

NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS COMMENTARY SERIES

BOOK OF DANIEL

by
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NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS INC. PO Box 403,
Blackwood, South Australia, 5051

1993

Published by
NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS INC., AUSTRALIA
PO Box 403, Blackwood, South Australia, 5051

First edition 1981
Reprinted with corrections 1993

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Wholly produced and set up in South Australia
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Author's Approach and method of approach

These notes were compiled and presented as lectures and were not intended for publication in Commentary form. I apologise for any omission in the acknowledgment of the source of quotations made. This will be corrected in future editions.

The Prophetic sections have been approached in three stages. In the first instance I have attempted to provide explanatory notes on the verses without attempting to interpret the meaning of the dream or vision. I have then taken a second look and have attempted to deal with any given interpretation without introducing material that is not clearly in the text itself. A third approach attempts to deal with commonly presented views, interpretations and speculations.

Robin Mitchell

General Introduction

To 'New Creation' Commentary Series

The Commentaries which have been prepared, and which are in preparation for this series, are intended to be modest both in their material and format. There are reasons for this kind of production.

Although the first consideration is not that of cost, we will, nevertheless say that it is an important reason. Many books are made to be attractive, and welcome as this is, it adds to the cost. We have tried to keep the price within that range which makes it easy to purchase" the volumes as they appear. Secondly, we make no claim to have produced a work of either great scholarship, or one for the meticulous exegete. It is for those whose time is limited in looking up many commentaries. We have done this work for them, and in that sense the commentaries are the result of the fruits of other men's labours, with a modest addition by the writers, who themselves gather impressions by the way and often, even have helpful insights.

Those who use these commentaries will not find them inspirational, for that was not their intention. They simply present valuable material and insights on the books with which they deal. Is it too high a claim to say that the material presented is worthy of trust, and should prove valuable to those who teach classes, groups, and who preach from pulpits and other places? We think they can be valuable, if not, always, wholly sufficient.

The Editors.

INTRODUCTION

The book of Daniel is to the O.T. what the book of the Revelation is to the N.T. Perhaps no book of the Bible has come under fire from the critics to the extent that the book of Daniel has. There are many real problems that face the reader be he of conservative or liberal persuasion. Recent studies have thrown new light on the book. Its historicity has been confirmed at many points and the traditional position of the critics is becoming less and less tenable. Without doubt continuing studies will yet lead to a better understanding of the book and clear up some of the remaining difficulties.

In spite of the technical problems the message of the book is clear. It is an encouraging word from God intended for His people in every generation and as we approach the book with open minds and the desire to hear God speak to us then we shall be blessed and excited to see His purposes unfold. We will come to understand His love and desire to purify us and perfect us even in the sufferings of life.

PURPOSE

Jerusalem was in ruins, the temple destroyed, and its treasures plundered. The people of God were scattered and many were exiles in Babylon. They had turned from the living God to idols and the dark hour of God's wrath had settled upon them. Yet His wrath 'is but for a moment' and His chastening is in love. When the darkness is greatest the intensity of His revelation is at its peak. By miraculous events YAHWEH declares that He is Sovereign. Pagan kings who oppress His people are but the 'rods of His wrath'. They must bow before the Most High and reign and are deposed by His word. He has not cast His people aside but chastens in order to purify. YAHWEH is the God of History and that

history revolves around His people. The future is theirs because it is His. They shall reign with Him but only when they have suffered with Him and tasted the hatred of the nations who rage against the King of Heaven.

The book then is a word of encouragement to all those who smart under His chastening hand. It is a call to stand firm to all who suffer for righteousness sake. It is a vision that inspires hope because the Lord is King.

SUMMARY

The book can be divided into two parts. The first six chapters relate to historical events, the last six to visions and revelations. There are five outstanding events recorded:

- (i) Daniel and friends refuse to eat the king's rich food.
- (ii) Nebuchadnezzar's dream and interpretation.
- (iii) Nebuchadnezzar's second dream and period of insanity.
- (iv) The writing on the wall and the fall of the Babylonian Empire.
- (v) The lion's den.

The second section deals with four times of Revelation concerning future events. Two revelations are received during the reign of Belshazzar (chapters 7 and 8). The other two occur during the reign of Cyrus the Persian (chapter 9, chapters 10–12).

PLACE IN SCRIPTURE

The Hebrew O.T. is divided into three sections. The Law, The Prophets, The Writings. We would expect to find Daniel among the Prophets, yet the book is placed among 'The Writings'. Daniel was called a seer and a wise man but was a government official

rather than a traditional prophet and this may be the reason. Some think it points to a late date of writing, i.e. after 'The Prophets' section was regarded as closed. The LXX and the Latin Vulgate place Daniel among the Prophets, hence the position in the English Bible.

LANGUAGES

Chapters 1:1–2:4a and Chapters 8–12 are written in Hebrew. Chapters 2:4b–7:28 are written in Aramaic. Hence more than half of the book is in Aramaic. Aramaic was the lingua franca of the day and here we see God dealing with Gentiles and calling them to acknowledge that He is the Lord of kings. The Hebrew section is largely concerned with the revelations given by God to Daniel. The Aramaic section cuts across the natural division of the book into history and prophecy. This has the effect of binding the two sections together and testifying to the unity of the book and a single authorship.

D.L. Emery propounds a theory that the Aramaic section may have been written in the cuniform script of the Chaldeans and translated at a later date into Aramaic. The view has great appeal but to date there is no real evidence of such having been done. Qumran scrolls discovered in recent years also shift from the Hebrew to Aramaic text in the same manner as the Massoretic text.

As well as Hebrew and Aramaic there are a number of Greek and Persian words and these cause problems when consideration is given to the date and authorship of the book.

APOCRYPHAL ADDITIONS

In the Greek version LXX of the O.T. several additions are made to the text that are not included in the Hebrew and Aramaic text. These include "The

Prayer of Azarias", "The Song of the three holy children", (These contain the prayer and praise of

Daniel's three companions while in the fiery furnace). "Suzanna" (The story of a woman protected by Daniel who obtains the conviction of two judges who attempt to seduce her). "Bel and the Dragon" (3 stories in which Daniel destroys the image of Bel, kills the dragon and was fed by Habakkuk while living in the lions' den for 6 days). These stories are recorded in the Apocrypha but are not regarded as part of the original text of the book.

DATE–AUTHOR–LITERARY GENRE

These matters are closely related and so will be dealt with together. Until the pagan Parphyry (3rd Cent. A.D.) who wrote against the Christian faith a 6th Cent. B.C. date was accepted by the Church without question. Not until the rise of higher criticism in the 17th Cent. was the issue again raised.

Most scholars of recent years would argue for a 2nd Cent. B.C. date, but with a great deal of new material from Ancient Babylon now coming to light many of the arguments of the liberal school are being disproved. There are however, real problems to be faced by both the conservative and the liberal scholar. Emery (conservative) writes 'Some of the present conservative or traditional answers do not fully meet the objections and arguments of Daniel's critics.'

Some literary problems that need explanation are:

- 1 Chapters 1–7 written in 3rd person. (1:7, 1:8 etc.). Chapters 8–12 in the 1st person (8:1–2 etc.) –Is this a literary device on Daniel's part? Does it mean there are two authors?
- 2 Chapter 1:1–2:4a in Hebrew; 2:4b–7:28 Aramaic;—8 – 12 Hebrew; why two languages?
- 3 The Babylonian kingdom was followed by the Persian

and then the Greek Empires. The book of Daniel contains a few Greek words and 21 Persian words. It would not be unusual to expect some Persian words as Daniel continued to live on into the Persian Empire, but some of them appear to be of a much later date. It is also noted that of the 21 Persian words only 3 occur in the Hebrew section and 19 in the Aramaic. One would expect them to be evenly distributed throughout.

S.R.Driver, an exponent of the liberal school wrote, 'The Persian words presuppose a period after the Persian Empire had been well established. The Greek words demand, the Hebrew supports and the Aramaic permits a date after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great (332 B.C.).' Recent studies however, have revealed that there was Greek trade all over the near East from the 8th Century B.C. (Daniel 6th Cent.) In fact there were many Greeks employed in Babylon in Daniel's day. The 3 Greek words are names of musical instruments so this is no real problem. The fact that there are so few Greek words argues in fact for an early date.

K.A.Kitchen in recent studies claims that the Hebrew can date anywhere from 600 – 300 B.C. and that the Persian words belong to a period before 300 B.C.

Other reasons for maintaining a late 2nd Cent. date are as follows:

1. The book details history up till the death of Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164). Conclusion–It must be written after his death–Presumes–God does not give detailed prophecy. The book then is regarded as history written to encourage the Jews suffering under Antiochus rather than being genuine prophecy.
2. The literary style is like that of the Apocryphal books which date much later. In the O.T. Daniel

Ezekiel and Zechariah contain passages that are apocalyptic in nature N.T. Revelation only. Leon Morris points out that while there are similarities with Apocalyptic literature there are many elements lacking, such as vivid descriptions of heaven and the age to come; detailed accounts of great battles; lurid descriptions of the fate of the wicked gentiles etc. (L.Morris, *Apocalyptic*). In all probability the later Apocalyptic writers copied from Daniel.

3. Theologically too advanced with doctrines of angels and resurrection from the dead. Assumes an evolutionary development of ideas rather than revelation.
4. Book not included in the Prophets. This section was closed in the 3rd Cent. so must be later. Already mentioned Daniel not a prophet in the traditional sense.
5. Historical errors – relating to Nebuchadnezzar –Belshazzar – Darius etc. These will be dealt with in the text.

As mentioned previously, D.L.Emery in '*Daniel, Who wrote the Book*' suggests that the Aramaic section may have been originally written in Babylonian (*Akkadian*) cuniform. Daniel was instructed in this writing, 1:4: and it would be natural for him to do so. He argues that as the cuniform writing fell into disuse it was decided at a later date (2nd Cent.) to translate it into Aramaic. He suggests that the book may have been originally written in diary form by Daniel and then put together by a 2nd Cent. writer. This idea is attractive for a number of reasons.

- (a) It does away with difficulties relating to the date of Greek and Persian words. (They can be late).
- (b) It explains why most of the 'Loan words' occur only in the Aramaic section.

(c) It provides an explanation for the use of the first person in the later chapters and the third person in chapters 1–7. The second Century writer composed 1–7 from sketchy diary type notes made by Daniel and used the third person to show that it was not the entire work of Daniel. Chapters 8–11 containing the revelations given to Daniel were written down in their present form by Daniel (12:4) and so were left intact.

Emery attempts to support his argument in a number of ways but to date there is no external evidence to support his ideas.

DATE OF WRITING

While there are still difficulties accepting a 6th Century authorship many of the arguments once used to point to a late date have now been ruled out as invalid. Yet the true position is far from clear and a composite position as suggested by Emery may one day prove to be correct.

LITERARY GENRE

The book represents a style of literature midway between the Prophetic and true Apocalyptic.

AUTHORSHIP

Most scholars now agree on the unity of the book but not all would acknowledge that it was written by a man called Daniel. Some see Daniel merely as an unknown folk hero to whom the book has been attributed in the style of the apocalyptic writings.

Leon Morris acknowledges that apart from references in Ezek. 14:14,20; 28:3; Daniel is not known in the O.T. In these references the name is spelt differently and it is argued that some other person may be intended–

The main difficulty of the critics seems to be their unwillingness to acknowledge that 'Daniel' is genuine prophecy and that God reveals Himself and His plans in such a manner.

We would see 'Daniel' as genuine prophecy and not mere history. Jesus accepted both Daniel and his prophetic word, eg. Matt. 24:15: as did other N.T. writers. The fact that 'Daniel' has been accepted into the canon of Scripture argues loudly for the genuineness of the book and its author. The Church up until the 17th Cent. adds its testimony that this is indeed a book which declares the purposes and plan of God.

Chapter One

Introduction

1:1–2 “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it and the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand”

We first note two things. The first is magnificent: *‘The Lord gave’*–*‘The Lord Reigns’* –He is the King of the nations. The second terrifying: The Lord gave His people into the hands of their enemies. For them the dark day of God’s wrath had fallen. The outstanding themes of the book are the Sovereignty of God, He reigns as Lord of history and secondly God’s judgment of His people, the discipline of Love.

Years before when God led His people out of Egypt He promised to bless them in every way if they obeyed His voice. He warned them that if they *disobeyed* they would bring upon themselves His curse. Their enemies would come upon them and they would taste His wrath. (Deut. 28). Jerusalem was ruled over by 19 kings, eight were good and led the nation to honour God: but eleven were bad and the nation turned from the Lord and prostituted herself with idols. In 722 B.C. Samaria fell to Assyria, the Northern Kingdom of Israel tasted God’s judgment (II Kings 17) and still Judah continued to sin.

After repeated warnings God announced Judgment through His prophet Jeremiah. *“Thus says the Lord of hosts, because you have not obeyed my words, behold I will send for all the tribes of the north says the Lord and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, MY SERVANT, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years...Take–from my hand the cup of the*

wine of wrath drink be drunk, vomit and fall, rise no more.” (Jeremiah 25).

In the year 612 B.C. the Assyrian capital, Ninevah fell to an allied force of Babylonians, Medians and Scythians. In 610 the Babylonians under Neboplassar with their allies pushed the Assyrians west across the Euphrates and Haran was taken. The Assyrians were joined by Egyptian troops and Josiah the good king of Judah attempted to prevent the Egyptians under Pharaoh Necho from going to their aid. Josiah took his army to Megiddo but was defeated and killed. (609 B.C.) II Kings 23:28–30: II Chronicles 35:20–24. Jehoiakim then came to the throne in Judah. Finally Babylon gained the victory over the Assyrians at the great battle of Carchemish in April of 605. The Babylonian army was led by the Crown Prince Nebuchadnezzar. He went on from there to defeat all Syria and Palestine. It was at this time 605 B.C. that Daniel and his friends were taken captive. Neboplassar died on the 8th of August that year and Nebuchadnezzar received the Crown on the first of September.

This was the third year of Jehoiakim according to Babylonian reckoning which numbers the reign from the year following the accession year. Jeremiah 25:1 nominates it as the fourth year. The critics were eager to point out the discrepancy but obviously Jeremiah’s calculations were according to Palestinian reckoning.

In 597 B–C. Nebuchadnezzar again came against Jerusalem and took some 10,000 leading citizens captive – Jehoiakim was bound. See II Kings 24: II Chronicles 36. This was at the command of the Lord. II Kings 24:2–3. Nebuchadnezzar, while he did not know it was the servant of the Lord. In all of this we see that God is Sovereign. There are no accidents in History. God is firmly in control and through political chaos and upheaval He is working out His purposes and bringing His plans to fulfilment. It can be frightening to look at the world around us, but here we are assured over and over again that our God

reigns. We see that He is a God to be feared and obeyed: He will not tolerate sin and yet He is not arbitrary nor vindictive in His punishment of rebellion. His love is longsuffering and patient. Some 900 years before He had warned His people of the consequences of disobedience (Deut. 28) and yet they had chosen to disobey. Repeatedly He warned via His prophets. II Kings 21:10, 23:27, Isaiah 6:10-11, Jeremiah 25, 26:6,12, 32:26-28 etc. and by patience and love sought to draw His people to Himself.

The history of the people of God is prophetic. It proclaims the name of God to us. He is the same yesterday, today and forever, we are confronted here by God Himself. As He has acted so He will act. This is not mere ancient history but the word of God that calls us to obedience and blessing and warns of the disastrous consequences of our rebellion

Finally in 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell and the country became a Province of Babylon. Even in His wrath His concern is for His people and it is an astonishing and marvellous thing to see the provision of God for His people in exile. Nineteen years before Jerusalem fell and the majority of the people deported, God took a young Jewish boy down into Babylon, anointed him with His Spirit and trained him to govern over the affairs of Babylon. During the seventy years of exile the Jews were never without a representative in the palace of the king. Daniel was a symbol to all Israel of God's continuing love. Their way was prepared, their affliction lightened, and in the darkness of wrath there was yet a glimmer of light.

Even in our rebellion God loves us and His desire in punishment is to turn our heart to love Him.

In Verse 2 We note the Name of God

In the first eight Chapters God is addressed not as *YHWH* but as *ADONAI*. "*SUPREME MASTER*," the Sovereign Lord of history and as such He deals with the nations as He wills.

Nebuchadnezzar brought some of the vessels of the house of God. The Hebrew has – the house of *the* God. "The" God is emphatic emphasising that He is the true God. The author does this throughout the book and this is seen as one of the evidences of the unity of the book.

The vessels were placed in the temple at Babylon. There were more than 50 temples within the city erected as monuments to various deities. The main one was to Marduck. This was situated just inside the magnificent Ishtar gate. It was probably here that the vessels were stored. Many of these sacred vessels were made by Solomon. Hezekiah had foolishly displayed them to earlier Babylonian Emissaries; II Kings 20:13ff. Isaiah predicted that they would one day be seized.

They were placed in the Babylonian temple signifying that to their mind their god had conquered YHWH the God of the Jews. (See I Samuel 5:2. Philistines took the Ark into the temple of Dagon).

Yet as we read. This was God's doing. Marduck had nothing to do with it. "My ways are not your ways says the Lord." All too often we come to the wrong conclusion when God doesn't act as we think He should. We tend to equate His blessing and action with visible success. Sometimes however He does His deepest works in those events that we regard as national or personal disasters. God is about what Isaiah called "His strange work." His work of wrath. It is significant that in Chapter 5 the Babylonian Empire falls to its destruction the very night on which the sacred vessels are profaned. The Lord He is King.

The mention of Shinar in V. 2 draws to our attention the way in which God works in judgment. Shinar is a name for Babylon but it carries with it in the Scriptures a nuance. It is the place hostile to faith. The name is first used in Genesis 10:9-10 – where it speaks of Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. (many would see this to mean that he hunted men to enslave them). His name means "let us revolt". and he

was the father of the kingdom of Babel in the land of Shinar. In Genesis 11:2 we read of the rebellion of the people and the building of the tower of Babel in the land of Shinar. Zech. 5:6-11. It is the place to which evil is banished and in the Revelation 17:3-5, 18 we see Babylon Mother of Harlots, the great city which seduces men by whoredom and wealth and deceives the nations who drink the blood of the saints.

Babylon then symbolically is the centre of idolatry and rebellion toward God. In Daniel's day it was a city of idols. The sins of God's people for which they were being punished was their lack of keeping the sabbath day and their idolatry; (I Kings 11:5, 12:28, 16:31, 18:19 II Kings 21:3-5, II Chron. 28:2-3, Jeremiah 7:24, 8:3, 44:20-23 etc.).

God's people chose idols rather than obey Him and so He gave them over to idolatry and exiled them into the world centre of false religion and idol worship.

It was there surrounded by the empty gods, the lifeless statues and the demonic rituals and worship that they learned that He is the One True God and there they sickened of idolatry for ever.

Our sin itself becomes the means by which God inflicts us when we will not obey Him. The perversity of our own iniquity and guilt leads to despair and in our anguish we are forced to cry to Him and if we will not then we are destroyed-

1:3-4

Nebuchadnezzar was a man of wisdom. In taking hostages who were of the Royal family and the nobility he used them to keep those still in Jerusalem in line. He was wise enough to see also that he could most effectively administer and control the affairs of his captors by training one of their own who understood their culture and thinking to preside over them. (Josephus claims that Daniel and three friends were members of the Royal family of Zedekiah. This is uncertain.) He thus chose out those who were 'skilful in wisdom' (practical wisdom) 'endowed with knowledge' (knowledge of a vast range of subjects) and having 'understanding

and learning.' (insight or understanding that probes beneath the surface.)

Perhaps with the exceptions of Moses and Solomon, Daniel was the most brilliant man of the O.T. His brilliance was a gift of God 1:17, given to equip him for ministry.

These young men were set to learn the letters and language of the Chaldeans. Today thousands of clay tablets have been excavated, some dating as far back as Abraham. Some of these give a good idea of the study that was set for Daniel and his companions. They probably learned two old Babylonian dialects and the Kassite language, astronomy, astrology, magic arts, mathematics, natural history, agriculture and architecture.

The practice of magic was strictly forbidden to the people of God (Deut. 18:10-12, I Samuel 18:34) but Daniel needed to learn much of such things in order to later carry out his duties as "Chief of the magicians and wise men" 2:49. From his life style we quickly see that he relied only upon God and not upon the magic of the Babylonians which was shown to be inferior again and again by the revelations and acts of God.

Here we see a little of the extraordinary faith and devotion of the young man Daniel. Evidence would suggest that he was a lad of no more than about 15 yrs. when taken captive. In all probability Nebuchadnezzar intended by the training to break their religious devotion and introduce them to the ways and worship of Babylon. Daniel and his three friends knew their God and maintained their faith in spite of the enticements of Babylon. It speaks highly of their early training at home.

They were put under the charge of Ashpenaz the chief eunuch. Some think that they themselves were made eunuchs according to the prophecy of Isaiah, II Kings 20:17-18, Isaiah 39:7, but this may not be so in the technical sense, as Potiphar of old was called

the Chief Eunuch and yet was married, Genesis 37:36. Whatever the case as we read on we see a remarkable spirit in Daniel. There is no hint of anger or bitterness at being taken from his home. There is only a faithful submission to God's will and undoubtedly he came to see that he was placed there for the sake of the people of God, even as Joseph did, Gen. 45:5f. We tend to react all too quickly to adverse circumstances and don't submit to God when things seem to be wrong.

These young men were also required to be of handsome appearance. This seemed to be almost a virtue in the ancient world. *Competent to serve in the king's Palace*: i.e. equipped with the necessary social graces. These are not unimportant.

Chaldeans:

The Chaldeans were a group of independent tribes from the swamp lands of the north Persian Gulf. A Semitic people who migrated from the Syrian desert and mingled with the Babylonians. They rallied together under Nabopolassar and overthrew Babylon with the help of the Medes in 612 B.C. He was the father of Nebuchadnezzar. The term Chaldean is also used in the technical sense of 'magician' throughout the book. The Chaldean people were expert in the magic arts and hence the term Chaldean became synonymous with magician.

Nobles:

A Persian word that scholars claim is of a late date.

1:5-7

The training was to last for three years, they were assigned food from the king's own table and were given Babylonian names. The name Daniel, means either God (el = strong God) is Judge or God is my Judge. His name was changed to *Beltshazzar* Belet was the wife of the god Marduck and the name possibly means "Lady protect the king".

Mishael = "Who is as God. now *Meshach* "I am of little account".

Hananiah = YAH (YHWH) is gracious now *Shadrach* "I am fearful of god (Marduck)."

Azariah = YHWH has helped now *Abednego* "Servant of the shining one (i.e. the god Nabu)."

The meaning of the Babylonian names are a little uncertain but obviously an attempt is made to associate the men with Babylonian gods and encourage them to forget their own.

"*Rich food*" another Persian word. The king's motive may have been to solicit the good will of the young men and ensure that they were well nourished to serve him. What follows indicates in all probability other motives as well.

1:8-16

It was not uncommon for kings to provide food from their tables for their courtiers. Solomon's daily measure was 20 cattle, 100 sheep besides harts, gazelles, roebucks and fatted fowl, I Kings 4:22-23. Yet this posed a problem for the youths and so they refused to eat the king's rich food. The king's word constituted a command and hence the reply of Ashpenaz, 1:10. He feared to disobey the king's order.

It is of interest to note how the youths acted when they were not able to accept the king's offer for conscience sake. The text shows that they acted with great respect for the authority that God had put over them. They were not rebellious, to be so would mean that they would be useless to Nebuchadnezzar and hence they could not serve God in his court. By reason of their respect they were well received and *Verse 9* we read, "God gave them favour ... in the sight of the Chief Eunuch." Because they were obedient to God He was in this with them. The mention of His favour (chesed) seems to bring into focus the covenant love of God which was at work towards His people. See Psalm 106:40-46, I Kings 8:50. Yet they were not content with refusal. Many in such circumstances would compromise but their determination was to obey God and so a second approach was made, this time to the Melzar (meaning

unknown; probably steward). A test was suggested Vs. 12–13.

Vegetables—literally—that which is sown from seed: could include grains as well as vegetables.

V. 15. Indicates a good result and the Melzar allowed them to change their diet. In all probability he connived with the Chief Eunuch, and was prepared to risk his head to provide meals for the youths in return for the Royal delicacies and so he benefited from the exchange.

The health and vitality of the youths need not be seen as miraculous as their health food diet was probably better for them than the king's rich food. Yet the promise of God to His people when they set out from Egypt should not be overlooked. Exodus 23:22–26.

We are told 'When in Rome do as the Romans' but where do we draw the line? Daniel and his companions found it acceptable to study the Babylonian arts and did not protest at a name that spoke of a foreign deity but they drew the line with regards to this matter of food.

At first glance it appears that their consciences were troubled because they would be eating food that was declared unclean by Levitical law. This cannot be the case however as they refused both food and wine. While some of the food was ritually unclean there was no ban on the drinking of wine. It has been suggested that the king's food and wine would both be defiled and this is certainly so as it would have first been offered to the Babylonian gods. However all food in Babylon and Assyria was ritually unclean. Ezek. 4:13, Hosea 9:3–4, and to eat such was part of the judgment of God. A deeper issue is involved and one that called for a compromise in their obedience and loyalty to God. A clue is found in 11:26 where the rare Persian word "*patbag*" ("rich food") is found again. In 11:26–27 we will see that to share the delicacies of the king is to commit oneself to friendship and loyalty. It was of Covenant significance – see Genesis 31:51–54, Exodus 24:7–11, Neh.8:9–12. To have taken of the king's rich

food would have ultimately led them to obey his command to worship the statue, Chapter two, or to cease from prayer at his command, Chapter six. The same thought is found in Matthew 26:26–28 and it makes the act of Holy Communion deeply significant. We are reminded also that the climax of history is an invitation to sit at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

It is not always easy to distinguish between custom, culture and the essentials of faith, yet we must do so if our faith is to be accepted in the world of today, where cross-cultural exchange is frequent and old barriers are breaking down.

1:17–21

Their training ended and when brought before the king they were found to be ten times (lit. ten hands) better than all the magicians and enchanters that were found in all his kingdom. Babylon was a centre of learning. A remarkable library was left by *Ashurbanipal 669–626 B.C.* Many of these writings have been found and are known today. This was high praise for such young men, but their skill and learning are attributed to God, 1:17 "*God gave.*"

Yet their knowledge and understanding were not given apart from their diligent efforts and study programmes. They made the most of the opportunities given to them and took no time out to bemoan the fact of their captivity. As Paul they were prisoners of the Lord and they set about serving Him.

Wisdom in the Scriptures is associated with obedience to God and is given to those who please Him, Psalm 119:100, Eccl. 2:26, James 1:5,17, Colossians 1:19.

As well as other skills Daniel was given "*understanding in all visions and dreams*" V. 17. This was most significant as the Babylonians made much of their dreams. Dreams were induced for this reason and the Babylonian priests were considered expert in the interpretation of dreams: but Daniel made no recourse to their dream books or devices his gift was entirely of

God and by it he revealed his God to be superior to those of the Babylonians and indeed the Living God.

V. 19 They stood before the king – i.e. they were selected for important government posts.

In refusing the king's rich food they showed that they cared more for God than advancement and now because it was God's desire they became prominent.

V. 20 “*Magicians*” The term may be related to the word stylus, i.e. those who use the stylus– Sacred writers. “*Enchanters*” Priests of Babylon – neither term is used in its strictest sense. They are all “*Wise men.*”

V. 21 Critics claim an inaccuracy at this point, 10:1 revelation is given in the third year of Cyrus. The point is that Daniel lived through into the time of Cyrus. It does not say that he died then. This Chapter was perhaps written in the first year?

Chapter Two

Introduction

Here for the first time we are confronted by prophecy that requires some interpretation– Some basic ground rules need to be considered to avoid error and wild speculation.

1. Read what is written. Don't read into the text what is not there.
2. Interpret each vision separately. Symbols may have different meanings in each (eg. Revelation 12, woman = Israel; Revelation 18, woman = Babylon; little horn, Daniel 7–8)–
3. Don't make more of a symbol, parable, or vision than the writer does. Accept his interpretation where given and let the book interpret the book where possible.
4. The message was intended for those of the prophet's day; what did they understand by it?

5. Prophecy often loses its time perspective. Often only significant events are recorded.
6. Interpret literally unless there is some Biblical or obvious reason not to, and yet realise that a symbol is only a *sign* of a reality and does not reflect the reality in every detail.
7. See if the Bible interprets the prophecy of symbol.
8. Symbols may well be understood by the beholder; contemporary literature may help to understand.
9. See the vision; the main points may become obvious.
10. Distinguish between Scripture interpreting Scripture and using Scripture to support one's own views. See also the additional note on interpretation at the end of this book.

2:1

“*The second year of Nebuchadnezzar*” This is seen by some to be a problem. Probably Babylonian reckoning – would then be third year by Jewish reckoning. 605 part of year = one year, i.e. the accession year. 604, 603 = year one, and two. So probably at the end of the training period for the youths.

Nebuchadnezzar had dreams that disturbed him a great deal. A Chaldean proverb says “Woe and anxiety create only bad dreams.” Nebuchadnezzar ruled over a vast area. His army was responsible for the collection of taxes from subjugated lands. In 604 Ashkelon resisted and the city was reduced to rubble. In 603 ancient records reveal that troops were in the field for several months indicating that all was not well. The dream coming as it did at this time seemed to add to his uneasiness and feeling that all was not well. “*TROUBLED*” *The word is emphatic.* He was deeply disturbed.

2:2–3

The king summoned his wise men and demanded to know the dream. It is not clear as to whether

2:2-3 (Cont.) he had forgotten the content of the dream or simply wanted to make certain that what his counsellors told him was correct. “*Sorcerers*” Probably a group who used herbs and charm potions and sought help from evil spirits. “*Chaldeans.*” is used here in the sense of ‘Experts in Magic love.’ It is said that this usage became popular only after the rise of the Persian Empire.

2:4-11

“Then the Chaldeans said to the king.” “Chaldeans” here used to embrace all the wise men. The reply of the wise men is given in Aramaic. The narrative then continues in the Aramaic dialect through to the end of Chapter 7. “O king live for ever,” Simply Court etiquette.

V. 4 The counsellors request to know the dream that they might interpret it. Extensive dream manuals have been discovered. They consist of dreams and the events that followed. They are extensive and complex. They try to cover every eventuality. Only an expert could find his way through them.

V. 5 “The thing is gone from me.” or “The word from me is sure” R.S.V. “Gone” is probably here used in the sense of “gone forth” i.e. I have decreed. You will tell me the dream, rather than, “It is gone from me,” I don’t remember. Another proverb of Babylon says, “If a man cannot remember the dream he saw, his god is angry with him. If he did in fact forget then the import and impact of the dream remained with him and his forgetfulness may have disturbed him further.

Nebuchadnezzar was lavish in his rewards but he meant every word of this threat. The Babylonians were not what we would regard as civilized in such matters and we gain an insight into conditions that the Jews lived under.

V. 7 The Chaldeans repeated their request and without doubt Nebuchadnezzar was beginning to doubt their abilities. Their business was to make contact with the deities and be enlightened as to such mysteries.

V. 9 Nebuchadnezzar is firm.

V. 10 The Chaldeans try flattery. They suggest that Nebuchadnezzar is too great and powerful and wise to really expect such knowledge from his servants. The indication is that the king is wrong to ask such a thing. They virtually admit that their priestly claims of enlightenment by the deities are false.

2:12-16 The king was furious and demanded the death of the wise men. Daniel and companions though not present were included in the execution order.

V. 14 Daniel’s reaction is remarkable. He appears confident and unshaken. Such confidence can only come from a sure faith that he is where God wants him to be and that God is working out his purposes through him. Because of the manner of his approach, Arioch was willing to listen to him. He respected Daniel.

2:17-18

From childhood Daniel had been taught the history of his people and told of the mighty acts of God in delivering his people and giving them victory. His experiences in Babylon had already verified that God could care for him and so now he naturally turns to prayer and calls on his friends to join him. Note here the Hebrew names used when associated with prayer and God. The Babylonians worshipped the starry heaven. Daniel urges his companions to call on the God of the heavens. (PL). The one who is over all. An appropriate name for God in the context of astral worship. “mystery” – another Persian word. The king’s decree was sure but Daniel knew that even the decree of a king was not final. Even his heart is in the hands of the Lord.

2:19-23

God graciously answered prayer by a “Vision of the night” given to Daniel. The meaning of the term is not clear. It seems to be distinguished from dream. 8:1-3. vision of the day. Visions and dreams are the means by which God communicates to his prophets. The mode is unimportant. The communication is. Spontaneous praise follows the

answered prayer. *“Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever.”* The name of God is His revealed character and nature. It represents what may be known of God, (Exodus 6:3. The patriarchs had known Him as *E1-Shaddai*, God Almighty – by mighty acts of preservation and guidance and in the birth of Isaac. But now He was to reveal Himself as *YHWH*. The Covenant keeping God – merciful – slow to anger – forgiving) Daniel praised God for all that He had shown Himself to be.

Vs. 20 & 22 “To him belong wisdom and might ... He reveals deep and mysterious things.” – as evidenced by the vision.

V. 21 He removes kings – as the dream of the king revealed. A contrast to the fatalistic view of the Babylonians and even today many Christians find it hard to accept that God is in control when it comes to governments or even church politics.

V. 23 *“Praise you God of my fathers”* He senses his continuity with all who have gone before him. It is not just that God has spoken to Daniel but He has spoken to Daniel in the context of His people. He has spoken not just for Daniel but for His people and because He has entered Covenant with them. His revelations and gifts are always given in the context of His people, for His people. Our thrust today seems to be toward visions and revelations to edify the individual without much regard to the body, and only when we commit ourselves to each other as well as to Him will we begin to know many of the things that He has for us.

2:24-30

V. 27 *“Astrologers”* – a new term – those who consider the heavens and make predictions according to the movements of the heavenly bodies. The word is followed by reference to *the “God in heaven who reveals mysteries.”*

“Latter Days” It is important for the sake of proper interpretation to understand what is meant by the term. It is safe to say that it means those days that are referred to in the dream given to the king. As we will see the dream relates to the period from the Babylonian Empire through to the setting up of a Kingdom by the

God of heaven. We could simply read – *“What will be from here on.”* The term then includes much of what we now regard as history. It does not refer exclusively to days which are yet to come from our perspective.

V. 25 Arioch is not backward in capitalizing on the event. His attitude is in contrast to that of Daniel who acknowledges that God is solely responsible for the revelation. V. 30. He is not backward however, in pointing out deficiencies of the Babylonian experts

V. 27. Obviously this didn't win him many friends but it did highlight that his God alone is the revealer of mysteries. We can learn from Daniel how to handle the exceptional experience that God sometimes gives.

Israel was called to be a priestly nation and proclaim the name of God among the nations. Because of their disobedience in one sense they failed miserably. Yet of course by His dealings with them God has still revealed Himself for the nations to see. In Daniel we catch a glimpse of what might have been if all of His people had obeyed Him. We catch a glimpse of what might be if we obey Him.

2:31-35

The dream is told. The king saw a great image. Not an idol but a statue with a human form. It was immense. Its very size and brilliance was overwhelming. The head was of gold. The arms and breast silver, the thighs bronze, legs iron and feet were of iron and clay (the word is used of glazed china). A stone cut by no human hand smote the image and destroyed it. The stone became a great mountain that filled the earth.

It is interesting to note even at this stage a prophetic madness descends upon the commentators and speculation begins with regards to weights and specific gravities of the various metals mentioned? ? ?

THE HEAD OF GOLD

2:36-38

The king is addressed by his correct title, king of kings and yet Daniel does not hesitate to point out the kingdom is his only because God has given it to him. See Jer. 27:5-8. Romans 13

insists that every authority is of God. Even the beasts are subject to His rule, Genesis 1:28f. We will tell? Daniel and friends? Daniel and God? The head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar– We will see as we continue that reference to a king usually implies his kingdom. King and kingdom are inseparable.

“CHEST AND ARMS OF SILVER BELLY AND THIGHS OF BRONZE” V. 39 Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom is to come to an end. It will be succeeded by an inferior kingdom, and this will be followed by yet another and this third kingdom will rule over *“all the earth.”* Critics attack this verse, claiming that historically the kingdoms that followed Babylon were more extensive than that of Babylon. Obviously inferior does not refer to size because of the comment regarding the third kingdom. The following kingdoms lacked the central and fine organization which characterized the Babylonian Reign. The visions of Chapter seven may further add to our understanding of the comment.

“LEGS OF IRON AND FEET OF IRON AND CLAY”

V. 40–43 More detailed explanation is given at this point of Iron section of the image. We notice that Daniel interprets as he proceeds.

V. 40 Iron symbolizes strength and the fourth kingdom is one of great strength– It breaks and shatters and crushes all that went before it.

V. 41 Strong though it is yet there is a weakness and it shall be divided. The division is indicated according to Daniel not by the two legs, but by the two ingredients of the feet and toes. Iron and potter’s clay.

Vs. 42–43 It is important to read these two verses correctly.

V. 42 The toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay. Indicating that the kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. The toes then are part of this fourth kingdom as seen by Nebuchadnezzar.

V. 43 *“As you saw the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall be mixed with the seed of men.” RSV has “So they will mix with one another in marriage.”*

The phrase *“Seed of men,”* is a problem but the important thing to note is that it is the iron and clay that are mixed and not the toes of the previous verse. While they are mixed ‘by the seed of men’ yet they will not hold together even as iron and clay do not mix.

THE STONE

Vs. 44–45 A fifth kingdom is yet to arise. Not part this time of the dream image but a kingdom represented by the stone that was cut without hands. (Extra details are here added. The stone was cut from a mountain). – The God of heaven Himself will set up this kingdom. It will not be the work of man (without hands). It will contrast with the other kingdoms mentioned in that it shall never be destroyed. It shall stand forever and its sovereignty shall not be left to another people. This same kingdom will break in pieces all that precede it. *“A great God”* has thus made known to Nebuchadnezzar what shall be hereafter.

THE MEANING OF THE DREAM, ITS INTERPRETATION AND ITS PURPOSE.

2:36–45

V. 30 Indicates that the dream and its interpretation are made known so that Nebuchadnezzar may know the thoughts of his mind. God graciously favoured him with a view of things as they really are. This is part of God’s dealings with the king as we will see, to bring him to acknowledge the Sovereignty of God and bless and praise the Most High, 5:34f.

He is given to understand clearly that his kingdom, while majestic and more magnificent than others, is of limited duration. Three other kingdoms will follow his. They will each differ in their characteristics and yet are together all part of the one immense structure. The Most High will Himself set up a kingdom that is unlike those of the dream image. It will in fact bring about the destruction of those kingdoms and then endure forever.

The dream must have been a tremendous encouragement

to the young men and to all the exiles if it were widely known. If for a moment they believed the Babylonian propaganda that Marduck had conquered YHWH, now they would be reassured. Their God was Sovereign and in control. This same message applies today to the people of God everywhere and is especially relevant those in oppressed and troubled situations. We are to understand that the upheavals of human history and the collapse of Empires is due ultimately to the Kingdom of God which pushes in upon our world with powerful and even devastating effects.

The prophecies of both Daniel and Revelation are first of all to encourage the people of God, in exile or suffering persecution. They are given to assure that no situation is out of God's control and ultimately He will quell the rebellion, and make an end of man's sin, gather His people to Himself in love that they might obey Him and enjoy Him forever.

INTERPRETING THE INTERPRETATION

Prophecy is never presented merely to satisfy the idle curiosity as to what might be, or to promote undue speculation which can detract from getting on with life and what God has for us to be about. Yet if there is a prophetic word being worked out in our day it is given for our edification and ought not to be neglected.

To open the commentaries at this point is to be confronted with a veritable barrage of speculation. Because the dream relates to history, future from Daniel's view point and some at least past from our viewpoint, some elements can be discerned as having been fulfilled.

2:36–38

All agree the first kingdom is Babylon.

2:39–40

Conservative Scholars and the Church traditionally have interpreted the second kingdom as that of the Medes and Persians. The third as Greece and the fourth as Rome.

Liberal Scholars see Greece as the fourth kingdom – the

third then as the Persian and the second as the Median kingdom. The assumption is that the book is of the second Century B.C. and is history and not prophecy. Rome could not have been intended as it did not exist. Greece must then be intended seeing that the writer at that time having suffered under Antiochus was expecting the Kingdom of God to then be ushered in (he was mistaken). This means that the writer must have seen the Medo–Persian Empire not as one but as two. His historical facts were incorrect, (another evidence of a late date.) Such an interpretation hardly needs comment if we accept prophecy as genuine. A cursory reading of the book shows that the author was by no means confused with regard to the Medo–Persian Empire 5:28. The mention of Darius the Mede 6:1–9:1, tended to support the idea but if Darius is seen to be Cyrus, as Wiseman suggests then the argument is invalid.

The Jews hold a conservative position with regards to the first three, but then see the fourth as the Turkish Empire. By this they avoid the Christian claim that the kingdom was established by Jesus in the days of Rome.

2:41–42

Opinions differ widely. Many see the two legs as representing the division of Rome into East and West in A.D. 364, the Liberals, the Greek kingdom between the Ptolemies and Seleucids.

Note the earlier exegesis. The iron and the clay represent the division. Daniel does not draw attention to the fact that there are two legs. Many who hold such an opinion then go on to see the kingdom further divided into 10 toes representing 10 kings. Again we note that this is to go far beyond the interpretation given by Daniel in Chapter two. In fact it is to import elements of a later vision into this one (Chapter 7). Nothing is made of the toes and in fact ten is not mentioned. If we place emphasis on 10 toes then why not on fingers etc., (some undoubtedly do so). We are not at liberty to go beyond the interpretation given by the writer in interpreting symbols.

Many Pre-Millennialists go yet further—Wood for example mistranslates the “And” of V.42 as “Indeed,” and then proceeds to introduce a long time gap between *Vs. 41 and 42*, claiming that the Roman Empire will fall but then rise again at the end time and be reconstituted with ten kings represented by the toes. He errs at three points. 1. Mistranslates. 2. Reads Chapter 7 into Chapter 2. 3. Interprets the passage to conform to his own preconceived ideas. It may well be the case that the Roman Empire will be reconstituted but Daniel certainly does not say that in Chapter 2. If the Bible teaches this we will have to find it elsewhere. Similar fanciful interpretations are multitudinous.

2:43

“By the seed of men—”

1. Intermixing in marriage.
2. Democracy/Monarchy.
3. Democracy/Dictatorship.
4. All the national elements contained in the first three.
5. Have a guess?

2:44–45

The Stone points to a new feature in history. It represents a new power and is not under men’s control. It is agreed that this represents the Messianic Kingdom. The differences here revolve around the words “in the days of those *kings the God of heaven will set up a Kingdom*”

A-Millennialist generally see this as referring to the kings of the kingdoms mentioned above. (Note no kings apart from Nebuchadnezzar have in fact been mentioned only kingdoms). Hence see it as a reference to the Coming of Jesus and the institution of the Spiritual Kingdom of Christ.

Pre-Millennialist generally see V.44 as a reference to the Millennial reign and connect the stone shattering the image with Revelation 19:11–20 Christ smiting the nations with the rod of iron. “*These kings*” then refer to ten kings who appear at the end of time. Points for and against are many and the argument endless.

2:46–49

V. 46 “Homage” The word implies an act of worship. Josephus tells of Alexander the Great bowing before the Jewish High Priest. A General questioned his actions saying, ‘*Men bow to you, why do you bow to a priest.*’ Alexander replied, “*It was not before him that I prostrated myself, but the God of whom he has the honour to be High Priest.*”³ Nebuchadnezzar’s actions and intent may have been similar.

V. 47 The king uttered some impressive words. He was undoubtedly deeply moved by the whole experience. The implication of the dream is that there is only one true God. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges that He is the God of gods but not the only God. He demands to be acknowledged as God alone. It is not sufficient to reach out to Him while still holding on to idols. Nebuchadnezzar was not ready yet to face the implications of the revelation.

2:48–49

Daniel and his friends were duly exalted in the kingdom. Here again we see God providing and caring for His people. The exiles were given good farming areas to live in, built their own homes, had freedom of movement about the city. Had their own Elders and form of Government and worshipped freely. During the exile the synagogue type of worship came into existence.

CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCTION

The dream was terrifying and real, the interpretation a powerful witness to God and yet with the passing of time the memory of such confrontations with God grows dim, we forget our good intentions and go on as if nothing had happened. Some time had passed. It is difficult to date this Chapter. Theodotion and the LXX mention the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar and connect the incident with the destruction of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem by burning, II Kings 25:8–10, Jer. 25:12. That would indeed be significant but is uncertain and it may have only been a short time after the events of Chapter two.

There are again different approaches to the Chapter. Some see it as an historical event, others as an allegory and there are those who want to find prophetic significance in it. The details of the narrative are not incongruent with the facts of history. Death by burning was not uncommon. (Jet. 29:22 *“The Lord make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.”*) Furnaces (brick kilns) such as mentioned have been excavated in recent years.

3:1–7

V.1 Most would see the image of gold as related to the dream that Nebuchadnezzar was given. The image was intended to be worshipped but is not called a god and what it in fact represented is not known. It is suggested that seeing the legs and feet of iron and clay in the dream the king sought to strengthen and unify the people of his Empire by uniting them in common worship. Man’s idols are at his disposal and created to serve him. Allegiance to their own gods was not forbidden but all were called to bow before the image. Often rulers of this era erected huge statues of themselves and it may be the case here but if so we are not told.

The image was of gold. Probably overlaid with gold. Similar small gold overlay statues have been found. This statue was large and somewhat out of proportion 90’ x 9’.

DURA

There are many such places and the exact location is uncertain today. “Dura” means “a walled place or enclosing wall.” In all probability it was at Tolul Dura 12 miles S.E. of Hillah near the river Dura which empties into the Euphrates 6 miles south of ancient Babylon. An Archaeologist, Julius Oppert here discovered a large brick square 45 ft. on a side and 20 ft. high at this location. He is convinced that it is the foundation that the image was erected on but other sights are possible.

V. 2 We catch a glimpse of a festival spirit. The pilgrim excursions to the Plain of Dura, the acts of devotion, the music and celebration to mark the inauguration of the new cult. There is doubt concerning the nature of the musical instruments mentioned but this is unimportant.

The names of various officials are listed. “Satraps”. is a Persian loan word and some see this as evidence of a late date for the book. Persian influence is evident at this time in Babylonian literature and if Daniel was writing near the end of his life during the Persian era he may have naturally included it.

3:8–18

It is amazing that foreigners should be given such high government positions. Undoubtedly it caused tensions and jealousy. Certain Chaldeans, (here in ethnic sense) saw this as an opportunity to get rid of them. They came to the king with a malicious accusation. (The word is picturesque it means to “eat the pieces of flesh torn off someone’s body” i.e. to slander). The accusation was threefold.

1. They pay no heed to you. 2. They do not serve your gods. 3. Nor worship the golden image which you have set up. V. 12.

Note also the inference that it is all the king's fault for appointing them. The second and third accusations are true, the first is not in the broadest sense correct. Note. V. 14 the king only questioned them on the two counts. The king obviously did not want to lose the services of these men and so gave them the chance to worship the image. V. 15.

The answer of the men displays their determination not to bend and their trust in God. They had thought through the issues and made up their minds. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent and now there was no need to answer. Reasons were not sufficient the king had decreed and his will must be done. Human pride taken to its logical conclusion says "Thou shalt have no other gods but me." His pride prevented him from changing his decree or from making allowance for conscientious objection. v. 17 "*If it be so*"—presents grammatical difficulties. Obviously the young men did not doubt God's ability to be able to deliver them. They did not presume for a moment upon His goodness and mercies. Sometimes it is according to His purposes to deliver His people. At other times he calls them to martyrdom. They did not know His will in this instance but whatever the case they would not participate in idolatrous worship.

3:19–23

Nebuchadnezzar responded by flying into a rage, and ordered the furnace to be heated up seven times more than usual (a proverbial expression). Criminals were usually stripped and so it is of note that they were disposed of in haste clothes and all. After V. 22 the LXX inserts a description of their deliverance and a hymn. These are not in the Massoretic text and do not appear to be a part of the original writing. The anger of the king only hurt the innocent as is so often the case. The Bible nowhere teaches that Christians will be kept from trouble and suffering and even here the men had to endure the trial of being thrown into the furnace. Their testimony is

remarkable and takes away every excuse that we might have for moral and spiritual compromise in the face of pressure.

3:24–25

No doubt the anger quickly drained from the king's face as now he was confronted by the powers of that kingdom represented by the Stone. Instead of three men, now there are four and the fourth was like a son of the gods. A.V. has "*The Son of Gods*" implying a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. It is best to understand the term as those who used it would have. "gods" is plural. In contrast to Hebrew the Aramaic used the singular when referring to one God. In V. 28 Nebuchadnezzar identifies the being as an angel.

3:26–27

Overwhelmed, Nebuchadnezzar can only call "*the servants of the Most High God*" to come out. The miracle has not been without effect. The more so as they gathered to examine the men to find no hair singed and not even the smell of fire upon them. *See Isaiah 43:2–3.*

3:28–30

His anger gone and the reality of the situation touching him, Nebuchadnezzar broke in praise of God V 28. His pride was stripped away, God had set at nought the king's command. His enlightenment was followed by action that was commendable, but he still needed to mellow a little.

V. 30 True to character the men were rewarded by the king. In all of this God is working graciously in the life of this pagan king and at the same time revealing Himself as a loving Saviour to the people who had so easily forsaken Him.

Where was Daniel..? What happened to the fourth man when the others emerged from the furnace..? Who knows.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter makes claim to have been written by or at the command of Nebuchadnezzar himself and in it he tells how God humbled him through a time of insanity. Montgomery (*I.C.C.*) says; “As an edict the document is historically absurd. It has no similar in the history of royal conversions nor in ancient imperial edicts.”* There is however external evidence of the sickness of Nebuchadnezzar. Megasthenes a writer of about 300 B.C. speaks of such a sickness. He is quoted by both Eusebius of Caesarea A.D. 265–399 and by the historian Josephus, A.D. 37–100. Megasthenes speaks of Nebuchadnezzar as being possessed by some god or other. He goes on to tell of him prophesying that a Persian rule was to follow and bring slavery.

A remarkable document from Qumran known as the prayer of Nabonidus is similar to this story of the sickness of Nebuchadnezzar. Some argue that it represents an older and more accurate version of the story and that the tradition about Nabonidus became attached by the writer of Daniel to the better known king Nebuchadnezzar. There are however significant differences and until more evidence comes to light Daniel has certainly not proved to be incorrect.

The Chapter is written as Hebrew poetry and this is conveyed in the N.E.B. Vs. 19–33 are written in the third person. Probably a literary device. Nebuchadnezzar could not record his own sickness.

4:1–3

In the Massoretic text 4:1–3 is placed at the end of Chapter three. The LXX omits 4:1–3 but includes some of the phrases at the end of Chapter four. Emery argues for it being a *Colophon* used by ancient cuneiform writers. (i.e. An inscription at the end of

a clay tablet giving the printer’s name, place, date etc.). He sees this as an evidence of his translation theory.

The Chapter we are told is to declare the working of God to Nebuchadnezzar. Chapters two to seven deal with Gentile power and are designed to show both Jews and Gentiles that the Gentiles are indeed under the hand of the Most High. Signs: point to some reality. Wonders: events that produce surprise.

4:4–9

This dream occurred at a time when the king was at ease and prospering. Possibly about the year 573 B.C. (Dates vary – the LXX adds 18th year = 587). The term “*ease*” implies that he was free from apprehensions and fear. He was prospering in his palace, i.e. the country was prosperous and secure. There were no immanent threats to his kingdom or to himself as king. He had been confronted by the Living God but now those things seem far from his mind. All too often we only think of God at the crisis moment or when we are confronted in a living way, the memory is quickly dimmed by the comforts of life. God however, is not so easily set aside and again in grace he confronted Nebuchadnezzar by means of a dream V. 5. The dream struck terror into the heart of the king. The wise men were once more summoned but fail to give an interpretation. It is difficult to see why. They may have sensed an ill-omen and so were reluctant to share their thoughts. The term “*astrologers*” has not occurred previously it was unknown until the “prayer of Nabonidus” where it evidently means one who divines. The root means to cut and the divination is performed by consulting the liver and entrails of an animal.

Daniel (Chief of the Magicians – 2:48) is called *V. 8* “*After the name of my god.*” This would suggest that to whatever extent he now acknowledged the Most High God yet still he held onto his Babylonian deities. It is easy to be critical of Nebuchadnezzar and all too easy to hold onto our own superstitions.

* (See prayer of Nabonidus Pages 116 & 117 Tyndale on Daniel).

Daniel is referred to as “one in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.” The expression seems to have been a common one. The Queen and Belshazzar of 5:11 and 14 use the same expression. It is going too far to see this as a reference to the Holy Spirit. A plural adjective (Holy) also testifies that gods(pl) is intended.

4:10-18 The dream is now recounted. It was of an immense tree and visible to the whole earth. It was vital and in good health, its leaves were fair and it was in fruit and all ate from it and sheltered under it. It was not uncommon for rulers to be symbolized by trees and Nebuchadnezzar probably suspected that it represented him (Ezek. 17:22, 19:10f and Amos 2:9). A watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven V. 15. Perhaps a watcher, “even” a holy one. It is not clear just who the watcher is. Zech. 1:10 speaks of some sent to patrol the earth. Probably an angelic being is intended.

The holy one ordered the tree to be cut down but the stump was to be left. Vs. 14-15 and bound with a metal band. The exact use of the band is unclear. It may have represented an horticultural practice common in the day. The band may have been put around the circumference of the stump itself or it may represent some type of fence to give protection. The purpose is clear. It prevents removal and damage being done to the stump and so assures its safekeeping and provides for its restoration.

Vs. 15-16 It will stand in the field with the animals and ‘his’ mind changed from a man’s and a beast’s mind given to him. The king must have surely understood and yet wanted his misgivings to be confirmed by someone else. Seven times are to pass over him, not specifically seven years, seven seasons. LXX does translate as seven years.

The reason for the dream is given in V.17. Nebuchadnezzar was a proud man who needed to be humbled and to learn that the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men.

The lesson is clearly stated again in V. 25 & 32. He had acknowledged God previously when forced by circumstances to do so but had never submitted to the Sovereignty of God. As the rich fool he built a bigger and better city without giving too much thought to who he was and what was the end of it all. He had seen the power of God and so knew that God was Sovereign and yet that knowledge never affected his manner of life. He lived as if he could do according to his own will without having to give account to anyone. For him to know that God reigns would mean that he would have to set aside his idolatry and turn from the religious traditions and customs of his people. It was no small thing that God was asking. He may have intended to make some changes after the drama of the furnace but somehow not much happened. God however is persistent and so the decree is pronounced by the watchers V. 17 on God’s behalf V. 25. V. 18. Nebuchadnezzar asks Daniel for the interpretation.

4:19-27

On hearing the dream Daniel was alarmed and dismayed. He was obviously fond of Nebuchadnezzar after long years of service in his court. Encouraged by the king to proceed with the interpretation he expressed the wish that the decree was for the king’s enemies and not the king. Daniel was faced with a most difficult situation. He had to announce judgment on one for whom he had high regard. He goes on to confirm the king’s fears. He has grown strong and his greatness has reached to the heavens. He is the tree.

Daniel proceeds to interpret the dream Vs.24-26. It is God’s decree that he is to be driven from among men and dwell with the beasts of the field. The statement describes a sickness of the ancient world known today as Lycanthropy in which a person imagines himself to be a wolf or Boanthropy where the person behaves in an ox like manner. *Baldwin (Tyndale)* describes two modern day cases cited by an English

psychiatrist from a mental institution in England in the 1960's- Those concerned ate grass and their physical features became as those described in V. The interesting thing is that the person still retains their powers of reason although their behaviour is bizarre- The sickness is now curable by modern drugs. This is again said to be "*until seven times pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men.*" The period seems indefinite and Nebuchadnezzar had in fact only to acknowledge God to be free from his sickness.

God's testimony had largely been ignored by the king and so more drastic action was needed to bring him to grasp the truth. His sickness helped him to appreciate his own frailty and to see that God was indeed in control. We see that in this instance God used sickness to fulfil his purposes and bring Nebuchadnezzar to humble himself- No doubt the sickness would not have been needed if the king had been obedient to the previous revelation given to him. While it is true that God does use sickness as we see here, we need to be careful not to assume that all sickness or suffering is the result of man's pride and sin. The scripture is clear that this is not so. The person may indeed be innocent as Job, or the blind man (John 9:1-3), yet we see that even physical suffering is not without purpose-

It is interesting to note also that the Scriptures often associate repentance and confession of sin with wholeness and healing, eg. Jas. 5:13-16, 3 John 2, Psalm 32:3-5,10, Psalm 3B etc. prayer for healings needs to be accompanied by a right spirit.

V. 27 Daniel counsels the king to "*break off his sins by practicing righteousness and by showing mercy to the oppressed.*" His mighty Empire had been built at the cost of many a life. To know in truth that the Most High rules is to be righteous and to show love and mercy. To act other than in truth and in love is to show contempt for God who is Himself love and truth,

and He requires His people to be as He is, for all else is perverse, a distortion of reality and ultimately detrimental to man and the creation.

Daniel's boldness was balanced by his distress at the sentence against the king. To have said less would not be to act in love. It must have been distressing for him and the king and yet only as the truth is spoken in love can we maintain right relationships.

This verse was the cause of much debate during the Reformation period. The LXX translates "*Cancel thy sins by deeds of charity and thine iniquities by deeds of kindness to the poor.*" *This is not a correct translation but it was used by the Roman Catholic Church to support their doctrine of merit. Good works do not result in forgiveness but forgiveness motivates one to good works and a changed lifestyle is the testimony of a changed heart.*

4:28-30

In spite of the dream and its interpretation it appears that the king continued on as before. Glorifying in his own greatness. From the roof of the palace he looked over the city of Babylon and a feeling of satisfaction and pride filled him. An ancient clay cylinder called the *Grotesque Cylinder* tells in the king's own words: "*Then built I the palace, the seat of my royalty, the bond of the race of men, the dwelling of joy and rejoicing.*" From the "*East India House Inscriptions*" come these words from him: "*In Babylon my dear city, which I love, was the palace, the house of wonder of the people, the bond of the land, the brilliant place, the abode of majesty in Babylon.*"' (Wood, P.120). The city was certainly magnificent. Its outer double walls were 17 miles long and wide enough for chariots on top. The hanging gardens of the city were among the wonders of the world. There were eight gates to the city and inside of the famous Ishtar Gate stood the citadel of Esagcla where the grand temple of

Marduck was located along with an imposing Ziggurat. Inside the gate was a processional street 1,000 yds. long and decorated on either side with enamelled bricks showing 120 lions (symbol of Ishtar) and 575 dragons and bulls (Marduck and Bel). A grand scene constructed as Nebuchadnezzar said, *“By my mighty power.”*

4:31-33

Even as Nebuchadnezzar was glorying in his achievements the judgment of God fell on him and he was given the mind of a beast and driven out into the fields till his hair grew long as eagles' feathers and his nails were like birds' claws.

4:34-35

At last the king learned that God was God and he humbled himself accordingly— Even as he lifted up his eyes to heaven his reason was restored to him.

4:36

He found that in humbling himself before God he lost nothing personally. He was in fact enriched, others sought his counsel and his greatness was increased.

4:37

The Chapter is concluded with the testimony that he now extols and praises and honours the King of heaven. *“All His works are right”* – lit. *“truthfulness”*. His actions correspond to His own standard of righteousness and *“His ways are just.”* A remarkable statement from one emerging from a time of insanity sent upon him by the Lord. It is all too easy to despise the discipline of the Lord and rebel at our circumstances and against Him when all is not well. The chastening of the Lord, worked in love in this instance produced, praise, adoration and deep humility.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C. after a reign of 43 years. Some 23 years pass between the death of Nebuchadnezzar and the events recorded here. These years were times of political turmoil and trauma.

God was not silent in this period and in the first and again in the third year of Belshazzar Daniel was given visions of what was to come. Chap. 7 & 8. These may well have influenced his understanding and interpretation of the writing on the wall. Nebuchadnezzar was followed by his son Evil Merodach. He was assassinated by Neriglissar, a son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar after two years. He reigned for four years and on his death his son, Labashi – Marduck reigned for 9 months and was beaten to death by his friends. Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon and he reigned for 17 years and was defeated by Cyrus the Persian and was taken prisoner. He was exiled at Carmania and there died.

Two things are of note. Graciously God kept His people during this unstable period. Daniel was no longer a powerful figure as the text indicates, but still he was there because God had not yet finished with him.

The second thing we note is that among the chronicles of the kings of Babylon there is no Belshazzar. Naturally this proved to be a point at which the critics attacked the book and for a long time there was no satisfactory answer. Between 1958 and 1960 scholars worked on some old Cuneiform tablets at the Museum in Florence. These texts were from the sixth Century B.C. and here frequent mention of one Belsarusar (Belshazzar) eldest son of Nabonidus is made. Nabonidus was away on military campaigns for extended periods and in fact probably ruled from Babylon for less than half of his seventeen year reign. In his absence Belshazzar was given kingly authority and ruled as co-regent. A Persian text says, *“He*

(Nabonidus) freed his hand (Belshazzars), he entrusted the kingship to him. Then he undertook a distant campaign.” (Wood on chap.4).

Chapters 2 – 6 portray a series of events designed to show that the great world Empires are subject to God’s control. We have seen God’s gracious dealing with Nebuchadnezzar and now by way of contrast we see His revelation of judgment pronounced on Belshazzar and Babylon.

5:1-4

It is only possible to understand what is happening here when we know a little of the historical background. The Babylonian army had already been defeated at Opis on the Tigris. Nabonidus fled and was later captured. The armies of Cyrus had defeated most of the Province and only the city itself remained. The great banquet was sheer bravado and a refusal to face the reality of the situation. Wine is one way by which men seek to avoid facing life. The mention of Belshazzar drinking in front of the crowd is most likely a reference to the ceremony by which kings initiated the drinking. Encouraged by the wine and the desperate situation the king then did a foolish thing. He commanded that the sacred vessels from the temple of Jerusalem be brought. He and his lords, his wives and concubines drank from them. The cups had been placed in the Babylonian temple to indicate that their god had defeated the God of Israel and the Jews were a conquered people. In desperation Belshazzar appeals to the memory of a past conquest, grasping out to dumb idols of metal, wood and stone, to come to his rescue. In doing so he profaned the holy and incurred the wrath of Almighty God.

His sin was that of sacrilege. The vessels had been set aside for God’s use alone. God had put his name upon them (Deut.12:11, 7:6-8, Exodus 29:43-46) and to use them in this way was to “*take the name of the Lord God in vain.*” Ex. 20:7. By his action he challenged the God of Israel. He despised the Holy things because he despised God. Sacrilege is a sin

little spoken of but it is all too easy to profane the holy without thought. In I Cor. 11:27ff we are warned of partaking in communion unworthily. The Church of God may be despised by careless behaviour I Cor. 11:20-22 and to participate in idolatry is to provoke the Lord, I Cor. 10:14, 20-22. Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1f committed the same sin and we are warned that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit I Cor. 6:19. We are therefore to shun immorality for God’s temple is Holy I Cor. 3:16.

5:2,11

Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as the father of Belshazzar. In V. 22 Belshazzar is called the son of Nebuchadnezzar. The critics are again quick to protest. There is no word for grandfather or grandson in Hebrew or Chaldee, only the words father, son. Hence they were used in a broader sense than in English. They did not always even imply a blood relationship, eg. Elisha called Elijah – my father II Kings 2:12. Belshazzar it seems was the eldest son of Nabonidus and his mother was probably a daughter or even a wife of Nebuchadnezzar. While the details are not clear Nebuchadnezzar may well have been a grandfather of Belshazzar.

5:5-9

The picture portrayed is vivid the king was terrified when the fingers of a man’s hand appeared and wrote on the plastered wall. He cried to his counsellors but they were useless. That distressed the king even further.

Excavations of Babylon have revealed a large room within the palace. A recess in the end wall facing the doorway was probably the location of the throne. One wall was adorned with a design in blue enamelled bricks and the other walls plastered.

V. 7 The king’s offer to make the one responsible for interpreting the writing “*third ruler*” in the kingdom, caused much debate. It is now obvious that Nabonidus was No.1 Belshazzar No. 2 and his offer was to give control of the government to whoever could

fulfill his wish.

5:10–16

‘The Queen, obviously not Belshazzar’s Queen as his wives and concubines were at the feast

V. 3, her memory goes back to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar so she is not a young person. She came uninvited into the king’s presence and so was in all probability Belshazzar’s mother, the wife of Nabonidus.

For years Daniel had been set aside. His hopes must have been high to see Nebuchadnezzar bless God and acknowledge His sovereignty. The events that followed must have caused him concern and many would be tempted to despair in such circumstances. We learn that we ought not to put our hopes in outward change or success, but only in God, who is at work in every circumstance. Daniel’s long patience and faith were rewarded and again God was to push him forward to fulfill a significant role in the history of His people.

5:17–23

Daniel, wise with age did not appreciate the flattering words of the king nor did he want his gifts. He made no attempt to address the king formally as he did Nebuchadnezzar. We sense the contempt that he had for the king. A contrast to the affection and respect that he showed Nebuchadnezzar. He spoke fearlessly, with a rude boldness that spotlighted the king’s sin in the presence of his lords and ladies. Recounting God’s dealings with Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel pointed to the writing and said *“You knew all this but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven.”* Time and time again God had displayed his majesty and power to Nebuchadnezzar while only this once did he confront Belshazzar directly and then it was in judgment. The persistent and bold revelations given to Nebuchadnezzar and sometimes to others are not the norm. When given they are not merely for the individual but so that others might know the truth. Belshazzar was in fact confronted by

the same truth that Nebuchadnezzar was forced to bow to. Belshazzar of his own volition had chosen to disregard the revelation of God. Deliberately and with contempt he spurned God and committed sacrilege. He was totally culpable and without excuse. The incident teaches that we cannot trifle with God. When we know the truth we have no option but to obey. If we turn a blind eye then we in fact rebel and if we rebel God has no option but to act in judgment and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The foolish king praised gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone and refused to honour God in who’s hand was his very breath.

5:24–29

The hand then was from the presence of God and the writing was: “MENE MENE TEKEL AND PARSIN”. The words were known to the readers. They represented weights. In 1878 a weight bearing the term PARSIN was found at the British Museum. It means half of anything. It is as if the message was – a tonne, a kilogram, a gram. What did it mean? Daniel based his interpretation not on the given noun but on the corresponding verb form (participle). Mene, numbered. “God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end.” “Tekel”, weighed or assessed. “You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting.” “Peres” (Parsin is plural) shared, divided. “Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” Some think that Peres has a double meaning PRSN, the letters of PARSIN are the same as PERSIAN, there are no vowels in Hebrew or Aramaic. This may have given Daniel a clue but obviously he knew the state of affairs at the time and the visions of Chapters 7 and 8 made him aware of history yet to come. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah had also prophesied that Babylon would fall to the Medes: Isaiah 13:17–19, 21:1–10, Jeremiah 51:33–58.

5:29–30

Belshazzar kept his word and Daniel was clothed in purple and given the golden chain of office. Promoted again, this time to third

ruler in the kingdom. A short term affair but perhaps a very significant one. *“That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain”* V. 30. Herodotus tells how the forces of Cyrus entered the city by diverting a river and took the Babylonians by surprise while they were eating and dancing as it was a festival.

5:31

“And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about 62 years old.”

History is clear, Nabonidus and his co-regent son Belshazzar, was succeeded by the Persian Cyrus. 6:38 makes it look as if Darius was preceded by Cyrus and yet Cyrus is well known to Scripture as the one who liberated the Jews. Again some claim the writer is in error. (Those who hold a second Century date) but the details of Darius recorded in 5:39 and especially 9:1 would seem to indicate that Darius was a familiar figure to the writer. Who then is this Darius? Suggestions put forward have been.

(1) Cambyses son of Cyrus. Perhaps another coregent. Not likely as Cyrus would have been in his 80's when he led the army against Babylon.

(2) Darius I. Hystaspes-(522-486) The assumption is that a late writer confused his kings – Darius I coming in fact after Cyrus and Cambyses. Most unlikely as Darius I reigned for 36 years. If he commenced his reign at 62 then he was still reigning at 98.

(3) Gobyrus. A Greek name found on some ancient documents. The name has now been found to be the Greek form of –

(4) Gabaru. The first Persian Governor of Babylon. Whitcomb in his book *“Darius the Mede”* makes this assertion. There is no evidence however, of him being a Mede and being called king. (6:2). He would not have had the authority to make decrees such as those found in 6:7 6:27: 6:25, Darius regards his rule as universal.

(5) The last candidate is Cyrus himself. This suggestion has been made by D.J. Wiseman, Professor of Assyriology in London. Cyrus is known to be related to the Medes. He was about 60 years old when he began to reign. The LXX and Theodotion have “Cyrus” instead of “Darius” at Chapter 11:1. The famous Haran Stele in which Nabonidus gives an account of his activities he refers to the kings of Egypt and the Medes and the Arabs. Wiseman shows that the king of the Medes could only be a reference to Cyrus at that time, hence 5:31 “the Mede”. Cyrus appointed Satraps as did this king 6:1, he showed favour to the Jews (Ezra 1:2, 5:13-15). I Esdras 3:1-6 is the story of 3 guardsmen who were challenged by king Darius to a competition. The winner Zerubbabel asked that the king would remember his vow to rebuild Jerusalem. Zerubbabel (Ezra 4:1-5) was in Jerusalem building before Darius I Hystaspes. The book of Esdras goes on to tell of king Darius authorizing the rebuilding and a party was sent in the second year of his reign (I Esdras 5:6) and yet in Chapter 6 a king Darius in the second year of his reign, 6:1,23, had to search the archives to see if the Jews had been given permission to rebuild. This is obviously Darius I Hystaspes and the Darius that gave the initial order was another person. ‘Darius’ may well have been the name taken by Cyrus as his throne name for the first year of his reign. This was a common practice.

The difficulty then lies at Dan. 6:28, where we read *“The reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian”*. “And” represents the Hebrew and in this case the Aramaic ‘VAV’ conjunction. It is normally translated “and” but as a *ray explicative* it is sometimes “even, but,” etc. At several points Daniel seems to use it in this way: (1:3, 4:13,6:9, 7:1, 7:12, 8:10, 9:5, 9:11). Habakkuk and Nehemiah – near contemporaries use it in this way also. while concrete evidence is yet to be found it appears most likely that ‘Darius’ was in fact the throne name of Cyrus, king of the Medes and the Persians.

CHAPTER SIX

6:1–5

It is extraordinary that Darius the Mede should appoint the third ruler of the Babylonian Empire as a president over his people. One would expect Daniel to have been disposed of along with Belshazzar and his colleagues. Darius no doubt learned of the circumstances of Daniel's appointment and of his confrontation of Belshazzar, and decided that here was a man worth keeping.

The Medo–Persian Empire was the largest that the world had ever seen and so to facilitate administrative procedures, Darius appointed Satraps and set three presidents over them. Daniel was one of the three presidents. (I Esdras 3, tells of Darius having 127 Satraps from Ethiopia to India.)

Daniel quickly distinguished himself by reason of his 'excellent spirit.' We have seen that he was a man of integrity, endowed by the Spirit of God with wisdom and special gifts. We note his remarkable adaptability, when in Babylonia he did as the Babylonians: when in Persia, he did as the Persians. His faith was a cross cultural faith and he never confused the essentials of his faith with the mores of culture.

Because he displayed what we call 'the fruit of the Spirit' and stood for truth Darius knew that he could be relied upon and so intended to set him over the entire kingdom. This caused jealousy among the other presidents and satraps and they hated him and sought to dispose of him. In the exercise of his duties he was exemplary and so they needed to devise some scheme to be rid of him and his one weakness as they saw it was his religion. One commentator speaks of their plan as, "*a blind perverse reaction that can only be called Satanic.*" (Wallace). Somehow bent man is compelled by his perverseness to oppose that which is good and true. Daniel was a sign of the existence and grace of God and so he had to go.

6:6–9

Daniel's enemies conspired together and came to the king with a proposal that was designed to boost his ego. It may well be that Darius thought to bind his kingdom together. The Babylonians were conquered in battle but not in spirit. It would be good for all to bow before him and acknowledge him and so he signed the interdict compelling all to bow and make petition to him alone for thirty days, and if any disobeyed they were to be thrown into the den of lions.

V.7 Lion hunting was the sport of kings and similar dens have been excavated. It was a convenient way to dispose of one's enemies. There was no mess to clean up.

V. 9 The document obviously is the interdict. Here is a case of the VAV explicative being used. Read – "*signed the document even the interdict.*"

"THE MAN IN THE WINDOW"

6:10

Knowing that the document had been signed, Daniel continued as before. Three times a day he knelt down and prayed to God. It was here that he had come to know God. His 'excellent spirit' was the result of his constant and intimate relationship with God. As a result of these times with God he was able to face the crisis situation without panic or fear. He knew God and he trusted Him. He prayed in a room with windows opened toward Jerusalem. The city lay in ruin and yet in the first year of Darius, Daniel perceived from 'the books' and the prophecies of Jeremiah that the time of exile was near its end, (9:1–2). As he prayed he faced towards Jerusalem (as I Kings 8:41–43) knowing that the city was dear to God and would soon be restored.

Daniel, the man in the window, was a symbol of hope for the people of God. If the Persians saw him, so did his own people. While he was there the people's lot was no doubt lightened. As he prayed he provided an example for his people to follow and was the encouragement not to despair or forsake the Lord.

It would have been simple for Daniel to close the windows or to pray in private but he could not compromise and be a symbol of hope and faith to his people and he could not compromise without acknowledging the authority of Darius to be of more importance than worship of the One true and living God.

6:11-15

Daniel's accusers were swift to act and they wasted no time in telling the king of Daniel's disobedience. The king was greatly distressed. He had quickly come to respect and care for the old man. He realized that he had been tricked but try as he did he could find no way to reverse the law and save Daniel, for the law of the Medes and Persians was unalterable and his counsellors were insistent that the law be carried out to the letter.

Calvin comments "Constancy is praiseworthy in kings and their edicts if only they are preceded by prudence and equity." The law of God is absolute but that alone proceeds from the source of truth, and love, and the sinfulness and inability of man is compensated for by the grace and mercy of God, who satisfied the just requirements of the law through the death of His Son so that man might live.

For the law of man to be functional it must be tempered by mercy, and a rigid enforcement can all too often lead to injustices being done.

6:16-18

The king could do nothing else but carry out his own interdict and Daniel was delivered to the lions' den. The king, impressed by Daniel's faith commented, "*May your God whom you serve continually, deliver you.*" The den was sealed with the signet of both the king and his lords. In that way neither party could attempt to secure Daniel's release.

The king, greatly distressed went without his nightly diversions and spent a sleepless night fasting.

6:19-23

At first light Darius hurried to the den and in anguish cried out, "*Oh Daniel servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions.*" Darius as Nebuchadnezzar before him was about to learn that God was indeed the living God and a God who cares for and loves His people.

We can imagine his relief to hear Daniel cry out in reply, "*OH, king live forever, my God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths...*" At creation man was told to have dominion over the creature, when man sinned the very creation rose up in rebellion, but here by faith (Heb.11:33), the powers of the age to come have again broken in upon us and God by His angels kept his servant. Daniel lived. The Jews knew that their God reigned. Darius discovered the living God and surely was influenced by this to facilitate the return of the Jews to rebuild their holy city. Daniel was taken out of the den, and welcomed as one returned from the dead. Frequently in the catacombs of Rome the early church used Daniel to symbolize the resurrection. His enemies did not fare so well.

6:24

At the command of the king they and their families provided breakfast for the ravenous beasts. The king's action in executing families along with the men was a common Persian practice. It was not condoned or commented on only stated as having happened. Ezekiel and Jeremiah both taught that every man dies for his own sin and not the sin of his father. Ezekiel 18, Jeremiah 31:29. We need to remember however, that we are not the lone ranger and that all we do affects others.

6:25-27

Nebuchadnezzar had issued a decree (3:29) forbidding anyone to speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, but Darius goes further and gives a positive command that all are to "*tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for He is*

the living God enduring forever.” “He delivers and rescues.” He is a God of action.

6:28

Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and/even? the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Egypt years before had been shown the mighty hand of God. Now Babylon and Persia have to learn that God lives and is Sovereign over them. God is in control of time and circumstances– This message is for all nations in every generation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 marks the beginning of the second part of the book. Rather than historical events it deals with visions and their interpretations. While not always easy to understand we find them fascinating. We must not become overly preoccupied with them and nor must we neglect them for they relate in part to the last days, and ‘We are *those upon whom the end of the age has come*’ I Cor. 10:11.

The narrative continues in the Aramaic dialect and so binds the two halves of the book together. The second half covers the same period of time as the first. Chronologically Chapter 7 comes between Chapters 4 and 5.

Again we see that the visions are given to encourage the people of God in their darkest hour. Ultimately their God will reign supreme. Now they must suffer for their sins. In the days that are to come they will suffer simply because they are the people of God, but they are to endure because their God reigns.

There is a great deal of symbolism in the Chapters that follow; but generally the meaning is clearly given in the text and there is no call for speculation. Other symbols are in common use in the Scriptures.

7:1

First year of Belshazzar–(553) Daniel, age 67? The dream came at a significant time, under Nebuchadnezzar there had been stability and Daniel and his companions were in positions of authority. Now there was chaos and they were ‘has beens’ Graciously God assured them. “*Dream and visions*” – probably “*Dream even visions*” (as introductory material).

7:2

The four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. “*The four winds*” is a common

7:2

Cont expression (Zech 2:6, 6:5, Dan. 8:8,14 etc.) It refers to the four points of the compass, i.e. the winds from every direction. *“The winds of heaven”*. Jerome regarded them as angelic powers. Keil, as heavenly powers by which God sets the sea in motion. Valvoord, the Sovereign power of God. Wood, various forces which bring strife. Whatever they are they stir up the great sea. Again the figure is clear: (Isaiah 17:12,13, 27:1, 57:20, Rev. 17:9,15). The sea represents the nations of the world.

7:3

As the nations of the world are stirred by the heavenly forces four great, (i.e. monstrous) beasts arise out of them. They are different. Read Vs. 4-8. try to visualize them and gather the intent of what God is conveying. They are all beasts of prey, ravenous and destructive. They appear to Daniel out of the darkness of the night. The fourth beast is horrific. It is indescribable and destructive. It has ten horns on its head and as Daniel watched another small one arose and it plucked up three of the original ten. In this horn were eyes like a man’s and a mouth that uttered great things.

7:9-10

Suddenly the scene of horror fades away and is replaced by a vision of beauty and majesty. Again take time to visualize the picture. Glorious thrones come into view; one was of fiery flames and upon that throne one takes His seat. His raiment is as white as snow, the hair of His head like pure wool. He was ancient of days, filled with experience, wisdom and understanding the very source of time. As He sits a stream of fire, fire that consumes and purifies flows out from before Him. Thousands upon thousands are gathered to serve Him. The court begins and the books are opened each verdict will be heard by all.

“The Ancient of days” is understood to be the Father. Gaebelein, argues for Jesus. The throne

7:9-10

Cont. *is* fire – (Aramaic) not *“like”* as some translations. Fire symbolizes God and His judgment often in Scripture. Exodus 3:3, Moses. Mal. 3:6, 4:1 Day of the Lord. Ps.97:2-3 *“Fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries round about.”*

“The books” – see Isaiah 65:6, Rev. 20:12.

The vision is similar to Rev. 4 and 5. The scene is one of the Great Judgment of God. Ravenous, fearful and as dreadful as the beasts may be, the very vision of the Great Ancient of Days gives hope to His people.

7:11-12

Again the scene changes and Daniel’s attention is directed back to the horn and the great words that it was speaking. The beast was slain and its body burned. (The fire from the throne had touched it). The other beasts were deprived of power.

7:13-14

Daniel’s attention is turned again, this time back to the Ancient of Days and one *“like a Son of Man who was presented before Him. He was given Dominion and glory and Kingdom that all should serve Him.”* This is a new and unexpected turn of events. We want to know more but no explanation is given. Daniel had the opportunity to enquire but disappointingly he could not get beyond the horrific sight of the fourth beast and so his enquiries centred there, (V. 19). The term *‘Son of Man’* is not in itself unusual. There are two terms for man, ‘Adam and Enosh’ – so any individual is ‘Ben Adam,’ a son of man. Ezekiel is referred to as ‘Son of man’, 2:1,3,6,8, etc. in this general way, and so is Daniel himself, 8:17, yet there are other elements here.

He comes with the clouds of heaven. This is reminiscent of Sinai, Exodus 6:10 and the inauguration of the Covenant, Ex. 19:9. This is no angelic being but One ‘like’ a Son of Man. His presence contrasts with that of the beasts. Their inhumanity with his humanity. *“The day is coming when the reigns of*

7:13–14

Cont. Government will be for ever in the hands of a man worthy of the name: man as God, at creation, intended him to be". "He is what every human being should be if he is true to type." (Baldwin–Tyndale. P158, P143.)

Some would identify the figure as a Symbol for the people of God", but the N.T. is the best interpreter and we see that Jesus deliberately took this title upon himself and with deliberate intent identified himself as "The Son of Man". (Matt. 24:30, 26:64, Mark 13:26, 14:62, Luke 21:27, 22:69, Rev. 1:7,13, 14: 14.) The Jews see this one to be Messiah. Young points out that they often referred to Messiah as the 'Cloudy One.' or 'Son of a Cloud.'

7:15–18

The revelation does not come lightly to Daniel. He was anxious and alarmed. He enquired as to the meaning of the vision and was told simply that the four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. No detailed interpretation is given regarding the first three kings we are left to speculate.

We note first of all that the interpretation cannot be rigid, details are unimportant– The beasts represent four kings (V. 17) and yet they are kingdoms (V. 23) The beasts, here arise out of the earth (VI?) but in the vision they come out of the turbulent great sea. Hence it is pointless to speculate which sea is the great sea as some do.

THE FIRST THREE KINGDOMS:

Having been told that the beast represents kings or kingdoms, we are now in a position to look back at the vision again and see what we can discern of these kingdoms.

'We recognise immediately the similarity of the vision with that of Nebuchadnezzar's in Chapter 2. There were four kingdoms. The first represented by the king himself. The Stone prefigured the inauguration of the Kingdom of God and here we see one set

by God to reign forever. We notice also the contrasts. in Chapter 2 the kingdoms are glorious and while different they are united as part of the one colossus, depicting the unity of mankind. Here they are hideous and separate and speak of the diversity of the kingdoms. It may well be that they are represented in the first vision from a manward point of view. In the Second from the Godward. In themselves the nations are glorious families called into being by God and ultimately their glory shall adorn the Eternal city (Rev. 21:24); but in both of the visions they stand in contrast and opposition to the Kingdom of God, because they rage against Him Ps.2, as cruel, filthy beasts, fighting and devouring,

THE FIRST KINGDOM:**7:4**

"Like a lion with eagles wings." Beast and bird of prey yet majestic as kings of the air and the forest. The symbols were common in the Babylonian world of myth and mystery. Winged lions guarded the gates of the Royal Palaces and Jeremiah and Ezekiel both refer to Nebuchadnezzar as a lion and an eagle, or as a winged eagle, (Jer. 4:7, 49:19–22, 50:17,44, Ezek. 17:3,12).

As Daniel watched it wings were plucked off and it was made to stand on two feet like a man and a man's mind was given to it. The beast is destroyed and is humanized. Its ravenous habits cease and it behaves like a man. No doubt a picture of the changes that took place in Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar was humbled and blessed the God of heaven.

(Some would see a hint of the prophetic and Ellul has a fascinating idea that the Great–City the centre and heart of rebellion, (typified by Babylon the great) is to be transformed and taken up by God as the Glorious City the New Jerusalem (*"The Meaning of the City."* J. Ellul).

THE SECOND KINGDOM:**7:5**

"Like a bear raised up on one side and with three

ribs in its mouth, the victims of other hunts.” The bear is taken to symbolize the Medo-Persian Empire by conservatives – the Median by liberals. Reasons as in Chapter 2. The huge brown Syrian bear was a familiar figure, noted for its strength and fierceness. An apt picture for the Medo Persian Empire who mercilessly slew the Babylonians as Isaiah had predicted Is. 13:1, 15-19. The bear is raised up on one side, This is taken to mean that the Persians were superior to the Medes in the coalition. Some see the three ribs as the three major conquests of the Medes and Persians – Lydia – Egypt and Babylonia,

The beast was instructed *“Arise and devour much flesh”*. The Persians took far more territory than any previous Empire. Their kingdom extended from the Indus river on the East to the Aegean on the West and down to Egypt.

THE THIRD KINGDOM:

7:6

“Like a Leopard with four wings and four heads.” The symbolism is not as common as those of the preceding figures but the import of the vision is clear. Wings indicate swiftness and the beast itself leopard, or panther as it may be? are most dangerous beasts of prey. The Grecian Empire was characterised by its speed and fierceness. Under Alexander the Great its borders were enlarged enormously in a very short time. He conquered most of the civilized world from Macedonia to Africa and to India. Understanding of the meaning of the four heads varies. Some see four kings intended (various)– More likely it refers to the four Generals who took control of the Empire on the death of Alexander, or else they merely indicate that the beast was looking in every direction for its prey.

The meaning of the fourth beast is given to Daniel *Vs 19-25* and a comment will be made there; but first we are left to discern the meaning of *V. 12*. There are two ways of understanding this verse,

- (i) The fourth beast is destroyed and its body

given to be burned because of its blasphemy. (*V. 11*) and yet in some way the former beasts, i.e. kingdoms, while robbed of power continue to exist. This is surprising and difficult to understand. Perhaps the character of those kingdoms continue, even though they have come to an end.

- (ii) Others would see the destruction of the fourth beast being mentioned first to bring emphasis. The writer then returns to comment on the end of the first three. They had their dominion taken away but continued as nations under a new Regime while the fourth kingdom came to a sudden end.

Some want to see (*V. 11*) as referring to the destruction of the Antichrist, king of the restored Roman Empire at the end of the Great Tribulation but this is not said in the verse.

7:18

We return now to *V.18* and pause to see that again new material is introduced into the interpretation. In *Vs. 13-14*, the One like unto a Son of Man is given dominion and Kingdom. Now we see that the saints of the Most High are to possess the Kingdom. *J.Baldwin (Tyndale)* in a special note p.150 outlines some possibilities. (See for details).

- (i) “Son of Man.” *V. 13* – is a collective term equivalent to “Saints of the Most High”.
- (ii) “Son of Man.” *V. 13* is a representative for ‘the Saints’ *V. 18,27.*’
- (iii) “Saints” – means angelic beings – and Son of Man is the leader of such – *7:21,25*, rule this out as the little horn surely does not make war with angels and defeat them.

In the N.T. as has been indicated Jesus adopted the name, ‘Son of Man’ and the Saints are the true people of God. We hear Jesus saying to his disciples, *“Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”* Lk. 12:32. Again he told the twelve that they would sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Mt.19:28–

This, it is confessed, is reading the N.T. back into the Old but if revelation is progressive as we believe then we are to understand the O.T. in the light of the New.

Verse 18 contains another difficulty in that *“Most High”* is in fact plural. Should we read *“Saints of the Most High Ones”*? or is it a Royal plural with reference to God? It is usual to understand the term as applying to God.

THE FOURTH KINGDOM: THE GIVEN INTERPRETATION:

7:19-25

Vs. 19-20 Daniel enquires as to the meaning of the fourth beast. Mention is now made of *“claws of brass.”* These were not mentioned previously.

Vs. 21-22 Further details are given as to the activities of the little horn. This horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them. Their defeat however is short lived. Just until the coming of the Ancient of Days, who gives judgment for the Saints (*“On behalf of”* – not *“to”* as some translate. I Cor. 6:2 contains the idea of judgement given to the Saints but that is not what is meant here).

V8.23 and V.7 The Being, of the vision now begins to explain the meaning of the fourth beast. It represents a fourth kingdom (*V.17 king*) that is different from the others. Its difference appears to be one of intensity rather than kind. The other kingdoms are represented by beasts that are the most savage known to man, but this one is even more terrible (*V.?*). Its difference lies in the fact that it devours the whole earth, its devastation is far more extensive.

V. 24 and V. 8 The fourth beast had 10 horns (*V.8*), these are now said to represent 10 kings that arise out of the fourth Empire. These appear to arise simultaneously as a new and different king springs up from ‘among’ them. He has eyes like the eyes of a

man and a mouth that speaks great things. i.e. Great powers of observation and intelligence and his speech and actions are high handed and blasphemous (*V. 25*). He uproots three of the ten kings taking to himself their authority.

V. 25 *“A mouth speaking great things,”* *V. 8* is now expanded to *“He shall speak words against the Most High,”* and his actions shall reflect his blasphemous manner. He will harass the saints continually and wear them out. This implies a lengthy time of persecution. He will think to change the times and the law, and yet evidently will not effect the change. The times, probably refers to the religious festivals of Israel. He will suppress their holy days and endeavour to introduce a new law. A new moral code by which men are to live. They, the saints, are to be given into his hands for a time, two times and half a time. (Much disputed. Some see time = 1 year: 2 times = 2 years and 0.5 a time, so 3.5 years = 42 months. Corresponds to Revelation 11:2, 13:5.)

7:26-27

Yet his dominion will be taken away and he will be destroyed as the court sits in judgment. The greatness of the kingdoms are then given to the saints. We note that the kingdoms continue. (Rev. 21:24, 22:2) and all will serve and obey them.

This is the interpretation given to Daniel. Of this much we may be sure.

“INTERPRETING THE INTERPRETATION” or “SPECULATION.”

Again our natural curiosity encourages us to look back and see if these things have come to be and to look forward and try to anticipate events that are yet to be.

The liberal school would tend generally to see the events as historical, occurring before the time of writing (2nd Cent.) They would then postulate Antiochus Epiphanes as the little horn and regard the author as being mistaken with regards to the judgment

following his destruction.

The conservative school would interpret the passage in line with their interpretation of Chapter 2 and see the fourth kingdom as Rome. Again there are difficulties both for the pre-millennial school and for those that hold an A-millennial or other view.

V. 24 and V. 8 The Roman Empire fits the description well. Rome had no regard for the customs and cultures of the people that it conquered. Her chief desire was to smash opposition and to rule. She conquered Sicily in 241, this was followed quickly by Spain, Carthage, Nth. Africa, Macedonia, Greece, Asia-Minor. In 63 B.C. Palestine fell and Pompey took Jerusalem. In the next ten years conquests were made in South. Britain, France, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany West of the Rhine. The Empire reached its peak of greatness in A.D. 117 and during the third to the fifth Centuries declined slowly. In 410 Rome was sacked and it was not until A.D. 1453 that the last Roman or Byzantine ruler was killed and Mahommed III conquered Constantinople. *(Adapted from Wood on 7:7-8).*

THE TEN KINGS:

Vs.24 & V. 8 These verses present greater difficulties.

- (1) The liberals who view the little horn as Antiochus Epiphanes must either see 10 as a symbolic figure and/or try and nominate Seleucid kings who preceded Antiochus. The problem is (i) they were not contemporary. (ii) There were not 10 of them.
- (2) Some liberals and conservatives would see 10 as symbolic and not literal. 10 is five times 2 the number of horns usually found on a beast. So this beast was 5 times stronger than a normal beast. Others regard the figure 10 as a whole number and so it represents the whole of those kingdoms who have their roots historically in Rome.

- (3) Those who regard the 10 as literal kings are also not without their problems as the Roman Empire did not in fact break up into 10 identifiable kingdoms. Some then see the reference being to the kingdoms into which Rome broke up, and then point to the Pope as the little horn. Yet the Pope has never had kingly power and nor has he put down three kings.
- (4) The Pre-millennial school attempt to solve the problem by speaking of a resurrected Roman Empire at the end of time over which ten kings will preside. The Antichrist will then be represented by the little horn. E.J.Young objects that for this to be the Beast would have to die and be revived and this is not so in Daniel's vision. The Pre-millennialists then appeal to Rev. 13 and identify this beast of Daniel with that of Rev. 13, "*One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed 13:3.*" Features are similar to those found in the Daniel vision – and the beast is a composite of the leopard the bear and the lion. It is blasphemous and is allowed to make war on the saints and conquer them.

It is conceded that Antiochus may be typified but yet he only foreshadows the one yet to come. It is claimed that Rev. 13 supports the idea of the 10 kings as being part of the scene of the end time. Rev. 17 is similarly appealed to, 17:8 "*The beast that you saw was and is not and is to ascend from the bottomless pit*" again it has 7 heads and 10 horns.

As with Daniel the commentators are divided in their opinions on Rev. 13 and 17. Some see these two beasts as identical, some do not. Typical comments on Rev. 13 and 17 are: "*Reminds us of Daniel 7 but more horrible as this beast combines in himself the horrors of the four in Daniel*" (Leon Morris, Tyndale). "*The beast represents world government.*" (Hendriksen, "More than Conquerors"). "*It is misleading to say that the monster is Rome for it is both more and less, more because Rome is only its latest embodiment and less because Rome is also, even among all the corrup-*

tions of idolatry, God's agent of punishment for retribution of the offender. Rev. 13:4." (Caird "The Revelation of St. John the Divine."). Ladd in his Commentary says: "The beast, like Paul's man of lawlessness (II Thess. 2:9) is not merely the concentration of Political and military power: it is the embodiment of Satanic evil, drawing its power and authority from the dragon." He then speaks of the beast as the Antichrist.

Some see the beast as the Roman Empire and try and interpret according to past historical events. Some see a future Roman Empire. On grammatical grounds (13:8) it seems that this phenomenon is one that occurs again and again. Bestial forces emerge out of the nations, "they fascinate and mesmerise humanity until all the world wonders after and worships the beast." (Morris on 13:8).

Ladd comments, "In this vision (Rev. 13) John radically reworks the materials in Daniel 7." We would do well to recognise then that the passages of Revelation go well beyond what is contained in the vision of Daniel. In interpreting Daniel then it is best to restrict ourselves to what Daniel says and not try and read elements that are not present back into his visions. Because revelation is progressive it may well be appropriate to consider the revelation given to Daniel when exegeting the Revelation passages.

THE LITTLE HORN:

Is thus identified in various ways. Antiochus Epiphanes, the Antichrist, the spirit that exalts man and opposes God. Again many refer to Rev. 13 and see as future.

Driver, representing the liberal school and seeing Greece as the fourth kingdom and Antiochus as the little horn merely concludes that the prophecy is wrong. Rawley sees Antiochus and claims Demetrius, his murdered brother Antiochus (not Epiphanes) and Ptolemy Philometor as the three uprooted kings. Yet Demetrius who was hostage in Rome did sit on the throne after

Antiochus Epiphanes died.

It is futile to try and find a detailed fulfilment in past history. The future alone will tell if there is to be a literal outworking. From our viewpoint in history it is easy to identify the little horn of Daniel with the 'man of lawlessness' found in I Thess. 2:3-10 and the Antichrist of John, I John 2:18-22, 4:3. Both as seen to represent a person and yet "the mystery of lawlessness is already at work" and even now "many Antichrists have come." The picture is one that reoccurs again and again in history. Antiochus comes and goes. So do the Hitlers and the Ildi Armins. Each is Antichrist and yet not the Antichrist for the prophetic word is sure that the rebellion of the world will climax under the headship of such a one, and then judgment shall come, Vs. 9-10 & 26, and the beast destroyed.

7:28

This concludes the matter. Again Daniel expresses his personal distress.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INTRODUCTION

The language now changes from Aramaic to Hebrew. From here on the book deals specifically with history as it relates to the people of God; whereas the Aramaic section showed God's dealings with Gentiles.

Chapter 8 deals with a small section of the history outlined in Chapter 7 and yet many of the details of the last Chapter are now expanded on, and other details given.

Here we see a picture of how God will deal with His people during the second and third world Empires. The purpose of the Chapter is to prepare God's people for a time of suffering yet to come. The Jews might well anticipate the return from exile and an end to their suffering but this is not to be.

8:1–2

The vision came to Daniel in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar (550/549 B.C.). With Chapter 7 it is placed Chronologically between Chapters 4 and 5. Its detail certainly helped Daniel with the interpretation of the writing on the wall – Chapter 5.

Daniel appears a little surprised that God should honour him with another vision: *“After that which appeared to me at the first.”*

V. 2 The word order seems to indicate that Daniel was not present in Susa physically, but only in vision. This is borne out by *V. 27* and by the fact that Elam was not a province of Babylon at that time. It was later conquered by Cyrus the Persian and Susa was made one of the Royal cities of the Medes and Persians and the Capital of the Empire, Neh.1:1. Daniel saw himself standing at the river Ulai. Archaeology has shown that the Ulai was in fact an artificial canal joining two other rivers. It ran close by Susa.

8:3–4

Again we pause to see the vision. Note, the ram, his horns, the place where he stands. It seems other beasts were present in the vision for as the ram charged: *“no beast could stand before him.”* The impression is one of speed and power, the ram is a proud and invincible force.' His conquest is widespread, but not in an Easterly direction.

8:5–8

The vision continues. A he-goat, a buck, now appears. This is an unusual feature, a single conspicuous horn between its eyes. The horn is prominent and at once attracts attention. We sense the speed with which the goat advances – he does not touch the ground. Seeing the ram he is enraged. The goat strikes the ram, its two horns are broken, it is knocked to the ground and trampled. The he-goat grows strong but inexplicably its single horn is broken and four others grow up in its place.

8:9–14

Here it becomes difficult to even visualize what Daniel saw, *V.9*. The ram now stands with four horns. A little horn grows out of one of the horns and becomes immense toward the South, the East and the glorious land, literally *“the beauty”* (11:41, “the glorious land” Jer. 3:19, Ezek. 20:6,15 = Palestine).

V. 10 The horn enlarges hideously, even to the heavens and some of the stars are knocked to the ground and the goat proceeds to trample on them.

V. 11 The goat's pride is seen in that it exalts itself in taking away the burnt offering and destroying the sanctuary of the prince of the stars (Host). The host is given over to the power of the goat and some of the stars fall to the ground and are trampled.

V. 12 Truth was cast down and the horn prospered.

V. 13 The vision is interrupted by a 'holy one' speaking. A similar being said to the one that spoke, *“How long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and*

the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot.”

V. 14 “*He said to him*” (R.S.V.) Hebrew has “*he said to me*” i.e. *Daniel* “*2,300 evenings and mornings.*”

8:15–19

The vision of the ram and the goat come to an end and yet Daniel appears to continue in the visionary state. He pondered the meaning of the vision and as he did one like a man came and appeared in front of him yet at a distance from him. From the area of the river itself (lit. Ulai between), Daniel heard a man’s voice call, “Gabriel make this man understand the vision.” Gabriel, the one who had the appearance of a man then came and stood near Daniel, who reacted with fear and fell on his face. As Gabriel spoke Daniel fell into a deep sleep, (probably fainted), but was revived by a touch from Gabriel.

The name Gabriel means “God has shown Himself strong.” The book of Daniel is the only O.T. book to name angels and here only Gabriel and Michael (Dan. 10:13, 21, 12:1) are mentioned.

Gabriel later announced the birth of John to Zacharias, Luke 1:19, and of Jesus to Mary, Luke 1:26. Gabriel is the messenger of God who brings important news to man. While he is described as having the appearance of a man he is obviously alien to man. The awe, of one who is holy, and ‘other worldly’ overwhelms Daniel.

Gabriel addressed Daniel as “Son of man”. we note the contrast between one like a Son of Man (7:13), the angel having the appearance of a man and Daniel who is son of man because he is ‘Ben Adam’ – son of Adam. The one like a Son of Man we know to be God. The one having the appearance of a man is a ministering spirit. Daniel is man. There is something magnificent about ‘man’. There are elements of ‘man’ in which all three share, for even the One who is God became man. Yet the glory of ‘man’ is not that God is like him, but

that he is created in the image of God. It is a glorious thing then to be ‘man’.

Daniel is told that the vision is for the time of the end, *V.17* and in *V. 19*. we see that it relates to the latter end of the indignation for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.

There are at least four ways in which commentators seek to interpret this eighth chapter. (1) To see it completely fulfilled in past history. (2) To regard it as entirely futuristic. (3) To see a dual fulfilment first in Antiochus and then in Antichrist. (4) Historically fulfilled yet deliberately typical. The way we go about interpreting the Chapter will be determined largely by our understanding of Vs. 17 and 19 and the term “*time of the end.*”

In attempting to see what is meant by “*time of the end*” a number of things need to be taken into account.

1. *The Content and context.* After telling Daniel that he will make known what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, Gabriel goes on to speak of the Medo–Persian and the Grecian Empires. The horn of the he–goat is said to be its first king, *V. 21*. The little horn who destroys mighty men and the people of the saints arises at the latter end of the rule of the four who follow the first king of Greece. The reference then in context appears to be to the Greek Period.
2. *V. 19* Identifies the appointed time of the end as relating to the latter end of the indignation. The indignation spoken of is accepted as being the period of anger during which God allows His people to be punished. What this period refers to is however disputed. Some see it as the period of the Babylonian captivity, continuing through to the events relating to the Persian and Greek periods as outlined here. Others refer it to the “*times of the Gentiles*” (Luke 21:24) and place it before the second coming.

Young and others see it as the time during which the Jews suffer before the coming of Christ and the setting up of His Kingdom (at first coming) and yet not relating to the suffering of the Jews after the first coming of Christ.

3. Use of the term elsewhere in Daniel (9:26, 11:35, 40, 12:4) when used in later visions one is compelled to look beyond present known history into events that are yet future. We must not however, without good cause assume that terms or symbols of one vision are used in an identical manner in another. The content and context must determine the meaning.
4. Use of the term in other Scriptures. The last comment applies here also. We need however to see how the term is used elsewhere to give balance. Ezekiel quoting Amos 8:2 uses the word end in 7:2–3. For Amos and the Northern kingdom the end was the time of their invasion and captivity. For Judah the end was the sacking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (Ezek. 21:25,29, 35:5). ‘In each case the end meant the end of rebellion against God, because He intervened in judgment.’ (*Baldwin, Tyndale*). Baldwin claims that the term is used here in the same way.

We see then that the term is used in various ways and the matter is not absolutely certain. The most natural way to understand the term is in accordance with the interpretation given in the context (1.) and see it as applying in this instance to the events spoken of relating to the Greek period. Later uses of the term by Daniel need likewise to be understood in their immediate context. Practically all commentators agree that the Chapter relates to the Persian and Greek period and that the events described find a satisfactory fulfilment in that period. It seems unnecessary then to import elements which are not clearly present in the Chapter. Later visions may well go beyond this one but that is another matter.

Luther interpreted the Chapter as referring not only to the Greek Antiochus., but also to the antichrist.

Calvin referring to Luther’s interpretation said, “*I desire to see the sacred oracles treated so reverently, that no one may introduce any variety according to the will of man, but simply hold what is positively certain.*” This is wise counsel.

8:20

& Vs.3 & 4 Gabriel proceeds to give us the key to interpret the vision. The ram with the two horns is Media and Persia.

We now look again at Vs. 3 & 4.

As in the vision of the bear in Chapter 7, there is an imbalance in the appearance of the animal. One horn is higher than the other. The Persians were stronger than the Medes. The symbol is again a fitting one. History tells that when the Persian king stood at the head of his army he bore a ram’s head instead of a diadem. The guardian spirit of the Persian Empire appears in Persian art forms as a ram with clean feet and sharp pointed horns.

The charge of the ram well depicts the rapid conquests made by Cyrus, Westward, Northward, to Asia Minor, he bypassed Babylon only to take it later and went on to take the lands to the Southeast and Southwest. For 200 years the Empire expanded and no one could stand before it. It did extend to the East, but only in a very limited way. The details are remarkably accurate.

8:21 & V.5–8

The he-goat is the king of Greece and the great horn between his eyes is the first king.

V. 5 tells that this king whom we can now identify with Alexander the Great (334–323) “*Come from the West across the face of the whole earth.*” (note how the term ‘*Whole earth*’ is used). Alexander began his conquests from Greece and moved West. His father, Philip of Macedon conquered and united Greece and Macedon and planned to attack Persia but was murdered in 336 B.C. Alexander, then at the age of twenty took the throne. He was already an accomplished ruler and general having been appointed regent of Greece at the age of 16.

(He had been educated by the Great Aristotle.)

In 334 B.C. he crossed into Asia with 35,000 men, where he won a decisive victory over the Persian forces near Zelea along the banks of the Granicus River. The following year he met the army of Darius III, near Tarsus in Syria, and destroyed it so completely that Darius fled leaving his wives and harem behind. He then moved South and took over Syria and then Egypt. In 331 he completed his chief objective. He finally spent his great wrath (V. 6) on the Persian ram and put an end finally to the Medo–Persian Empire. His motivation for attacking Persia with such great hatred was one of vengeance. Xerxes (Esther his favourite wife) crossed the Hellesport in 480 B.C. He burned Athens and committed crimes against the Greek sanctuaries before being defeated. The Persians constantly ‘harassed the Greeks and for this Philip of Macedon and then Alexander sought revenge. Alexander then pressed as far East as India where his troops refused to go further. The following year at the peak of his power (V. 8) he died suddenly at 32 due to exhaustion and a fever that gripped him.

Vengeance and anger may motivate men to greatness, but such passion can only lead to self destruction. ‘Vengeance is mine saith the Lord, I will repay.’ We are well advised to leave such matters with Him.

8:22 & V.8

Alexander’s kingdom was divided among four of his generals, but they did not have his power

V. 22. After many struggles and intrigues Ptolemy and Seleucus became prominent in Egypt and Syria respectively.

8:23

At the latter end of the rule of these four a king of bold countenance will arise. This will be ‘*When the transgressors have reached their full measure*’ (NEB ‘*When their sin is at its height.*’) Older versions read transgressions and the Hebrew word can be pointed either way. This refers to the Jews or to their sins, as the case may be, not to the pagans who rule.

God with patience and mercy gives ample time for repentance and yet by hardness of heart His people, “*store up the wrath*”, Rom. 2:4–5, I Thess. 2:16, Matt.23:32. Israel set aside her idolatry after the exile yet despised the Lord by putting their own interest first (Hag. 1:9–11). They profaned His name and despised Him by offering polluted sacrifices and withholding their tithes and offerings – (Mal. 1:12–14, 3:8–10). Gabriel indicates clearly that the coming tyrant is the means by which God will punish His people. We recall Deut. 28. The promise that as His people obey Him, their enemies will flee before them 28:7, if they disobey then they will be defeated 28:25. We ought not to think that God is hard but rather see that His people were foolish. Knowing full well the consequences of their disobedience they deliberately pursued a course where judgment was inevitable. God is perfectly just in giving His people over to the folly of their sins and into the hands of their enemies. Here is a solemn warning for us to fear God and obey Him. We fear that our sins will be found out, when we ought to fear stepping out of His will even for a moment. The grace of Christ forgives and cleanses and that should lead to reverence and holiness, but never to a light view of sin. Nor should we think that God no longer cares when we disobey. The wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience because of their sins (Col. 3:6). How much more then upon those who know the truth, profess to keep it and yet disobey.

This king symbolized by the little horn will understand riddles, i.e. he will be intellectually gifted. He is of bold countenance.

8:24–25 & 9–11

V. 24 This king shall be powerful, successful and destructive. He will destroy mighty men and particularly the Saints. V. 9 Indicates that his power shall extend to the South, the East and to Palestine. Undoubtedly this king is Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus was the son of Antiochus III (surnamed the Great). On his defeat by

the Romans his son Antiochus Epiphanes (which means the .”glorious or illustrious one”) was taken to Rome as a hostage and remained there for 15 years. On the death of his brother, Antiochus IV the Romans allowed him to return to Syria as a vassal king. His hatred for Rome was great, and thinking to throw off the yoke of Rome he sought to unify the various groups within his domain. He attempted to do this by imposing Grecian thought and beliefs on his subjects. He conquered Egypt (South) and Armenia or Medo–Persia (East) V. 9 but did not anticipate the determination of the Jews to hold onto their national faith.

V. 25 Tells that by cunning he made deceit prosper under his hand. In 171 B.C. the Jewish High Priest Onias III was removed from office and replaced by his brother Jason who bribed Antiochus for the position. He was soon replaced by another brother, Menelaus, who offered a higher bribe. Onias rebuked his brother, Menelaus for selling gold utensils from the temple to pay the bribe and so Menelaus murdered him with the help of an officer of Antiochus. (How easy it is to fulfil our religious duties and yet be totally corrupt.) Jewish anger was then stirred and in retaliation Antiochus turned on the Jews with great hatred.

Vs. 25 & 10,11: V. 10 ‘The horn grew great even to the host of heaven. It trampled on some of the stars.’ The host of heaven are the stars, Jer. 33:22, and obviously the people of God are here intended. (Gen. 15:5, 22:17, Dan. 12:3). Elsewhere in Scripture the stars represent angelic beings (Rev. 1:20) and some see these, the protectors of the people of God, being referred to here. In reaching for the stars the little horn is claiming equality with God. “*In his own mind he shall magnify himself*” V. 25. The name Epiphanes testifies to this. II Macc.9:10 tells that, ‘He thought himself to touch the stars of heaven.’

Epiphanes sent an armed force under Apollonius to collect taxes from Jerusalem. He tore down the walls and stripped the city of spoil, set fires to homes and buildings. The people were massacred and

women and children taken into slavery. I Macc. 1:29–31.

He then dispatched emissaries to Judea with explicit orders to stamp out Judaism. The temple was robbed and a statue of the Olympian Zeus (Romans called Jupiter) was setup in the holy of Holies and similar idols were set up in all public places and pigs were slain on Jewish altars. In doing so he magnified himself up to the prince of the host V. 11, even the Prince of princes V. 25, i.e. God, who is the Lord of Hosts and calls His host by name, Isaiah 40:26. (I Macc. 1:54–61).

“The continual burnt offering was taken away from him”, i.e. the daily morning and evening offerings Exod. 29: 38–42. The whole sacrificial system was stopped and the sanctuary over–thrown. Circumcision and the observance of holy days forbidden on pain of death.

8:12

The host, or army, along with the sacrificial system are given over to the horn and this is by reason of transgression. This last expression is obscure and grammatically difficult to understand. It seems to say as V. 23, that it is because of their sins that the Jews are to be thus treated.

As the horn prospered truth was cast down to the ground. (*as V. 25*). Worship and truth are of the one essence; when worship ceases then truth falls.

8:13–14

In explaining the vision, Gabriel makes no comment on these verses. We are left to interpret the passage as best we can. Many gallant but diverse explanations have been propounded.

- (1) The Seventh Day Adventists see the 2,300 days as years and use it to calculate the Advent of Christ i.e. 1884.
- (2) 2,300 evenings and mornings = 2,300 days. The fact is that sacrifices ceased for about 3 years; 360 + 3 days = 1080 days.

- (3) 2,300 evenings and mornings = 1,150 days, 2 sacrifices daily. Not quite 1080 days during which the sacrifices were stopped by Antiochus, but some think it near enough. Genesis 1:5 is used to support this notion– “There was evening and there was morning, one day.”
- (4) As there seems to be no exact co–relation between the numbers and the facts of history some find this reason enough to relate the figure to the last seven year period of the Gentiles before the second coming of Christ. This is to introduce material not found in the Chapter and in any case 7 years times 360 days = 2,520 not 2,300.
- (5) Others see the numbers as symbolic and leave it at that.

Clearly no adequate explanation has yet been found to account for a literal interpretation of the numbers. It is well to note that numbers seem to be used in a loose and not too literal fashion at times. The point is the sanctuary is to be restored at the end of the period.

We see that the host and the sanctuary are given over to the horn. He does not take them apart from the Divine will.

8:25

Yet the end of the little horn will surely come. “*But by no human hand he shall be broken,*” and the sacrifices restored. (V.14).

Greek altars were erected throughout Palestine but resistance soon built up. In a small town of Modin 17 miles NW of Jerusalem an officer of Antiochus attempted to make sacrifices to Zeus and was killed by an old priest, named Mattathias of the family of the Hasmonaeans. Mattathias and his five sons fled to the hills and many devout Jews followed. Soon a revolt was under way. Mattathias died in the following year 166 B.C. and his third’ son Judas took over the leadership. He took the surname Maccabaeus. At about that time

Rome demanded enormous tribute from Antiochus and he was forced to go East with the bulk of his army to raise funds. This left Syria with only a few soldiers. Judas and his men soon took Jerusalem and the’ temple was restored on the 25th Dec. 165 B.C. The Feast of Dedication was then remembered annually (Hanukkah; John 10:22). Antiochus hearing the news turned for home but he died suddenly on the way.

V. 25 “*Prince of Princes*” is understood in various ways. Some have seen it as a reference to the High Priest. Many of the Pre–Millennial school who see the Chapter having reference to Antichrist identify the figure as Christ, pointing out that the term is different from Prince of hosts’ V. 11. From V. 18 onward we are being given an interpretation of the events and symbols of the vision. It would seem most natural then to understand the term used here to be an explanation of the term used in V. 11. It will then refer to the same person and that is clearly to God.

8:26

The vision is true but for the time it is to be sealed up. Some see the seal as intending to preserve the book, others, refer to it as a sealing to keep the contents out of reach of the enemy. A document was sealed with the official seal, as was the lions’ den, in order that the contents could not be tampered with. Gabriel emphasising the vision to be true instructs that it be sealed. Time will validate the prophecy and its truth will be confirmed.

8:27

Daniel tells that he was overcome and appalled by the vision, (Lit. made desolate). The horror of seeing the punishment yet to come upon his own people and the sight of abominations to be committed against the Most High, His Sanctuary and His Law were more than Daniel could take and he lay sick for some days. The burden of the prophet is no light one for his call is to see God’s Holiness, to understand the enormity of man’s sin and the fearfulness of God’s judgment. Only that burden issues in a cry for men to repent, exper–

ience God's mercy and walk in truth.

SOME OTHER VIEWS

- (1) Driver and others usually of the liberal school, identify the little horns of Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 as identical. The differences seem to be too great to allow this. The horns arise from different beasts. The beasts have a different number of horns, (7, beast 10 horns + 1: 8, goat, 1 horn). The outcomes are different. Chapter 7, horn – slain and One like a Son of Man receives the Kingdom. Chapter 8, he-goat – sudden end followed by four kingdoms.
- (2) Scaffold Reference Bible popularized the idea of a dual fulfilment: seeing 8:1–14 fulfilled in Antiochus, but claims 8:15–17 has a double fulfilment. Antiochus and then Antichrist. Many Pre-Millennialists hold this view. Others following this line (Talbot) would see 1–22 fulfilled historically but 23–27 yet to be fulfilled. Wood, who holds a double fulfilment gives some reasons. They are worth examining.
 - (a) Antichrist is presented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel's first vision and again in his third and fourth times of revelation; why not here?
 - (b) "*Time of the end*" V8. 17–19 do not find satisfactory fulfilment in Antiochus. The period of Antichrist will be the time of the end.
 - (c) A clear similarity exists between the language of 8:23–25 .. and that of 7:24–26, where actions of the Antichrist are presented, making likely the thought that the one acting is the same in both instances. If 8:23–25 concerns the Antichrist then it is logical that his time is concerned in the present verse (8:19).

We note:

- (a) If Antichrist is spoken of four times why assume that it will be so a fifth time. Furthermore Wood can only find reference to Antichrist in

Nebuchadnezzar's vision by referring to ten toes of which the Chapter makes nothing. See on Chapter 2.

- (b) As we have seen there is another explanation of the phrase and in either case it is precarious to proceed to base a teaching on an uncertain point.
- (c) Wood agrees that the horns of Chapter 7 and 8 are different and yet because of a similarity of language proceeds to find a second fulfilment necessary. He then uses this unstable ground to argue that "time of the *end*" refers to the day of Antichrist and not just to the Greek period that is clearly spoken of in the context.

This is not to say that the Pre-Millennial view is wrong. It is simply saying that Daniel 8 relates quite clearly to the Persian and Greek periods and does not clearly demand a futuristic interpretation'. Any "views" relating to the future from our point of time will need to be substantiated by other passages of Scripture. Such divisions of the Chapter then appear to be arbitrary and without Scriptural warrant. If there is to be a dual fulfilment then why not of the entire Chapter? And for what good reasons are we forced to consider such?

- (3) Some see the entire prophecy as future. Pember, quoted by Walvoord says, "The vision is no prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanes: the little horn is a far more terrible persecutor, who will arise in the last days." Those who hold this view then appeal to Chapters 7 and 11:36–45. This is to import the contents of one vision into another and come up with a single blended edition. The visions are separate and distinct even if not unrelated.
- (4) A further variation held by some of the Pre-Millennial school is to see the little horn of Daniel 7 as a future Roman dictator, but different from the little horn of Chapter 8, whom they assume to be the future king of the North Dan. 11:6–15, who is then identified with the Assyrian of Micah 5:5–6.

Walvoord who follows generally the pre-Millennial interpretation claims that it is doubtful if proper exegesis allows such an interpretation as “*such passages do not become relevant to Daniel Chapter 8*”.

The Chapter is a clear testimony to God’s Sovereignty. It shows His punishment of sin and so comes as a warning to His people to obey Him. We do well to avoid endless speculations, heed the clear lessons of the Chapter and walk in reverent fear before God.

As well as the points already made it is worthwhile pausing to look at the characters themselves.

The Great king of Greece, Alexander, in many ways noble and good was driven on by a passion for vengeance. A passion inherited from his father, and one that would not let him rest even when Persia, the focus of his passion, was conquered.

Antiochus Epiphanes, the hostage of Rome, burned with hatred for his captors. His blind rage consumed not those that he despised but the Jews who innocently stood between him and the fulfilment of his ambition.

Alexander, drained of strength by his constant warring, died an early death. Antiochus (The opposer) Epiphanes (the glorious one) earned for himself the nickname, Antiochus Epimanes, Madman.

Daniel whose circumstances were not unlike those of Antiochus reacted in a very different manner. He knew his God, he knew that God was in control. He submitted to God and to the circumstances that God had put him into. He did not rebel, he trusted God, and became one whom others could trust, respect and love. A symbol of hope for a nation, a blessing and not a curse. Circumstances do not determine the way that an man goes. He does himself, by a conscious act of the will. By an act in which he acknowledges God

and submits to Him and to His will or by choosing instead to rebel and be the opposer.

CHAPTER NINE

INTRODUCTION

Chapter nine begins with Daniel’s realization that the time of captivity is near its end. This led him to prayer and Gabriel appeared while Daniel was still praying. His message to Daniel is contained in the last six verses of the Chapter. His words are vague and enigmatic and we are presented with what has been called the most difficult passage of the O.T. While a detailed interpretation is difficult there is a clear and encouraging message for the people of God. When asked for detail concerning God’s timing of events Jesus replied, “*It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority.*” *Acts 1:7*. Graciously, the Father “*makes known His secrets to His servants the prophets,*” yet in doing so in broad outline He leaves us to watch and wait and to live in expectation of those great things to come.

9:1

Assuming that Darius is Cyrus as has been argued then the Chapter is dated at 539BC. Chapter five, Belshazzar and the writing on the wall, and the fall of Babylon have just preceded the vision found here. Daniel in the lions’ den, Chapter six, occurred about the time of the vision also. Darius is said to be the son of Ahasuerus. This distinguishes him from Darius I Hystaspes, who came to the throne in 522 BC. Some think the facts are wrong as Ahasuerus (*GK = XERXES*) in fact followed Darius I Hystaspes. It now seems that “Ahasuerus” may be an ancient *ACHAEMENID* royal title.

The Darius, here spoken of is of the seed of the Medes. If it refers to Cyrus, then he could claim

descent from both the Medes and Persians. This now seems likely.

9:2

“*The books*” include the prophecy of Jeremiah. Some see this as the first reference to the idea of a sacred canon of Scripture. Others argue that it indicates a late date.

These books obviously played a large part in Daniel’s religious life. He was a man of prayer, but he was also a man who hew the inspired writings. His knowledge of the books of the law are reflected in his prayer. It seems that the Jews were allowed to have their own elders and priests and Jewish worship continued. There came about a change in emphasis; no longer could men worship in the temple and draw near to God Whose presence was abiding in the Holy of Holies, but now they came to encounter with God in the Scriptures. The Synagogue system of worship later developed out of their experience in Babylon. From the book of Jeremiah Daniel became aware that God’s time of punishment was near its end. (See Jer. 25:11-12, 29:10-14). This is according to the word of the Lord. The Lord here is YAHWEH, the covenant name of God, used by Daniel as he is called to remember God’s faithfulness for His people and see God’s future plans for them.

Daniel understood the 70 years to be literal years and so he looked to an end. While this is so we note again that numbers are used loosely. There are various ways of calculating the 70 years. i.e.

(1) From the first deportation 605 to the restoration by Cyrus 539 = 66 years. (2) From the destruction of Jerusalem 587 to the completion of the temple 516 = 71 years. The actual period of time during which there was no worship at Jerusalem was much less than 70 years. 587 – 538 = 49 years. The point is that after a time of punishment God will forgive and restore His people to their land.

9:3

Seventy years had been decreed and yet God did not act apart from the prayers of His people.

God has strangely bound Himself to act in answer to prayer and all too often we “*receive not because we ask not.*”

Daniel’s faith was based upon the word of the Lord as given to Jeremiah and it was on this basis that he prayed. His earnestness is clearly evident as he humbled himself and sought God in sackcloth and ashes and with fasting. There is no emphasis on what Daniel sought from God, his attitude towards God is the important thing to note. He addressed God here as ADONAI, Lord and Master, recognising the authority and Sovereignty of God in the matter. Prayer, means intercession and supplication is an entreaty for mercy.

9:4

“*I prayed to the Lord (YAHWEH) my God.*” Daniel prays out of the background of a personal relationship with his God. Again he addresses YAHWEH, the covenant God, and proceeds to approach Him on the basis that He is a covenant keeping God and one who shows covenant love, (CHESED) steadfast love to His people. Yet He is “*the great and terrible God.*” (identical to Neh. 1:5; some see late date – others a liturgy reflected). Terrible in His mighty acts of judgment and so Daniel comes to make confession.

9:5

“*We have sinned.*” Daniel identified himself with the nation of Israel in their sin. It is one thing to acknowledge personal guilt but another to identify ourselves corporately with the people of our nation. God deals with nations and peoples, tribes and tongues. His wrath engulfs the likes of Daniel and his companions. They suffer for the sins of their fellows for no man is alone, but is part of a community and a nation. If the nation is obedient then it experiences a blessing in which all share. If a nation is rebellious then all suffer. While this is true yet we see that God is gracious to individuals who obey Him and He shows His steadfast love to them even in their suffering.

“*sinned*” – a deliberate falling short of the mark.

“*Done wrong*,” a perversion, or an unjust action.

“*Acted wickedly*.” deliberately incurred guilt.

“*rebelled*” i.e. against His commandments.

9:6

In this verse Daniel goes on to emphasize that the rebellion has been deliberate. The prophets have spoken but no one has listened.

9:7–10

“*The Lord is Righteous*” but Daniel confesses to Israel’s confusion of face (shame) because of her treachery against God. Sin is no light thing and for her sins she has been driven from her own land. Those of Northern Israel were taken captive into Assyrian Cities. The inhabitants of Judah were in Babylon and some in Egypt. (Jet. 43:1–7). This was the Lord’s doing. It was not because they had sinned unknowingly, or only once or twice, but because they had wilfully gone on generation after generation rejecting His Sovereignty by rebelling against His law and refusing to hear His *prophets*. V. 10.

9:11

All Israel had sinned. They knew the consequences of their disobedience but still they rebelled. Lev. 26:14–25, Deut.28:15–68, Deut. 29:20. God is faithful to His word. Faithful both in His promises to bless and to curse. When we will not obey He has no alternative but to act in judgment.

9:12

Daniel sees the magnitude of the disaster that has fallen upon Israel. It is a calamity without parallel. Jerusalem the city of God and the Temple built for His dwelling place lies in ruins. This the city of God itself, forsaken and desolate because His people have rejected Him. No other judgment has been like this one. What greater judgment could there be than for God to forsake His own city and Temple. Only the Judgment where God had to forsake His own Son.

9:13–14

In spite of the disaster His people have not called upon Him for mercy nor have they turned

from their sins.

9:15–16

Daniel began his prayer with confession and now with his petition grounded on the name, the goodness and mercy of God, he brings his request. “*Let thy anger and wrath turn away from Jerusalem.*” God has made a name for Himself (V. 15). By His mighty acts of deliverance He has shown Himself to be the true and living God. By contrast His people have become a byword among the nations. A tragic confession for this people were called to be a nation of kings and priests to declare the Lord.

9:17–19

Daniel pleads strongly to act for the honour of His own name. The city, the people, they are His: while the city is in ruins and the people in captivity then the nations mock the God of Israel. V. 17 “*Cause thy face to shine upon thy Sanctuary.*” i.e. show your love and goodwill towards it that it may be rebuilt. Daniel stresses that his supplication comes before God not on the grounds of his righteousness but only on the grounds of God’s mercy. He knew that in love, God had committed Himself to His people by His covenant and on that basis he called on God.

9:20–21

As Daniel prayed he was interrupted at about the time of the evening sacrifice by the Angel Gabriel. The evening sacrifice commenced at about 3 pm. It had ceased in 586BC, when the Temple was destroyed, yet the time was still remembered perhaps by prayer.

Gabriel is referred to as “*the man*” – a reference to the one in Chapter 8 having the appearance of a man. He was not man but ‘having the appearance of man.’ An angelic being. Gabriel came in “*swift flight*”. The phrase is difficult as the two words may be from the same root or from a different one. The root of the word here translated ‘flight’ (RSV) may be either to fly or to be weary. The word translated ‘swift’ is

from the root meaning to 'fly', but it could mean to be swift. Hence some translate, 'fly in weariness'.

9:22-23

Gabriel indicates that his mission is to give Daniel wisdom and understanding. His prayer was heard instantly and at the beginning of his prayer "*a word*" a Divine decree was issued as Daniel is beloved of God. While he is given wisdom and understanding yet he is told to consider the word and understand the vision. Intelligent thought is needed along with the gift if Daniel is to understand.

9:24-28

From this point on confusion reigns and commentators differ at almost every point. We will attempt first of all to see what can be understood with reasonable certainty and then we will look at various interpretations.

V. 24 A certain period of time is yet decreed for God's people and the Holy City. We note that the revelation relates to these two things. During this time a number of specific things are to happen. We first note the period of time mentioned, RSV has "*Seventy weeks of years.*" This is not a literal translation but is in fact an interpretation. The Hebrew text simply has "*Sevens seventy are decreed.*" Even sevens is not exact as this is a masculine plural participle and we read something like - '*besevened*', meaning computed by sevens.

The word is usually feminine plural, but here for some reason is masculine plural. Different explanations are given. (1) A grammatical error. (2) Done so that in the Hebrew the word would then sound like seventy, i.e. a literary device. (3) It draws attention to the fact that 'seven' is not used in the normal way. Whatever the case we note that we have in fact no reference to any definite period of time. We are not told if there are to be 70 days - months, weeks or years.

The same Hebrew word "*besevened*" is used again by Daniel in Chapter 10:2-3. Where Daniel tells that

he was mourning and fasting for three sevens of days. Here the term is qualified by the addition of "days". Obviously he meant three weeks.

Here we pass from exegesis into interpretation. To see the "sevens" as seventy weeks' (490 days) does not fit anyone's scheme of understanding the passage and so is discounted. Months is also unlikely. The majority would see the sevens as seventy times seven years (490 years). This concept was not unfamiliar to the Hebrews: Lev. 25:8 "*And you shall number to yourselves seven sabbaths of years, seven years times seven, and all the days of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty nine years.*"

E.J. Young, Keil and others see the 'sevens' as referring to an indefinite period of time. One's understanding of what is meant seems generally to be determined by one's overall view of eschatology as we shall see later.

What we can say is that during this period of time yet appointed for the people and the city of God, six things are to be accomplished. Again our understanding of these six things will be in some instances determined by our overall eschatological view.

- (1) "*TO finish the transgression*" (RSV): "*Then rebellion shall be stopped*" (NEB.) "*Transgression*" conveys the idea of rebellion and self-assertion. It stands for sin in a general sense. The word translated as "finish" RSV, may in fact be "*restrain*". The uncertainty lends itself to various interpretations. The liberal school would generally see the passage referring to the time from the destruction of Jerusalem to Antiochus Epiphanes. They would see the transgression restrained or the rebellion stopped (as NEB): (i.e. the Jewish rebellion and apostasy) Baldwin, who claims that scholarly opinion comes down in favour of "*finish transgression*" then understands the term to refer to "*the final triumph of God's*

Kingdom and the end of human history.” That time when sin is finally dealt with and every knee shall bow.

Young, who takes on A-Millennial stance, argues for “*retrain*” and not “*finish*”. He understands transgression to be restrained and sin ended through the Atoning work of Christ on the Cross.

Wood, typical of the Pre-Millennial school again argues in favour of “*restrain*”. He claims that the first three items listed clearly refer to Christ’s first coming, “*when sin was brought to an end in principle. The actuality of sin coming to an end for people, however, comes only when a personal appropriation of the benefit has been made.*” He then goes on to argue that as this applies primarily to the Jews and not to the Gentiles (whose sins were restrained to a greater extent than those of the Jews who have gone on rebelling), the interpretation must apply to Christ’s second coming “*because only then does Israel as a nation turn to Christ.*” wood, p249. (Does the Bible teach a second chance for the Jews???)

- (2) “*To put an end to sin*” The term sin used here is a general term for all wrong. There is even more doubt concerning the root of the word “*end*” used here than in the previous phrase. The *KETHIBH* reading of the Hebrew text (that written) is from the root meaning to seal up. The *QERE* reading (marginal correction) added by the Massorete scribes shows that they understood it to mean ‘an end of’ or ‘to complete’.

If we take the text as meaning ‘to seal up’, then how are we to understand the term? Is it sealed up and shut out of sight forever. Is it sealed up for judgment and to be punished, (Job.14:17, Deut. 32:34 for this idea). Again does the term apply to the Atoning work of Christ at the Cross or to the final judgment of sin?

- (3) “*To atone for iniquity*” Within the period of the seventy sevens atonement will be made for

iniquity in general. This message is clear and sure. Here we rejoice with Daniel and all the people of God. The whole of the O.T. looks forward with longing to the day. Jeremiah spoke of a New Covenant, Ezekiel, a new heart, and now Daniel is shown that man’s guilt is to be dealt with in a total and complete manner. We cannot read the N.T. without seeing Christ, the Lamb of God who bears the sins of the world. With sin atoned for there can now be everlasting righteousness.

- (4) “To bring in everlasting righteousness”. “To bring in” is a strong term; it means to cause to come in. Righteousness is brought to be by the definite and powerful action of God in making an end to sin. Daniel has clearly seen the righteousness of God, Vs. ?, 14, 16 and Jeremiah prophesied concerning a ‘righteous branch’ (Jer. 23:5–6). Now Daniel is told that God will act within the seventy sevens to cause to come in (lit) righteousness of ages. The N.T. tells that because of the propitiation made by Christ at the Cross the righteousness of God has been manifested. Rom. 3:21–25, Isaiah 53:11.

While this is so the day will indeed come when “the shoot from the stump of Jesse” will judge with righteousness and smite the earth with the rod of his mouth. “The Wolf shall dwell with the lamb.” and “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

- (5) “To seal both vision and prophet” There are different ways of understanding these words.

(a) This particular prophecy and prophet will be shown to be correct: i.e. Jeremiah’s prophecy of 70 years.

(b) To seal is taken to mean that both prophecy and prophet are shut up and no longer appear. Their functions are finished. I Cor. 13:8.

- (6) “*To anoint a most Holy*” The Hebrew does not specify what a “*most Holy*” is – place, thing, person. A variety of suggestions have been put forward:

- (a) Rededication of the temple by Zerubbabel I. Macc. 4:52-56
- (b) The New Jerusalem
- (c) Christ, anointed by the Holy Spirit
- (d) A new Holy of Holies in the New Jerusalem Temple.
- (e) Baldwin sees the ambiguity as deliberate. In 539BC concern was centred on the Temple in Jerusalem, and Daniel may well have understood this as a reference to the dedication of the temple that he longed to see restored. Yet *“the Lord’s anointed was ultimately to be a man (Matt. – 12:6 “Something greater than the temple is here).”* It can yet apply to the *“fullness of time”* when all things in heaven and on earth are united in Christ. (Eph. 1:10 and I Cor. 15:28).

V. 25 This is the most difficult section yet. The seventy sevens are now divided into portions. The first consists of seven sevens, followed by sixty two sevens. The seven sevens begins with the word going forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Various times are designated as the starting point.

- (1) Young thinks it is the time when the word comes from God via Gabriel. Most see a command of men referred to.
- (2) The decree of Cyrus issued in 538BC. Ezra 1:2-4, 6:3-5
- (3) The decree of Artaxerxes, Ezra 7:11-26, 458BC. Ezra’s return.
- (4) Second decree of Artaxerxes, Neh. 2:5-8, 17-18, 445BC. Nehemiah’s return.

Various dates are propounded with 445 being the most popular one. The reason will become obvious. V. 25 Tells us that the coming of an *“anointed one and Prince”* will end the period. The problem now is, which Period does the coming of the anointed one (Messiah) end?

The Hebrew text as punctuated by the Massoretes would indicate that the coming of the anointed one brings to an end the seven sevens. We read then as RSV or NEB. The Massorete pointing however is not part of the original text and their understanding may have been wrong. Theodotion, the Latin Vulgate and many today would read that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty two weeks,’ total 69 weeks. Popular interpretations find this more acceptable as it more readily fits most theories, but is it correct? We are on unsafe ground if we allow our theories to interpret the Scriptures.

The issue is made extremely complex when we look at the terms, Messiah – (anointed one) and Prince. Today the term ‘Messiah’ has become a technical term that immediately brings to mind Jesus Christ. To Daniel however, the term did not have this connotation. In the O.T. both kings and priests were anointed with oil and so were ‘Messiahs.’ Cyrus the Persian is referred to as God’s Messiah, (anointed one) in Isaiah 45:1. Many of the old interpreters thus identified the ‘anointed one’ as Zerubbabel, Ezra, or Onias III. Some see it as a reference to Cyrus himself.

We note that this one is not an anointed prince, but is at the same time both an ‘anointed one’ and ‘a prince.’ Keil takes this to mean that he is both a priest and a king and so excludes the above suggestions. The term prince, however, can clearly be applied to any leader. Interpretation is precarious.

Jerusalem is to be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. The word ‘moat’ was unknown until the Dead Sea Scrolls’ find and means, ‘conduit’. Jerusalem was not in fact completed in this way until the return of Nehemiah and this is seen by some to argue for the 445BC. date.

V. 26 *‘And after the sixty two weeks an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing; and the*

people of the Prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary...” Here we find that the sixty two sevens is again set apart from the seven weeks. They must run their course before the next important event. We are now in a position to see something of the dilemma of the interpreter. There are many possibilities and problems.

- (1) If Jesus is the ‘Messiah’ of V.25, does he come at the end of the seven sevens? Keil would understand this to be the case. The 62 sevens then apply to the period between the first and second advents of Christ. The problem then is what is meant by “*cut off*” in V. 26? It must apply to the period of the second coming,
- (2) Jesus coming at the end of 69 sevens. What then is the significance of the first seven sevens. What marks the end of this period? No satisfactory answer is given. When is the city and sanctuary then restored. At the end of the seven sevens – or when Messiah comes at the end of the 69 sevens?
- (3) If Cyrus, Ezra, Zerubbabel or some other person is meant by “Messiah” in V. 25 then the first problem is still an issue. (i.e.— at end of 7 or 69). If the period is seven sevens as most who hold this interpretation of Messiah would say then the Messiah who comes at the end of 62 sevens is a different one, (V. 26). If the 7 + 62 = 69 applies then Vs. 25 and 26 can apply to the same person. This verse by mentioning 62 sevens and not 69 gives weight to the idea that the one cut off comes at a later period than the one referred to in V. 25. Arguments are advanced in both directions.

The anointed one who is to be cut off – V.26 is generally understood by Evangelicals to be Christ. Driver and Montgomery would argue for Onias III. Isaiah says prophetically of Christ “*He was cut off from the land of the living.*”

The term ‘cut’, is used of the making of a

covenant. It involved the death of a sacrificial animal (Gen. 15:10–18). It was frequently used to refer to death.

We are told he “*shall have nothing.*” The term is unclear as the translations show. NEB. “*with no one to take his part.*” TEV “*unjustly*”. We note that it is “*after*” sixty two weeks that the anointed one is cut off: not during.

Who then are the people of the prince who is to come and destroy the city and sanctuary? Is this prince, the prince of V. 25? Various answers are given.

- (1) Christ, whose death makes an end to the sacrificial system.
- (2) Antiochus Epiphanes – yet the Greek armies did not completely destroy city and temple – I Macc.1:31ff.
- (3) Keil and others who see the 62 sevens applying to the period between the first and second advent apply this to Antichrist.
- (4) Many would see the people, as the Romans, who destroyed the temple for the second time under Titus Vespasianus in AD. 70

In V 18 Daniel prayed “*Open thine eyes and look upon our desolation and upon the city that bears thy name.*” NO promise can be given that Jerusalem will not suffer. The opposite in fact will be so. Desolations are decreed and there will be war to the end.

9:27

“*And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week.*” We are confronted with yet another problem. Who is the ‘He?’ – Again opinions differ. Grammatically the nearest possible antecedent is chosen, in this case that would be the prince of V. 26. It could however apply to the anointed one who is cut off V. 26 also. ‘He’, is thus identified with Christ, Antiochus, Titus, the little horn of Chapter 7 and Antichrist. ‘He’ we are told will make a “*strong covenant.*” This term is unusual– Baldwin claims that

it implied a covenant that is forced upon an unwilling people: This being the case it could perhaps apply to Antiochus – or to the Antichrist. Young on the other hand argues that Antiochus did not make a covenant with the Jews. They sought his permission to covenant with the Gentiles, I Macc. 1:11–14, but that is different to him enforcing a covenant with them.

Young in fact argues that the expression does not mean “*make a covenant*” as the usual term “*cut a covenant*” is not used here. He sees it as meaning ‘He’ will cause a covenant to prevail. Young then interprets ‘He’ as Christ, and sees reference to him fulfilling the covenant made with Abraham and his seed. The matter is uncertain, the arguments long and tedious and no clear answer emerges.

We are told that he shall make a covenant for one week and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offerings to cease. Argument follows as to the time of this week. During or after the events of *V. Z6*. If as Young says, the Messiah brings to an end sacrifices by his death why only for half a week? Yet half a week may in fact be better translated, “*In the midst of the week?*”

We are then told that “*upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate until the decreed end is poured out on the desolation.*” “*The wing of abomination*” is again a difficult phrase. Young sees it as a reference to the temple itself. The ‘wing’ being the pinnacle. (Matt. 4:5, Luke 4:9). The sacrifices now ceased and the veil of heaven rent, true worship is now in Spirit. The temple is no longer the house of the Lord but the house of abominations?? NEB. translates the phrase “*in the train of these abominations.*” The point is there will be abominations and one will come who makes desolate until the decreed end.

Many link the desolations here with Dan. 11:31, 12:11, Matt. 24:15, Mark 13:17. This may be so or it may not be so. The abomination of desolations spoken of by Daniel and referred to by Jesus would seem

to point forward to Titus and then on to the time of the end. If this is the desolation spoken of here then the seventy weeks of Daniel relate to the end time and this causes further problems.

We happily note that the end of the desolator, Antiochus, Titus, Antichrist, whoever he be, is decreed. God is Sovereign and all these things are in His hands.

9:24–27

We must now take a look at the common schemes of interpretation.

- (1) Many liberals particularly hold that the seventy sevens apply to the period from 586BC. The destruction of Jerusalem to Antiochus Epiphanes. Cyrus is then the anointed one’, *V. 25* and his coming ends the first period of seven sevens. The next 62 sevens represent the period through to Antiochus. Onias III is the one anointed and cut off, *V. 26*. The numbers are symbolic only. Montgomery, Porteous and F.F.Bruce hold to this view. The weakness, as we have seen centres around *V. 24* where the six things mentioned seem to be of greater import than any events associated with the era of Antiochus. I Maccabees 1:54 describes the desecration of the altar and temple in 167 by Antiochus as an abomination of desolation, yet immediate deliverance did not follow and nor did everlasting righteousness.
- (2) The Jews and many early Christians understood the passage to have a double application. The Jewish historian Josephus, applied it in the first instance to Antiochus, and then saw it as referring to the devastation of Jerusalem by the Romans. Not until the second century did Christian scholars begin to try and compute the seventy sevens to coincide with the coming of Christ. (Only the starting date of 445 BC. is valid if the sevens are taken as literal years. Even then it is a squeeze, 360 days 1 year plus adding extras for leap years etc. Most pre-Millennial scholars today take this view. Other dates can be seen as the commencement of the period if the sevens

are not understood as literal years.) Jerome translated *V.25* as 'Prince Messiah', and so introduced the Messianic interpretation as held now by Young and others.

(3) Many differences of interpretation revolve around the interpretation of the seventy sevens. If literal years are taken then on the face of it Chapter nine deals with 69.5 weeks. What then of the other half? Dispensationalists who seem to want the best of both worlds insist on literal years and yet want to include Antichrist as part of the prophecy. They then invent a gap between the 69.5 years and the final half a week which will see a revived Roman Empire whose prince will be the Antichrist. 9:24 is generally taken to refer to the end of time rather than to the first coming of Christ, although some opt for both. They would teach that the Jewish temple and worship is yet to be restored so that it can again be desecrated by the Antichrist. The Jews will be saved when Christ comes again.

We see that most of these elements are not to be found in the text itself. There seems to be no justification for stopping the prophetic clock as Ionside claims, inserting a gap of some thousands of years and then concluding the seventy sevens with an isolated seven year period at the end of history. The N.T. would indicate that "*Jesus looked for a replacement of the temple centred on himself. He transferred the activities of the temple from Jerusalem to another entity. This entity was Jesus himself A new fellowship with God would be set up through his death and resurrection: in effect he himself would become the replacement for the temple.*" (Baldwin Tyndale p.177).

Scripture does not appear to teach a second chance for the Jews. There is no longer Jew and Gentile but one new man in Christ. God as Peter said is 'no respecter of persons.' We all come through faith in Christ in this age. When Christ comes he will come in judgment.

- (4) Baldwin represents—the view that the passage focuses primarily on the first coming of Christ and looks forward also to the second coming and judgment. She would see a telescoping effect in the prophecy. Looking from a distance the events recorded seem to stand together whereas in 'fact they are spaced out. The seventy sevens thus refers to the entire period of history yet to come.
- (5) The N.T. does not mention the seventy weeks of Daniel as such. The abomination of desolations is referred to but that is from Daniel 11, and may or may not be the focus of attention here.

Rev. 11:2 refers to 42 months during which the holy city is trampled under foot. In Rev. 13:5 the same period of time is mentioned as that during which the beast has authority. If the sevens are years then the 42 months may well equal the half a week of Dan. 9:27, during which the sacrifice is to cease.

From Daniel's viewpoint we can look and see that the people of God are yet to suffer. There will be persecution and opposition. From where we stand Jesus has promised the same to us. Together we are called to stand firm and obey God in the assurance that sin and transgression will come to an end and everlasting righteousness will one day prevail.

CHAPTER TEN

Chapter 10 begins a long introduction to the fourth vision of Daniel. The introduction ends with Chapter 11:1.

10:1

We are told that a word was revealed to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus, i.e. 537BC. Some of the Jews had already left for home with Zerubbabel. Daniel obviously stayed on in Babylon because he was one of the Presidents in Persia, (Chapter 6). Perhaps also because of his age – now over 80 and because God had use for him there still.

We note again the use of the third person in V. 1, but the first person in V. 2. V. 1 appears to be an editor's note.

Daniel is referred to as Belteshazzar – probably to connect him with the Daniel of Chapter 1. It is a miracle that he was still in the court of the king after so many changes of government.

“The word was true and it was a great conflict.” The word ‘conflict’ is translated in various ways. It may be warfare, task, suffering. The great conflict would seem to indicate a lengthy period is intended.

10:2–3

Daniel's mourning was demonstrated by his fasting. The vegetable diet that Daniel and friends insisted on in Chapter 1 was evidently not permanent. The fast continued for three sevens of days. ‘Days’ mentioned to distinguish from the sevens of Chapter 9, ‘obviously weeks are intended. Not only did Daniel fast but he did not anoint himself during this period. It was the practice to anoint the exposed area with oil. This was a sign of gladness, Prov. 27:9. Fasting as such does not solicit the favour of God but it symbolized a humble and right attitude towards God and He is pleased with such.

10:4

Daniel was on the banks of the Tigris, in person not merely in vision as in Chapter 8. It seems from V.7 that others were with him. The period of his fast included the passover feast day which fell on the 14th of Abid. Exod. 23:15: (later called Nisan Neh. 2:1) and the feast of unleavened bread, 15th to 21st. This was traditionally a time of fasting and remembering the deliverance from Egypt. The old Syriac version has Euphrates in place of Tigris and liberal scholars argue for this as the Euphrates was usually referred to as the Great River.

10:5–6

Daniel was confronted by a being that he calls a man: try and visualize the man described. *“Clothed in linen”* – The fine white linen of the priests Exod. 28:39–43. *“A golden girdle about the waist.”* *“His body was like beryl”*. Probably the colour of a flashing yellow stone. *“His face like the appearance of lightning and his eyes like flaming torches.”* *“His arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze”*. His body resembled a *“giant transparent jewel reflecting the glory of the rest of the vision.”* (Walvoord p.243).

10:7–9

V. 8 NEB. *“I became a sorry figure of a man”* Here we catch a glimpse of the overwhelming terror and glory of the Lord. Sinful man, whoever he is cannot bear such holiness. Similar encounters with God are likewise devastating to those involved. Isaiah 6:1–6, Rev. 1:17.

10:10–12

Daniel is again referred to as *“man greatly beloved”*. Few were so favoured. Abraham was called the friend of God. Mary found favour with God. David was a man after God's own heart. All were called to suffer as was the *“Beloved Son”*. *“A touch from the angel's hand”* gave Daniel strength. He was commanded to stand and to give heed. He was enabled to do so. The angel would not have come apart from Daniel's prayer. From the first day, God heard, and

His messenger was sent.

10:13–14

The messenger was delayed for twenty one days. While Daniel fasted and prayed there was a spiritual warfare raging in the heavens between this messenger and one called the “*prince of the kingdom of Persia.*” we note the following with regard to this prince. (1) He is opposed to the will of God. (2) He is related to Persia. (3) He is obviously not a human prince as he contended with the angelic messenger and Michael himself was needed to help fight against him.

“*Michael*” – is one of the chief princes – spoken of in 10:13,21, 12:1, Jude 9, Rev. 12:7.

V. 13 “*I left him (Michael) there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia.*” *RSV.* – This makes sense but the more difficult reading may in fact be correct. i.e. “*Michael one of the chief princes came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.*” Driver suggests that the Hebrew word translated “*remained*” – does not mean remain behind, but rather to remain over, i.e. be superfluous. In which case Michael occupied the demonic prince and distracted him from harassing the kings of Persia and the angelic messenger. The messenger was then free to come to Daniel.

His purpose in coming is to make known to Daniel what will befall Israel in the “*latter days.*” From Chapter 11 we see that the Persian and Greek kingdoms are involved in these latter days. The term is used as in Chapter 2. When the end of an age is meant the writer uses the expression, “*The time of the end.*” 8:17, 11:35,40, 12:4,9.

The vision, *V. 14*, of course refers to the contents of Chapter 11.

10:15–17

V. 16 “*One in the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips.*” simply – one who appeared like a human being.

“Lord” Adonai – Master – not necessarily God.

10:18–19

Again Daniel is revived by an angelic being. He is then ready to receive the revelation.

10:20–21

In *V. 20* we learn a little more of the satanic adversaries, the prince of Persia is not yet defeated. The messenger must yet go and contend with him. When he is dealt with the prince of Greece will come. Evidently there are angelic and demonic beings who are assigned to nations. In *V. 21* we are told that Michael is the prince of Israel. (12:2). We see that he contends with even Satan on behalf of his people Judges 9, Rev. 12:7. While the Satanic forces seek to hinder the people of God. We learn that the natural and the spiritual realms are not far removed and they both exert strong influences on the other.

This illumines such passages as Eph. 6:11–12 where we are told that the weapons of our warfare are not *fleshly*. *I John 5:19* – “*The whole world is in the power of the evil one.*” It makes the Cross a terrifying event John 14:30, Ps.22:1,12,20.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

INTRODUCTION

Here we come to some of the most detailed prophecy in Scripture. *Vs. 1 – 35* Deals largely with the Greek Empire and majors on Antiochus Epiphanes. Why should such detailed prophecy centre on Antiochus? This question troubles many. The Chapter shows that while the exile was a time during which God’s people suffered for their sins this will not always be the sole reason for affliction. World powers backed by opposition in the heavenly places (Chapter 10) will endeavour to destroy the people of God simply because they are God’s people.

We see that to some extent history is predetermined. World rulers unwittingly fit into a pattern of behaviour described of them in the prophecy.

The Chapter is traditionally accepted by the Church as genuine prophecy. This Chapter was singled out for particular attack by the pagan Porphyry in the third century and the higher critics today claim that it is history written after the event. Until the Qumran the earliest documents on Daniel dated from the Middle Ages. Now several specifically relating to Daniel and others that contain helpful background information, date from the late first century BC. Harrison claims that Qumran material excludes a Pre-Maccabean date but this is questioned by the critics. We will approach the Chapter before us as prophecy.

11:1

The revelation was given in the third year of Cyrus, 10:1, but we see here that Darius was strengthened in the first year. It is possible that this verse relates to Chapter 10: in that it may be the heavenly messenger who strengthens Michael and so the Jews are permitted to return from exile (539). It is usual however, to understand the words as applying to Darius the Mede being strengthened, for the angel 10:13 must stand against the prince of Persia again. Whatever the case may be spiritual conflict resulted in the Persian king showing favour to the Jews.

11:2

Two hundred years of Persian history are embraced in this verse. ‘Three more kings shall arise and a fourth.’ There were in fact nine. The critics attack this as an error on the part of a late writer. The difficulty in fact supports the prophetic view as prophecy tends to see ahead with a telescopic vision and only the highlights are mentioned. The use of ‘three and a fourth’ is a proverbial expression, (Prov. 30:15,18,21,29 etc.) and perhaps should be read in this way here. It would then not be specific but refer generally to those kings which are to arise.

The point is not the number of kings but the

activity of the fourth king – his wealth and antagonism against Greece are noted. Those who understand ‘the fourth’ as literal find here a reference to Xerxes. Darius who preceded him imposed excessive taxes on Babylonia, Lydia, and Egypt and Xerxes continued to amass great wealth. The books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther deal with this period of time. The wealth of Xerxes is evident in the book of Esther, when Ahasuerus (the Hebrew equivalent of the Persian name Xerxes) put on a feast that lasted for 180 days. After Xerxes (who is the fourth after Cyrus, if the usurper Pseudo-Smerdis 522–521 BC. is included) the later kings were of little account and the Persian Empire was in a state of decline.

The fourth king is said to *“stir up all against the kingdom of Greece.”* Xerxes commanded the largest army of the ancient world and in 480BC. came against Greece only to be defeated.

11:3–4

Without doubt the mighty king mentioned is Alexander the Great. In Chapter 8 Greece has

been named as the successor to Persia (8:20–21) and a similar prophecy given. We recall that his kingdom was divided between four of his generals. ‘Four winds of heaven.’ The four points of the compass.

11:5

We note and must insist that the kings of the South and North here refers to kings arising from the Greek Empire. We are not given reason to look for a future king at this point.

“The king of the South shall be strong” “South” here is the term Negev. It usually refers to the desert area south of Palestine. V. 8 identifies the South as Egypt in this instance. The king referred to is Ptolemy Soter, who was one of Alexander’s generals. He was made Satrap of Egypt in 323 BC. and proclaimed himself king in 304.

“One of his princes shall be stronger than he.” This refers to Seleucus Nicator—another general of Alexander. He was made Satrap of Babylonia in 321BC. but

was forced from his office by another general named Antigonus. Seleucus fled to Egypt and served Ptolemy until 312BC. when Antigonus was defeated. He then returned to Babylonia and succeeded in controlling Syria and Media as well. *“His dominion shall be a great dominion.”*

11:6

we are now introduced to the king of the North. Syria was north of Palestine and is here referred to. It was not a nation at the time of the prophecy and so is simply referred to by the use of ‘king of the North.’ Again we need not look beyond the context of Greece to the future or see Russia intended. Of the four divisions of Alexander’s Empire only two are mentioned here because Palestine is between them and they influenced the life of the people of God.

“After some years they shall make an alliance” (Lit. ‘to the end of years’) – i.e. some time shall pass. The king of the North Antiochus II Theos (261–246) made an alliance with the king of the South Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285 – 261). Ptolemy forced Antiochus to divorce his wife Laodice and marry his daughter Berenice. *“She shall not retain the strength of her arm.”* Two years after the alliance Ptolemy died and Antiochus decided to take his former wife Laodice back. He put aside Berenice. *“She shall be given up and her attendants, her child, and he who got possession of her.”* Laodice was not happy with the treatment that she had received and took vengeance by poisoning Antiochus and having Berenice, her child by Antiochus and her attendants killed. She then proclaimed her son Seleucus II, as king.

11:7

“A branch from her roots shall arise in his place.” The brother of Berenice was put on the throne of Egypt in place of his deceased father. Ptolemy III Euergetes immediately sought to avenge the death of his sister. *“He shall come against the army and shall prevail.”* He put Laodice to

death after easily defeating the Syrian army. Seleucus II stayed alive by keeping well out of reach in Asia Minor.

11:8

This verse shows the extent of the victory of Ptolemy.

11:9

The King James Version seems to imply that the king of the South will return into his own realm. Probably the king of the North is intended. In 240BC. he retaliated against Egypt but was quickly forced to return to his own land.

11:10

“His sons shall wage war.” Seleucus II has two sons. Seleucus III and Antiochus III the Great. Both gathered large armies and attempted to push back the Egyptian borders which extended through Palestine into parts of Syria itself. Seleucus III was killed after only 4 years 227 – 223 and Antiochus III became king at the age of 18 years. He pushed South and took much of what had been Egyptian territory. Palestine of course is in the centre of this continual warfare.

11:11

The king of the South – now Ptolemy IV Philopator responded with anger. With his – sister – wife, 75,000 soldiers and 73 elephants he came against Antiochus III the Great, who had also gathered a large army. The king of Egypt was victor.

11:12

History tells that Ptolemy killed some ten thousand soldiers and 5 elephants and took another 4,000 men captive. Yet we are told, *“He shall not prevail.”*

11:13

After some 14 years Antiochus III the Great came against Egypt again. Ptolemy V Epiphanes the four year old king was now on the Egyptian throne (203–181).

11:14

Philip of Macedonia formed an alliance with

Antiochus II and attacked some of the territory held by the Egyptians. In Egypt Agathocles excited a rebellion against the young ruler. The Jews who were suffering constantly by armies criss-crossing their territory which was again under the dominion of Egypt sought the help of Antiochus III to throw off the shackles of the Egyptians. But they failed in bringing peace to Palestine.

11:15

This refers to the capture of Sidon, a city of fortifications, by Antiochus in 199 – 198BC.

11:16

Syria then occupied all Palestine.

11:17

Rome then the new rising power applied pressure to Syria, who found it expedient to form an alliance with Egypt. Antiochus III married his daughter, Cleopatra to the young Egyptian king. *“He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom.” “destroy the kingdom” RSV (Lit. corrupting her.)* this may mean ruin the land, so, RSV. i.e. Antiochus thought by marrying his daughter to the ten year old king to ruin Egypt. The scheme however did not succeed as Cleopatra stood by her husband and opposed her father. Egypt aided Rome against Antiochus. (The marriage agreement was made in 197 when the king was 10 but not enacted until 193).

11:18

“Afterwards he shall turn his face to the coastlands and take many of them.” Antiochus took many Islands and coastal regions of the Aegean and portions of Greece and Asia Minor. *“A commander shall put an end to his insolence.”* Antiochus III attempted to conquer Greece. He was defeated in 191 and then again in 189 by soldiers of Rome and Pergamum led by the Roman general Scipio Asiaticus.

11:19

Antiochus retreated to his own land and a year later was killed when attempting to plunder a temple in Elam.

11:20

Seleucus IV Philopator, son of Antiochus, inherited the throne and great debts as the Romans demanded 1,000 talents tribute money annually. He sent an exactor of tribute to seize funds from the temple in Jerusalem. His name was Heliodorus and he was foiled in his attempt by a divine apparition in the temple. II Macc.3. Seleucus actually reigned for eleven years, ‘a few days’ compared with his father’s reign of 37 years, and then he died mysteriously. It is suspected that he may have been poisoned by Heliodorus, who sought the throne, the only son of Seleucus having been taken hostage into Rome.

11:21

The throne rightly belonged to the hostage son of Seleucus and so on hearing that his brother had died Antiochus IV Epiphanes, hurriedly returned from Athens and proclaimed himself king. Heliodorus was never heard of again. It is known that Antiochus secured his position by flattery and bribes and by the assistance of Rome who sought to stabilize power in the East. This ruler is a contemptible person. All agree to the identification of Antiochus. He typifies many to come who will afflict the people of God with intense suffering. As a prototype he is of interest to generations. He forces men to make a choice between commitment to God and political diplomacy and expediencies.

11:22

His victories were chiefly over the Egyptians. *“The prince of the covenant”* could refer to Ptolemy Philometor who was now king of Egypt. In which case the covenant would be the agreement noted in V.I7. More likely the phrase is a reference to the Jewish High Priest Onias III, who was killed by his brother Menelaus, in 171BC. In 11,28 and 32 ‘Covenant’ is used to refer to the Jewish state, so this is most probable.

11:24–25

The strategies of Antiochus are outlined. I Macc. 3:29–31 tells that he took from rich districts and gave to poor districts.

11:26–27

Antiochus Epiphanes as a result of treachery

captured the young Ptolemy VI who was in fact his nephew (son of Cleopatra I). Ptolemy VII Euergetes brother to Ptolemy VI Philometer, was now given the throne in Egypt. Antiochus then pretended friendship with his captive nephew in the hope of influencing his brother, now king of Egypt. *“The two kings their minds bent on mischief.”* Both distrusted each other and had ambitions of ruling Egypt. Antiochus captured Memphis in Egypt and installed Ptolemy VI Philometer as king. Antiochus left for Syria and Ptolemy VI quickly worked out a joint rule of Egypt with Ptolemy VII, and married their joint sister, Cleopatra II.

11:28

Antiochus, with wounded pride, returned home I Macc. 1:19, and as he passed through Palestine he put down a Jewish revolt and vented his anger upon the Jews. The objects of his anger were specifically the temple, priests and religious system. I Macc. 1:20–24.

11:29

“At the time appointed” This is part of God’s plan being fulfilled. Antiochus wanted to avenge himself against Ptolemy VI Philometer. He managed to capture him but was forced to withdraw. He attacked yet again but was met by the Romans who had come to Egypt in ships. *“Ships of Kittim”* (or *Chittim*) Kittim is a reference to Cyrus. Translated in the LXX as ‘the Romans’ The reference is clear to the ancient readers. The Roman Emissary Popilus Laenas demanded that he leave Egypt or be attacked by the Romans. He left.

11:30

He was enraged and again his anger was directed toward the Jews who happened to be in the way as he returned from Egypt. He gave heed to those who had forsaken the holy covenant. He sought the support of the apostate Jews in venting his wrath on the people of God. The High Priest, Menelaus gave him full support. I Macc. 1:43.

11:31–32

The content of these verses is the same as

the prophecies of Chapter 8 and 9:27. Antiochus polluted the temple, stopped the Jewish sacrifices and perverted many by bribes and false promises. The Maccabees and those who knew their God stood firm.

11:33–35

“Some help will be given to those who stumble.” This may mean that help is given to or by the Maccabees? *“Many shall join themselves to them with flattery”* (lit. *intrigue*). i.e. some joined the revolt for wrong motives fearing reprisal at the hand of the Maccabees. The purpose of persecution is to cleanse and refine the people of God. Daniel and his friends were delivered from their enemies but this is not always the purpose of God. Often His people must suffer. *“The wise”* is probably a reference to those of the resistance movement. *“The time of the end.”* obviously refers to the end of Antiochus. Some see a double reference, to Antiochus and then to Antichrist.

11:36–45

INTRODUCTION: To this point we have seen some one hundred and thirty five remarkable prophecies which have now been fulfilled in detail. No wonder liberal scholars prefer to see this is history written after the event. They would then go on to refer these remaining verses to Antiochus Epiphanes, but regard the writer as moving on from history into prophecy and in some instances proving to be incorrect.

Driver contends that proper exegesis does not permit the introduction of another person into the continuous narrative at this point and yet there are factors which would seem to require this. We note for example:

- (1) The details of *Vs. 40–45* certainly do not apply to Antiochus. If this is genuine prophecy then there is a fulfilment ahead. (If the chapter is history and error as the liberals claim then what part of Scripture can we trust? This of course is no evidence).

- (2) We note that the emphasis is now on the king's character and not on his deeds as in the first portion of the book.
- (3) V36 'The king' is distinguished from the '*king of the North*' v.40, which is the usual title given to the Syrian kings. So this king is probably not Antiochus Epiphanes.
- (4) Chapter 12:1 speaks of a time of trouble such as never before. Matt. 24:21 interprets this as future. Hence after Antiochus. It could of course be another such time?
- (5) Jesus interpreted the Abomination of desolations 9:27, 11:31, 12:11 as being future see Matt.24 Mark 13.
- (6) The Book of Revelation takes up the general theme, and some of the symbols of Daniel and the persecution of the people of God yet appears to be future.

Antiochus seems to prefigure the events of AD 70 and then again the Antichrist, See Joy in The Tyndale Commentary–Bottom p.57–58.

11:36

“The king” has been variously identified, E.J.Young lists suggestions. Antiochus Epiphanes, Constantine, The Roman Empire, The little horn of Daniel seven, The Pope, Herod the Great, Antichrist. Conservative scholars today generally all agree that the king is the Antichrist. There is then a division of opinion. Some identify him as: (1) An unregenerate Jew, living in Palestine and in league with a restored Roman Empire. (J.N.Darby. Gaebelein). (2) An apostate Christian, who is the little horn of Daniel 7. He rules from Jerusalem during the last 3.5 years of the 70 weeks, (Note not mentioned in Chapter 11), and thus during the Great Tribulation. (Scofield). (3) A Roman world ruler – who is again identified with the little horn of Daniel 7 and also with the beast out of the sea, Rev. 13:1–10 (Walvoord.)

“He shall do according to .his will.” This could well apply to Antiochus and his insolence. *“He will magnify himself above every god.”* while Antiochus ‘magnified himself’ 8:11, yet he did not magnify himself above every god. He tried to impose Greek worship upon the Jews. II Thess. 2:4 speaks of the man Of lawlessness *‘who opposes and exalts himself against every so called god or object of worship.’* *“He shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods.”* II Thess. 2:4 *“proclaiming himself to be God.”* The same type of thing is said of the beast of Rev.13:5 *The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words”* etc. The inference is that the blasphemy will be unique.

“He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished” The indignation refers to God's indignation against His people. That must be accomplished for it is determined by God for the purification of His people. Not one of these things will happen apart from the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God.

11:37

The verse gives the impression that this king has an unnatural attitude. Firstly – “He shall give no heed to the gods of his fathers. “Most men honour their family traditions of worship. Some see this as an indication that the king is Jewish. ‘god of his fathers’ is a Jewish expression. RSV has ‘gods’ The term is the normal Elohim a plural word used usually of God or other gods. We note that the singular form, which is not usual, is used twice in the next few words. That probably means that we are to read ‘gods’ and not ‘God’ This was not true of Antiochus. He will also not give heed to “the one beloved by women” RSV is an interpretation. (Lit. we read, “will not regard the desire of women.”) This is interpreted in two ways. (1) He will not desire women. i.e. have no natural affection for mother, sister, wife etc. (certainly not Antiochus)

(2) He will not regard the object that women desire, There are then different ways of understanding the phrase.

(a) A reference to *Tammuz (Adonis)* whose cult was very popular in Syria among women. Ezek. 8:14.

(b) A reference to Messiah whom every Jewish woman hoped to bear. The king would then be opposed to both God and His Messiah.

(c) Thirdly we are told that “he will not give heed to any other god.” The reason is that he is entirely self centred, “He shall magnify himself above all.” Human pride and rebellion reaches its climax in this person.

11:38

“*He shall honour the god of fortresses instead of these.*” we have just been told that “he will not give heed to any god.” The statement is deliberately contradictory. The word fortress is used seven times in the Chapter. In each case it means a stronghold. The meaning is that he will put his wealth and energies into the war machine. If men will not have the true God then they in fact give worth to something else and that becomes god to them even if it be no god. He is a complete materialist who believes supremely in his own might. Some see a reference to Communism. No wonder “there will be wars to the end.”

11:39

“*He will deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god.*” The foreign god, has traditionally been taken as a reference to the god of fortresses. No one will be able to withstand his power. NEB Has “*He will garrison his strongest fortresses with aliens, the people of a foreign god.*” This may be the thought? Jobs for the boys, are part of his strategy.

11:40-45

INTRODUCTION. Here we are told of the end of this king. The events described have not

taken place in history to date. If the book is history it is wrong. Baldwin – quoting Cranfield, says, “Neither an exclusively historical nor an exclusively eschatological interpretation is satisfactory, and that we must allow for a double reference, a mingling of history and eschatological.” (Tyndale p.202). We see here the telescoping effect well recognised in prophetic writing.

11:40

“*At the time of the end. the king of the South shall attack.*” V. 35. The expression could clearly refer to the end of Antiochus and even then we acknowledge the “abomination of desolation” referred to by Jesus, carries us on into the destruction of Jerusalem in AD. 70 and perhaps further yet to the very end.

Here “*the time of the end*” clearly refers to events which have not yet taken place.

“*The king of the South*” The term previously had clear .. reference to Egypt. We can now say with certainty that it refers to forces from South of Palestine. Egypt is of course still a powerful political force and now head of the Arab block of Countries. The term may not be limited to Egypt alone.

“*The king of the North*” Has also been used previously in reference this time to Syria. As Syria has long since fallen as a world power, the term can simply mean a force from the area north of Palestine. Russia may well be included if we need to fit them in somewhere? Wood sees Russia intended and so finds the present Egyptian situation significant (1973). Young identifies the king of the North as the Antichrist. The king of the North and the king of the South will together attack the king who has exalted himself. “*He shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through*”. There is difficulty discerning who is referred to here. “He” could be the king of the South, the king of the North, or the king of V. 36, the latter seems most likely. “*chariots and horsemen*” – are generally understood figuratively.

11:41

“*The glorious land*” is Palestine. Leupold sees it as a symbol for the Church, but that hardly necessary. The victory is not total as some will escape. Moab no longer exists as a nation so an over-literal interpretation is to be avoided.

11:42–43

“*Egypt shall not escape*”. Egypt and perhaps the other areas mentioned are certainly involved with the king of the South. Their defeat is complete.

11:44

Tidings from East and North cause the king alarm and he responds with fury. Some of the Pre-Millennial scholars refer to Rev. 9:13–21 and 16:12 at this point. Wood admits that the passages are subject to other interpretations.

11:45

“*Palatial tents*” i.e. the official dwelling place. “*the seas (plural) are the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea*.” “*the glorious holy mountain*” is a reference to Mt. Zion i.e. Jerusalem. “*There he shall come to an end with none to help*.” Antiochus is again ruled out having died in Syria.

Chapter Twelve

**The Chapter division is unfortunate.
The narrative continues straight on.**

12:1

“*At that time*” i.e. during the events just described. Michael the great Prince of Israel will arise. He will not end the persecution: keep the people of God in it.

Jesus quoted this passage in Matt. 24:21,22. The fact that it is future is placed beyond doubt. The Scriptures consistently testify to a time of great trouble for the people of God. Deut. 4:30, Jer. 30:7f, Zech. 14, Rev. 6 – 19.

“*Every one whose name is written in the book of life*” There is again division at this

point. Some see reference to all Christians and others limit those intended to Israel. “Your people” are twice mentioned in the verse and this applies most naturally to Israel in the context of the book. The Tribulation period is certainly centred around Palestine and the Jews who have rejected Messiah. Israel is yet to be saved Rom. 11:25–26 “*when the number of the Gentiles come in*.” They will mourn when God pours out a Spirit of compassion upon them and “*they look upon him whom they have pierced*.” Zech. 12:10–12. (Some take this to be at the Cross, others at an end time). They will be refined as one refines silver. “*I will say, they are my people*”, Zech. 13:8–9.

Jesus did not seem to limit the time of trouble to the Jews exclusively and the Book of Revelation certainly gives a picture of every nation, tribe and tongue being affected by the pouring out of the wrath of God. Sin as personified in Babylon the mother of harlots who is drunk with the blood of the saints. What applies to the Jews with regard to deliverance and resurrection, applies to the Gentile Christian also. “The *Book*” – Exod. 32:32,33, Ps. 69:28, Rev. 13:8, 17:8, 20:15, 21:27.

12:2

The angel reveals to Daniel that there will be a resurrection of the dead. The liberal school claim that this is a second century concept. The O.T. consistently teaches such. Job. 19:25–26, Isaiah 26:19, Hos. 13:14, Ps. 16:9–10, Gen. 22:5, with Heb. 11:19. We are told “*some will awake to ever-lasting life and some to shame and contempt*.” The matter appears to be straight forward until we attempt to fit the various views to the text. Those of the A-Millennial school are generally content to see a resurrection of just and unjust together and go on to *V. 3*. The eternal state then follows the resurrection.

The Pre-Millennial school are divided. (1) Gaebelien denies that the verse refers to a physical resurrection at all. He claims that the restoration of Israel is intended. The motive is obvious. He teaches

that the O.T. Saints are to be raised at the same time as the Church is raptured, i.e. according to him, before the Tribulation. The verse seems to imply that both just and unjust rise together and his theory claims a later resurrection for the unjust. (2) Walvoord represents a second group. He attempts to solve the problem by placing a 1000 year gap between the resurrection of the just and the unjust and claims that the Church shall be raptured before the Tribulation and then the O.T. Saints with the unjust are raised at the end of the Millennial reign.

A further difficulty relates to the term “*many*” “*shall rise*.” The pre-Millennialists are now happy as many rise in one resurrection and many in another. The A-Millennialists explain on grammatical grounds that many in fact means all? – It sometimes does. eg. Isaiah 2:2,2, Is.52:14,15, Is. 53:11,12. In each instance – ‘many’ in one verse becomes ‘all’ in the other. The Hebrew word ‘all’ – *col* does not have a plural form and where a plural is required the word *rabbim* ‘many’ is used. But is this the case. here?

We see that the interpretation becomes extremely clouded by trying to view the matter through the lense of a certain view. We can say with certainty that the book of Daniel teaches a glorious resurrection to life for some and a resurrection to shame and contempt for others. The various Millennial views need to be considered when coming to Rev. 20, for one’s understanding of that passage largely determines one’s Millennial view. The views are not native to this passage and we will best understand the verse as Daniel was given to, if we forget them for the time.

Those who rise to life, having held on to their faith and those who have turned others to righteousness shall be transformed and made most glorious. “*The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.* Rom’. 8:18. “*For it does not yet appear what we shall*

be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him.” I John 3:2. The glory of the Saints is to be for ever and ever. Praise be to God.

12:4

The vision, given in words has ended. Suffering is inevitable but the true people of God shall be gloriously saved. Daniel is instructed to “*Shut up the words and seal the Book.*” Preserve it, authenticate it. A further implication is that it is to be kept from general knowledge. *Vs. 8 and 9* confirms this idea as the material is not yet relevant. Ultimately the seals will be removed and the history of the prophecy will unfold and the details clarified by the events at the time of the end. “*Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase.*” The phrase is most difficult LXX translates, “*until many are left behind and the earth is filled with unrighteousness.*” *some take it to mean that the book is to be sealed so that men may be able to come to the sure record and learn.* Young quotes Amos 8:12 “*And they shall wander from sea to sea and from the North even to the East, they shall run to and fro and seek the word of the Lord and not find it.*” The book is to be sealed. Many will search for truth and not find it.

12:5-6

Chapter 10:4 showed Daniel and his companions on the banks of the river Tigris. Two other beings, probably angels now appear. Daniel addresses the angel in linen who has given him the revelation. “*How long shall it be till the end of these wonders*”

12:7

“*The angel raised his hands in solemn oath.*” Gen. 14:22, Exod. 6:8, Ezek. 20:5 (usually the right hand). The two other beings may simply have been there to witness the oath as required in the law, Deut. 31:28, 19:15, II Cor. 13:1). He swore by “*Him who lives forever.*” i.e. God.

The answer then is in two parts. First we are told it will be for a time, two times and half a time. We have seen an identical expression in the Aramaic section

at 7:25. The phrase is understood in various ways.

- (1) Time = 1 year. Times = 2 years. 0.5 Time = 0.5 year, so 3.5 years. As mentioned previously this coincides with the 42 months of the book of Revelation. It is then regarded as the last 3.5 years of the 70 week period by most of the Pre-Millennial school.
- (2) When applied to Antiochus Epiphanes we saw that the time of tribulation was in fact less than 3.5 years. This leads to the interpretation that it is merely an indefinite but limited period of tribulation without specific reference to time.
- (3) Leupold propounds a variation of (2). Claiming that it is an indefinite period but that a time refers to increasing power of the Antichrist (or Antiochus in Chapter 7); 2 times – the height of his power, 0,5 a time, dwindling power before his end.

The second part of the answer is clear and yet no definite time is specified. The times and seasons are in the hands of the Father. *“When the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be accomplished.”* When the persecution of God’s people is finished and their power spent, when men’s hearts fail them for fear, then Divine intervention will come (Luke 12:25–28) and these things accomplished.

12:8–9

Daniel was bewildered and did not understand. *“Only after the event can a prophetic word be seen to be fulfilled. It does not supply information from which a programme can be constructed, for that is not its purpose.”* (Baldwin, Tyndale p.208).

12:10

“The time of trial and tribulation will result in a purification of the wise. They will understand. The wicked however will be revealed by their wickedness and will not have understanding.” The N.T. teaches that understanding of God’s mind and

purpose is only by the Holy Spirit, I Cor. 2:14ff. *“The wicked shall do wickedly”* the judgment is expanded in Rev. 22:10–12 a fearful pronouncement. We see that suffering is never meaningless. It purges, cleanses and refines. It also separates the cross.

12:11–12

The angel refers again to the question of *V. 6 and V. 8* – *“How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?”* When the burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up.

- (1) Some refer this back to Antiochus Epiphanes and see it referring to that era alone.
- (2) Keil and Young refer it to Antiochus but then see the numbers 1,290 and 1,335 as symbolic of the total persecution of God’s people extending from Antiochus to the end of time.
- (3) Pre-Millennialists generally see the 1,290 days as referring to the last 3.5 years of the 70 sevens, and refer it to the tribulation period under Antichrist. 30 days of 12 months for 3.5 years = 1,260 days, there are 30 days to account for. It is suggested that it will take this long for Christ to judge the nations after he returns and puts an end to the Tribulation Matt. 25:31–46, judgement is cited???

At the end of the 1,290 days there seems to yet be a period of 45 days and then at the end of the 1,335 days (1,290+45) the final blessing will be enjoyed.

The numbers are enigmatic. Throughout the book we have found difficulty fitting numbers exactly into history. They indicate periods that are limited in duration by God and whether they be intended literally or symbolically give hope to those facing despair and tribulation. It is necessary to endure to the end. Those who are wise will discern God’s intention when those times come upon us and so they will persevere.

12:13

Daniel is instructed to go his way. He shall

12:13 cont.

die and yet have a part in the resurrection. He shall stand among the wise, in his allotted place in that day. persecuted, scattered abroad, yet purified and ultimately there is victory and glory for the people of God. *“Fear not little flock, it is the Father’s good will to give you the Kingdom.”*

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ADDITIONAL NOTES ON INTERPRETATION

See also Introduction to Chapter Two, pp. 19,20.

Chapter 11 is particularly enlightening as to the way we should approach the interpretation of prophesy. Note the following:

1. To read the Chapter from Daniel's perspective one would assume that there is to be one king of the North and one king of the South. Many kings are in fact intended as history has revealed. History is telescoped by the prophetic vision.

Similarly Antiochus can prefigure Titus antichrist. Undoubtedly Antiochus is chosen for such detailed prophecy as he typifies evil persons to come. Evil follows the same course whether it be Antiochus or Hitler or Titus or the antichrist. There is one Antichrist but there are many there is one man of lawlessness but there are many, (I John 2:18).

2. The clear predictions and exact fulfilments of Chapter eleven serves to highlight the vague and enigmatic prophecy in Chapter nine of the seventy sevens. It is not that God cannot make things clear, rather, He chooses not to do so. To recognise this will save us a lot of wild speculation.
3. Daniel would not have understood the prophecies of Chapter eleven as we now do. It seems that God does not generally intend that details relating to time and circumstances should be conveyed by prophecy. 'In the fulness of time', Gal:4:4, when God is ready then the events that He has chosen to reveal in prophecy come to be. Only after the event can the prophecy be seen as having been fulfilled. The overall details presented in prophecy are vague and yet the outlines of God's purposes and plan are quite clear. Those who live in times of fulfilment should then be able to

discern the outworking of God's prophetic word and are encouraged to persevere and not to despair for God is clearly Sovereign and is working out His purposes.

4. Numbers and time references are in the same way deliberately vague. They are given so that the people of God may anticipate the outworking of prophecy. They are yet vague so that we may not avoid unpleasant events that God deems needful for us. Nor are we then permitted to become complacent for we are called to live in hope and by faith.
 - (i) 70 years of exile before return to Babylon. Dates used to calculate give 66 yrs., 71 yrs., 49 yrs. See 9:2.
 - (ii) Chapter eleven: A few days – 11 yrs.
 - (iii) 1,290 days: see on 12:11–12.
5. Exegesis of Chapter nine highlights the deficiencies of English translations. A translator cannot easily convey multiple possibilities. Use a number of translations and try to understand why they differ.
6. The total prophetic picture may be represented as a child's building block with different scenes on each side. The various prophetic views tend to look at one side and not see beyond that. We need to try to look at each side to form a complete picture. The truth of God is like a multi faceted diamond. Each facet flashes brilliantly but only seen together can the whole be appreciated fully.

NOTES