusalem, but only one of them (445 BC) related to the rebuilding of the city. The one by Cyrus in 536 BC concerned only the temple (**II Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:2; 6:1-50**). The reconfirmation of Cyrus' decree by Darius in 519 BC (**Ezra 6:6-12**). The one by Artaxerxes (457 BC) sent Ezra with provisions for the beautifying of the temple and organize the people (**Ezra 7:11-26**). The request by Nehemiah of Artaxerxes (445 BC) for the privilege of rebuilding the city (**Nehemiah 2:1-8**).

After the sixty-nine sevens Messiah would be "cut-off". This means Christ was living during the sixty-ninth seven.

The problem that exists among theologians: Does the seventieth seven immediately follow the sixty-ninth seven or is there a time in between? If the fulfillment was continuous when did the seventieth seven end? What event happened seven years after Christ's death? Or, what event took place 3 1/2 years after His crucifixion? History has not revealed any ending of the seventieth week. If the seventy sevens are history then all the six things determined upon Israel and Jerusalem are history also. If there is a gap between the sixty-ninth

and seventieth sevens then there is a possibility that the seventieth seven is yet future.

Verse 26 will help determine which is true (continuous fulfillment or a time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth sevens). It is evident Christ is meant by Messiah and that his crucifixion came after the sixty-ninth week was completed. The language could allow for Him being crucified during the seventieth seven, but could also allow for an interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth sevens. The "*prince*" here must refer to Titus the Roman general whose forces destroyed the city and temple in 70 AD. Its position in **verse 26** indicates it takes place before the confirmation and breaking of a covenant in **verse 27**. Then there is added: "*and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*" This could only mean that after 70 AD there will be many wars that bring desolations. Since 70 AD and before Israel became a nation in 1948 over twenty major battles were fought in and around Jerusalem.

Verse 27 should also help determine if the sevens are consecutive or not. The pronoun "*he*" must refer back to the nearest noun antecedent. That would be the "*prince*" of the people who destroyed the city. Titus did not make a seven-year covenant with Israel and then break it in the middle of the time; therefore, it must be another prince of a later time that does so. This would make the seventieth seven not consecutive with the sixty-ninth. The "*he*" could not refer to Christ for there is nothing that hints at such a covenant being made by Him and the sacrifices and oblations did not cease until the temple was destroyed in 70 AD. The "*he*" refers to the Antichrist/man of sin. This agrees with many ***New Testament*** passages concerning the "great tribulation."

Phillip Mauro said: *"the seventieth seven is seven literal years beginning with the public ministry of Christ and ending about three and one half years after His death."* He has no proof for his conjecture and he cannot use the 445 BC date as the starting point.

A literal interpretation of these years require a gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth sevens - the seventieth being yet in the future. Any other literal view has no substance. **Verse 27** indicates that unbelieving Jews (*"the many"*) will make an agreement with the Antichrist concerning their religious worship for a seven year period. The Antichrist will not honor his agreement but will break it after 3 1/2 years and make it intolerable for the Jews. This agrees with **Matthew 24:15-21; Revelations 11:2-11; 13:5-8; II Thessalonians 2:3-13**. When Christ returns in glory (**Revelations 19:11-12**) He will destroy the Desolator (*"desolate" verse 27*).

Outline of Daniel

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II. The Times of the Gentiles - 2:4 - 7:28 - The Aramaic Portion:

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Verses 36-45 - The interpretation.

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- 2nd and 3rd world empires - Medo-Persia and Greece - Arms and chest of silver; body of brass *verse 39*.

- 4th world empire - Rome - legs of iron and toes of iron and clay - *verses 40-43*.

- 5th world kingdom - Christ's kingdom on earth - *verses 44-45*.

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III. The Times Determined Upon Israel and Jerusalem in Relation to the Gentiles.

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