

# DANIEL

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## G. Chapter 7

1. Daniel received dream visions in the first year of king Belshazzar, who began his co-regency with his father Nabonidus in 553 or 550 B.C. So this is before the events of chapters 5 and 6 and about fifty years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2.

2. In his visions, Daniel saw the four winds of heaven whipping up the sea, and out of the sea came four different kinds of beasts. These beasts are said in v. 17 to represent four earthly *kings*, but as v. 23 elaborates, the beasts represent the four earthly *kingdoms* ruled by those kings. Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 also involved four kingdoms, and recall that in the chiasmic structure of the Aramaic section (2:4b-7:28) chapter 7 corresponds to chapter 2.

3. What Daniel saw was different symbolic depictions of the same four kingdoms that were symbolized in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, namely the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires. They are portrayed in a way that emphasizes their beastly, fearsome, and destructive natures.

a. The first beast is a creature like a lion with eagles' wings. This is widely recognized as a reference to Babylonia. The winged-lion was a familiar image in Babylonian art and obviously represents a swift and powerful predator. Nebuchadnezzar is compared to a lion in Jer. 4:7 and 50:17, and the Babylonian king, nation, and armies are compared to eagles in a number of places in Scripture (Jer. 4:13, 48:40, 49:22; Ezek. 17:3; Hab. 1:8; and Lam. 4:19).

(1) As Daniel was looking its wings were plucked off, which suggests a lessening of its capability. This occurred under Nabonidus and Belshazzar and even before.

(2) The beast also was made to stand upright and given a man's mind. This is a reversal of what was done to Nebuchadnezzar; he had a man's mind taken from him and was reduced to an animal-like state. This may symbolize the nation's weakening, a reduction in its ferocity, which is inherent in becoming more like a human and less like wild animal.

b. The second beast was like a bear. It was raised up on one side and had three ribs between its teeth. It was told, "Arise, devour much flesh." This is a reference to the Medo-Persian Empire.

(1) Bears are often associated in Scripture with lions as fierce and dangerous predators. This is confirmed by the three ribs between its teeth.

(2) The fact one side of the beast was higher than the other probably is a reference to the asymmetry in the Medo-Persian Empire, the fact God granted dominance to the Persian side of that alliance. Just as the larger of two horns in 8:3 represents Persian dominance in the Medo-Persian Empire, so the higher side of the bear represents Persian dominance.

(3) The statement "Arise, devour much flesh" refers to God's authorization of Medo-Persian success. Though no empire arises apart from his active will or permission, Scripture specifically identifies the Persian king Cyrus as God's chosen instrument (Isa. 44:28, 45:1).

c. The third beast was like a leopard with four wings of a bird on its back and four heads. Daniel notes that dominion was given to it, again pointing to the sovereignty of God. This is a reference to the Grecian Empire.

(1) Leopards are known as swift animals (Hab. 1:8), and one with four wings would be especially speedy. Alexander the Great conquered a huge amount of territory with unprecedented speed. He established a vast Grecian empire in only ten years (334-324 B.C.).

(2) The beast's four heads may symbolize its mobility, its ability to move quickly in any direction. This would point to the vastness of the kingdom. Possibly the four heads symbolize the four Greek generals who assumed control of separate parts of the empire upon Alexander's death.

d. The fourth beast is not likened to any known animal. It is described as terrifying, dreadful, and exceedingly strong. The same word "strong" was applied to the fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:40, 42). This beast has iron teeth, which is reminiscent of the iron of the fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and it breaks things in pieces just as the fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was said to do (same word). These verbal links associate the fourth beast with Nebuchadnezzar's fourth kingdom, which is the Roman Empire.

(1) The fourth beast is said repeatedly (vv. 7, 19, and 23) to be different from all the rest. I believe it is different not only in the degree of its might and self-willed destructiveness (suggested by v. 7) but also because it is the only one of the kingdoms that coexists with the opposing kingdom of God. As indicated in chapter 2, the chapter that corresponds with chapter 7 in the chiasmic structure of the Aramaic section, the kingdom of God arrived in the days of the kings of the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire.

(a) All prior earthly kingdoms operated in a different spiritual environment, in a world in which the eternal kingdom of God had not yet been inaugurated, had not yet invaded the present. The Roman Empire, on the other hand,

asserted its power, sought its worldly ends, in the presence of and in conflict with the divine kingdom.

(b) Whereas the fourth beast most immediately represents the historical Roman Empire, I think that through that representation it serves as a type, as a general representation of earthly kingdoms operating in contrast to and conflict with the inaugurated kingdom of God, the kingdom that ultimately spells the end of all such worldly rule. The Roman Empire is the last kingdom depicted because, as the first one that coexists with God's kingdom, it typifies all worldly rule in opposition to God's kingdom. In other words, the fourth beast is the Roman Empire, but on another level it is all earthly kingdoms that share Rome's prideful sense of sovereignty in the face of the divine kingdom's presence. Such earthly kingdoms are the Roman Empire in a figurative sense; they are latter-day manifestations of that empire's nature and spirit.

(2) The fourth beast has ten horns, which we are told (v. 24) represent ten kings that shall arise out of the fourth kingdom.

(a) The number "ten" is often used to express completeness,<sup>1</sup> perhaps stemming from the fact ten is the full number of our fingers. The number seems to be used symbolically in 1:20 ("ten times better" meaning completely or thoroughly better). So the ten kings probably represent the full but unspecified number of kings that will "arise out of" the Roman Empire prior to the coming of the little horn, the final, distinctive king. It is a way of indicating that the timing of the little horn's arrival is determined by God.

(b) Rulers or kings would qualify as "arising out of" the literal, historical Roman Empire if they arose from within that empire itself or arose from kingdoms or nations spawned by the fall of that empire. They would qualify as "arising out of" the figurative sense of the Roman Empire if they arose from within a nation or kingdom that shared Rome's prideful sense of sovereignty in the face of the divine kingdom's presence. That leaves the door open for rulers today to qualify.

(c) So from the historical Roman Empire until the coming of the little horn, the final, distinctive king, there will be a complete but unspecified number of rulers. Those rulers will arise from the Roman Empire in its literal and figurative senses. They will arise from the *literal* Roman Empire either directly during the days of that empire or indirectly from kingdoms or nations spawned by the fall of that empire. They will arise from the *figurative* Roman Empire in that they will arise from kingdoms or nations that express the nature of the literal empire vis-à-vis God's kingdom.

e. When the full number of predecessors has arisen from the Roman Empire, a final, distinctive king will arise from that empire (he arises *after* them – v. 24). In other words, his coming is subject to God's timing; he will not arise before God permits him to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Marvin H. Pope, "Number, Numbering, Numbers," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. G. A. Buttrick; Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 3:565-66.

(1) This little horn is said in v. 24 to be different from the other rulers that arose out of the fourth beast. It is depicted in v. 8 with eyes and a mouth speaking great things. The eyes may symbolize his superior awareness or intelligence, and the "great things" he speaks are identified in v. 25 as attacks on God. He declares open war on the Almighty. His arrogance is evident in his intent "to change the times and the law" (v. 25). As 2:21 indicates, only God changes "the times and seasons," meaning only he controls the course of history. The "law" refers to God's will and directives, which no man has authority to change.

(2) Verse 20 says the little horn appeared greater than its companions, and we are told in several verses (vv. 8, 20, 24) that he puts down a number of other kings, the number three perhaps being symbolic, that also arose out of the fourth beast. This is indicative of his power, superiority, or aggressiveness. He makes war on the saints and prevails over them for a limited period of time (v. 21, 25).

(3) Daniel is told in v. 23 that the fourth kingdom shall devour the whole earth, trample it down, and break it to pieces. I think this refers to the latter-day expression of the fourth kingdom in the rule of the little horn. It will be a worldwide, violent, and anti-Christian empire. (If not, then it is a hyperbolic reference to the relative power and wanton destructiveness of the literal Roman Empire.)

(4) The fourth beast, the Roman Empire, as it is manifested in the God-opposing reign of the little horn, is destroyed completely at the final judgment when the heavenly books are opened (vv. 10-11, 21-22, 26). There will be no more incarnations of it. The earthly kingdoms that preceded the coming of God's kingdom, the first three beasts of the vision, had earlier had their dominion taken away. The statement in v. 12 that their "lives" were prolonged for a season and a time (a predetermined time) is simply a way of indicating that they were relatively less culpable than the fourth beast that acted in the face of the divine kingdom.

(5) This judgment comes when the little horn is making war and prevailing over the saints (vv. 21-22, 25-26). At the time of that judgment, the saints shall be given, shall enter into, the consummated kingdom of God (vv. 26-27), the final eternal state.

(6) In association with this vision of divine judgment, Daniel sees one "like a son of man," a picture of humanness, but who comes with the clouds of heaven as God is said to do, a picture of divinity. This is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is given by God the Father an eternal and universal kingdom. It is this kingdom that is consummated, that comes to full expression, in conjunction with the final judgment and is inherited by the saints (vv. 22, 26-27).

f. With many commentators (e.g., Keil, Young, Archer, Ferguson, Miller, Steinmann), I am convinced this little horn is the person known in the New Testament as the man of lawlessness or Antichrist.

(1) In 2 Thess. 2:1-12 Paul explicitly rebuts the claim that the Second Coming referred to in 1 Thess. 4:13-5:3 had already occurred by reminding them of what he previously had taught them, namely that Jesus will not return until the rebellion and the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, is revealed. Since that had not occurred, the claim that Jesus had already returned was false.

(2) Paul says this person will exalt himself over any claimed deity or object of worship. In this he is, symbolically speaking, taking a seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. According to 2 Thess. 2:8, he will be on the scene at the time of Christ's return. Leon Morris states in "Antichrist" in *New Bible Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (p. 49): "Paul does not use the term 'antichrist', but the 'man of lawlessness' of whom he writes in 2 Thess. 2:3ff. clearly refers to the same being."

(3) John tells his readers in 1 Jn. 2:18 that as they had heard that Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. They had been taught about the coming of Antichrist, just as Paul had taught the Thessalonians about his coming. I believe that is the same figure referred to in Revelation 13 as the beast rising out of the sea. He is a Satan-inspired ruler of a powerful, worldwide, and violently anti-Christian empire who draws people from God through deception.

(4) John says that *even now*, before the coming of the Antichrist they had heard about, that climactic opponent of God, many antichrists (plural) have come. John is referring to the false teachers who were threatening those to whom he was writing. They are "antichrists" in the sense they share the spirit of the Antichrist (4:3), that spirit that opposes God and his Christ. This is evident from their denial of Jesus as the Christ (2:22; 2 Jn. 7). In saying this, John is not denying the future coming of *the* Antichrist. As George Ladd states, "We may conclude that the spirit of antichrist manifests itself everywhere in heretical, schismatic teachers, but will be climactically embodied in a single evil person at the end of the age."<sup>2</sup>

4. At the end of the vision's interpretation, Daniel is greatly troubled and rendered pale. Tremper Longman comments (p. 191), "Though it ends well from the perspective of the godly, it does paint a picture of continued and difficult oppression. The divine victory does not come easily, but through a cosmic struggle." Daniel kept the matter in his heart meaning that he did not for a time reveal it to anyone.

## H. Chapter 8

1. A couple of years after the dream visions of chapter 7, Daniel saw another vision. Depending on when one dates the beginning of Belshazzar's co-regency, this vision was given in 551/550 B.C. or 548/547 B.C. It is about a decade before the fall of Babylon to the Medes and Persians. In this vision, Daniel was at the Ulai canal which ran near the city of Susa, a city that would later become the winter capital of the Persian Empire.

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<sup>2</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 662.

2. Daniel sees standing on the bank of the canal a ram with two large horns, one of which was higher than the other. It charged westward, northward, and southward and became great, overpowering all opposition. As the angel Gabriel reveals to him in v. 20, the two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. That means that this ram represented the Medo-Persian Empire, the longer horn representing the dominant Persian element of that kingdom. This kingdom dominated the Near East for about two centuries.

3. While Daniel was contemplating the two-horned ram, he saw a male goat with a large horn between its eyes racing across the earth from west to east. This goat overpowered the ram and became exceedingly great, but while the goat was in its prime its great horn was broken and four large horns arose in its place. Gabriel explains in vv. 21-22 that the goat represents the kingdom of Greece (as embodied in its king) and that the great horn represents its first king. The four horns that arise in place of that great king represent four kingdoms that arise from the first king's empire.

a. This is a clear prophecy of the amazingly swift conquests of Alexander the Great. He began to engage the Persians militarily in 334 B.C., and by 331 B.C. he had gained control of the Persian Empire. This ultimately led to the widespread adoption of Greek culture throughout the Empire.

b. Following Alexander's death at a young age in 323 B.C., his kingdom was divided among four of his generals. Ptolemy I gained Egypt, and Seleucus I gained Syria and Mesopotamia. For some years there was contention between them for control of Palestine. The Ptolemies succeeded in controlling Palestine until 198 B.C., at which time it fell into the hands of the Seleucid rulers.

4. In the vision, a horn that began small arises out of one of the four horns. Steinmann translates vv. 9-12 as follows (p. 392, see also, 395-397):

Then from one of them came a single horn that began small, but it became very large toward the south and the east and the beautiful [land]. It magnified itself against the army of heaven and made some of the army and some of the stars fall to earth, and it trampled them. It magnified itself against the Prince of the army, from whom the continual sacrifice was taken, and the place of his sanctuary was thrown down. The army will be given [to it] together with the continual sacrifice during the transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground. It will succeed in doing this.

a. The "beautiful" or "glorious" land is a reference to Israel (Ezek. 20:6, 15). The traditional translation "*host* of heaven" is rendered "*army* of heaven" by Steinmann (p. 396) and NET. If Steinmann is correct in thinking that heaven is here (as in 4:26) a circumlocution for God, the phrase means "army of God" and probably is a reference to Israel, known elsewhere as the Lord's army or hosts (Ex. 7:4, 12:41).

b. This king tramples the people of Israel and magnifies himself against the "Prince of the army," probably meaning God himself, preventing his sacrifices and attacking his sanctuary.

5. Gabriel explains (vv. 22-23) that this horn represents a bold king who will arise from one of the four kingdoms that arose out of the great king's empire. He adds in vv. 24-25 that this king will be powerful and crafty and will bring destruction on the people of God. He will have an exalted view of himself and will even rise up against God (the Prince of princes), but he will be defeated by God.

a. This is widely recognized as a prophecy of Antiochus IV, who in 175 B.C. usurped the Seleucid throne following the death of his brother Seleucus IV. He assumed the surname Epiphanes, which is Greek for "divine manifestation."

(1) As most commentators agree, the statements in 8:17, 19 that the vision is "for the time of the end" means that its emphasis or focus is on the time period addressed at the end of the vision, the 2,300 evenings and mornings of oppression by the horn that precede the restoration of the sanctuary (8:14).<sup>3</sup> This is confirmed by the fact Daniel's vision is called "the vision of the mornings and evenings" in 8:26. In other words, in this context the vision is "for the time of the end" not in the sense it refers to the absolute end that will occur at the return of Christ but in the sense it refers mainly to what occurs at the end of the vision.

(2) In the oft quoted words of C. F. Keil, "Time of the end' is the general prophetic expression for the time which, as the period of fulfillment, lies at the end of the existing prophetic horizon – in the present case the time of Antiochus."

b. Notice that this horn is associated with the third kingdom, the Grecian kingdom, whereas the little horn of chapter 7 was associated with the fourth and final kingdom, the Roman Empire, which I suggested functions as a type. There are a number of other differences in the statements about the two horns that support distinguishing them (see, e.g., Steinmann, 154; Young, 276-279), including that the dominion that is taken from the little horn of chapter 7 is given to the saints of the Most High (7:27).

c. From 198-165/164 B.C. Palestine was under Seleucid control. In 175 B.C. Antiochus IV Epiphanes began to rule. In response to bribes, he appointed as high priest men who were favorable to the Hellenization of Palestine. In 169 B.C., while escorted by the second of these appointments, Menelaus (Menahem), Antiochus IV plundered the temple taking "the golden altar, the lampstand . . . the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain" (1 Macc. 1:21-22).

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<sup>3</sup> Most commentators believe the 2,300 evenings and mornings refer to 2,300 evening and morning sacrifices. These would take place over 1,150 days, which figure symbolizes the relatively short time of the temple's desecration.

d. In 168 B.C. Roman power thwarted his designs on Egypt and forced him to withdraw in humiliation. On his return, he took harsh vengeance against Jerusalem for an attempt to unseat Menelaus.

(1) According to 1 Maccabees 1:29-33, a Jewish work dating from the late second century B.C.:

Two years [after plundering the temple] the king sent to the cities of Judah a chief collector of tribute, and he came to Jerusalem with a large force. Deceitfully he spoke peaceable words to them, and they believed him; but he suddenly fell upon the city, dealt it a severe blow, and destroyed many people of Israel. He plundered the city, burned it with fire, and tore down its houses and its surrounding walls. And they took captive the women and children, and seized the cattle. Then they fortified the city of David with a great strong wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel.

(2) Everett Ferguson writes in *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 406:

The walls of Jerusalem were broken down, a new citadel (the Acra) was erected to dominate the temple area, and a garrison was stationed there converting the city into a military settlement. Menelaus and the Jewish Hellenizers collaborated with the military settlers in modifying the temple service into the worship of the Semitic "Lord of Heaven" (*Baal Shamayim*), who was identified with Zeus.

According to Jewish sources Antiochus IV in 168 or 167 B.C. issued decrees prohibiting the practice of the Jewish religion: the Scriptures were to be destroyed, the Sabbath and festivals were no longer to be observed, the food laws were to be abolished, and circumcision was no longer to be practiced (1 Macc. 1:41-64). Moreover, at the end of 168/167 a smaller altar was erected on the top of the great altar of burnt offering, and as the supreme insult to Judaism swine were sacrificed on it.

e. This conduct sparked a successful Jewish revolt, which began in 166 B.C., known as the Maccabean Revolt (named for one of its prime figures, Judas Maccabeus).

6. Daniel is told to close up the vision because it was not to be fulfilled for a long time. I think this speaks symbolically of safeguarding the vision so it would be available for generations in the distant future rather than to keeping it secret.

7. The vision of persecution of God's people is so powerful that Daniel is overcome and lies ill (or exhausted) for several days. He then rises and goes about his duties for the king. He continued to be appalled by the vision and acknowledges that he did not fully grasp it.

## I. Chapter 9

1. Daniel notes at the beginning of chapter 9 that in the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede (Cyrus the Great) he understood "in the scrolls," meaning those scrolls recognized as inspired by God, that God had revealed to the prophet Jeremiah that it would take seventy years for fulfilling the devastations of Jerusalem. In other words, the Jewish exile from the city would last that long. But it was not clear just when that clock would begin to run (there were three waves of exile: 605/604, 598/597, 587/586) or whether "seventy" was symbolic for the full time determined by God, it being the multiple of seven and ten, two numbers that symbolize completeness (Longman, 222).

a. The first year of Darius's reign probably refers to his first full regnal year as ruler of the defeated Babylonians, which year began in March 538. This was not long after Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den in chapter 6. Daniel has now been in Babylonia about 67 or 68 years and is probably eighty years old or a bit older.

b. The passages in Jeremiah to which Daniel is referring are Jer. 25:11-12 and 29:10. Both of these texts indicate that the end of the seventy years would be marked by God's punishment of Babylonia, and in light of Babylonia's recent fall to the Medes and Persians, Daniel perceived that the time for restoration, the running of the seventy years, was at hand. That is what motivates his prayer, which takes up the majority of the chapter.

2. In 9:3-19 Daniel recounts how he, with fasting and in sackcloth and ashes, emblems of repentance, poured out his heart to God on behalf of Israel. It is a powerful, penitent plea for God now to fulfill his promise to end the punishment by restoring his people to Jerusalem.

a. Daniel seems to have in mind Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the newly built temple, especially that portion recorded in 1 Ki. 8:46-51. Solomon prayed over four hundred years earlier:

<sup>46</sup> "If they sin against you--for there is no one who does not sin--and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, <sup>47</sup> yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,' <sup>48</sup> if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name, <sup>49</sup> then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause <sup>50</sup> and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may

have compassion on them<sup>51</sup> (for they are your people, and your heritage, which you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace).

b. Daniel follows the condition expressed in Solomon's request, even tracking in v. 5 some of Solomon's language: we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly. As they are a truly penitent people, God need not delay his promised extension of mercy.

c. Just as is done in Lamentations, Daniel connects their present suffering to God's righteous judgment against them for their persistent rebellion. He prays in vv. 11-12:

<sup>11</sup> All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. <sup>12</sup> He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem.

d. Verses 16-19 are an appeal to God's mercy that he not delay in delivering them from their captivity, that he again look with favor on Jerusalem and on his destroyed sanctuary. Not long thereafter Cyrus would issue his decree permitting the Jews to return (Ezra 1:1-4).

3. Daniel 9:20-23 reports that the angel Gabriel, appearing as a man, came to Daniel while Daniel was praying in a state of extreme weariness or exhaustion, probably associated with his fasting. (This seems preferable to the translation that Gabriel came to him in swift flight – see NAS, NET, Goldingay, 228, and Steinmann, 444). Gabriel informs Daniel that because Daniel is greatly loved he has come to give him wisdom and understanding by delivering to him a message that went out when Daniel began praying.

4. The message delivered by Gabriel in vv. 24-27 is widely recognized as one of the most difficult texts in the book and even in the entire Old Testament. I offer my understanding being well aware there are other possible takes on the text. This translation, which is a composite from various standard translations and scholarly commentators, will make it easier to follow my comments:

<sup>24</sup> Seventy sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy [One]. <sup>25</sup> Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of the Anointed One, the ruler, there will be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens. It will have been rebuilt [with] plaza and moat, and in distressing times. <sup>26</sup> Then after the sixty-two sevens, the Anointed One will be cut off and have nothing. The

people of the coming ruler will destroy the city and the sanctuary; its end will be like a flood. And to the end there will be war; desolations are decreed.<sup>27</sup> He will confirm a covenant for the many [during] one seven. In the middle of the seven, he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease. And on the wing of abominations [comes] one who makes desolate until the decreed end is poured out on the one being desolated.

a. Because of God's great love for Daniel, which he was prompted to express by Daniel's tremendous prayer of contrition, God is giving him a vision of the future of the Jewish nation, the Jewish people as centered around the holy city of Jerusalem (9:24), that goes beyond the return from exile referred to by Jeremiah. Jim McGuiggan states (p. 150): "God is saying to Daniel: 'Yes, I know 70 years were decreed and are now fulfilled, but Daniel, I have another decree. It is one which carries within it the outline of my completed work in regard to your nation.'"

b. The message to Daniel indicates, consistent with the visions of chapters 2 and 7, that God's kingdom in the person of the Messiah, the great Davidic king, which kingdom is the full and true fulfillment for which they long, would not come at the time of their physical return from exile but only after a much longer time than the time they had spent in exile (seventy **sevens** instead of seventy **years**). Israel's return from exile could be thought of as being tied tightly to the coming of the Messiah, one like Moses, who would lead this new "exodus." But the Messiah, the ultimate answer to their (and the nations') need, was still the rise of two kingdoms away.

c. Through Messiah's coming, God will finally, effectively, and ultimately deal with transgression and sin and atone for iniquity; he will bring in everlasting righteousness, seal both vision and prophecy, in the sense of certifying their authenticity through fulfillment of their messages, and anoint the Most Holy [One] (9:24).

d. In v. 25, Gabriel says that the sixty-nine sevens that precede the coming of the Messiah, the ruler/prince/leader, in the climactic seventieth seven divide into two groups or periods: a period of seven sevens and then a period of sixty-two sevens.

(1) A number of English versions translate the verse in keeping with the uninspired accents of the MT and thus start a new sentence or clause after the reference to seven sevens (RSV, NEB, NRSV, REB, ESV). The effect is that the anointed one is said to come after seven sevens, and the following sixty-two sevens refer to a time after his coming. This seems quite unlikely given that v. 26 specifies that the anointed one is "cut off" *after* the sixty-two sevens.

(2) Most English versions, however, have the anointed one, the Messiah, the ruler, coming after the combined periods of seven sevens and sixty-two sevens. This is in keeping with the ancient Greek versions. This not only makes more sense

of v. 26, but it is quite possible that the MT accentuation was a reaction against the messianic interpretation of the text by early Christians.<sup>4</sup>

(3) Before the Messiah, the ruler/prince/leader, comes, a period of seven sevens will run from the going out of the word to rebuild and restore Jerusalem until the city is actually rebuilt. Historically, this period of seven sevens ran from Cyrus's decree in 538 B.C. allowing the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem to 445/444 B.C. when Neh. 7:1-2 makes clear that the city had been rebuilt. This suggests that seven sevens is not meant as a literal forty-nine years but as a symbol for the shorter phase, the rebuilding of Jerusalem phase, of the sixty-nine sevens that precede the climactic coming of the Messiah in the seventieth seven.

(4) The rebuilding of Jerusalem will be followed by a much longer period of time, symbolized by sixty-two sevens, in which the rebuilt city will exist through troubled times. (Another possible understanding is that the rebuilding of the city during the seven sevens would be over much opposition.) This is a reference mainly to the tumult of the Hellenistic era, especially the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, pictured in the vision of chapter 8.

e. According to v. 26a, after this longer post-rebuilding phase of sixty-two sevens, that is, after the total of sixty-nine sevens (seven sevens + sixty-two sevens), the Messiah, the anointed one who is identified in v. 25 as a ruler/prince/leader, will be cut off. In the words of Isa. 53:8, he is "cut off from the land of the living." The following clause commonly is rendered "and have nothing," which means that when he is cut off he owns nothing and is completely abandoned by everyone. That obviously fits the Lord's death. However, the KJV, NKJV, footnotes in NIV and TNIV, and some modern scholars believe the clause should be translated "but not for himself," which would indicate that his death was vicarious, something endured on behalf of others.<sup>5</sup>

f. There is a textual issue regarding v. 26b. All the standard English translations accept the reading: the people of the coming ruler/prince/leader will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The alternate reading, noted by commentators and in the NET footnote, is: the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed with the coming ruler/prince/leader. Both readings speak of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple that occurred in association with the coming of Christ.

(1) In the context, the coming ruler/prince/leader is the coming anointed one, the Messiah, who in the preceding verse is specifically identified as the ruler/prince/leader. Under the standard reading of v. 26b, it is *his* people, his ethnic kin (Rom. 9:4-5), meaning the Jewish people, who are said to destroy the city and the sanctuary. They do so in the sense their infidelity and rejection of Christ brought God's judgment on the city, which he administers through the troops of Rome (Mat. 23:36-39/Lk. 13:34-35; Mat. 24:1-2/ Mk. 13:1-2/ Lk. 21:5-6; Lk. 19:41-44). Luke 19:41-44 states (ESV):

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<sup>4</sup> See Roger T. Beckwith, "Daniel 9 and the Date of Messiah's Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Computation," *Revue de Qumrân* 40 (1981): 521-42.

<sup>5</sup> See Peter J. Gentry, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus," *SBJT* 14.1 (2010), 34-35, 37.

<sup>41</sup> And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side <sup>44</sup> and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

(2) In *The Jewish Wars* Josephus places the blame for the destruction of Jerusalem on the Jewish zealots who brought down the wrath of Rome. In doing so, he illustrates how Jews rather than Romans can be seen as the cause of the destruction, despite the fact the Romans did the actual destroying. So it is a perfectly understandable concept.

(3) Under the alternate reading, the statement is that Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed "*with* the coming ruler/prince/leader," meaning simply that their destruction is associated with his coming in some unspecified way. We know that his coming resulted in that destruction because he was rejected by the leaders and majority of the Jewish people.

g. According to v. 26c, the city's end will come with the destructiveness of a flood. More specifically, it will come by means of war pursuant to desolations decreed by God.

h. Verse 27a says that "he," meaning the Messiah, will "make" or "confirm" a covenant for many *during* one "seven," meaning during the seventieth seven, the final seven of the prophecy.

(1) Though translations typically state he will make or confirm a covenant "*for* one week," the word "for" is supplied; it is not in the Hebrew text. The point is not the duration of the covenant but the time when the covenant is made or confirmed – during the final, climactic seven of the prophecy. So I think Steinmann is correct in supplying "during" rather than "for."

(2) If "*make* a covenant" is the correct translation (per ASV, NAS, RSV, NRSV, ESV), it refers to the new covenant of Mat. 26:28 and Jer. 31:31. If "*confirm* a covenant" is correct, then it refers to Christ's confirming God's faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham by fulfilling the promise of blessing to all nations (e.g., Rom. 15:8; Gal. 3:7-29) and his faithfulness to his covenant with David (e.g., Psalm 89) by fulfilling the promise of an eternal dynasty.

i. Verse 27b indicates that in the midst of the last seven, the climactic seventieth seven, the Messiah will put an end to sacrifice and offering. Verse 26 made clear that the Messiah would be cut off (put to death) after the sixty-ninth seven, meaning sometime in the seventieth seven. Christ's crucifixion was the true sacrifice that effectively

put an end to the sacrifices and offerings under the Mosaic law by rendering them illegitimate in God's sight.

j. Verse 27c can be translated: And on the wing of abominations [comes] one who makes desolate until the decreed end is poured out on the *one being desolated* (see KJV, NKJV, ASV, and the translations of Young, Goldingay, and Gentry).

(1) The "wing of abominations" is the abomination of desolation to which Jesus referred in Mat. 24:15/Mk. 13:14, which Lk. 21:20 explains refers to pagan armies surrounding Jerusalem. "Wing" brings to mind swiftness, and the phrase seems to refer to the attacking power of the pagan Roman legions surrounding Jerusalem. With that attacking power comes one who, as God's agent, is bringing desolation on the city, and he will do so until what has been decreed has been fully poured out. As Goldingay expresses the meaning (p. 263): "Devastation will continue to overwhelm desolate Jerusalem until what God has decreed is exhausted." This occurred, of course, with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

(2) Sinclair Ferguson remarks:

If this is the correct interpretation, it is not too difficult to see what it was that heaven was so anxious to communicate to Daniel, its representative on earth. It was right that he should long to see the people delivered from captivity; it was right that he should long to see Jerusalem rebuilt and the temple worship reinstated. Yet the Lord wanted Daniel to see beyond these things to what they foreshadowed, however painful that might be. God's ultimate purpose was not a temple made with hands and a holy place entered but once a year. His Son was the place in which men were to approach God; His sacrifice was the one which would bring forgiveness. Then if men still clung to the shadows and symbols of the old order, rejecting what they symbolized, there was only one terrible prospect: judgment and destruction of the most terrible kind.<sup>6</sup>

J. Chapter 10 (including 11:1)

1. Daniel 10:1-11:1 is Daniel's vision of a divine man that introduces the revelation that is given to Daniel in 11:2-45. This vision occurs on the twenty-fourth day of the first month of the third year of Cyrus king of Persia (vv. 1, 4), which translates to April 23, 536 B.C. (Steinmann, 482). Daniel 10:1 says this divine message was true and that it related to a great conflict, which we will see involves both heaven and earth. Daniel understood at least the broad meaning of this word and vision, even if he did not know the meaning of every detail (12:8).

2. Daniel had been fasting and mourning for three weeks, during which time he was apparently praying for understanding (v. 12). As he was standing on the bank of the Tigris River, he saw a man whose description is quite similar to the description of God in

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<sup>6</sup> Sinclair Ferguson, *Daniel*, Mastering the Old Testament (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988), 203.

Ezek. 1:4-28 1 and the Lord Jesus in Rev. 1:13-16. Those who were with Daniel did not see the vision, but they obviously sensed something of the being's presence because they began trembling and ran away to hide. The vision was so awesome that Daniel became weak and his expression completely changed. When he heard the sound of this being's words, he fell flat on his face in a deep sleep.

3. Daniel is awakened by a hand touching him, which enables him to rise to his hands and knees with trembling. This being, who is not identified and need not be the same being described in vv. 5-6, tells Daniel that he is greatly loved and that he has been sent to speak to him. He instructs Daniel to stand up, which he does, again with trembling.

4. The being explains that he had been sent in response to Daniel's prayers when Daniel had first started his prayerful fast three weeks ago but had been detained by the "prince of the kingdom of Persia" until Michael, one of the chief princes, had come to help him.

a. The "prince of the kingdom of Persia" seems to refer to a demon, a fallen angel, who focused on resisting God's use of Persia in his unfolding plan of world history. He apparently perceived that the revelation to be delivered to Daniel was significant and thus battled to prevent it.

b. The fact the first angel was delayed by the prince of the kingdom of Persia until Michael came to help him does not mean that demons are a match for God's power. It means that God has a purpose for allowing certain battles to be waged between spiritual powers in the heavenly realms.

c. Michael, who in 10:13 is called "one of the chief princes," is mentioned two other times in Daniel (10:21, 12:1) and also in Jude 9 and Rev. 12:7. These references make clear that he is a powerful spiritual being who plays an important leadership role in God's heavenly army. In Jude 9 he is identified as an archangel. As a result of Michael's help, the messenger angel was a needless surplus (v. 13b – "so I was left over" in the sense of being no longer needed so as to be able to come to Daniel – see Lucas, 259).

d. The angel explains in v. 14 that the message he is to deliver to Daniel relates to some of what is in store for his people in the future.

5. In vv. 15-17 Daniel turns his face to the ground and is silent. An angel, in the appearance of a man, touches his lips which gives him the strength to speak. He tells the angel that the vision he had seen, presumably the awesome vision of vv. 5-6, had so affected him that he is unable to carry on a conversation.

6. In vv. 18-19 the angel again strengthens him, and Daniel asks him to speak. In 10:20 the angel tells Daniel that he will be returning to the fight against the prince of Persia, the fight from which he had been freed by Michael's help, and that when he leaves that battle he will then need to engage the prince of Greece (see RSV, NRSV; Steinmann, 488, 494). In other words, there will be a demonic power analogous to the prince of Persia

that will work to thwart God's purposes for Greece as that nation rises to the fore in God's unfolding plan of world history.

7. The angel says in v. 21a that before he returns to the battle he will reveal to Daniel what is contained in the Book of Truth, which apparently contains the course of history as recorded by God in his foreknowledge. The angel says in Dan. 10:21b that he and the archangel Michael, which possibly includes the angelic forces under Michael's command, are the only angels engaging these particular demonic powers. He says in 11:1 that in the first year of Darius the Mede, which would be the year that Darius/Cyrus issued the decree permitting the Jewish captives to return, he had stood up to support and strengthen Michael. Presumably the heavenly battle with the prince of Persia began in earnest at that time.

#### K. Chapter 11 (from 11:2)

1. In 11:2 the angel tells Daniel that he will now reveal the truth to him. He informs him that three more kings will arise in Persia before a fourth, wealthy king. Recall from 10:1 that the vision is given in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia (536 B.C.). The three kings who followed Cyrus were Cambyses (530-522 B.C.), Gaumata (Pseudo-Bardiya/Pseudo-Smerdis; 522 B.C.), and Darius Hystaspes (522-486 B.C.) The fourth king, Xerxes (486-465 B.C.), who is called Ahasuerus in Esther, was very rich.

2. The last clause of v. 2 literally reads: "he will arouse everyone, the kingdom of Greece." Most English translations supply "against" to yield "he will arouse everyone [against] the kingdom of Greece." Steinmann argues that the more probable meaning is "he will arouse everyone, [especially] the kingdom of Greece." This was fulfilled in Xerxes who incited his people to join his army and invade Greece. The Greek city-states of that time repelled his invasion by forming a coalition, the effect of which was to arouse or awaken the Greeks to the potential of their being a unified force. This unity was realized just over a century later under Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great.

3. The revelation jumps from the mention of Xerxes' arousing the *kingdom of Greece* in v. 2 to the mighty *king of Greece* in vv. 3-4, Alexander the Great. It ignores the kings that ruled Persia after Xerxes and prior to Alexander because the movement is dictated by the mention of Greece, a catchword that triggers the next reference. That the prophecy relates to Alexander is clear from the description in v. 4. As soon as he conquered a vast territory in only a decade, Alexander died at the age of thirty-two and his kingdom was divided among four of his generals (Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy) rather than his descendants.

4. It is agreed by all that 11:5-35 is a description of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms that were fragments of Alexander's empire. The detail of these prophecies is so amazing that skeptics claim they must have been recorded after the fact, but God revealed this history to Daniel centuries before it happened. (The following depends largely on Steinmann, 520-532.)

a. King of the south refers to the Ptolemaic rulers, and king of the north refers to the Seleucid rulers. Verse 5 describes how the Seleucus I fled to Egypt in 316 B.C. when he was attacked by Antigonos, another Greek general, and was made a general by Ptolemy I. After Ptolemy and Seleucus defeated Antigonos in 312 B.C. in Gaza, Seleucus returned to Babylon. After Antigonos's death in 301 B.C., Seleucus's kingdom came to exceed that of Ptolemy.

b. Verse 6 describes a peace treaty between Ptolemy II and Antiochus II that was entered into around 250 B.C. It involved a marriage alliance between Ptolemy II's daughter Berenice and Antiochus II, which required Antiochus II to leave his first wife, Laodice. Berenice's son was to become the next Seleucid ruler. However, four years later Antiochus II took back his wife Laodice. She apparently poisoned Antiochus II, had Berenice and her son murdered to insure her son's succession to the Seleucid throne (as Seleucus II), and had many of Berenice's attendants from Egypt murdered. That same year Berenice's father (Ptolemy II) died. This is all predicted in v. 6.

c. Verses 7-9 describe the retaliation by Berenice's brother Ptolemy III against the Seleucids. He had a successful campaign during which he executed Laodice and recovered the Egyptian idols that had been taken from Egypt in 525 B.C. by the Persian king Cambyses. Ptolemy III was unable to consolidate his control over the Seleucid territory because he had to return to Egypt to deal with a rebellion, which allowed Seleucus II to reestablish his authority. In 242 B.C. Seleucus II then made an unsuccessful attempt to invade Egypt.

d. Verse 10 describes the campaign of Antiochus III in Syria and Palestine against Ptolemy IV in 219-218 B.C. He regained territory his father had lost and pushed the battle all the way to an unidentified stronghold of the Egyptians.

e. Verses 11-13 describe the response of Ptolemy IV in 217 B.C. to the successful campaign of Antiochus III.

(1) He fought against Antiochus, and though Antiochus raised a huge army, that army was given into Ptolemy's hand. Ptolemy regained control of Palestine and southern Syria, but rather than press his advantage chose to make peace with Antiochus.

(2) So despite killing nearly twenty thousand of Antiochus's troops and regaining some territory, he did not prevail in the sense Antiochus would attack again some years later (204 B.C.) and ultimately (198 B.C.) remove forever southern Syria and Palestine from Ptolemaic control. Ptolemy returned to Egypt where the second-century B.C. historian Polybius says he gave himself up to a life of debauchery, thus fulfilling the reference in v. 12 to his heart being exalted.

f. Verses 14-19 refer to the subsequent conflict with Antiochus III.

(1) It seems from v. 14 that, in conjunction with Antiochus's initially successful assault in 204 B.C., some Jews joined in violent resistance to Ptolemaic rule, but that Seleucid victory was short-lived. The Egyptian general Scopas drove Antiochus back until 200 B.C. when Scopas was defeated in a decisive battle at Paneas (Caesarea Philippi in the N.T.). Scopas retreated to Sidon, where Antiochus forced his surrender in 198 B.C. after besieging the city. This led to "permanent" Seleucid control of Palestine, the beautiful land.

(2) Since Rome's power was rising in the west, Antiochus did not invade Egypt. Instead, as prophesied in v. 17, he entered into a marriage alliance by giving his daughter Cleopatra (not *the* Cleopatra) to be the wife of Ptolemy V. He apparently was hoping she would help him destroy the Ptolemaic kingdom from within, but that scheme was thwarted because Cleopatra turned out to be steadfastly loyal to her husband.

(3) Verses 18-19 describe how Antiochus subsequently turned his military desires westward until the Romans and Greeks defeated him at Thermopylae in 191 B.C. and the Roman general Lucius Cornelius Scipio drove him eastward and defeated him at the Battle of Magnesia in 190. In 188 B.C. Antiochus was forced to accept a treaty in which he became a Roman vassal and was forced to send his son Antiochus IV to Rome as a hostage. In 187 B.C. he was killed by a local population when he attempted to pillage a temple of Zeus/Bel to secure the funds necessary to pay his tribute to Rome.

g. Verse 20 refers to the reign of Seleucus IV the successor of Antiochus III. He sent his finance minister, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem to loot the temple, but he was prevented from doing so. Seleucus IV died in 175 B.C. under mysterious circumstances, it being thought he was poisoned by Helidorus.

h. Antiochus IV was returning to Syria from years of captivity in Rome when his brother Seleucus IV died. Antiochus had been released in exchange for Seleucus IV's elder son, Demetrius, who was the rightful heir to the throne. Another nephew, an infant also named Antiochus, was next in line for the throne after Demetrius. On his way back to Syria, Antiochus IV convinced Eumenes, the king of Pergamum, to support his bid to become coregent with his infant nephew, apparently claiming it was necessary to guard the nephew's rule against potential usurpers. When young Antiochus died or was murdered in 170 B.C., Antiochus IV ruled alone. So as prophesied in v. 21, the throne was not given to him in rightful course; he seized it by intrigue or deceit.

i. Verses 22-24 seem to be a general characterization of Antiochus's reign. He will defeat military opponents, depose a high priest ("a prince of a covenant"), make alliances he has no intention of keeping, and develop his power from a small initial base of support. He also will plunder the rich parts of his realm and spread that wealth to his supporters in an unprecedented manner. All of this fits what is known of Antiochus IV. The last sentence of v. 24 turns the prophecy to Antiochus's designs on Egypt, but God will allow him to succeed only for a time.

j. Verses 25-27 prophesy about the conflict between Ptolemy VI and Antiochus IV. Two of Ptolemy's advisors encouraged him to take Palestine back from Seleucid control, but Antiochus was told of Ptolemy's plan. He defeated Ptolemy in battle, captured him, and came to control most of Egypt. The exception was Alexandria where the leaders declared Ptolemy's younger brother Ptolemy VII to be king. Antiochus made an alliance with Ptolemy VI, setting him up as a puppet king in Memphis under the claim that he was the rightful king. Both Antiochus and Ptolemy were scheming to enhance their own power never intending to be bound by the pact they had made. But their schemes will be to no avail in that God determined an end for them contrary to what they had hoped to gain through their duplicity.

k. Verse 28 prophesies about Antiochus's return from this Egyptian campaign. It was fulfilled when he plundered the temple as told in 1 Macc. 1:20-28. Apparently his victory over the Egyptians (except Alexandria) encouraged him to express his hostility toward the Jews by taking valuables from their temple.

l. Verses 29-30 were fulfilled when Antiochus, two years later, launched another campaign against Egypt, where Ptolemy VI had become a joint ruler with his brother Ptolemy VII. This time, however, he was forced to withdraw in humiliation by a show of Roman power. (*Kittim* can be a general term referring to parts of the Mediterranean world that lay west of the Middle East [e.g., Rome]. LXX has "Romans.") On his return, Antiochus took harsh vengeance against Jerusalem for an attempt to unseat Menelaus, his handpicked high priest. He showed favor toward "those who forsake the covenant," meaning those who supported his Hellenizing agenda.

m. Verse 31 predicts Antiochus's assault on Jewish religious practices. To quote Everett Ferguson again (p. 406):

The walls of Jerusalem were broken down, a new citadel (the Acra) was erected to dominate the temple area, and a garrison was stationed there converting the city into a military settlement. Menelaus and the Jewish Hellenizers collaborated with the military settlers in modifying the temple service into the worship of the Semitic "Lord of Heaven" (*Baal Shamayim*), who was identified with Zeus.

According to Jewish sources Antiochus IV in 168 or 167 B.C. issued decrees prohibiting the practice of the Jewish religion: the Scriptures were to be destroyed, the Sabbath and festivals were no longer to be observed, the food laws were to be abolished, and circumcision was no longer to be practiced (1 Macc. 1:41-64). Moreover, at the end of 168/167 a smaller altar was erected on the top of the great altar of burnt offering, and as the supreme insult to Judaism swine were sacrificed on it.

n. Verses 32-35 predict the resistance to Antiochus by those faithful to God. Those with Daniel's kind of wisdom about God will enlighten and influence others but will also suffer persecution. In their hardship they will receive a little help, probably

referring to the encouragement of those joining the resistance – it being "little help" perhaps in contrast to the greater help God would later provide – but it is revealed that many at that time will be insincere in their affiliation with them. The purpose of this persecution of the wise, those who see correctly how they are to relate to God, is the refinement and purification of their faith so that they may be ready for the ultimate end, which still awaits the appointed time that is beyond their time of suffering.

o. With the early church fathers and many modern commentators (Young, Archer, Ferguson, Miller, Steinmann; see also Longman), I think the focus in vv. 36-45 shifts to the end of history, to the time of Antichrist, the final climactic opponent of God. Admittedly there are no clear indications of this shift, only hints, but that may be a way of suggesting that Antichrist will be a kind of Antiochus, a kind of king of the north, on steroids. The ambiguous hints of a shift include:

(1) The end of v. 35 says the purpose of the suffering by the wise under Antiochus is that they will be purified until the end that God has appointed for a future time. The meaning of the phrase "the time of the end" depends on the time frame or temporal horizon of the particular prophecy in question. In other words, it need not refer to the end of history at the return of Christ, but it can refer to that time. Its meaning must be determined by the context, which is not always easy (Steinmann, 409, 538-539). The phrase is used three other times in this particular revelation (11:40, 12:4, 12:9), and since its uses in 12:4 and 12:9 follow the reference to the resurrection of the dead at the final judgment in 12:1-3, it seems to encompass the end of history.

(2) The reference in 11:36 to "*the* king" is unique. No Hellenistic king prior to 11:36 is referred to simply as "the king." There is always some further identification.

(3) These hints assume greater weight in light of the fact a number of the prophecies in vv. 36-45 cannot be said to have been fulfilled by Antiochus IV. Though he clearly had delusions of grandeur, there is no indication that Antiochus exalted and magnified himself over every god and paid no attention to the gods of his father or to any other gods. On the contrary, Antiochus was known for his devotion to Greek gods in general. He honored them on coins and with festivals, probably erected a statue of Zeus in Jerusalem and ordered sacrifices to be offered to it, and promoted the worship of Dionysius in Jerusalem. The prophecies of vv. 40-45 also were not fulfilled by him, even granting their symbolic nature.

p. According to vv. 36-39, this ruler exalts himself over every so-called god and blasphemes God Almighty. He makes a god of military power and spends on it lavishly. It is by this "foreign god" of military might, something his ancestors did not worship, that he deals with the strongest opponents. Those who support him are given benefits and brought into the fold. He will be allowed to succeed until God's time to take him out.

q. In vv. 40-45, he engages in a struggle with a rival power and overcomes him. He flows into other countries like water and comes into the "beautiful" or "glorious" land. Steinmann remarks (p. 545):

This power struggle will affect God's people. "The beautiful land" (11:41) is a metaphor for God's people, the Christian church, the new Israel, residents of the "Jerusalem above" (Gal 4:26; see also Heb 12:22). Many will "stumble" (Dan 11:41). This verb was used earlier in Daniel 11 to refer to believers who were persecuted even to the point of martyrdom (see the third textual note on 11:14). Here these Christian believers will be willing to suffer death rather than fall away from the faith or the visible church because of the king's actions. However, the king will spare enemies of the Gospel. "Edom, Moab, and the chief part of the Ammonites" (11:41) are metaphors for the theological enemies of Christ who contribute to the persecution of God's people.

r. The ruler receives some kind of news that alarms him, and then he goes on a spree of destructive fury. He centers his attention in the beautiful land, symbolized by him pitching his palatial tents "between the sea(s) and the glorious holy mountain," which may symbolize his zeal against the church. At that point, he shall be taken out by God, or in Paul's words in 2 Thess. 2:8, "the Lord Jesus will kill [him] with the breath of his mouth and bring [him] to nothing by the appearance of his coming."

## L. Chapter 12

1. During this time of great distress for the people of God,<sup>7</sup> the days when Antichrist is on the scene, the archangel Michael will arise. He, and presumably the heavenly army he commands, will deliver the saints in that they will be God's agents in bringing history to a close and executing the final judgment (see, e.g., Lk. 9:26; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7-8; Jude 14-15; Rev. 14:14-20). Indeed, 1 Thess. 4:16 mentions the presence of an archangel at that time.

2. The end of v. 1 refers to those whose names are written in "the book," meaning God's book of life (see Mal. 3:16-17; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 17:18, 20:12, 20:15, 21:27). Verse 2 is a description of the general resurrection of the dead that occurs in association with Christ's return and the consummation of the kingdom. The wise, meaning the faithful, are resurrected to an eternal life of glory. In Jesus' words in Mat. 13:43, "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father." Those who were not faithful will be resurrected to shame and everlasting contempt; they will be condemned.

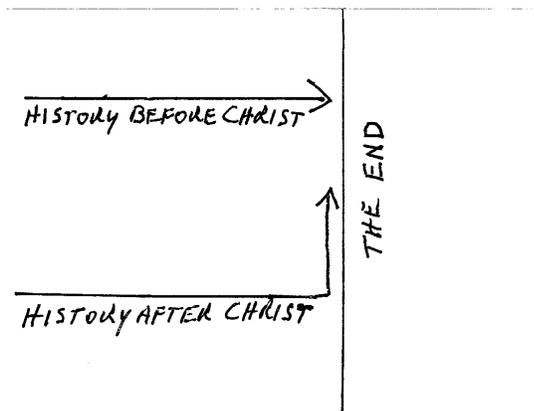
3. Daniel is told in v. 4 to seal the book until the time of the end. As in 8:26, I think this speaks symbolically of safeguarding the vision so it would be available for generations in the distant future rather than to keeping it secret.

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<sup>7</sup> The depiction of the distress as "such as never has been since there was a nation" is a proverbial way of expressing its utter horror. As McGuiggan notes (p. 184), "It is used in Ezekiel 5:8-9 of the 586 B.C. destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus just used it of the 70 A.D. conflict. Both can't be literally correct."

(a) The Apostle John, on the other hand, is told in Rev. 22:10 *not* to seal up the words of the prophecy of the book because the time is near. This was a way of emphasizing the significance of Christ's coming. The last days, the time of the end, had already begun through Christ's ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension. Life from that time has been lived on the brink of the final, ultimate end, the consummation of the kingdom at his return. However long God in his purposes extends the time since Christ, Christ's coming is ever at our door. The command not to seal the prophecy is a symbolic way of communicating that fact.

(b) I have on a number of occasions used this (poorly drawn) diagram to help communicate the idea. It's from J. H. Newman, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century pastor, and was cited in the commentaries on 1 John by F. F. Bruce, I. Howard Marshall, and Gary Burge.



4. In the time until the end, many will dash about for the purpose of increasing knowledge (see NIV, TNIV). The similarity to Amos 8:12 seems to imply a vain effort to obtain knowledge. Young paraphrases the meaning (p. 258), "Preserve the book until the end, for it contains the truth as to the future. Many shall go to and fro in search of knowledge, but they shall not find it." As Longman says (p. 285), "people will scurry about desperately trying to find knowledge in their own power, but will fail in their attempt." Knowledge of the future is only in the revelation of the Lord.

5. In verses 5-7 Daniel sees two figures, presumably angels, standing on opposite banks of a river.

a. Someone says to the man clothed in linen who was above the waters, which is probably the awesome being described in 10:5-6, "How long until the end of these astonishing things?" With Steinmann (p. 565), I think this refers to the astonishing things uttered by Antichrist against God that are mentioned in 11:36. It is a question about the length of Antichrist's rule and subjugation of the saints.

b. The awesome figure, perhaps a manifestation of God the Son, raises both hands to heaven and swears that it would be for a time, times, and half a time,

and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people, the subjugation of the saints, comes to an end all these things will be finished. The return of Christ and the associated resurrection and consummation shall occur when Antichrist is on the scene (2 Thess. 2:8).

c. Notice that "time, times, and half a time" matches the time during which the saints are said in 7:25 to be given into the hand of the little horn, whom I take to be Antichrist. It seems to refer to a time of suffering that is cut short by God; the expected progression is terminated (Baldwin, 146), which indicates God's protection.<sup>8</sup> It also is widely taken as a way of saying "three-and-a-half years" (1 time [sg.] + two times [pl.] + one-half a time). "As half of the perfect number, seven, it denotes a short period of evil" (Lucas, 194). This same expression is used in Rev. 12:14, and various equivalents (42 months and 1,260 days) in Rev. 11:2-3, 12:6, 13:5, with the same general import.

6. Daniel's grasp of the vision is not as clear as he desires, so he asks the being for clarification regarding the last stage of these events (not "end"; see Young, 260 and Goldingay, 275, 281). He wants more information about the ending of the shattering of the power of the holy people. He is told simply to "Go," as that aspect of the revelation has been finalized (shut up and sealed), preserved for the time of the end. No further details would be provided in response to his specific inquiry.

7. The being then gives the "take home lesson" by referring back to the nearer coming persecution of Antiochus that was addressed in 11:31-35. This redirection is signaled by use in 12:10 of the language of 11:35 and by use in 12:11 of the language of 11:31. The crucial point about persecution of the people of God by worldly powers of any age (something with which Daniel was well acquainted) is that the wise, those who understand the greatness of God and his rule over history, will remain steadfast in their faith in the face of suffering and be blessed through their suffering as a result. The persecution will strengthen and benefit their faith, and that faith will be richly rewarded.

8. As God will be in control when Antiochus rages – he numbers the days of his power – and will bless those who wait on him through the full time of that struggle (1,335 days: the 1,290 days of the most severe persecution, symbolized by the removal of the sacrifice and the defiling of the temple, plus 45 days of lesser persecution before and/or after that peak), so he will bless the faithful through every persecution. Why the specific numbers 1,290 and 1,335 were used in the symbolism is a mystery.

a. Possibly they are alternate ways of representing three and a half years under different calendars, when allowance is made for the periodic insertion of months (intercalation) to bring those calendars in line with the true length of a solar year. Goldingay states (p. 310): "When allowance is made for intercalation, 1290 days can represent 3 ½ lunar years [citation omitted] or 3 ½ solar years [citation omitted]; 1335 days can also be reckoned to comprise 3 ½ solar years [citation omitted]."

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<sup>8</sup> This is the "cutting short" of Mat. 24:22 (Mk. 13:20) if, as I believe is the case, 24:22 refers back to the *age of distress* in Mat. 24:9-14 rather than to the specific episode of distress that was the fall of Jerusalem referred to in Mat. 24:15-21 (see my "A Sketch of Mat. 24:1-42").

b. As noted above, three and a half years (time, times, and half a time) and its various equivalents (42 months and 1,260 days) seem to symbolize a period of suffering that is cut short by God in his protection. If 1,290 and 1,335 are alternate ways of representing three and a half years, they are two symbols of God's providential protection through suffering, the juxtaposition of which serves to distinguish the time of total persecution from the time of intense persecution.

c. But recall that the time of Antiochus's persecution is symbolized in 8:14 as 2,300 evenings and mornings, which most commentators believe refers to 2,300 evening and morning sacrifices, which translates into 1,150 days. All these times are in the same ballpark of between three and four years, so maybe the symbolism lies more in the ballpark than in any specific time.

9. Daniel is told in the final verse to live his life faithfully until its end. He will rest, meaning he will die, and will arise to his allotted portion in the resurrection at the end of days.