

THE GOSPEL IN DANIEL

Robert J. Wieland



Preface

You usually leave your dessert to eat last, but let's begin with the good news first: you can understand the book of Daniel! Jesus told us to read it and He wouldn't promise that we could "understand" it if we couldn't (Matthew 24:15).

Yes, it is true that Daniel was told to "shut up the words, and seal the book." But being "shut up" and "sealed" was to last only until "the time of the end." Then would come a change: "knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). We are now living in that "time of the end."

What Jesus said means that God and all His holy angels want you to understand the message of this precious book. Worldwide, millions are now reading it. As never before in history the Bible has become "a lamp unto [our] feet, and a light unto [our] path" (Psalm 119:105).

In love to you, God gave it long ago. "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy

Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21, NKJV). Others through the ages have preserved it at the cost of sufferings and even martyrdoms. It's through the Bible that God speaks to human hearts today.

Daniel has survived attacks from those who doubt its inspiration. Modern discoveries of buried records in the Middle East confirm this book as written by the prophet when he lived in the Iraq of long ago. Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of the world, had something special to say about it. Concerning "Daniel the prophet," He said: "Whoso readeth, let him understand" (Matthew 24:15). No other book in the Bible did He single out in such a way.

Before you open the book, do something special: bow your heart before God and ask for His Holy Spirit to be your Teacher. "Behold, I will pour out My spirit unto you," He says, "I will make known My words unto you" (Proverbs 1:23). The Holy Spirit "shall teach you all things," and "guide you into all truth" (John 14:26; 16:13). "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find"

(Matthew 7:7). These promises must apply especially to Daniel.

But let's be careful. Some are "unlearned and unstable" and "wrest [it], as they do the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 1:20). "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20), that is, no one can dream up his own personal explanation of it. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" is the way (1 Corinthians 1:13). We shall have the help of the same angel to whom God commanded, "Gabriel, make this man [Daniel] to understand the vision" (Daniel 8:16). If God so wanted Daniel to understand, surely He will help us to understand.

There are "scholars" who believe Daniel was written by a novelist, not a true prophet. Miracles can't happen is the idea. No "prophet" in the 6th century B.C. could predict future events as Daniel did. Therefore, they insist, the book is a forgery from about the middle of the 2nd century before Christ. This unknown novelist made up these

stories about an imaginary man to whom he gave the invented name of "Daniel." Then he tried to make people think they were "prophecies."

But there are facts:

(1) The language used in Daniel is not that which a later writer would use; it is correct only for the time of a real Daniel in the 7th or 6th century B.C.

(2) Accurate historical details such as Belshazzar being the last king of Babylon could not have been known to a later writer of the 2nd century B.C. The author of Daniel proves that he actually lived in the time of the fall of Babylon and the beginning of the Medo-Persian Empire.

(3) If Daniel is a forgery, its author was guilty of a capital crime because he claimed to be speaking of visions which the Lord Himself had given him: "The prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, ... even that prophet

shall die" (Deuteronomy 18:20). Could Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, have been fooled into believing Daniel was a true prophet when he wasn't? He said he is "Daniel the prophet" (Matthew 24:15).

This book accepts Daniel as a truly inspired prophecy.

Because most readers will have the King James Version, we will use it in our study. Other versions may also be used sometimes to good advantage.

A brief note: we are not trying to blaze the way to some new discovery in history or theology. Our goal is to find the gospel in Daniel and open it so it makes sense all the way through to the ordinary reader. May our efforts bring you many happy and profitable hours.

*Robert J. Wieland
Meadow Vista, California*

Chapter 1

In the Palace of the King

Daniel 1:1-2: In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god: and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

Here we jump into the middle of an exciting time of national disaster. This was God's true people who have just been defeated in war, with captives carried off to Babylon! God had chosen them to be His special treasure on earth, to let their light shine so that all nations might learn the glorious news of His salvation for all people. But now comes this tragedy.

What a pity! Those people of the one true God should never have been conquered and carried as

captives to Babylon! What fun these heathen soldiers must have had laughing and mocking the religion of God's people! Although Jerusalem tried to defend herself, her cause was hopeless, for the Lord Himself "gave" King Jehoiakim and his people into Nebuchadnezzar's hand. "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalm 127:1). But those people didn't want the Lord to "keep" their city; they would trust their military might.

Repeated warnings by prophets sent of God to His people predicted this. Moses himself had said that if they should turn their backs on the commandments of God they would be carried captive into heathen lands (see Leviticus 26:33-35; Deuteronomy 28:64). Jeremiah, a later prophet, reminded Judah that if they had been faithful to God and kept the Sabbath day holy, Jerusalem would have stood impregnable forever as a glorious city (see Jeremiah 17:24-27; 2 Chronicles 36:20, 21). Elijah in King Jeroboam's day repeated the prophetic warning (1 Kings 14:15), as did Amos the prophet (Amos 5:27). Isaiah made it

clear 120 years before it happened that Jerusalem would be taken by the Babylonians. These were the very people to whom the foolish king Hezekiah had proudly displayed his royal treasures (Isaiah 39:6, 7). Because God's people would not heed the warnings of His prophets, He could do nothing else than back off, and give them up to the destruction that pagan nations would wreak upon them.

Parents must consider that it was because of the wickedness of king Manasseh, Hezekiah's improperly trained and unconverted son, that all this evil befell Judah. Manasseh led the whole nation so deeply into idolatry and paganism that they never were able to recover until after seventy years of exile in Babylon (see Jeremiah 15:4). Children become a blessing or curse to the world according as their parents train them.

Daniel 1:3-5: And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in

all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar's plan was to enrich the government of Babylon with the talents of these young men, as well as convert them gradually to the heathen religion of the Chaldeans. He was sure his pagan religion was the true one, for hadn't his gods defeated the great God of Israel?

These boys were likely in their late teens at this time, for they had already attained wisdom and skill "in knowledge and understanding." Consider them the computer gurus of that day.

Daniel 1:6, 7: Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs

gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

The Hebrew name Daniel signified "judge of God;" Hananiah, "gift of the Lord;" Mishael, "who is what God is;" and Azariah, "whom Jehovah helps." The Chaldean names given them honored various heathen deities. The Chaldeans hoped to cause these Jewish youth to forget their early training in the love and service of Jehovah, and to learn to worship the pagan idols.

Thank God that in the midst of the wickedness and apostasy in Judah and Jerusalem, there were a few homes where reverence for God was preserved! Though we do not know her name, Daniel's mother deserves great honor. Her boy, now far from home in the midst of a wicked and degraded court life, remained true to the right teachings of his mother. His courageous and firm stand for truth put heart into his three companions to be faithful also. Our world needs more parents

like Daniel's mother! And thank God, today He has some out there like her.

Daniel 1:8: But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Daniel recognized what the Apostle Paul many years later taught—that the human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. He knew that to defile it with improper food or drink is a sin against ourselves and against our Creator (see 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 10:31). His strength of character was the result of a decided purpose of heart. He knew how to say "No!" to temptation so definitely that the tempter had to flee from him. Daniel's remarkable clearness of mind and strength of body were the result of faithful adherence to right ways of eating and drinking. We too can enjoy the same blessings as we rule our appetites and passions instead of letting them rule us.

Daniel 1:9, 10: Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.

This little detail gives us a glimpse into the social context. There were others of "the children of Judah" in this same group who obviously did not adhere to the principles of temperance which were taught the people of God. They may even have ridiculed and persecuted Daniel because of his desire to be faithful, even in a foreign land. Even today the most bitter persecution a Christian can take is often from his own "brothers and sisters" supposed to share Christian fellowship with him. Ridicule is a lethal weapon of persecution.

Daniel 1:11-16: Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy

servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

The Hebrew word here translated "pulse" is the same as "seed" in Genesis 1:29. This "seed" was the Creator's original plan for man's food. "I have given you every herb bearing seed, ... and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat [food]." Daniel's diet thus included more than just one monotonous thing. It was also fruits, grains, nuts, and vegetables, and the wonderful drink which God has given us for our health—pure water, and unfermented fruit juices. These boys really had a continual picnic.

As Daniel expected, after ten days of this simple but nourishing diet, his health was excellent, and that of his companions also. They were able to study easily. It is just as true today that healthful diet and physical habits are an aid to mental and moral strength. Students in school don't have to follow the crowd. They can enjoy standing out different, and follow the youthful Daniel's example.

Daniel 1:17-21: As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his

realm. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

The character of Daniel is cited by the prophet Ezekiel as an example of the character that those who serve God in the last days of the world's history will have (14:20). Great events will be taking place in heaven and earth, which they must know how to understand if they are to be in tune with what God is doing in the earth. For this reason, His people today will live healthfully and temperately, as Daniel did in the king's palace.

The indulgence of appetite was the first great sin of the human race (see Genesis 3:6). The grace of Christ is much more abounding than all the allurements of our sinful nature which we have inherited by birth from the fallen Adam. Jesus was tempted more than we can be tempted when He fasted for forty days. His overcoming grace is given freely to all; now, let's receive the gift. Says our friend and brother the apostle Paul: "I follow after, ... forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are

before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. ... I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 3:13, 14; 4:13).

It's impossible to estimate the enormous suffering there is in the world due directly to unrestrained appetite. Everywhere you turn you see obesity, heart disease, lung cancer from smoking, cirrhosis of the liver from drinking, alcoholism; well, the plagues are endless. Jesus is already the Savior of the world (John 4:42), but He is helpless to save people who resist and reject His salvation that He gives them. We could weary you with endless statistics of suffering and premature death, so much of it unnecessary. And Jesus Christ is forced to have to watch it all, to see the needless tears, to sympathize with the needless pain, to share the often needless funeral grief. Says Isaiah: "In all their affliction He was afflicted. ... In His love and in His pity He redeemed them," because He has become one of us (63:9). He has taken upon Himself our fallen, sinful nature, as a member of our humanity. It's time for us to learn to

sympathize with Him in His sufferings that He feels for humanity.

Here's a passage that speaks of all the unnecessary sin there is in the world, but it can apply also to the unnecessary sickness and suffering: "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" (Ezekiel 18:23). You can hear the overtones of the wailing of God. He loves these people who are killing themselves! "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (33:11).

Look at the reward for temperance and self-control that we see in Daniel's book. He and his companions far excelled all the other students at the end of their three years' university training. Are you interested in further education? Here is something for you to notice.

God was preparing these youths to be witnesses for Him, for through them He would give knowledge of the gospel to all the world of their

day. It would be fantastic—hang on, the story comes later in our book.

Where are the youth of today who will follow the example of Daniel and his three companions, that God may fit them to be a blessing to the world?

Can we find the gospel in Daniel? Or is it all about "beasts" and world empires?

This first chapter packs a powerful gospel punch: here are four young men in university training where their scholarships provide them access to the elitist dining rooms or cafeterias in the empire's capital. They will be served the same gourmet bill of fare from the same kitchens that cater to royalty.

The delicacies on their table are the envy of wealthy Babylonians. The meats come from the fabled outreaches of the empire, the desserts are super mouthwatering. But Good News saved them from health disaster and muddled minds in a time

of crisis.

These four petition the authorities for a simple, low-fat, low-sugar vegetarian diet. With the hearty appetite that all teens have, these four "purpose" in their hearts to deny natural cravings for rich food and to choose the simple diet. They will not patronize the McDonalds, Burger Kings, pancake houses, or steak houses of their day. Their goal is not merely to live seven years longer and keep going to their Disney World; they want to keep their minds clear to comprehend the teaching of the Holy Spirit in an era of solemn significance.

We're in that kind of era today, on a world scale. It's great Good News that the same world Savior who blessed Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will give (not merely offer) you and me the victory over runaway appetite. The Holy Spirit will be your day-by-day Teacher; you won't be able to transgress without His first convicting and reminding you of truth. Now don't silence His voice, don't deny His loving reminders of sacred duty. "Purpose in your heart" to follow the Savior

in this His great Day of Atonement.

Chapter 2

What the Dream Tells Us Today

Daniel 2:1: And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

Daniel had finished his special three years of university education. Now the Lord opened the way for him to help those people in Babylon who did not know of His truth, or understand His character of love. He had chosen His people Israel to be missionaries to proclaim the gospel to their dark world, but they had failed Him. Now He is about to circumvent their unbelief in a fantastic way.

Daniel 2:2-4: Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king

his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

The king was proud of his empire, and his beautiful capital city, Babylon. He hoped it would remain forever. He knew very well, however, as all men know, that some day he must die. Then what would happen to his kingdom?

He was a pagan king, and knew nothing about the one true God of heaven. His only contact had been through God's unfaithful people, the Jews, whom Nebuchadnezzar had been able to conquer and take captive. Since he conquered the Jews, who could blame him for thinking that he was greater than their God?

The people of Israel had loved themselves more than others, and thought that they alone could be saved. Poor Nebuchadnezzar! In his paganism, he knew no better than to do many wrong things. But God could see that his heart was honest.

Although the king was well educated in the wisdom of the world, he did not know the wisdom of heaven. This strange dream made a deep impact on his heart. He could not even remember its details, but God was working to prepare a way to humble the philosophers of Babylon who professed to know true science. He gave Daniel an opportunity to open their minds to reality. Note the method God employed.

What the Babylonians called "higher education" was foolishness. Some of the "wise men" professed to talk with dead people. Some were "astrologers" who professed to read the future through the movements of the stars. It was their custom, when the king asked wisdom from them, to ask him many questions skillfully crafted in order to draw him out to learn what he was thinking. Then they would invent some answer, hopefully to satisfy him. This they tried to do now.

Daniel 2:5-13: The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye

will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof. The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is

not with flesh. For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

At last Nebuchadnezzar wakes up to these tricks. Sensing that some supernatural Being is trying to tell him something significant, he is tired after several days and nights without rest. He worries over the dream. He can't control his temper with his wise men. Have not these "wise men" professed to talk with "gods" who did not "dwell with human flesh?" And now they confess before the king that all they have is only the ordinary ignorance of human beings!

Now comes a battle between the education of the world and that which comes only from God. Here are the wisest men of the world in the kingdom of Babylon, educated in every possible branch of learning of their time. On the other side stands Daniel, a youth despised, coming from a people who are conquered slaves. But Daniel had

received the education and knowledge of God.

We cannot approve of the anger and cruelty which Nebuchadnezzar shows toward his professed "wise men." But we must remember that this is the anger of an autocrat who has been deceived by those whom he has trusted. And all the while, he is basically an honest man.

However, this terrible cruelty is an evidence of the truthfulness of the book of Daniel. Ancient historians such as Herodotus tell of Eastern rulers notorious for the barbarity of their punishments, especially the Assyrians and Persians. Dismemberment, tearing bodies apart, is portrayed in Assyrian bas-reliefs on stone, and is also described in the law codes of Babylonia and Assyria. The picture Daniel gives us is supported by history.

Note that these were pagan "wise men" who believed that God's "dwelling is not with flesh." In the end of time there will be only two basic religions in the world:

(1) That "faith of Jesus" which declares (as Scripture says) that in His incarnation the Son of God "was made in the likeness of men," that "God [sent] His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," that He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," that He "condemned sin in the flesh" by denying self all His life up to Gethsemane and even to His cross. (Philippians 2:5-8; Romans 8:3, 4; Hebrews 4:14; John 5:30, 6:38; Matthew 26:39)
And

(2) this belief of the pagan "wise men" of Babylon in a "god" who does not "dwell with flesh," that the Son of God did not "take" our fallen, sinful flesh upon Himself, but was cut off from DNA identity with the human race through some dogma of an Immaculate Conception, so He could not be "in all points tempted like as we are," thus removing from humanity our Savior from sin and substituting for us a savior in sin.

Daniel 2:14-18: Then Daniel answered with

counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Do not forget that Daniel has received the summa cum laude in the examination at the close of his three-year university course. He was enthusiastically listed as "ten times wiser" than the others; and yet he humbly seeks God for wisdom and asks his friends to pray with him and for him. True education does not allow anyone to be proud.

It was good that the king had apparently

forgotten about Daniel when he called his "wise men" to tell him what the dream was. Had he called him first, there would have been no opportunity to expose the empty pretensions of these "wise men." Daniel probably remembered the promise of David in Psalm 25:12-14: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." Perhaps he remembered the promise in Proverbs 3:25-26: "Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken." In severe crisis, he chose to believe the Good News in God's promises. He is one of the heroes listed in Hebrews 11 who "pleased God" because they believed what He said (vs. 6).

Daniel 2:19-23: Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changes the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise,

and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast made known unto us the king's matter.

Notice:

(1) Daniel's confidence that truly the Lord had revealed to him the dream of the king. He would not ask the king timidly whether this might be his dream or not. Instead he praises the Lord for revealing it to him. He risks everything on this faith.

(2) We are reminded that in our prayers to God we should praise Him for the accomplished fact of His goodness and mercy to us.

(3) We see how Daniel understood that this revelation came in response to the prayers of his

friends as well as his own. He did not take the honor to himself alone. The true Christian will not deprive others of the credit which belongs to them.

Note also how Daniel confesses that true wisdom comes only from the God of heaven. Magic and witchcraft are not its sources. Astrology deserves to be classed with "science falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20). These currently popular superstitions are modern examples of the ancient ignorance of the Babylonians of Daniel's day. Daniel is an up-to-date book!

Daniel 2:24-25: Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him: Destroy not the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

Thank God Daniel is magnanimous enough to ask to have the lives of the foolish "wise men" saved, although they do not deserve mercy. Daniel hopes that among them there might be found some willing to listen to truth and find salvation through the story of the king's dream. Their lives are saved because of Daniel, a servant of God: in the same way today God spares the lives of many wicked people because of the few righteous ones among them. (See Genesis 18:26-32 for an example of how God works even now.)

Daniel 2:26-30: The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; as for thee, O king, thy

thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

The dream given to Nebuchadnezzar reveals "what shall be in the latter days." It extends to our days. Daniel is not ancient history. It's more modern than tomorrow's TIME magazine.

As a servant of God, Daniel takes no credit to himself for his understanding. He gives it all to God. His motive: that the king also might learn to believe the God of truth. He makes certain at the very beginning of his lecture before what was probably a packed house that the thoughts of all who are listening might be directed not to himself but to the God of heaven. At last God has a youth whom He can trust!

Then Daniel goes on to tell the dream and then explain it, the king listening anxiously in confidence, obviously breathless with interest.

Daniel 2:31-35: Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Because Nebuchadnezzar is an idolater, he is at first pleased to see this image. But when he sees the image broken to pieces and blown away by a

hurricane, he is shocked. Is all his worship of images worthless?

As the feet of the image are of clay, so the foundation of worldly riches and worldly greatness is only dust. Its end: to be blown away.

We can imagine how fascinated the king is to hear this confident youth explain carefully the mysterious dream which he had forgotten. We can almost hear him exclaiming with excitement, "Yes, that's my dream! Thank you! Please go on; tell me what it means."

Daniel 2:36-38: This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

The king is patriotically proud as he realizes that his kingdom, "the glory of kingdoms," is represented by the head of gold. But Daniel quickly reminds him: all his wealth and authority and honor in which he rejoices, is not his because of his valor and skill at arms. It was given to him by the great King, the God of Heaven, in trust for the good of mankind. For the first time in his life, the king begins to realize that there is a "Savior of the world," a plan of salvation for the world; and he is called to serve that Savior as His agent for the good of the world. Great thoughts begin to illuminate his mind.

The First Great World Empire

The kingdom of Babylon was founded by Nimrod who apostatized against God in very early times (Genesis 10:8-10). In the time of Nebuchadnezzar it grew to glory, a superpower of wealth and power. In building Babylon, the capital city, Nebuchadnezzar had built the greatest metropolis the world had known up to that time.

The wonder of the ancient world, it was bigger than ordinary cities of that time, being about 10 miles in circumference. The Euphrates flowed through it. Massive walls surrounded the city. Huge brass gates guarded entrances by way of the river. Slaves kept gardens and magnificent palaces in pristine condition. Two palaces were built one on either side of the Euphrates, joined by a tunnel under the river to allow people to go back and forth. Saddam Hussein probably got his idea of numerous palaces in modern Iraq from Nebuchadnezzar's architectural exploits. Babylon said, "I shall be a lady forever. ... I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children" (Isaiah 47:7-8). This kingdom of Babylon was indeed the head of gold, the world's richest, ever. Let's not underestimate the driving force of the psychic drive of modern Iraqis; they hold memories of their history.

Daniel 2:39: "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth."

After ruling for forty-three years Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by kings who drove the empire downhill. The last was Belshazzar (see chapter 5). He was the co-ruler on the night when the Medes and Persians surrounded the city, found entrance through the river and captured the kingdom. Daniel was still living at that time, now a very old man.

The prophet Isaiah had clearly prophesied the fall of Babylon nearly two hundred years before. He was so precise in his prophetic foreknowledge that he mentioned the name of the second kingdom of the world, the Medes and the Persians (Isaiah 13:17-19). Further, in his prophecy he mentioned the name of the king, Cyrus, who would humiliate the proud city (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-3).

Babylon's end must come. Cyrus and his army surround the walls of the city to take it by force. The Babylonian soldiers and people inside are celebrating a holiday, something like our Christmas. The food stored within the city they

think is sufficient for twenty years, and there are ample gardens for growing more. There is no army that can break down walls so thick, nor destroy such gates of brass. But the prophecy says that Babylon shall be destroyed. In a way that those who defended the city could never understand, the word of the Lord is fulfilled completely. Cyrus, clever and brilliant militarily, having received news that on a certain day the city is to be given up to drunkenness and feasting, purposes to overthrow them while they are having great fun.

He turns aside the Euphrates river into a low place in the ground, to make a lake outside the city. As the waters slowly and silently subside, he and his soldiers stealthily creep under the gates of brass to enter the city at midnight, walking on the river bottom. Lo! they find the gateways leading up from the river into the city left open by drunken watchmen, just as the Lord has promised he should find them (Isaiah 45:1). Brandishing their swords and screaming, soldiers rush upon their drunken Babylonian victims. Tonight the Babylonian king Belshazzar is slain upon his throne together with

the rulers of his kingdom. The second empire, of silver, the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, now begins to rule the world.

Second Great World Kingdom

This is the breast and arms of silver. Even as silver is of less value than gold, so the kingdom of the Medes and Persians was not as wealthy as Babylon. But its first king, Cyrus, conquered the known world from the Aegean Sea to the borders of India.

They ruled for about two hundred years, beginning in 538 B.C. But the seeds of destruction were already sprouting within their kingdom. Their pride and cruelty, together with their drunkenness, conquered their own government. The Bible book of Esther details the moral lassitude of the empire. Now they must in turn be conquered by a small nation from the west, a nation of courage and vigor ruled by a king who was a mere youth. Although the Medes and Persians were wealthy and could afford a tremendous military, and although their

soldiers were many in number, they were overmastered by these few Greeks under Alexander the Great. The fall came in 331 B.C.

Alexander's soldiers spent a whole month gathering the spoils of the battle. Now the third world empire of the Greeks has begun to bear rule over all the earth. History has now passed from the breast and arms of silver to the thighs of brass of the image. Aside from Daniel, in no other book ever published is world history portrayed so clearly in so brief a manner.

The Third Great World Kingdom

After only a few brief years, Alexander's meteoric career came to its end. Although he had conquered the world, he could not rule himself. As is true of us all apart from a Savior, Alexander "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh,

fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:1-3). Alexander is a notable world exhibit of one who has the world of wealth and pleasure at his feet, but chooses to remain a slave to his passions.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:32). The enemy of Alexander was his own self; his weakness was his love of passion. Some times he had killed his own friends in drunken debauches. One day he encouraged twenty of his soldiers to drink themselves to death. History says he became ill after one of his drunken spells and died on June 13, 323 B.C. at the age of only 32. He tore down that which he himself had built up. Now comes the greatest of all world empires.

Daniel 2:40: And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

By 168 B.C. the Greeks were conquered by another nation, also small and courageous, who came from still further west. This was the kingdom of the Romans. Thus the kingdom has passed from the thighs of brass to the legs of iron, the Romans.

The Fourth Great World Kingdom

Each metal that follows becomes of less value, but of greater strength. Satan has been learning in each succeeding kingdom of world history how better to bind with his chains the souls of men. Rome was a stronger kingdom than any of those that went before it. Although the English historian Edward Gibbon did not believe the Bible, he unwittingly confirmed what Daniel says about Rome in the following words:

"The arms of the Roman Republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to

represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome."

Rome ruled over a larger section of the earth than any previous kingdom, conquering parts of Africa, Asia, Asia Minor, and Europe.

Daniel 2:41-42: And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

Rome itself, although the strongest of kingdoms, could not last forever. By the year 476 A.D. it was broken into different parts represented by the ten toes of the feet of the image which were iron and clay mixed together. Some of these portions still remain to this day, such as England, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland,

and Italy. (More will be said about them in chapter seven).

Daniel 2:43: And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

Rome would be the last kingdom to rule the entire world. Men have tried repeatedly to unite these portions of the old Roman Empire into one. They have thought that if Alexander could conquer the whole world, they could also. But all their efforts have been in vain. "They shall not cleave one to another" proves to us that the book of Daniel was written by the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

Every effort possible has been made in Europe to break this prophecy. From time to time, kingdoms have arisen retaining some of the strength of the old Roman Empire (the "iron" is still mixed with the "miry clay"), but the strong ones have never been able to conquer the weak ones permanently.

Charlemagne tried to resurrect the empire of Rome, and was even crowned emperor by the pope in Rome on Christmas day, 800 A.D. But his kingdom soon disintegrated. In the days of Luther, Charles V tried; he also failed, for the Muslims banging on the gates of Vienna continually distracted him. In the days of France's prosperity, Louis XIV proudly tried to unite Europe into one empire; he also failed. Napoleon almost succeeded after frightening all of Europe and even England, but in the end as he lay upon his death bed he is said to have cried out, "O God, you have been too strong for me!" These few words of the Holy Scriptures were stronger even than the arms of England: "they shall not cleave one to another.

"In our days various European rulers have tried to unite Europe under one government. Queen Victoria married her children and grandchildren among the various royal families of Europe, hoping if all the ruling families of Europe were related to one another, they would be one big happy family and would never think of war. But her plan gave

birth to a sad surprise: the first World War, 1914-1918. The Kaiser of Germany also was defeated.

Then the League of Nations was conceived for the purpose of uniting all nations of Europe into one peaceful organization. This plan ended in shameful failure; World War II followed soon after. Hitler and his armies carried fire and destruction to all parts of Europe. For a time he threatened England, which had never previously been conquered. The hearts of many brave people trembled. Some who read the Bible began to fear that perhaps, after all, this prophecy would prove to be a failure. But at tremendous sacrifice, the armies of Germany were thrown back, and Daniel's prophecy stood vindicated once again.

Finally in our day, while we are writing these words, the world is looking toward the United Nations as its last hope, or to the new "Roman empire," the United States. Under the dark shadows of terrorism and nuclear war, various governments of the world realize that future wars will wipe out all civilization; hence their earnest

desire to unite together. But the words of the prophet Daniel still say, "they shall not cleave one to another."

Not only do the nations of Europe find it impossible to unite together, it's also true of the nations of the Middle East, the Far East, and Africa. Even Muslim nations that profess to be united in a religious brotherhood disagree and fight among themselves. And Kwame Nkrumah's dream of a "United States of Africa" never came true.

Many believed that Russia would succeed where Hitler failed, and would unite the world under Communism. The pope and President Reagan put an end to that dream. The word of God cannot be broken. Like a rock rising out of the stormy waves of the ocean, that word has withstood the attacks of men and armies for well over two thousand years. Though all the kingdoms and all the armies of the world should try to prove the word of God false, they will only fail; "they shall not cleave one to another."

The Holy Spirit inspired this simple figure of "iron and clay." Not only is this constant disuniting process true in a military or political sense, it is also true of attempts to unite religion to the state. In the Dark Ages, popes attempted to unite the kingdoms of Europe to their church; the "dark" part of those Ages was the result—persecution was horrible.

God is the Author of liberty; He does not add His blessings to attempts to unite religion and the state, whether apostate Christianity tries to do it, or whether Islam tries. As we come close to the end, God wants every person to be free to decide according to his own heart whether he/she will conscientiously choose to unite with the Lord and serve Him in His kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is Next

All the kingdoms of the world must come to an end, "without hands." The second coming of the world's rightful Ruler ushers in God's everlasting kingdom. This is "He ... whose right it is" (Ezekiel

21:27).

No one else can sit upon the throne of a world empire. God gave this dream to king Nebuchadnezzar for this purpose: to turn our attention away from the vain hopes and councils of men, and that our faith should be established on the sure and certain hope of the word of God.

There is coming a government of peace with happiness and righteousness for all who submit to its rulership (Isaiah 9:6, 7).

Daniel 2:44, 45: And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the

interpretation thereof sure.

The establishment of this eternal kingdom will bring an end to sin. The signal for its establishment is Christ's success in leading a people to "overcome even as [He] also overcame" (Rev. 3:20). All human history for all past ages has been moving to this day. All who dwell upon the earth will see the establishment of this kingdom. Not only will the remnants of the empire of Rome be broken to pieces by this "stone cut out without hands." All nations upon the face of the earth will be included. In the end, there is nothing that will be left except that great stone which was cut out of the mountain "without hands." This will be the eternal kingdom of God.

When and how will this kingdom be established? This kingdom of glory was not established when Christ was here upon the earth, for He said it would come later (Matthew 26:29; Acts 1:6). Flesh and blood cannot inherit it (1 Corinthians 15:50). It will be established in the time when Jesus judges both the living and the

dead "at His appearing," when He comes the second time (2 Timothy 4:1). Then He will come in His own glory with the glory of His angels (Matthew 25:31-34).

Thus we see clearly that this stone "cut out without hands," which strikes the image upon the feet represents the second coming of Jesus Christ in power and glory. "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Corinthians 15:24).

When Jesus hung upon the cross crucified, one of two thieves crucified with Him pleaded, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Reader, will you also join in this prayer?

It is now that God is preparing the subjects of His coming kingdom. It is now that He sends the Holy Spirit to men and women everywhere, calling

them to consecrate all to Him, that He may rule over them as the king of Love. Jesus is the only King in all world history who has conquered, not by force of arms, but by the power of love. Millions would die for Him today.

Daniel 2:46-49: Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

We are happy to know that Daniel did not become proud after such honor. His early home

training when a child, the teachings of self-control and humility which his mother taught him, and his education in the knowledge of the King of heaven, all these preserved him from falling into vanity when he was elevated to a position of honor and responsibility so high above his fellows. What great Good News this is, that today as the Holy Spirit works in all the world He is training youth who will, like Daniel, endure such honor in humility.

Daniel's book lives on! And it continues to bear rich fruitage in hearts and lives changed by the much more abounding grace of Christ.

Chapter 3

Faithful Through the Fire

Daniel 3:1: Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

The king was so amazed when Daniel explained his first dream to him, as we read in Chapter 2, that he began to reverence God. But, unfortunately, he backslid as we say. His heart was not yet truly converted. Pride took over again, and he began to worship idols with even more zeal.

The king now determined that he should try to improve on the image which God has shown him in his dream. He was not content to be only the "head of gold." He didn't like the idea of any other empires to succeed his. Now he decided to make an image completely of gold to express the idea that his empire of Babylon should stand forever. In this way Nebuchadnezzar's pride led him to fight

against God.

The king's counselors agreed with him. Great patriotism! They wished the people to forget Daniel's interpretation of the dream. The lesson God taught the people was to be twisted in order to teach a lie. This was another chapter now in the story of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. But Daniel was still alive, with his three faithful companions. They doubtless met together often for prayer. We can be sure they prayed for God to step in and overrule for the good of the gospel. The Lord must not forsake the empire while they kept on praying!

The people of Babylon had never seen anything so magnificent as this new image all covered with gold. It is not necessary to assume that it was of solid gold—that would have been extremely expensive (although gold was plentiful in Babylonian times). The image could simply have been covered with gold leaf. Nor must we assume that the image itself was sixty "cubits" (about 18 meters) high. There may have been a tall pedestal

on which the image stood. Archaeologists think they have identified "the plain of Dura "with "Tulul Dura" some six miles south of where old Babylon stood in what is now modern Iraq.

Daniel 3:2-7: Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: and whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the

same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sack but, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

A "burning fiery furnace" like this was not an unusual punishment for criminals in Babylonian times. Jeremiah tells how two false prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah, were "roasted in the fire" by "the king of Babylon" (Jeremiah 29:22). The Code of Hammurabi provides for this punishment. As late as 1671-77, the French traveler Chardin saw two furnaces of fire in Persia kept burning for the punishment of shopkeepers who overcharged for food.

We may be sure that the angels of heaven were watching this contest. Through king Nebuchadnezzar, Satan was trying to overthrow the truth. The same battle is being fought in the world today. In the Holy Scriptures, Babylon is a symbol

of the confusion in the religious world of these last days, organized to oppose the truth by trying to force the consciences of people. These events will be repeated in various ways in the future, before God sets up His everlasting kingdom. We are all preparing to act a part in that great struggle.

Notice how king Nebuchadnezzar tried to strengthen his worship of idols by the law of the land. This again was "iron" mixing with "miry clay," the union of religion and the state. But no worship of God can be dictated by earthly law. Every individual must be free to worship God as his own conscience tells him is the right way.

Further, no one who worships God sincerely can harm his neighbor. Any kind of worship which is enforced by law inevitably becomes an evil thing, because God cannot accept such forced worship. Punishment is always threatened by authorities for those who refuse to obey. Thus, immediately, freedom of choice is taken away. God will accept only the free will worship of His creatures. Any forced worship therefore becomes a

kind of idolatry.

In this great crowd, only these three Hebrews appear to have understood this principle clearly. (Daniel, for some reason was absent, probably on some government business.) The three were required to come, because the king had called them. They obeyed as far as they could. But they knew that to bow down and worship the image would be to deny their loyalty to Christ. This they could not and would not do. (How do we know that to obey the king would mean disloyalty to Christ? Was He near by? Hang on—you'll meet Him in the story shortly.)

As soon as the Babylonian Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra struck up the bars of national anthem, everybody was to bow before the golden image. The plan of the king should work smoothly. But these three had planned their response in advance. Through a mature grasp of the principles of righteousness by faith, they knew that this confrontation would put the principles of God's government on trial. Amazing as it may seem,

these young men had a more mature understanding of the gospel than many have today: their concern or motivation was not with their own safety. They had graduated out of the egocentric class of "Christian experience" where our prayers are for our own salvation; they were concerned for the honor and integrity of Christ! They would have found it impossible to fake a supposed compliance while "their heart was not in it," to satisfy a sick "lukewarm" or Laodicean conscience. (Revelation 3:14-21) No way could they have knelt down to tie their shoe laces, for example. Their hearts were reconciled to God by the blood of Christ. Theirs was a "by faith" experience, which is why they belong in that lustrous list in Hebrews 11.

Daniel 3:8-12: Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: and whoso falleth

not down and worshipping, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Because these Chaldean teachers had been humiliated by the truth of God when Daniel revealed the king's dream, they were now jealous of these Hebrews. They could see that it was impossible to disprove the truth of the Hebrews' faith in the true God. Since the Chaldeans were dishonest cowards, they encouraged the king to make an intolerant law, that by this means they might rid the Babylonian empire of those who differed from them in faith.

Any religion that desires to lean upon worldly laws in order to support it shows that it is weak and false. Earthly rulers must give their subjects freedom in religious matters.

Daniel 3:13-18: Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hands, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Surely it takes courage to stand alone before a

crowd of people like this! Now the three stand face to face with death. Shall they compromise their faith? Shall they be afraid of the fiery furnace? Shall they fear the king's anger? Although they cannot in their hearts really worship the image, can they not appear to others to comply?

No. These men are not cowards. They know what is right, and they are not afraid to die for it. They have already considered what to do, and they have already prayed about it. They know that if God is God, He must be worshipped with the whole heart (Matthew 6:24). They remember the promise God made to the prophet Isaiah many years before: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isaiah 43:2). They do not tremble. While they are courteous and respectful, they answer the king firmly that they cannot and they will not worship his image.

Let us notice especially the good example of these three young men in showing respect and honor to the "powers that be." God's Word tells us

that we should be "subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). We should be "subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1).

But when the laws of men conflict with the law of God, then our duty is to obey God. When Peter was commanded by the Jewish council not to preach in the name of Jesus, he replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 4:19; 5:29). This is the stand the three Hebrews take on the plain of Dura. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have come to this meeting because they were called. They can show their willingness to obey the king as far as possible. But to fall down and worship his image, to deny what they know as truth, to defile their conscience before God, to transgress the clear commandment of God, in order to save their jobs, their wealth, their worldly honor, and their lives, to join Judas Iscariot in betraying the Son of God—

this they will not do.

They tell the king in a nice way, "There is no need to give us a second trial. We know what is right!"

Daniel 3:19-23: Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

It may surprise modern readers that an empire ruler could be so childishly immature in losing his temper. But remember: this was the age of pagan tyrants. The very fact that Nebuchadnezzar became so angry is proof that he was doing the wrong thing. Although he had subdued the whole world with his sword, he could not rule his own spirit. Even his face was changed, contorted to a demon-like image. It was foolish of him to heat the furnace hotter than usual, because this only served to make more evident the great power of the Lord to deliver His three servants. But again the dear Lord overruled; He takes notice of what happens on this earth!

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

God.

See how the wrath of man is made to praise the Lord! (See Psalm 76:10.) Someone stronger than the king takes charge of the situation. God's promises to His servants are faithfully fulfilled.

How did that heathen king know what the Son of God looked like? God's people in Old Testament times looked forward to the coming of Christ, while we look back to His first coming. Alike, we all see Him by faith. No one has ever been saved except by the power of Christ. The Hebrews had preached in Babylon of Christ, the Redeemer to come. The king remembered their teaching, and from their message recognized the Son of God when he saw Him.

Incidentally, they seem in no hurry to come out of the fire. God provides air conditioning where and when it is needed. They will be happy to stay there, if only they can walk and talk with Christ. To be with Him is sufficient reward for all the trials of earth! When we suffer for Him today, we

too may enjoy His presence with us in the same way (see John 15:18; Isaiah 63:9; James 1:2). You may think this is hard to believe. But you'll know it next time you are thrown into your "fiery furnace" for your faith in Christ; He'll make Himself preciously near to you as ordinarily you never know Him in times of peace.

Daniel 3:26-30: Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies,

that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

Now the very thing Nebuchadnezzar has tried to prevent takes place! All nations and tribes and languages quickly hear the story of God's power. What the Chaldean teachers did to try to prevent the preaching of the truth results only in giving greater publicity to the truth. Many people made their decisions that day to serve the God of heaven.

But not yet does Nebuchadnezzar really understand. He's a child in the heavenly kindergarten. Although he was right in making a public confession to exalt the God of heaven above all of the pagan gods, he had no right to try to force people to worship the God of heaven in this way.

Is it not encouraging how these three Hebrew boys had faith and courage? Their secret is this: when they were first brought to Babylon, they refused to compromise their faith in any little particular (see chapter 1). They knew that one compromise of evil leads to another downward step. Because of their faithfulness in enduring the smaller test, they became prepared to endure the greatest test. May God help us never to compromise in the first step with sin and with evil!

The book of Revelation unfolds to us the story of a similar test which some shall endure. There will be an "image of the beast" which will be set up on the earth, when all living upon the earth will be commanded to give to it either willing or unwilling worship by obedience to man-made religious laws. As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, death will be decreed for all who refuse to obey false religion. As it was on the plains of Dura, the vast majority will bow before the decrees of Satan. This test will come to you and me and to the entire world.

Who will choose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season"? (Hebrews 11:25, 26). Where are the Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abednegos of today who are now obeying the truth from their hearts? Where are those who obey God daily in the smaller tests that come in our home life, in our school life, and in business? Who will be able to stand in that decisive day which is yet to come?

For those who have truly bowed their knees before the great God of heaven, it will not be hard to make the right choice. They cannot, will not, be afraid of any man's threats. Fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is better to them than any earthly reward could be. The most precious message of Christ's righteousness is even now preparing multitudes to stand firm for the Savior.

The same God who delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will work mightily for His people who stand for what is right. The One who walked with the Hebrews in the fiery furnace

will be with you wherever you go in His service. His presence will comfort you and sustain you. Satan with a million evil angels cannot harm even one of the weakest of God's saints.

Chapter 4

He's Greater Than the Greatest Man on Earth

Daniel 4:1-3: Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto the people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

A heathen king gets to write part of the Bible! He makes known to the whole world of his day the knowledge of the mighty acts of the God of heaven!

That was something that Israel should have done long before, but failed to do. This straightforward, honest account of Nebuchadnezzar's experience must have led many

to the Lord. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men" (Psalm 107:8).

There can be no doubt that what this chapter tells us really took place. The ancient people believed that each nation or tribe had its own god; it was not uncommon for a person to be converted to the worship of another god. Nebuchadnezzar finally gets settled in his faith. He confesses that the God of the Hebrews is above all the gods. He is the "most high God."

Daniel 4:4-7: I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

In chapter two the wise men and astrologers had said that if only the king would reveal to them his dream, they would contrive some interpretation. Now the king makes the dream known, and still they are at a loss to reveal the secrets of heaven!

The fact that they are called before Daniel is called indicates that the king had by this time allowed himself to forget what he had been taught about the true God in chapters two and three. Granted, the man was under intense pressure as head of the greatest empire on earth. Although he had an honest heart, the powerful pull of riches, worldly power, and honor drew him back into apostasy. God was merciful and patient in seeking again and again to bring Nebuchadnezzar back to an understanding of the truth. So He works with men and women today. The better you understand yourself, the closer you will feel you are to Nebuchadnezzar in weaknesses. You'll have no "holier than thou" spirit.

Daniel 4:8-12: But at last Daniel came in

before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying, O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof. Thus were the visions of my head upon my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof were fair and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

The symbolic meaning of such a tree must have been known to Nebuchadnezzar. In fact, he probably had some little idea of the real meaning of the dream, as is indicated by his attitude in verse 19. The story of the Tree of Life had been handed down by legend in old Babylon, as had also the

story of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Ezekiel had foretold the great fall of the king of Egypt, and now Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, would be the instrument used by the Lord for cutting him down, "to the end that none of all the trees [including Nebuchadnezzar] ... exalt themselves for their height" (Ezekiel 31:14). Nebuchadnezzar should have learned a lesson from this humbling experience of another "tree" before him—the Pharaoh of Egypt. But so like you and me, the king has been slow to learn his kindergarten lessons in the school of faith. But you've never had a teacher in school more patient with you than the Lord is in His "school."

Daniel 4:13-18: I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; he cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches. Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be

wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from man's and let the beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

Nebuchadnezzar should have remembered that his kingdom was not to stand forever. In spite of the revelation in chapter two, he had continued to beautify Babylon, building for himself an enormous palace to satisfy his vain pride. His wars were finished, and now the entire world lay at his feet. Every pleasure he might desire was his. He

sensed no restraint imposed upon his ambitions. But "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a great fall" (Proverbs 16:18). You may not be building palaces like Nebuchadnezzar, but you have your own ambitions that you imagine you can pursue without the Lord's help.

The "watchers," or "holy ones" mentioned here are the angels who are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (that's you! Hebrews 1:13, 14). They take a strong interest in the affairs on this earth. Your newspaper or Fox News has nothing on them. They are continually ministering to the spiritual needs of those who choose to follow Christ. The angels had noted Nebuchadnezzar's growing pride and hardness of heart, and it must have worried them. Unless something was done, he would be lost entirely. They knew that he had gotten to the place where only trouble and humiliation could help him come to his senses. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," said a very good person (see Psalm 119:71). Therefore, God permitted this sad experience to come to our king.

Daniel 4:19-27: Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: it is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down and destroy it; yet leave the stump of roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the

beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; this is the interpretation, O king, and it is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.

When the king told his dream, Daniel understood the meaning immediately. For years, the prophet had been praying for the king, ever since the events of chapter two. Daniel realized that he had many good traits of character, and that within his heart he was honest and wanted to

respond to God's love. Daniel and the king were very likely good friends.

He now saw that God was answering his prayers. But to tell the king the news of this terrible judgment was very difficult for Daniel. The king seemed to sense a foreboding that something was wrong, and sympathized with Daniel's hesitant attitude. The Holy Spirit was already speaking to him. He urged Daniel to tell everything, fearing nothing.

Daniel therefore made a personal appeal to the king. He assured him of God's willingness to forgive, if he would repent of his sins of pride and all the relevant sins of a Middle Eastern tyrant.

For a time the impression of the warning was strong upon Nebuchadnezzar; but the heart that is not transformed by the grace of God soon loses the impressions of the Holy Spirit. Self-indulgence and ambition were still cherished. In spite of instruction so graciously given him and the warnings of past experience, Nebuchadnezzar again let himself be

filled with jealousy against the kingdoms that were to follow. He began to rule harshly and oppressively. Hardening his heart, he used his God-given talents for self-glorification, exalting himself above the God who had given him life and power. There may be someone reading this book who has been just as persistent in resisting the grace of the Savior.

For months the judgment of God waited. The sun shone as brightly, his people flattered him as usual, all seemed well. But instead of being led to repentance by this kindness of God, the king became more proud, until he lost confidence in the interpretation of the dream, and laughed at his former fears.

Daniel 4:28-33: All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the royal palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the

king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

Archaeologists have recovered Nebuchadnezzar's own written boastings from the ruins of Babylon: "Then built I the palace the seat of my royalty, the bond of the race of men, the dwelling of joy and rejoicing" (Grotesque Cylinder). Even the bricks of old Babylon, dug out of the sand, are inscribed with Nebuchadnezzar's name.

David said, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." (Psalm 37:35, 36). God is merciful to send adversity when we need it, just as much as when he sends us prosperity. It is often adversity that turns our hearts away from earthly vanities that will soon pass away, to the appreciation of the enduring heavenly things.

The "seven times" can be identified as seven years (compare Daniel 7:25 with Revelation 12:14 and 13:5). During this time Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted with a strange disease which medical science knows as Lycanthrophy. One of the earliest to observe this disease was a Greek medical writer of the 4th century A.D. The sufferer imagines himself to be changed into an animal and acts like one. Yet this extreme form of insanity does not seem to interfere with the inner human consciousness. E. B. Pusey (Daniel the Prophet, New York, 1891) tells of the case of Pere Surin, a modern example of this disease.

All reasoning power, honor, and strength we have are given us of God. When God removed those gifts, the king was left entirely to his own wisdom and honor, which proved to be nothing (see Galatians 6:3)! "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish," said king David (Psalm 49:20). David freely and humbly confessed that without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, he was indeed foolish and ignorant. "I was as a beast before Thee" (Psalm 73:22). What a contrast between his humble attitude and the pride and self-sufficiency of Nebuchadnezzar!

During these seven years, Nebuchadnezzar's family or counselors ruled in his stead. Daniel's interpretation of the dream must have been known throughout the palace, for it was expected that Nebuchadnezzar would recover his reason, and would return to the throne. His throne was left sure unto him, as the stump of the tree is left in the earth that it might shoot forth again.

Daniel 4:34-37: And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me: and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

"I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven." Had the king done so before he lost his reason, his severe chastening would not have been

necessary. Only when he learned to obey in spirit the counsel of the apostle Paul in Romans 12:3, did he receive true understanding: "I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." So with us. We are of the earth, earthly, as Paul says (1 Corinthians 15:47). Our eyes are turned downward, absorbed in the things of this world, its honor, wealth, power, and pleasures. Only when we lift our spiritual eyes upward, toward heaven, do we really begin to live. Then we pass "from death unto life" (John 5:24). "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

The huge tree which Nebuchadnezzar saw represented not only the king himself personally, but also his Babylonian empire. When it fell, as we shall see in the next chapter, the root was allowed to remain in the earth. (But what can this mean?)

Today, the great political empire of Babylon is no more; not a brick remains. Yet great spiritual Babylon, prominently displayed in the prophecies of Revelation, remains as an offshoot of that root left in the earth. All nations of the earth have been made "drunk" with the wine of her false doctrines (Revelation 14:8). The mysteries of ancient Babylon's heathen worship are perpetuated in some modern Christian churches today. Thousands of worshippers, in every land, are ignorantly doing honor to ancient Babylonian gods when they observe religious rites and ceremonies which are not founded upon a "Thus saith the Lord" in the Holy Scriptures, the Bible. "In vain they do worship Me," says Jesus, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). These evil and deceptive doctrines are an outgrowth of that stump left in the earth so long ago. We need to search carefully to make sure that our faith is rooted only in the Bible, and not in the mere commandments of men.

Chapter 5

The Writing the King Couldn't Read

Daniel 5:1: Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

There were about 25 years between our last chapter and this one. Belshazzar came to the throne about the year 541 B.C.

Only two years later the hosts of the Medes and Persians clashed with the Babylonian army outside the walls of the city. The Babylonians were defeated and crawled back within the safety of their city walls. The gates were closed, and the siege began. Still the Babylonians laughed at their enemies. Were not their walls the strongest in the world? Did they not have provisions sufficient for twenty years?

But now the last night of that proud empire's existence has come, and rulers and people know it not. All are busy seeking pleasure, some dancing, many drinking. Unknown to them, the Holy Watchers in heaven weigh both people and king in the scales of God's judgment, and find them wanting. A pronouncement is made on them of eternal doom. Little does Belshazzar think as he sees that evening sun sink behind the western walls of Babylon that he will never see it rise another morning. So we are reminded today by the Savior, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and ... so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21:34, 35).

Excavations at old Babylon have uncovered what is very likely this same banquet hall, 173 feet long by 57 feet wide. In the center of one wall is a niche, probably where the king's table was. The walls are still covered with white plaster. Ancient records tell of kings entertaining huge parties, a

Persian king feeding 15,000 from his table, Alexander the Great 10,000. The book of Esther tells of Xerxes' great feast (chapter 1). Belshazzar's feast was a wild, immoral, drunken scene. The ancient historian Xenophon tells how the Babylonians had a certain national holiday when everyone was expected to drink and revel all night. This could well have been that occasion.

Daniel 5:2-3: Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them.

Doubtless this feast was in honor of the victory the heathen gods of Babylon gained over the God of heaven (so they thought), when Judah was conquered years before. As the king gets drunk, he

wickedly calls for the sacred vessels which had been fashioned for the worship of the holy God of heaven (see Exodus 31:1-11). He knew about Him, but wanted to insult Him.

There were thoughtful people in Babylon who revered Him, just as there are people in our culture today who disapprove of the licentious abandon of pleasure-seeking multitudes. Such defiance and blasphemy this night in Babylon will not be left at last unpunished, although it has been apparently overlooked many times previously. But before the king can lift the sacred vessel to his lips, he sees something that makes him turn pale. There in public he loses his normal physical self-control:

Daniel 5:4-9: They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the

joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

The loud laughing is hushed. Men and women tremble with a nameless terror they have never known before. They watch a hand slowly trace mysterious characters on the wall as though it were a giant cinema. Each remembers the evil in his own life. It's like being arraigned before the judgment bar of the eternal God, whose holiness and righteousness they have defied. Where but a few moments before there was hilarity and

blasphemous witticism, now there are shaking limbs and cries of fear. When God makes men fear, they cannot hide the intensity of their terror.

The king is the most terrified of all. Above all others, he was responsible for the rebellion against heaven which that night has reached its height in Babylon. In the presence of the unseen Watcher whose power has been challenged and whose name has been blasphemed, the king is paralyzed with horror. This is a preview we are privileged to see of what will come on our world, perhaps far sooner than we have imagined.

Daniel 5:10-12: Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: there is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods, and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy

father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

The queen here mentioned is the queen-mother, perhaps a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. The ancient historians gave her name as Nicotris. She remembers the old prophet whom the younger generation have dismissed from office, probably with sneers (they will not be guided by such a foolish and superstitious old man!). They are too wise to entertain belief in an unseen God of heaven. But old Daniel is hastily called, very likely from his sleep, for he would have no part in drunken pleasure parties. Calm, sober, self-possessed, he comes in quietly before the trembling king and faces his brilliantly dressed, drunken nobles.

Daniel 5:13: Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?

The king, despite his trembling and fear, pretends to despise the old man Daniel, not wishing to appear before his peers as worried by the mysterious message on the walls. Though Daniel was once the prime minister of the empire, chief of the "wise men," the vain-headed young king addresses him condescendingly as one of the conquered captives out of Jewry. The old prophet (answering not a word) looks straight into the shifting eyes of a foolish but terror-stricken ruler. Belshazzar must say something as to why he has summoned Daniel:

Daniel 5:14-16: I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read

this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: and I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Now the king changes his speech, and begins to praise Daniel. He realizes that a man of God, not a despised captive, stands before him. Daniel wishes it plainly understood that he cares nothing for the rewards the king has offered, for he is not moved by the selfish motives of the pagan wise men. He offers no words of flattery, no vain wish that the king will live forever, for he well knows that in a few hours the proud monarch of Babylon will be dead, together with his empire:

Daniel 5:17-24: Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet, I will read the

writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: and for the majesty that he gave him, all the people, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: and he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou has

praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

Straightforward and bold are Daniel's words. The story he told about Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar's grandfather, is not new to the court. The young king's conscience smites him as his memory recalls the well-known events that had once been the talk of the Babylonian empire. Great light and opportunities from heaven had been offered to the Babylonian kings, and they outhful Belshazzar cannot plead ignorance. Macho and boastful, he has rejected the light of heaven. "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed," said the Lord to Jeremiah (51:9). Now the finger of God has touched the pride of Babylon's golden empire, and it is about to fall.

Daniel 5:25-29: And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL,

UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Daniel, long accustomed to obey the voice of God, has no difficulty reading the language of heaven. The wicked king is baffled, but the figure of being weighed in the balance as in judgment is familiar to him. Their pagan belief was similar to the karma of Hinduism in that the gods weigh the good deeds of people over against their bad deeds. Whichever prevail, so the person is judged.

Even as Daniel is speaking, the soldiers of Cyrus (see notes on chapter 2, verse 39) are quietly entering the city on the dry river bed. No one has seen the waters of the river Euphrates go down,

admitting the army of the besiegers. The king sits, trembling, awaiting his nameless doom.

Daniel leaves the banquet hall in dignity and honor. All is now quiet, save for the sobs and moans of weeping people. Suddenly the shout of invaders is heard, and the rude Persian soldiers, swords in hand, break in to slay the king first of all. They seem as numerous as "locusts" (Jeremiah 51:14, NKJV). Fighting erupts all over the city. Posts run from station to station announcing that the city is taken (Jeremiah 51:31). Fires are lit. The sky is red with the glare. Hand to hand, the Babylonians fight desperately for their ruined empire. But, wearied with sleeplessness and drunkenness, they give up the struggle, and many perish by the Medo-Persian sword.

As the sun rises over the eastern walls of the city, great Babylon is no longer the queen of empires. The head of gold of Nebuchadnezzar's dream has changed to the breast and arms of silver.

Daniel 5:30, 31: In that night was Belshazzar

the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Daniel was probably personally acquainted with Darius, for his life was spared. He had accepted the gifts of Belshazzar, being made the third ruler in the kingdom, with the purpose of being better able to help his own people when the Persians took over the kingdom. (To be made "third ruler in the kingdom" meant that probably Nabonidus was first, Belshazzar his son second, and Daniel last. Evidently the victorious Medes and Persians retained Daniel in high position in the new government.)

Nations are today repeating the sad mistakes that led to the fall of ancient Babylon. The next great fall of kingdoms will usher in the everlasting kingdom of God. Today the call goes from heaven to God's people still in modern spiritual "Babylon": "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance"

(Jeremiah 51:6; Revelation 18:14).

The place of refuge is found where we "dwell in the secret place of the most High, ... under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1). A living faith in the Son of God who is "the Savior of the world" will lead one into full reconciliation with the righteousness of God, and in obedience to His commandments (Galatians 5:6; Revelation 14:6-12). It's the experience of the atonement, becoming one with God in character through faith which is a heart appreciation of the sacrifice of Christ upon His cross.

The world is gravitating constantly toward the wild pleasure-loving spirit of ancient Babylon; but as we shall see in later chapters, our period of world history is what God calls "the time of the end," "the day of atonement." The Babylonians should have spent their last night in prayer and fasting!

Chapter 6

Why Hungry Lions Refused to Eat

Daniel 6:1-5: It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

Darius ruled for only two years after he

captured Babylon in 538 B.C. Therefore, what happened in this chapter was shortly after the fall of Babylon to the Medo-Persians.

Daniel had become a friend of the Persians while he lived at Shusan some time previously. They recognized his ability and faithfulness, and were glad for his "excellent spirit." The new king, Darius, apparently did not wish to be over-bothered with affairs of business. He had delegated authority to others. Completely trusting Daniel, he had made him the chief president, or prime minister of the realm.

Bribery and robbery were very likely practiced by the one hundred and twenty princes, and the other two presidents. Wishing to retain for their own use a certain percentage of the taxes which they collected, they would have to answer the honest and faithful inquiries of Daniel when they came to him with their reports. He would not permit robbery and extortion. He believed in the truth later expressed by Christ, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." Knowing that Daniel

faithfully rendered to God the things that were God's, Darius had no fear that he would fail to require also honest payment of taxes to "Caesar" (that is, the government).

Religious persecution is a hateful and underhanded thing. The princes and presidents were looking for some occasion against Daniel concerning the law of his God, because of their jealousy of him. They stooped to lying methods to bring about their wicked purposes.

Daniel 6:6-9: Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live forever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

The original language gives the idea that the princes came together quickly to take the king by surprise, before he could really understand the crooked purpose buried in their new law.

When we remember that Babylon had just been conquered and that there was very likely much unrest and rebellious feeling against the new Medo-Persian government, we can better understand the pretexts that Daniel's enemies brought before the king. This new decree, they urged, would now test the loyalty of the proud, though conquered, Chaldeans. The king was deceived. Thinking that Daniel's approval had already been obtained, he quickly signed the decree. Here we are again thrust directly into the heart of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. This was far more than local politics. These men who hated Daniel were agents of Satan for he hated the honesty of God's servant Daniel. They are intent on having him killed, and they thought

this was a neat trick to do it. What's refreshing is the open fearlessness he showed. Read on:

Daniel 6:10: Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

Why stop praying now, when he most needed God's protection? Daniel would rather die than try to live alienated from God. This man anticipated the position of those who framed the United States Constitution thousands of years later—that no power on earth can stand between a person and his private relationship to God. Daniel didn't know what he was doing—he was lifting a torch of truth high enough to shed its light even down to us living in this 21st century!

Doubtless his custom of praying three times daily was based on Psalm 55:17: "Evening, morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud:

and he shall hear my voice." It being his custom to pray out loud, he's not going to stop now that there's a law against it. (Praying out loud is a good idea!)

Daniel 6:11-13: Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

We do not need to assume that all 120 or more of these government leaders came to watch Daniel pray, or that they all trooped in to accuse him to the king. A few could have been the agents for the

many.

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" is the inspired word of the Apostle Paul (2 Timothy 3:12). The accusers, instead of speaking respectfully of Daniel as the prime minister, chief of the presidents, say contemptibly, "That Daniel, of the captivity of Judah."

To say that Daniel regarded not the king was a complete lie, and the king knew it. Suddenly he realized the wicked design in the decree which was brought to him so hastily for signature. How he wished he had not signed on!

Daniel 6:14-17: Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be

changed. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

A later king, Darius III, apparently in anger sentenced one Charidemos to death. Darius says he "immediately repented and blamed himself, as having greatly erred; but it was not possible to undo what was done by royal authority." This account in Daniel is true to the historical realities. Ancient records tell of kings keeping lions and inflicting barbaric torture on unfortunate victims, especially the Persian kings.

The king feared that he could not deliver Daniel without giving up his own position as king, just as Pilate feared that he could not deliver Christ without giving up his position as governor. So, for the sake of his honor and his throne, which death

claimed from him only a short time later, the king was willing to deliver a just and innocent man to death. Daniel, the man "greatly beloved" of God, was treated as was his Master, Jesus Christ.

Note how the Lord worked out this problem to its solution: He did not prevent these wicked men from having their way, but He permitted them to go all their way that He might demonstrate all the more clearly His judgment of righteousness. When you are tempted to think affairs are going contrary to you, remember this story. "The wrath of men shall praise Thee," says Psalm 76:10. Note how the Lord would have been helpless to work out this mighty deliverance if He had not had a man who trusted Him so implicitly that his fidelity gave God a chance to work!

The Persian king did not know Daniel's God. He had only heard about Him. Now he is to learn about the power and love of the God of heaven, first-hand.

Daniel 6:18-24: Then the king went to his

palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angels, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the

bottom of the den.

If you had been Daniel, would you have berated the king when you got out of the den? Daniel did not reproach the king for permitting him to be cast in the lions' den, but he did pointedly remind the king of his innocence, and of the king's injustice to him. This was proper for him to do.

The angel of the Lord had come into the den and tamed the lions as they were tame in the beginning before sin came into the world, and as they will be in the earth made new after sin is finally destroyed (see Isaiah 11:6-9 and Job 5:22-27). That night was probably one of the most enjoyable that Daniel ever spent in his life. He held fellowship with the angel of the Lord who was present with him. Indeed, Daniel was happier there with the angel and with the Spirit of Christ who is with us in all our persecutions and troubles for His sake, than was the king in his royal palace! We need never fear what men may do to us if we are loyal to God. This remarkable experience is referred to in Hebrews 11:33, where it is said that

"through faith" the prophet "stopped the mouths of lions.

"When Daniel's enemies saw his remarkable deliverance, they probably tried to explain away the miracle by saying that the lions were not hungry. To test such a theory, the king ordered them cast in!

Daniel 6:25-28: Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth, Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Daniel was an old man when this experience

came to him—85. His deliverance encouraged him, and most of his visions were written out after this time. (As an author, he was a late bloomer!)

Reader, you are a servant of God, as was Daniel. When things appear to go wrong for you, why should you give up? When the wicked soldiers picked up Daniel to throw him in the den of lions, he was probably tempted to think that God had forsaken him. Sometimes you too may think God has forsaken you. But no, He never will. If your heart is stayed on God in your hour of trial, you can be just as peaceful and happy as when you prosper.

Daniel teaches us that a statesman or a politician can be an honest, upright man, instructed by God at every step. Likewise, if a business man is converted and consecrated, he may be as Daniel was. Daniel was successful wherever he went. He was tactful, courteous, good at heart, and faithful to principle. Even his enemies were forced to confess that "they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful.

"But was Daniel just naturally good? If so, there's not much hope for us who aren't "naturally good." What we know for sure is that Daniel was born with a sinful nature alienated from God just as much as we have been born that way. But his mother (and maybe his father) taught him the principles of the gospel. Paul says that God "preached the gospel" to Abraham (Gal. 3:8); the Holy Spirit preached it to Daniel, also. Daniel was a Christ-like man simply because he was a sinner by nature who believed in Christ, exercising the "faith which works" (Galatians 5:6).

Our modern world needs political leaders, government officers, and business men as honest and unselfish as Daniel. We have a Savior, a Great High Priest, who "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Hebrews 7:25). Choose to surrender your heart to Him, and He will give you grace to overcome every temptation that may come, whether your position is high or low.

May God give us courage to stand for the right side by side with Daniel! "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12).

Chapter 7

The World Finally Chooses Their New Ruler

Daniel 7:1: In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

Now we come to the heart of Daniel's fascinating book. Speaking to His prophets in dreams and visions of the night is God's appointed way of teaching truth to His people. "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream" (Numbers 12:6). Daniel qualifies!

Daniel 7:2-3: Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

World history is covered in chapter 7 as it was covered in the prophetic image of chapter 2. But there are differences between the two prophecies:

(1) Chapter 2 was to be understood by a pagan king, and therefore was very simple.

(2) Chapter 7 was to be understood by the prophet and by the church: hence, it reveals far greater detail and a deeper meaning.

(3) The prophetic image of chapter 2 shows us the four kingdoms in their purely political forms.

(4) Chapter 7 shows us the four in their spiritual forms, as they relate to God's work and His people. It is for our current world population.

The angel in verses 17 and 23 tells us that the four beasts are symbols of four kings, or kingdoms. In His wisdom, God represents the glory of human empires as entirely of the earth, as animals which have no care for heavenly things. It's to lift the

human race from thinking only of earthly things so they can see eternal spiritual things, that the Bible was given to us. Daniel is a good book for anyone to begin reading the Bible. It's the one book that Jesus singled out as especially important for us to "read" and "understand" (Matthew 24:15).

One hundred years earlier the prophet Hosea used the same symbols of a lion, leopard, and fierce beast to describe kingdoms which would rule over God's people because of their rebellion and forgetfulness of truth (see Hosea 13:5-8). If Israel had remained true to her Lord, these four cruel empires could not have arisen as they did. How much depends upon the faithfulness of God's people! They are "the light of the world," and if that light goes out how great is the darkness (Matthew 6:23)! God has promised to "hold" back the "four winds" of strife if His people will proclaim faithfully His sealing message (Revelation 7:1-4). In this light, thoughtful people have recognized that World Wars I and II and other terrible strifes have been unnecessary; God's people have often neglected their duty.

Daniel 7:4: The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

The first kingdom, the lion, answers to the head of gold of the image of chapter 2, the Babylonian empire. Jeremiah likened the Babylonian army to a destroying lion (Jeremiah 4:7; 21:7). The eagle's wings denote the speed of their conquests. Habbakuk said that the Chaldeans' "horses also are swifter than the leopards. They shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat" (Habbakuk 1:6-8). Beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's mental sickness in chapter 4, the empire of Babylon lost its spirit and strength. When the empire fell, the mighty men could not even fight. "They became as women" (Jeremiah 51:30). This weakness was symbolized by the lion being made to stand upright; now the empire had a weak fearful heart, as a lion forced to stand on two legs has lost its lion-like courage.

Daniel 7:5: And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it was raised up on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

The bear represents the same kingdom as the breast and arms of silver of the image—Medo-Persia. The raising up of itself on one side shows how the Medes under Darius were the more powerful of the two factions; but later the Persians under Cyrus took over. There were three conquered provinces that the Medes and Persians treated most cruelly after they rose to power: Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt. Probably these are symbolized by the three ribs between its teeth.

No animal can be more cruel than a blood-thirsty bear. Cruelty was the outstanding characteristic of the Persian Empire. As we saw in chapter 6, verse 24, the innocent wives and children of condemned men were punished equally with them. This is cruelty that human governments do not do today.

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

This, the same as the thighs of brass of the image, was the Grecian kingdom as established by the swift conquests of Alexander the Great. The leopard is a small animal compared to the bear. We read that only 47,000 men in Alexander's army conquered the huge Persian army of nearly a million. The four wings show how quickly the Greeks traveled, to surprise their conquests. Alexander was famous for his organizing skill and rapid marching. The four heads show the division of his empire into four separate kingdoms after his death.

Daniel 7:7: After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was

diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

No animal in creation is terrible enough to be compared with this one! Rome is symbolized in chapter two by the legs of iron. The ten horns now are the same as the ten toes of the image— ten kingdoms which arose out of the ruins of the pagan Roman empire. Tyranny was terrible in the days of pagan Rome. Never had there been a world kingdom as heartless and all-powerful. She filled up her cup of iniquity by taking part in the crucifixion of the Son of God, and by murdering many of the early Christians. In judgment, God held her accountable.

Daniel 7:8: I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

This "little horn" is the main subject of this

chapter. Surely God's word will not hide its identity from us. All the details that have gone before are as a "root" which supports the "tree" of the rest of the chapter. This little horn power is the subject of many prophecies in the Bible, evidence that God wants us to understand who it is. It has a very prominent part in world history and in our own lives everywhere today. Either we are totally with Christ or our allegiance will gravitate toward the power symbolized as the "little horn."

Daniel is no longer a sealed book, for we have reached the "time of the end" when God has opened it (Daniel 12:4). As we proceed, we shall see how simple it is to understand these prophecies.

Daniel 7:9, 10: I beheld till the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the

judgment was set, and the books were opened.

In Revelation 14:6, 7, we read an announcement to the world that the time of the judgment here described has already come. It was future in Daniel's day; it is present truth in ours.

What thinking man can fail to tremble before an infinite personal Judge? It is a fearful time, when the angels assemble before Him and the books which record every secret of our lives are opened for divine inspection. It is of this judgment time, when our names will be called for judgment, that Jesus warns us: "Take heed to yourselves, lest ... that day come upon you unawares. ... Pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy ... to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:34-36). But please remember: there are two kinds of judgment. One is condemnation; the other is vindication. What God's people face in the judgment is vindication, because Christ has accepted in Himself their condemnation and has died for them their second death.

The "books" are the records kept of all that has been right or wrong on earth. They contain our "tears" of agony and sorrow and repentance (Psalm 56:8), the names of those who respond to God's love (Psalm 69:28; Exodus 32:32, 33), and the record of our lives (Psalm 139:16; Malachi 3:16). Those who devote their lives to God's service have their names in the book of life (Philippians 4:3).

So do not be afraid of this judgment! Your Savior died to redeem you. He is not trying to keep you out of His kingdom, but He is seeking to prepare you to enter in triumphant so you'll be happy there. He will honor and vindicate in this judgment those who respond to His Holy Spirit. Trust your case to Him (1 John 2:1, 2). "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," says Jesus (John 6:37). Cling to that promise as for dear life!

Daniel 7:11-14: I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their

dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Now we can see that the "little horn" is not primarily a political power because his "great words" are considered by the spiritual judgment in heaven. The "little horn" is therefore a religious power. It grew to world prominence as a branch growing out of the old Roman empire. It is a great church which we see in the world today, distinguished because it has exercised political power.

Daniel noticed something interesting: although the three previous beasts (world empires) had their dominion taken away, their "lives" were prolonged

until the time of the final judgment. Babylon's wealth and glory, Medo-Persia's cruelty, and Greece's subtlety, are all merged in the great and terrible Roman Empire; and the "little horn" power has learned his super-marvelous wisdom from the four beasts whose wisdom and power live on in him.

The "One like the Son of man" can be no other than Jesus, the Son of God, who loved to call Himself "the Son of man." He became one with us as our Elder Brother. The footsteps of Jesus can be traced all through the Old Testament because He is the One "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). His footsteps lead today into that place in the sanctuary of heaven which is called "the most holy apartment." There He is working for us as our great High Priest in the "presence of God for us," to finish His work of redemption. When this judgment described in verses 9 and 10 is finished, Christ will win an everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

The nations and languages who serve Christ in

His coming kingdom are not worldly kingdoms, but the host of redeemed in the "new earth" from every language and people (see Revelation 21:24).

Daniel 7:15, 16: I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

If Daniel himself was so concerned to understand this prophecy, surely we also living now should be greatly concerned about it. Jesus said, "Whoso readeth [Daniel] let him understand" (Matthew 24:15). The angel himself made known to Daniel the meaning of the prophecy. Therefore we are not to guess at it with our own private interpretations.

Daniel 7:17-22: Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even

for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Daniel understood about the first three kingdoms; but the fourth, so strange, powerful and cruel, distressed him. What especially troubled him was a strange movement among the ten horns on the fourth beast. A "little horn" different from the others arose to world power. It uprooted three kingdoms that stood in its way. Daniel saw in this power the real enemy of the saints of God, because

it persecuted them so severely. The Ancient of Days finally sat in judgment and said, "It is enough.

"But none of this suffering has been in vain. "Judgment" will be given to all who have been loyal to Christ. Even though they have suffered on earth, it has been a privilege for these loyal, believing ones to share in "the fellowship of His sufferings." In a special way, they forever "enter into the joy" of their Lord (Philippians 3:10; Matthew 25:21). We either bring honor or shame to our Lord! Daniel gives us insights to view our suffering in a new, encouraging light.

Daniel 7:23-25: Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear

out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

We have already seen that the fourth kingdom (the legs of iron of the image) was pagan Rome. Between 351 and 476 A.D. pagan tribes from the north rushed down upon the Roman Empire. Ten smaller kingdoms evolved out of its ruins. Historians generally agree that the following were the ten: England, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland, Italy. These seven remain to this day. Three others no longer exist, having been "plucked up by the roots": the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths.

In South America, some people who could not read or write asked a missionary to send them a teacher. He agreed to do so. "But," they asked, "how will we know that the teacher is really sent by you?" The wise missionary picked up a stone, broke it in two, gave half to the chief, kept half himself. "When the teacher comes he will bring the

other half of this broken stone, and you can know that no other teacher in all the world can have a broken stone that will fit your half!"

So it is that the prophecy of Daniel is one half of a broken stone; history is the other half which fits so perfectly that even a child can see that God's word has been precisely fulfilled.

Seven identifying features are in the words of the angel:

(1) The "little horn" will arise out of the ten kingdoms of the Roman empire, but be different in nature from them.

(2) A religious power, he will seek to rule the world politically.

(3) In his grasping for power, he will subdue three kingdoms which oppose his ambition.

(4) He will speak "great words" (blasphemy—see Revelation 13:5) against the Most High God.

(5) He will "wear out," or persecute, the saints of the Most High.

(6) He will try to change times and the law of God.

(7) He will continue "a time, times, and half a time," or three years and a half, prophetic time.

Now let's examine these seven points to see if history fulfils the prophecy, as the two parts of a broken stone:

(1) The "little horn" will arise out of the ten kingdoms of the Roman Empire, but be different in nature. Rome being the capital of the world, the pastor of the church there came to be looked upon as the leading bishop of all the churches. As the apostasy predicted by the apostle Paul developed (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Acts 20:29, 39), that church became more worldly and powerful. False doctrines crept in from paganism, among them a tradition that Peter had given sole authority to rule

over the church to the bishop of Rome, and that later popes were his successors. (Matthew 16:18-20; 18:17, 18; Psalm 149:5-9) They built their ambition on the idea that Christ's kingdom was a kingdom of this world. They forgot His words, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

(2) The popes determined to put down by force all resistance to their claims to spiritual and temporal authority and to rule over the nations. Thus the "little horn" is not a mere political kingdom as the other ten, but a religious power arising from among the political powers.

There were five steps by which the papacy exalted its claim:

- (a)** the bishop of Rome was first a "brother" to the others;
- (b)** then he advised them as an elder brother;
- (c)** as the years went by, his words began to be received as from a father;
- (d)** as the Roman government became weaker, the bishop of Rome became "pope" (which

word means "father") and he was regarded as a lord;

(e) finally, he made the claim to be "God on earth.

"Says a prominent historian:

"The mighty Catholic Church was little more than the Roman Empire baptized. Rome was transformed as well as converted. The very capital of the old Empire became the capital of the Christian Empire. The office of Pontifex Maximus was continued as that of Pope ... Even the Roman language [Latin] has remained the official language of the Roman Catholic Church down through the ages. ... Christianity not only conquered Rome, but Rome conquered Christianity."

(3) The little horn in its fight for power will subdue three kingdoms which oppose his ambition. What does history say?

Odoacer, king of the Heruli, opposed the claims and doctrines of the papacy. Odoacer and his

Heruli soldiers were overthrown in 493 A.D. This naturally caused rejoicing among the friends of the papacy. But they were sorry to discover that the new king of the Ostrogoths, Theodoric, who had conquered the Heruli, also opposed the papacy. The papacy then turned to become the determined enemy of Theodoric and the Ostrogoths.

At the same time, a third hostile kingdom from North Africa threatened the papacy. This was the kingdom of the Vandals.

Something had to be done!

In 533 A.D. the Emperor Justinian of the East made a decree in which he exalted the pope to be the head of all the churches. To make effective this new decree, he sent his general Belisarius with an army into Africa to crush the opposing Vandals. The next year he succeeded. The same general then fought against the Ostrogoths, finally driving them out of Italy in 538 A.D. Thus, that year the three kingdoms were uprooted from before the "little horn."

(4) The "little horn" will speak great words against the Most High. Some of the arrogant and blasphemous claims made by the papacy are quoted here from Ferraris's "Ecclesiastical Dictionary":

"The pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God. ... The pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth, and of the lower regions. ... The power of the Roman Pontiff by no means pertain(s) only to heavenly things, to earthly things and to things under the earth, but even over angels, than whom he is greater. ... For he is of so great dignity and power that he forms one and the same tribunal with Christ. ... The pope is as it were God on earth."

As late as 1894, Pope Leo XIII said: "We hold on this earth the place of God Almighty." Here is a power fulfilling the will of Lucifer, son of the morning, who said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. ... I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13, 14). It was for such pride and

blasphemy that Lucifer, now known as Satan, was cast out of heaven.

(5) The "little horn" will wear out the saints of the Most High. During the Dark Ages, which began in 538 A.D., many Christians who determined to follow the Bible were persecuted to death by the papacy. This horrible record is one of the darkest stories of human history. We quote now from a few historians.

"That the church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history."

(6) The "little horn" will attempt to change times and the law of God. We quote again from the Roman Catholic *Prompta Bibliotheca* by Ferraris:

"The pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify [change], explain, or interpret divine laws."

In the Roman Catholic catechisms used for teaching the common people, the law of God is modified so that the second commandment forbidding the worship of images has been deleted. The fourth is shortened so as to support the observance of the first day of the week (Sunday) in place of the seventh day, the true Sabbath. The tenth is divided into two commandments. Regarding their change of the fourth commandment, they say in an officially approved catechism:

"Quest. Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?"

"Ans. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."

Another interesting recent statement:

"Nothing is said in the Bible about a change of the Lord's day from Saturday to Sunday. We know of the change only from the tradition of the [Catholic] Church—a fact handed down to us from earliest times by the living voice of the [Catholic] Church. That is why we find so illogical the attitude of many non-Catholics, who say that they will believe nothing unless they can find it in the Bible and yet will continue to keep Sunday as the Lord's day on the say-so of the Catholic Church."

To attempt to change the law of God is something which God himself says He cannot and will not do (Psalm 89:34). We need not wonder that Daniel was amazed when he heard the words of the "little horn."

(7) The "little horn" will continue for a time, times, and a half of time." A "time" is another expression for a year. "Times" would therefore be two years, and the "dividing of time" a half a year. Thus altogether, the little horn power would

continue in authority for three years and a half, prophetic time, with the saints delivered into his hand for that time. But prophetic time is not literal time.

The various symbols found in the prophecies of Daniel are easily explained in the Bible. In Bible prophecy a day is a symbol which stands for a year of literal time (see Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34; Leviticus 25:8; Genesis 29:27).

This same period of time is mentioned in Revelation 12:14. In Revelation 13:5 it is again, 42 months, counting twelve months to the year ($12 \times 3\text{-}1/2 = 42$). Again we find the same time period in Revelation 12:6, as 1260 days, counting 30 days to the month for 42 months ($42 \times 30 = 1260$). The little horn, the papacy, was to rule supreme in Europe, persecuting the saints of God, for 1260 literal years.

Justinian made a decree in 533 A.D. giving the papacy unlimited power over all the churches. This decree went into effect in 538 A. D. when the last

of the three kingdoms opposed to the papacy was pulled up by the roots. Thus the time for beginning the 1260 years of papal rule is 538 A.D., see item number (4).

Exactly 1260 years later, the papacy lost its temporal power. On February 20, 1798, Berthier, General of the French army under Napoleon, took the pope a prisoner in Rome, effectually putting an end to the papacy's temporal power in Europe. After that time there was no real persecution of the saints in Europe. They were free to worship God.

Like a broken stone, the two halves of which alone can join together perfectly, Daniel's prophecy and the testimony of history agree in clearly pointing out the "little horn" power.

We recognize that the development of the papacy in history has been the outworking of the principle of self-seeking (gadal, see chapter 8), which is natural to all our human hearts. We all need a Savior from sin; and thank God, we have One! But although we would be humble in

recognizing these facts of history, we must also confess the truth that Daniel's prophecies have been fulfilled.

Daniel 7:26-28: But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations [thoughts] much troubled me, and my countenance was changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

Daniel is permitted to look down to the end of time, when the little horn together with the beast who carries him are destroyed in the final end of sin and sinners. Just before the end, the deadly wound suffered by the papacy will be healed (see Revelation 13:3, 14), and for a short time the whole world will "wonder after him." However, the heavenly judgment has passed judgment upon him.

Though he may prosper for a time, his final end is certain.

This vision of Daniel, which was to him such a source of concern is also of concern to us in these last days, lest we be found serving the little horn ignorantly, and thus share in opposing Christ. Even now the "dominion" of the "little horn" is being taken away, to destroy it unto the end. Here and now today we may know that this power has lost his hold over us. Not only in the world around us, but in our own hearts we see this dominion taken away as we by faith follow Christ in His work as our great High Priest in His sanctuary above.

How encouraging to God's people to know that the kingdom will be given to those for whom it has been prepared since the foundation of the world. In all their trials and afflictions, God's true worshippers may remember this promise.

And they will choose to elect Jesus and to crown Him as their KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS because here on this earth in their

daily lives, they have so crowned Him (Revelation 19:16). Devotion to Him will take away all fear from our hearts (1 John 4:18).

Chapter 8

The Bible's Most Pivotal Chapter

Daniel 8:1, 2: In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. And I saw in the vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was in Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

The second chapter of Daniel presents world history to the pagan king in a very simple form. The seventh chapter reveals world history in its spiritual aspects. The eighth chapter goes into greater detail, revealing truth about the great judgment, of which we had only a glimpse in the seventh chapter. Here is where heaven touches earth. What's going on behind the scenes?

Let us remember that the Book of Daniel was

written for us who are living in the time of the end (chapter 12:4, 9, 10), and that the prophecy in this chapter therefore concerns us living today, rather than the people who lived thousands of years ago. All of the Bible story hinges on the events of this chapter.

Daniel 8:3, 4: Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high: but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; and no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

It was not difficult to recognize who the ram is, for Daniel had already learned that Medo-Persia was to conquer Babylon and rule the world. In verse 20 the angel tells Daniel: "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia." The one horn that came up higher than the other shows that the Persians took

over from the Medes (see comments on 7:5). At the height of their power, the Medo-Persians ruled over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia, the whole of the then known world (see Esther 1:1).

Daniel 8:5: And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.

Who is this? The answer again is clear: "And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king" (verse 21). At the age of only twenty, Alexander the Great became heir to the throne of Greece. Quickly he forced the scattered towns into a kingdom, trained a disciplined army, and set out to wage wars of conquest. Though his army was small, he taught his soldiers to march swiftly and tirelessly, to maneuver cleverly, and to fight with desperation. After conquering all of Macedonia, there was nothing left for the ambitious young king to do but to attack giant Medo-Persia, the "ram

with two horns." This would be like Cuba or Haiti conquering the whole of the United States and Canada!

Daniel 8:6, 7: And he came to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him; but he cast him down to the ground, and trampled upon him; and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

Alexander clashed with the Persian armies in the bloody battle of Arbela in 331 B.C., and completely overwhelmed them. It was a miracle that the tiny Grecian army should rout the huge hosts of the Persians, like a leopard killing a tired elephant. The Persians could not fight—they simply lost their will.

Daniel 8:8: And the he goat waxed very great:

and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones [horns] toward the four winds of heaven.

Hardly had Alexander conquered the world at the age of only 32 than he himself, the great horn, "was broken." Conqueror of the world, he could not rule himself. Some history says he died from a drunken spree, whispering that he was leaving his newly conquered empire "to the strongest." His generals therefore fought among themselves.

Finally exhausted, they agreed to divide the empire into four parts: Lysimichas took the North, or Asia Minor; Cassander took the West, or Greece; Seleucus took the East, or Syria; and Ptolemy took the South, or Egypt. These four new kingdoms were the same as the four heads of the leopard in chapter 7, verse 6.

Daniel 8:9: And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant [glorious] land.

The original language gives the idea that it was out of one of the four winds of heaven that this new power arose—out of north, east, south, or west. The previous verses are easy to understand. As a root supports a tree, simple history supports the truth taught in the remainder of this chapter.

Persia was called "great," Grecia was called "very great," now this power which surpasses them all, is called "exceeding great." Rome arose to world supremacy out of one of the "four winds"—the west. Rome conquered Macedonia, thus taking over one of the four "horns" of Grecia. Rome then grew into its destiny, and moved on to world conquest. After 168 B.C., Rome became recognized as the new world empire.

No king of Macedonia could be called this "little horn," for none of them was "exceeding great." The strongest of them, Antiochus Epiphanes, was forced to leave Egypt at the rude command of the Romans. Does not the stronger drive out the weaker? The Romans were therefore

the "exceeding great" power. Each successive kingdom becomes more self-exalting than than the one before. Media-Persia was "great" (exalting); Greece "very exalting;" the horn or Rome "exceedingly exalting." This principle of self exaltation is an inherent characteristic of nations and peoples.

"Toward the glorious land" can refer only to the land of God's people, the Jews. The Romans took over the control of Palestine with the consent of the Jews in 161 B.C.

Daniel 8:10-12: And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced and prospered.

The prophet saw the Roman power ruling God's people and their leaders, the "stars." The Jews finally disowned Christ, their true and rightful King, by crying out at His crucifixion, "We have no king but Caesar." They chose to remain under the Romans forever.

"The Prince of the host" represents Christ, or the "Prince of princes," as the angel spoke of Him in verse 25. Jesus is called the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16). Thus pagan Rome not only conquered the Jews and their rulers, but put to death their true and rightful King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As to the meaning of the "daily sacrifice," the words "burnt offering" or "sacrifice" do not appear in the original Hebrew of this text. When the English translations were made, this word "sacrifice" was supplied by the translators who innocently thought the meaning required it. To show that "sacrifice" is not part of the inspired text, they printed it in italics (or in parentheses) in some versions. To understand the meaning of the text,

we should read it as it is in the original Hebrew:

"From him (the little horn) the continual was taken away (taken up, lifted up) and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host (or army) was given him against the continual in transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground."

The meaning of this text is easy to understand when we remember that Rome existed in two different forms. Until the empire fell around 476 A.D., its form had been pagan (Daniel 7:8). Afterwards, it arose again in a spiritual form as a church, in the Roman Catholic papacy. Therefore the little horn of Daniel 8 represents the two phases of Rome that followed each other. Pagan Rome springs from one of the "four winds of heaven." Then papal Rome evolves from pagan Rome, and they co-exist together for a time until papal Rome takes over from pagan Rome (which then passes from the scene of action). God represents the papacy as merely another phase of Rome, the fourth kingdom. This is pivotal in understanding

the world in relation to God.

In view of the principle of self-exaltation, "the daily" represents the principle of self-exaltation (gadal) associated with ancient pagan nations, and yes, all humanity.

Now if we compare our text above which mentions the "daily" with Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 where the "daily" is also found, we shall see how the pagan form of Rome and its self-exalting character is represented by the term "daily," or "continual in transgression;" and the second, the self-exalting character of the papacy form, is represented by the term, "the abomination that maketh desolate" (verse 13). Both paganism and the papacy are desolating powers. The self-exalting nature of paganism is described as "continually in transgression," but the self-exalting nature of the papacy served in an even more deadly enmity in its warfare against God, "the abomination that maketh desolate" (12:11).

Paganism, although it deceived millions, still

left a painful emptiness in human hearts that prepared many to seek after and welcome the word of God. The doctrines of papal Rome "desolate" even that natural hunger of the human heart for God, supplying a false hope that makes one feel so satisfied that he feels no need of the word of God.

The Christian religion of the apostles was so appealing and so satisfying to the people of ancient Rome that paganism trembled and fell away before it. Satan saw that the only way he could hold the world in deception was to invent a religion which professed to be Christian and thus take advantage of some of the ideas of Christianity, and yet was spiritually the same as the old paganism. This principle which infected both paganism and the papacy originated with Lucifer in heaven and has infected all mankind since the fall of Adam. "All have sinned" (Rom. 3:23).

Satan's plan was to lead the early church away from the purity and simplicity of the gospel by introducing pagan philosophies and superstitions to be mixed with the gospel. The result was the great

"falling away" which the apostle Paul spoke of in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. It would finally be so serious that the very "man of sin ... [would] sit in the temple of God," usurping the place of Christ, "showing himself that he is God." Doctrines borrowed from ancient Babylon and mixed with Christian teaching, prepared the way for the temporal exaltation of the Roman bishop to the place of pope.

Note what a recent historian writes concerning paganism surviving within the professed Christian church:

"Few dispute that literacy was spurned during the Dark Ages; however, there is another characteristic of the period that is sometimes overlooked and perhaps disregarded. While Protestants have traditionally held to the idea of a syncretized church to help justify their existence, recent scholarship has demonstrated that the paganism of late antiquity did not die out after the fourth century, but rather attached itself to the church, reshaping it. The aim of this chapter is to

examine the reasons behind the church's assimilation of pagan forms and Europe's subsequent plunge into the night. ... The old system was incorporated into the new. ... paganism kept its original character [of self-exaltation] but was placed under new management."

When the pagan Roman Empire was declining, the seat of its government was moved from the city of Rome to Constantinople. Thus the "place of his sanctuary," or worship, was "cast down." (This same transfer is brought to view in Revelation 13:2, where it is said that the dragon, pagan Rome, gave to the beast, papal Rome, his "seat," that is, the city of Rome.)

The "host given him" (the little horn or the papacy) against "the daily" (or "continual" self-exalting, pagan Rome) was therefore the hordes of pagan tribes of Europe rushing down into Italy and Rome, breaking to pieces the former empire of pagan Rome. These pagan tribes soon accepted outwardly the doctrines of the papacy, persuaded to exchange their former pagan religion for the

nominal profession of Roman Catholicism just as many people do today who believe the two religions are basically similar. When these people returned to their homes in central Europe, they fought with the sword to set up the religion of papal Rome.

But their "faith" was not the genuine "faith of Jesus." They had accepted an outward shell, but inwardly were still worldly at heart. The basic principle of paganism has always been what is called *gadal* in Hebrew, that is, a self-seeking spirit. Thus, "by reason of transgression" the little horn or papal Rome destroyed European paganism politically, "cast down" the truth of simple biblical Christianity to the ground, professed to usurp the place of Christ as head of His church, and "practised and prospered." It followed the spirit of *gadal* until it tried to usurp the place of "the prince of the host, "Christ Himself.

Thus papal Rome absorbed or took up within herself the doctrine and spirit of paganism, while military force working for her took away its

political power. The simple truth of Bible faith was "cast down to the ground." Christ's place as Head of His church was usurped by the "little horn" which henceforth "practised and prospered." To Daniel, all this was an "astonishing" vision!

We now come to the part of Daniel's vision of greatest importance to us today: how long should this desolating power continue to trample the truth of God and hold the world in deception? How long shall this "transgression" which desolates, persecutes, and slays God's people, continue? Will it never have an end?

Worst of all, it seemed in the time of Daniel that the God of Israel had Himself been conquered by paganism. It was natural to ancient people to suppose that a nation's victory in war meant that its gods were supreme. Jeremiah speaks of how "Bel," the Babylonian god, had "swallowed up" or "devoured" Israel and "filled his belly" with God's people, like eating a piece of candy (51:34, 44). The question God's people were asking was, "How long" was this "continual in transgression" to

triumph? Some, like Daniel, were more concerned for the honor of God than for their own security. (This kind of paradigm shift in motivation will characterize God's people more and more as we near the end.)

Daniel gets his answer as he listens to a conversation between two angels. They direct him to the symbolical services of the Hebrew sanctuary, which reveal the meaning of world history and make plain God's plan of salvation:

Daniel 8:13, 14: Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Good news—there will be an end to the rule of sin! That which has for so long been "trodden under foot" will be vindicated. There is a time

determined of God when His truth will be justified before angels and before the world. Then judgment will be given to the righteous, and the cause of truth will triumph.

All this is included in the "cleansing of the sanctuary," a message of astounding Good News. When this righteous judgment is finished, Satan and all "the transgression of desolation" will come to their end.

Before we consider the time (the "two thousand and three hundred days"), we must consider what the sanctuary means; and then what its cleansing means.

What Is the Sanctuary?

When Daniel heard the angels talking about the "sanctuary," his mind immediately went to the beloved Hebrew sanctuary at Jerusalem, which at that time was broken down, desolate, and "defiled." The true worship of God had been carried forward there in types and shadows, something like

children playing with toys to teach them about grown-up life. A high priest "chosen from among men" led out in the services. He was a type of Jesus Christ, our true High Priest. All that he did in the sanctuary through ceremonies and types was to teach Israel the meaning of God's plan of salvation. The Son of God must come to earth, become one of the human family, conquer sin "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3), take over from the fallen Adam the headship of the human race, and save humanity.

Of course, this earthly sanctuary was only for a short time. The ceremonial law of Moses came to an end at the cross when the antitypical Lamb of God was sacrificed. The earthly sanctuary was an object lesson or a picture of the work of Jesus as Savior of the world, a "shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1). Its services, directed by the earthly high priest and his assistant priests, were only an "example and shadow of heavenly things" (Hebrews 8:5).

You cherish a picture of a loved one when the

loved one is absent. But when the loved one finally comes, you no longer look at the picture, for you can see your beloved face to face. So, when Jesus the great High Priest came and died for us in person, the "picture" or "types" of the Hebrew sanctuary were no longer needed. Like a shadow which comes to an end when we see the sunlight which made the shadow, so the "shadow" of the earthly sanctuary met its fulfillment at the cross. The veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom and the ministry of the earthly sanctuary itself lost its significance (Matthew 27:51). That is why there is no earthly "temple" or "sanctuary" like there was in the days of Moses and Daniel. We have something better—the reality in heaven.

When Jesus ascended after His resurrection, He began His work as High Priest in a "better" sanctuary than the old one. His followers no longer cared about the old sanctuary in Jerusalem, but they followed Christ by faith as He entered the one above. We can easily understand that if Jesus as our High Priest "has passed into the heavens," then the real, eternal sanctuary is also in heaven

(Hebrews 4:14). And nothing can ever "take away" His ministry there for "He ever liveth" and His ministry is "unchangeable" (Hebrews 7:25,24).

The New Testament makes it clear: "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:1). Our minds are directed to the true one in heaven, of which the earthly was a pattern. "The first tabernacle was ... a figure for the time then present, in which were offered gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; ... but Christ [has] come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building" (Hebrews 9:8-11).

Therefore, since the vision given to Daniel was for "the time of the end," the sanctuary to be cleansed must be the heavenly one, not the earthly one (verses 17 and 19).

But What Is the "Cleansing of the Sanctuary"?

There was an annual service of "cleansing" which was a shadow or type of "cleansing" the heavenly one. It was not a mere janitor's job of cleansing it from dust, mud or blood, as when we clean a house. It was a spiritual cleansing or purification from the sins of God's people. "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission [of sins]. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens [the earthly sanctuary] should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:22-24).

It is filth and dirt which makes it necessary to "cleanse" an ordinary house. So it was the sin and selfishness of Israel which made it necessary every year to cleanse the sanctuary from these sins. The

loving God sought to teach the Israelites what a terrible, self-destructive thing sin is. In fact, the sanctuary service taught them to hate it and to love righteousness.

They saw that nothing could wash the stain of sin from the heart but the blood shed of an innocent victim who had to die. The sinner had to take the knife himself and slay the little lamb. As the blood gushed out, the sinner was reminded that his sin had cost the life of the true Lamb of God. Tears came to his eyes as he thought of the suffering and anguish he had brought upon the innocent Son of God. He began to understand what sin is. He saw a "picture" or "type" of Calvary.

The priest would take some of the blood into the sanctuary and sprinkle it before the veil as a witness that Someone holy and innocent had died for the sinner. The priest might also eat some of the flesh of the sin-offering, symbolizing that he bore the sin "in his own body" as Christ bore our sins "in His own body" (1 Peter 2:24). Thus the record of the sin was transferred from the sinner to the

sanctuary. The sinner saw the cross of Christ in the sanctuary service and went home with a new heart. He was really a new man. Thus his sin was forgiven him—that is, removed from him. (Leviticus 4:4-35; 10:16-18)

But what about the record of his sin? Though the sinner was personally forgiven, the blood was still sprinkled as a witness to the sin. That ugly record now defiled the sanctuary. In "type," God had taken upon Himself the guilt. The sinner was forgiven, but the sanctuary was not cleansed from his sin. There must be another service to cleanse the sanctuary of all the sins of Israel. God's name must be cleared of responsibility in this terrible evil.

Also the sinner's heart must be demonstrated to be fully reconciled to God. God's purpose is not to let sins go on forever. This chapter then is pivotal in understanding the Bible. God's great problem has always been what to do with sin; when we sinners become reconciled to Him by the blood of the cross, we too share His great desire to see an

end to sin itself. Our motive in this new paradigm shift of motivation is His vindication, not merely our own security.

Once a year, on what was called the "day of atonement," the Israelites took part in the service which taught them about the final judgment that cleanses the sanctuary and vindicates the name of God. The high priest would choose a goat for the Lord, kill him, and take some of its blood into the second apartment of the sanctuary, which was called "the most holy place." There before the mercy seat, which represented the throne of God, the high priest would sprinkle some of the blood as final atonement because of all the sins of Israel which had accumulated in the sanctuary for the whole year. The guilt and the record of these sins must be borne away, in order for the sanctuary to be "cleansed." There must be a final end of sin and sinning, not a mere superficial "pardon for sin" that goes on and on forever, creating an eternal havoc in the universe. Again, this chapter is profound in its implications for the salvation of the world.

The high priest would bear these sins himself as he came out from the most holy apartment. Then, having chosen a second goat, "Azazel," or Satan's goat, he would lay his hand upon its head, thus transferring the responsibility for all these sins upon the scapegoat to signify that Satan has been the original source for all the sin ever committed. A strong man would then lead this scapegoat out into the wilderness, that it might perish far away from the camp, symbolizing the eternal end of sin. (Thank God!)

It was like casting their sins "as far as the east is from the west," into the depths of the sea (Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19): Thus the old earthly sanctuary was cleansed.

But it was only a type.

Of course, the "blood of bulls and goats" could never really take away even one sin. Therefore, this whole service re-enacted every year was an object lesson to the people of the greater work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary of the sins of

God's people at the end of time.

How often we have all struggled, and tried to overcome, only to fail again and again! And there goes up to heaven daily the record of more failures, more sins, to defile the heavenly sanctuary. Satan appears to triumph, and like Daniel, we cry out almost in despair, "How long, how long!"

But here's the good news: in the last days, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." When that work is completed, Satan will be forever vanquished, because sin will have lost its dominion in the last place where it has found a home—in the hearts of God's people. And when sin is expelled from there, that will be its end forever, for there is no other place in God's universe where the poison of sin can find lodging.

Included in this work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary is the work of judgment. In ancient Israel, those who would not afflict their souls on the day of atonement were to be "cut off from among God's people (Leviticus 23:29, 30).

Likewise, in the end of the world those who will not give up sin and lay it on the Lamb of God and receive His forgiveness, cannot share in the blessings of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. It is a solemn thought.

The angel does not tell Daniel when the 2300 "days" are to begin. But in chapter 9 he will return to explain that part of the "vision." As we saw in our last chapter, in Bible prophecy a day is a symbol of a literal year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), and has been so understood by Bible scholars for many hundreds of years. Daniel is therefore speaking of 2300 literal years. This will bring us down to near the close of time.

Daniel 8:15, 16: And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.

Just as Daniel the prophet sought for the

meaning of what was revealed to him, so we living in the last days want to understand it. Be hungry and thirsty, and the Lord will make you "to understand."

The name Gabriel means in Hebrew "the strength of God," or "man of God." This mighty angel appears to the virgin Mary, and to Zacharias (Luke 1:19,26). The "man" whose voice commanded Gabriel to enlighten Daniel was probably no other than the Archangel, Michael, or Christ (Jude 9). He is spoken of in Daniel 7:13 as "one like the Son of man."

Daniel 8:17-19: So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

The command, "Understand, O son of man," comes to each reader of this book as well as to Daniel. The command is a promise.

What does the "indignation" mean? Daniel has already understood that Israel's captivity in Babylon for seventy years is the beginning of God's "indignation." Their unfaithfulness left Israel subject to cruel, wicked, pagan kingdoms. They were so stubborn there was no other way they could learn. Even God's spiritual Israel today are often subject to this same "indignation." When Jesus Christ returns who alone has the right to the throne, God will give to Him the diadem and the crown, and He alone shall reign over His people. Then the "indignation" will have ceased (see Ezekiel 21:25-27,31).

Daniel 8:20-23: The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four

stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

We have seen that the kingdom which succeeded Greece was pagan Rome. The phrase "dark sentences" probably means the language of the Romans, Latin, which forms the basis of many European languages today.

Daniel 8:24, 25: And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

There was something strange about how Rome grew up to win world supremacy. Their conquests

were made so easily that it seemed that some more than human power was aiding them.

"He shall be broken without hands" refers to Rome's final destruction by the great stone "cut out without hands" (Daniel 2:34) which puts an end to all earthly kingdoms.

Daniel 8:26, 27: And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

"The vision of the evening and the morning" refers to the "2300 days." Having explained everything in the vision except the part about this time prophecy, the angel now leaves Daniel for a time. He is "astonished," or desolated, by the vision.

But Gabriel has been commanded to make this

man to understand the vision. Daniel has fainted, and now can understand no more. We shall expect Gabriel to return that he may complete where he left off, that is, explaining the 2300 days. In chapter 9 he does return. There we shall find the puzzling 2300 years explained.

Chapter 9

The Gospel in Arithmetic

Daniel 9:1-3: In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

Medo-Persia now rules the world. Daniel believes that the time is near for the Jews to be given their liberty to return to Jerusalem. Though he is himself a prophet of God, he humbly studies the prophecies of Jeremiah to learn what the Lord has said (Jeremiah 25:11, 12; 29:1, 10). "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Corinthians 14:32). No prophet can be too proud to study the Bible!

The time for the final deliverance of God's people from this world of sin is just before us! Where are the Daniels of our day who are earnestly searching the Scriptures with fasting and humiliation, seeking God for light and guidance? Those who follow Daniel's example will be taught of God through His Word, and by His Spirit. You are called to be among them.

Daniel 9:4, 5: And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.

We too are living in a time when it seems that the church of Christ is thwarted and baffled on every side, as the Jews were troubled during their captivity in Babylon. It will not help for us to begin to accuse one another, "to smite" our fellow

servants (Matthew 24:48-50) in fault-finding. Better let us do as Daniel did: though he was a man with whom even his enemies could find no fault, he took the sins of Israel upon himself, as it were, and confessed them as his sins. "We" have sinned, he says. "We" have done iniquity; "we" have rebelled.

We are told: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). By taking his people's sins upon himself, Daniel was experiencing a repentance for the sins of others, as though they were his sins (he had not joined in their apostasy!). This is the kind of repentance that Jesus experienced in our behalf. When He came to John the Baptist requesting baptism, John refused Him, for he knew that Jesus was sinless. But Jesus had to explain to him that He has come as "the Lamb of God" taking upon Himself the sins of the entire human race. He is to "be made sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21). John was not permitted to baptize anyone except "for repentance." This repentance that Jesus experienced in our behalf was a corporate

repentance—repenting for the sins of others, putting Himself in our place. As soon as we begin confessing "our" sin as Daniel did, realizing that the sin of others would be our sin but for the grace of Christ, revival and refreshing of the Holy Spirit will sweep through God's people. In verse 23 of this chapter we note that "at the beginning" of his supplication, the angel was sent to help him. Likewise, at the beginning of a heartbroken prayer of humble confession on our part, help will be sent to us.

Daniel 9:6-10: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou has driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers,

because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

The Lord is not pleased with a confession of sin which is not to the point. Merely for one to say "I have sinned" is not enough. The sinner must be specific, "confess that he hath sinned in that thing" (Leviticus 5:5). Then he can understand fully the nature of his sin or rebellion, and can repent truly.

Daniel understands the deep-dyed sin of rebellion that has ruined his people. Particularly he confesses how they have refused to listen to the prophets who warned them in the name of the Lord.

The "spirit of prophecy" is the "testimony of Jesus" (Revelation 19:10). To refuse, or to neglect, to listen to the prophets is to despise the word of Jesus. The ruin that befell ancient Israel in Daniel's

day is a pillar of fire still burning in the sky. It is an everlasting warning to every one of us, urging us today to heed and obey the messages of God's true prophets. "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20).

Daniel 9:11-14: Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

How often, when calamity or failure overtakes us, we are led to doubt God's love and watchcare, or His faithfulness. Those who are always ready to blame other people for their troubles will usually try to blame God also!

When someone has passed from death unto life (1 John 3:14) he begins to look into his own heart and understand his own sin, rather than blame someone else. It is those who are blind spiritually who cannot see their own weakness and sin. The blind invariably fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14). What a blessed gift to us is the Holy Spirit, whose first kind of work is to open our eyes to our own faults and sins, so that we can be healed (John 16:8).

Israel's calamities did not lead Daniel to doubt God's faithfulness, but strengthened his faith in God. He observed how the Lord "watched upon the evil and brought it upon us" (verse 14). If God is so faithful to bring upon His people the curses He has promised them in return for their unfaithfulness

(read Deuteronomy 28:15-68 to see the prophecy to which Daniel referred), He will be no less faithful to bring upon them the blessings He has promised for their faithfulness! "There are more blessings in God's curses than in man's benedictions."

Daniel 9:15-19: And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city

which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies, O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

Daniel pleads a reason that at present moves only a few of God's people to pray. Not for their own personal or selfish benefit, but that the Lord's name may be honored and glorified before the world, Daniel pleads that the Lord may have mercy upon Jerusalem. Moses used the same argument in pleading for Israel (Numbers 14:11-19). As we near the end, this paradigm shift in motivation will more and more impress God's people.

Daniel evidently thinks that the vision concerning the sanctuary (chapter 8:14) refers to the restoration of the old sanctuary service at Jerusalem at the end of 2300 literal days. Now the angel comes to instruct him clearly that the vision is for the latter days, not for his days long ago.

Notice Daniel's concern for the Lord's "sanctuary that is desolate." The only part of the "vision" of chapter 8 that the angel had not explained was that part about the 2300 days when the sanctuary should be cleansed. Can the Lord refuse to answer such an earnest, humble prayer as this? Of course not! Help is on the way. Daniel's questions will soon be answered. And don't forget, the Lord loves you as much as He loved Daniel. He hears your prayers, too. The angel is as ready to explain it to you.

Daniel 9:20-23: And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I

am come to shew thee; for thou are greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Can we now have a doubt, that the Lord hears prayer? Does He notice the wants of His humble child? No sooner does Daniel's prayer begin to ascend to heaven, than the command is issued to the mighty angel to "fly swiftly" to his help! There is no loitering in the "offices" of Heaven. "The first faint whisper of want by the child of God is instantly lodged upon the throne." Swifter than an e-mail, the answer comes "as the appearance of a flash of lightning" (Ezekiel 1:14). Trembling child, have faith in God!

What made Daniel to be "greatly beloved"? Does God have some favorite people whom He loves more than others? No, for Christ gave His blood for all of us equally. He did something for the entire human race. He has redeemed us all. If He died to save the world, He has given the gift of salvation to the world—but it's a gift that has to be received by faith. By His sacrifice on His cross, the

Son of God has given the gift of justification to "every man," but you can do like Esau did who "had" the "birthright" but "despised" it and "sold" it (Genesis 25:33, 34; Hebrews 12:16, 17). Paul makes clear that what Christ did for humanity was more than make them a mere "offer." Five times in one short passage he declares that Christ gave us a "free gift" of justification (Romans 5:14-18).

Daniel believed this "Good News" and chose to respond. For him Christ's legal justification became the experience of justification by faith. This is what made him obedient. What the angel says to Daniel, he says to you also. Besides, saying, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," say, "God so loved me. ..."

What "matter," what "vision," is the angel to explain to Daniel? It is a vision that Daniel has already received, for the angel commands him, "Understand the matter, and consider the vision." Other than the vision of chapter 8, which the angel was never able to finish explaining to Daniel, because he fainted (Daniel 8:27). All had been

satisfactorily explained at that time, except the strange word about the "two thousand three hundred days," and the sanctuary being cleansed. The angel now begins where he left off in chapter 8, verse 26.

Daniel 9:24: Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

The word "determined" means in biblical Hebrew to be "cut off." "Seventy weeks" are therefore cut off of the 2300 days, and are given to the Jews as their last opportunity, as a nation, for repentance.

Each week contains seven days; and 70 times 7 equals 490. Each day is a symbol of a year in Bible prophecy (see Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34); thus, we have 490 years "cut off of the 2300 years as a special opportunity for Daniel's people. (The

Hebrew clearly says "weeks," and most scholars see literal years here, thus confirming the year-day application.)

During these 490 years, some wonderful things are to take place:

- (1) "to finish transgressions;"
- (2) "to make an end of sins;" and
- (3) "to make reconciliation for iniquity."

God will give His people opportunity to fill up the cup of their iniquity, climaxing thousands of years of rebellion by their murder of the Son of God. But His death will not only complete their full measure of "transgressions;" it will "make an end of sins and make reconciliation for iniquity, "and bring in everlasting righteousness." And the heavenly sanctuary, including the Most Holy Place, is to be "anointed" or consecrated by the inauguration of the true High Priest, Christ Himself.

The desire of every true Jewish woman was to be the mother of this Messiah. Whenever a baby

boy was born, the relatives would gather hoping he might become the Savior. Now, at last, He was to come, "in the fulness of the time" (Galatians 4:4).

As the moon reflects the light of the glorious sun, so the sacrificial services of the Jewish temple reflected the glory of the redeeming work of Christ. But the offerings of animals were only a symbol, or a type. The Lamb of God must Himself come at the end of the 490 years. His blood "is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). His coming as Savior truly brings in "everlasting righteousness" to all who believe, and receive Him into their hearts.

How happy Daniel must have been to hear these blessed words of hope! The gospel is at last coming into its own. After so many long ages of darkness and bitter sin, wretched man is to have a mighty Hand extended to lift Him up from his pit of ruin. The reason why Jesus asked us especially to "read" Daniel "whoso readeth let him understand," (Matthew 24:15) is that special

insights to understand the gospel are embedded in Daniel.

Daniel 9:25: Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Now we see the event which marks the beginning of both the 490 years and 2300 years together: "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" at the end of the Jews' captivity in Babylon. When did this "decree" go forth? Fortunately, this actual decree has been preserved for us in the wisdom of God. It is found in Ezra 7:11-26. This decree gives full and complete permission for the restoration of the city and the temple services. It is the only decree which fulfills the prophecy. The date when this decree was given was the year 457 B.C.

It is marvelous how the years prophesied by the

angel are found to be exactly right in history. "Seven weeks," or 49 years, were allotted to building the city and the wall. Exactly on time, 49 years later, brings us to the events of the 13th chapter of Nehemiah, when the city and the wall were re-built and the people consecrated. This would be the year 408 B.C.

Unto the coming of "Messiah the Prince," or Christ, shall be a further sixty-two weeks, or sixty-nine weeks all together. Sixty-nine weeks of years is 483 years. In other words, Christ should make His appearance before Israel as the "anointed One" at His baptism exactly 483 years after the going forth of the commandment to rebuild and restore Jerusalem in 457 B.C. This is what the angel revealed to Daniel.

These 483 years end in the year 27 A.D. Luke tells us what happened in that year: "It came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou

art My beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21,22).

Immediately after He began His ministry, Jesus began preaching boldly, "The gospel of the kingdom, and saying, The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:14, 15). Surely Jesus was calling attention to this wonderful fulfillment of this time prophecy of Daniel 9:25! The long-looked-for Messiah had come. The people would have known if their pastors had been faithful in teaching them.

Daniel 9:26: And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

The Jews who sinned so grievously before being taken captive to Babylon did much worse than their fathers who had rejected and murdered the prophets of old. They "cut off," murdered, the Messiah who had come to save them! "He came

unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). But He was not "cut off for Himself. He had no sin of His own. He died for others. He Himself did no sin, nothing worthy of death. Even the pagan Pilate said of Him, "I find no fault in Him at all." He was cut off for our sins (Isaiah 53:8).

Gabriel precisely foretells the very time when the Messiah should be slain by the people. Notice the next verse:

Daniel 9:27: And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

We have already considered sixty-nine weeks of the seventy. During the last week of seven years, the Messiah Himself and His apostles shall labor one last time to save the Jewish nation. In the midst

of that "week" of seven years, Christ shall be lifted upon the cross as the sacrifice for sins, and "He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." In other words, the earthly services in the sanctuary were to come to an end (Hebrews 10:4-9).

Half of seven is three and one-half. Jesus' ministry lasted for exactly three and one-half years, at the close of which He was crucified. This we can be sure of by a careful study of the four gospels. Evidence is clear that He was baptized in the autumn of 27 A.D., and was crucified at the time of His fourth Passover, an event which always comes in the spring. Reliable evidence places our Lord's crucifixion in the spring of the year 31 A.D. A Roman Consul, Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator, is reported to have written: "In the consulate of Tiberius Caesar Aug. V and Aelius Sejanus (A.D. 31) our Lord Jesus Christ suffered, on the 8th of the Calends of April (25th of March) when there happened such an eclipse of the sun as was never before or since."

For the remainder of the seven years mercy still

lingered over the hard-hearted Jewish nation. The Lord did not condemn them because they crucified the Son of God. But they finally condemned themselves because they refused to repent of that sin!

For three and one-half years more the apostles preached only to the Jews. Jesus Himself commanded them, "Go not unto the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5,6). They were to be witnesses of Him first of all in Jerusalem and in all Judea (Acts 1:8), and only later to Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth. Thus He should "confirm the covenant with many for one week," seven years.

Three and one-half years from the crucifixion ("the midst of the week") bring us to the autumn of 34 A.D. In that year the Jewish nation finally and completely rejected the gracious appeal of the Holy Spirit, by murdering Stephen (Acts 7). They did not realize that what they were doing was a

fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. Their 490 years of opportunity were "cut off." Heaven's gracious call had been despised unto the last. So bitter is the sin of pride and unbelief. Henceforth we find the apostles declaring to the Jews, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

Marvelous has been the work that the Holy Spirit of God has done among the "Gentiles" since that day. Among every "kindred, tongue and people," the glad tidings of the Savior who came "to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity," is being proclaimed. But not forever will the door of mercy remain thus open. Soon the last opportunity will be offered to all the inhabitants of the earth. There will be a "consummation," an "end thereof ... with a flood."

When Jesus was crucified, the great temple was forsaken by God forever. "Your house is left unto you desolate," Jesus said, though the Jews realized

it not. The veil that separated the most holy apartment from the holy apartment was rent from top to bottom by an unseen hand (Matthew 23:38; 27:51). The "sacrifice and oblation" ceased with the offering once for all of the Lamb of God as the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, though the empty forms were carried on for a few more years by the unbelieving Jews. Finally in 70 A.D., the "people of the prince that shall come," the Roman soldiers, arrived and completely destroyed both the city of Jerusalem and the splendid Temple, and its end was "with a flood and ... desolations."

We are living in the sunset hour of our opportunity. Soon the work of judgment, represented by the "cleansing of the sanctuary," will be forever completed. Soon the Lamb of God, who has become our Great High Priest and Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, will minister His blood for the cleansing and saving of the last repentant and believing human soul. A little longer the Lord graciously waits, "is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). Won't you come to the Savior, while there is

time? "Behold, now is the accepted time" (2 Corinthians 6:2). The very last page of the Bible emphasizes the invitation: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

No man, not even the angels in heaven, knows the day or the hour when the High Priest will complete His labor as Savior from sin (see Matthew 24:36). In that day, men will continue in their daily business as did the men of Noah's day, and Lot's day. "As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:38, 39). While I am writing these lines, while you are reading them, might come that solemn hour that fixes our eternal destiny. Shall we not pray that we may be "accounted worthy?" (Luke 21:36).

Lord, show Your longsuffering toward us today! You are not willing that any of us should

perish. Lead us by Your Holy Spirit, to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9) The sounds of buying and selling, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, planting and building, are ringing in our ears. (Luke 17:27, 28) Oh, grant us to hear Your quiet knocking at the door of our hearts. (Revelation 3:20) Turn us now to behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, which is our sin, my sin. (John 1:29) We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 10

Why Prayer Seems Often Unanswered

Daniel 10:1: In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

Now we come to Daniel's last vision. This was unlike his previous ones—it was not given in mysterious symbols, but in clear language. The Lord wants us to understand it! It clarifies the prophecies of chapters 2, 7, and 8.

Daniel 10:2, 3: In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

How deep was Daniel's desire for light and understanding is shown by his willingness to fast for three full weeks. He would probably have fasted longer had the angel not come when he did in answer to his prayer.

This does not mean that he abstained completely from food, for God doesn't want His people to injure themselves. Fasting is not an exercise to awaken God, or to attract His attention, or to arouse His sympathy. Self-inflicted suffering does us no good. Daniel ate sufficient food to sustain his health and his life during these three weeks. By abstaining from "pleasant bread" and "flesh" and "wine," Daniel avoided rich foods, sweets, and the kind of overeating that benumbs the body, mind, and nerves.

There are many who eat so much and such a rich variety of food that their minds are blocked and stupefied. Spiritual truths make no impression on them. Jesus has warned us of the danger in these last days of overeating, and eating the wrong kind

of foods (Luke 21:34). By his fasting, Daniel put himself in the best possible physical condition in order to understand with a clear mind what the Lord would teach him. Wise people long have said that abstemiousness in diet is rewarded with mental and moral vigor.

Daniel 10:4-10: And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me to corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words; and

when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

Here Daniel saw the glorious radiance of the Son of God, the same Being whom John saw in vision (Revelation 1:14-16). The glory of Christ was too great for Daniel's companions. They ran to hide. That which was death to those who cherished sin in their hearts, was life to the man who had humbly confessed his sins and sought forgiveness.

To those who cherish sin in their hearts, the voice of God is as thunder, as the voice of the Father was thunder to the Jews when the Greeks came to Christ (John 12:28-30). To the one who would follow truth, His voice is clear "as the voice of a multitude."

Then the angel Gabriel came and touched Daniel to arouse him. In his touch there was strength. So those who abide in Christ will

strengthen all whom they "touch" in their daily life.

Daniel 10:11, 12: And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then he said unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

The Bible nowhere teaches that men should worship angels. There are not "many gods." When the apostle John felt he should bow before the angel to worship him, the angel strictly said no, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God" (Revelation 19:10).

There is no honor that men of the world could give greater than that given to Daniel. Imagine—the angel said he was a man "greatly beloved" by God and the inhabitants of heaven!

Daniel's humility, his repentance, his unselfish love for his people, his longing to know the things of heaven, his perseverance in seeking to be reconciled to God—all had won for him the sympathy and tender love of heavenly beings. Such love is for those who feel least worthy of it.

The angel kindly told Daniel, "Fear not." Angels of God are not evil spirits seeking to do us harm, looking for opportunities to accuse us. They are not selfish, seeking bribes and gifts from us in order that we may induce them to do us favors or to protect us, as superstitious people usually think of the "spirits." Heavenly angels love us, and seek our welfare and happiness." Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14).

Each believer, even the child who trusts in Christ, is given a special guardian angel to watch over him and to keep him from all evil (Matthew 18:10, 11). Nothing can separate us from the loving watchcare of these angels every moment of the day

or night, except some sin that we deliberately choose to hang on to. Not a hair of our heads shall perish (Matthew 10:30; Luke 21:18).

Notice that from the very first day that Daniel began to fast and pray, his prayer was heard, and the angel was commanded to go to help him. Why then did Daniel have to wait for three full weeks before the answer arrived? Do we not have the same experience often, of waiting long for answers to our prayers? If Daniel who was "greatly beloved" had to wait so long, surely we should not become impatient. Let's find out why Daniel had to wait so long. There is something here that will reveal to us the hidden secrets that lie beyond our prayers. The angel lets us peek beyond the curtain that separates heaven from our view:

Daniel 10:13, 14: But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter

days: for yet the vision is for many days.

The trouble is not with the angel, who is immediately sent to help Daniel. The trouble is with the prince of Persia, who is not a worshipper of God. God cannot force his will, for that is contrary to the way He works with men. So a struggle follows in the palace of the king of Persia. Satan himself probably is there, fighting against the efforts of the angel Gabriel to turn the heart of the king toward God's people. Day after day passes. Still Daniel continues to pray on, knowing nothing of the struggle going on behind the curtain. He may be tempted to think God has not heard his prayer, as we are often tempted to think concerning our apparently unanswered prayers.

Then "Michael," one mightier than the angels, comes to help Gabriel. The hosts of evil cannot stand before Him. The king of Persia no longer resists the divine influence. The battle is won and Gabriel comes now to tell Daniel about it. You and I may not know the secret struggles that are set in motion as a result of our prayers. But let us not

doubt. Our prayers are being answered!

Angels are also constant visitors in the government councils of modern nations until the fatal day when they utterly reject the truth of God. The Holy Watcher is a constant witness in the assemblies of rulers. Every just and equitable law that promotes freedom and true prosperity is the result of an influence brought by the angels of heaven.

"Michael" means "He who is like God." Jude tells us that he is the "archangel," the chief angel (verse 9). Gabriel calls Him "one of the chief" angels or the first one. By reading 1 Thessalonians 4:16 we learn that the dead are raised from their graves by the voice of the "archangel." John 5:28 tells us that it is the voice of the Son of God who calls them from their graves. Thus it is clear that Michael, the "archangel," is really the Son of God (see also Daniel 12:1).

Daniel 10:15-21: And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the

ground, and I became dumb. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou has strengthened me. Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

Again the angel speaks to Daniel those words that are greater than the statues erected to world heroes, "O man greatly beloved." God loves you, why do you fear? What makes us weak is usually a sense of guilt for our sins. When we are washed in the blood of Jesus and our fear is taken away, we too are strengthened.

After explaining to Daniel what he wishes to understand, Gabriel must return to fight "with" (or on the side of) the prince of Persia until the kingdom of Greece comes. The message he brings to Daniel is a secret. No one knows it but "Michael your prince"—Christ the Savior, God the Father, the angel, and poor Daniel. But what a glorious chain of revelation! The secret passes from God the Father to His prophet, and thence to us.

Chapter 11

What Happens Just Before the End

Daniel 11:1, 2: Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

In this chapter, there are no symbols or figures to confuse us. As simply as one man could describe something to another, the angel tells Daniel the news of events coming in world history.

The angel Gabriel helped King Darius in his reign. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs 21:1). The Lord sends His angels today to help the rulers of the world who

strive to preserve peace so that the work of God can prosper unhindered.

The three kings who "stood up" or reigned in Persia were: Cambyses, son of Cyrus, Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspes. The fourth was Xerxes, richer than them all. It was he who foolishly stirred up war against the young and vigorous kingdom of Greece.

Only the most important events are brought to our attention in this prophecy. Often hundreds of years intervene between verses. We view world history as one standing on a high peak looks over a range of hills and mountains, discerning through the haze only the tops of the hills lifted above the fog, the valleys hidden from his view. The next verse skips over the nine descendants of Xerxes, and introduces us to Alexander the Great:

Daniel 11:3, 4: And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided

toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

Alexander "did according to his will." Man's will always leads him into trouble (see Isaiah 57:17). Alexander's will led him into alcoholism. He died suddenly in 323 B.C., leaving his Grecian kingdom to those who would fight for it. His son, or "posterity," received no crown. In a short time his entire family had been murdered. Of what value were his riches and glory?

Four kingdoms emerged out of the wars and wreckage: Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. Two of them, the king of the territory north of Palestine and the king of the territory south of Palestine, become the important "kings" who star in this drama. This geographical designation early in the vision seems to define throughout the chapter the identity of the kings of the "north" and the "south," if we keep in mind "the law of first mention":

Daniel 11:5, 6: And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion, his dominion shall be a great dominion. And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

Cassander and Lysimachus at first ruled over the west and north, but fell before Seleucus, who then became the "king of the north." In the meantime, Ptolemy of Egypt is known as "the king of the south." These two kingdoms fight on for centuries, and they re-appear at the end of the chapter.

The only way we can reasonably understand this chapter is to identify the "king of the north" as that power which rules or occupies the territory

which had been the northern area of Alexander's kingdom, and the "king of the south" is that power which ruled or occupied the part that was the southern area. Dynasties and families, kings and rulers, may change; political powers may be replaced by others; centuries may go by, but the land territories remain the same.

Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt (the "king of the south") made an agreement with Antiochus Theos of Syria ("the king of the north") to give him his daughter Berenice in marriage, requiring Antiochus to put away his first wife, Laodice. The motive was to unite the two warring royal families.

But it seems God never blesses adultery. "She shall not retain the power of the arm." The trick to cement their friendship failed. Laodice finally poisoned her husband, Berenice herself was murdered, "and they that brought her" were slain with her, including her son. Do adulterous unions often end in disaster?

Daniel 11:7-9: But out of a branch of her roots

shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail: and shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north. So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

The "branch out of her roots" was her own brother, Ptolemy Eurgetes. When he came to the throne he immediately led an army to the territory of the "north" to avenge the murder of his sister, crushed his enemies, and raided the wealth of his captives. The spoil he carried back to Egypt. The mention of "Egypt" makes certain that we are to understand that country to be the "king of the south." By analogy, our understanding of "the king of the north" is confirmed.

Daniel 11:10, 11: But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and

pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress. And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

Hatred and revenge dominated the world. Seleucus' sons determined to avenge the conquest of their father's kingdom, and prepared to invade Egypt, re-conquering their father's kingdom on the way.

Naturally, Ptolemy Philopater of Egypt was furious at this new attack, and went forth to battle. Again Egypt emerged victorious in arms, at the Battle of Raphia in 217 B.C.

Daniel 11:12, 13: And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up: and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it. For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after

certain years with a great army and with much riches.

Ptolemy, not knowing God nor understanding the pride of his human heart, gloried in his victory. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). He had crushed mighty armies; but his own passions and lusts crushed him in turn. Disgusted with their shamefully lewd ruler, his own subjects rebelled against him. He began a heartless persecution of the Jews. He died by destroying himself, leaving his infant son, Ptolemy Epiphanes, to the throne.

He was joined by "many" who stood up against Egypt, including king Philip of Macedon who proposed to divide Egypt's kingdom among other kings. Egypt's day of glory now comes to an end.

Daniel 11:14-16: And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall. So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and

take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand. But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

"The robbers of thy people" in the Hebrew is "the breakers" or "oppressors of thy people [the Jews]." "The vision" here is chazon, referring us back to Daniel's vision of "the little horn" (8:11, 12). It was indeed at this time that the Romans began to "exalt themselves" toward becoming a world empire. But the angel encourages God's people, as if to say, Don't be dismayed, the time must come when "they shall fall." Look to the end—those who oppose God's truth will not prosper forever.

By this time, Egypt had come under the protection of the Romans. Antiochus, "the king of the north," aided by Philip of Macedon, had determined to wrest all of Egypt's territory from

Ptolemy, the infant king. The Romans warned him to let Egypt alone, but he refused to listen. He overran Palestine and began to harass Egypt's possessions in Asia Minor. A second and a third time the Romans warned him to desist, but he plunged on in his war of conquest. Even the well-fortified cities of Gaza and Sidon (the "most fenced cities") finally surrendered to his might. When Antiochus invaded Greece itself in 197 B.C., the Romans were at last compelled to fight him, and defeated him at Magnesia. Antiochus fled back to Syria, like a dog with his tail between his legs. He was forced to accept humiliating terms of surrender offered by the Romans.

In this way the Romans are the new power introduced as "he that cometh against him" and he that "shall do according to his own will." The Romans entered the "glorious land" of Palestine in 161 B. C. conquering it in 63 B.C.

Year by year, Rome is growing in power. Now she has already conquered Macedon and Thrace, Syria and Judea. Now all that remains of

Alexander's proud kingdom is "the king of the south," Egypt. Rome must now conquer that kingdom also.

Daniel 11:17: He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.

A very beautiful woman, Cleopatra, "the daughter of women," played a prominent part in giving Egypt to Rome. Her father had been king of Egypt. Before he died in 51 B.C., he decreed that the crown of Egypt and its rulership should be left to his son and daughter to share jointly between them. He also specified that until the two children were old enough to reign, he would place them under the guardianship of the Romans.

But the two soon began to quarrel, for the elder, Ptolemy, had deprived his sister Cleopatra of her rights. Julius Caesar, the Roman consul, demanded

that the two appear before him so he could decide which was to be favored in judgment. Cleopatra, now a grown young woman, had heard that Caesar was a licentious man, and determined to win his favor by appealing to his lustful passions.

She had herself wrapped in a large carpet and carried to the Roman consul's apartment as a "gift" for Caesar. The bundle containing the beautiful girl was carried into Caesar's private apartments. When he opened it, out stepped the enticingly dressed Cleopatra, ready to charm and seduce the Roman to give judgment in her favor. Caesar liked what she did, and yielded. In the war that followed, Ptolemy was killed, so Caesar conquered Egypt. But "she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him." Cleopatra being fickle, she soon joined herself to Caesar's enemy, Antony, and used all her power against Rome.

Daniel 11:18, 19: After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach

he shall cause it to turn upon him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

The important facts in these verses are that Caesar should take part in another war, after which his own "reproach" should turn upon himself. He should return to the "fort of his own land," the city of Rome, and there "stumble and fall."

In 47 B.C. Caesar entered Rome in triumph, where he was showered with every kind of reward and honor, including the title of dictator for life. Rome had up to this time been a republic. Caesar's enemies now feared he would become a king or emperor, and change the age-old form of Roman government. In March, 44 B.C., when Caesar was least expecting it, he "stumbled and fell," being murdered in the senate house by his former friends. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). Thus ended the life of another of the world's most successful and powerful men of arms.

Heaven was watching, for the birth of the Son of God was near.

Daniel 11:20: Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within a few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.

Augustus Caesar, his successor, was a man of peace in contrast to Julius Caesar, a man of war. He was famous as a "raiser of taxes." Luke speaks of "a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1), at the time that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Augustus' days were the "glory of the kingdom" of Rome. Peace was universal, corruption had been curbed, justice was maintained, and learning was promoted. He died a few years after the birth of Christ, not at the hand of assassins as happened so often, but peacefully in bed.

Daniel 11:21, 22: And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in

peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.

Augustus was succeeded by a truly "vile person," Tiberius Caesar. He obtained the kingdom "by flatteries" in a peaceful way. When he became emperor, he revealed an unspeakably vile character, murdering innocent people, dissembling and flattering his enemies before arresting them to kill them. Seneca says Tiberius maintained one continual drunken spell from the time he began to drink until he died.

But Tiberius was washed away before the "flood" of wrathful opposition which his vileness had aroused. In his seventy-eighth year of age, he was murdered. Like a flood, he had "overflowed" many; now the flood washed him away, and "broke" him.

But Another was "broken" during the reign of Tiberius Caesar—the Prince of the covenant, the

Christ, the Son of God, mentioned as the "Messiah the Prince" in Daniel 9:25-27. This was the one great event of all world history. Rising above the stormy waves of a sea of corrupt human history, stands this eternal Rock of Ages—the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whence we have everlasting salvation.

Please note carefully that the death of Christ, the "Prince of the covenant," confirms beyond all doubt the interpretation of these verses in Daniel 11. Christ died only once, under only one government, under only one Roman emperor—Tiberius Caesar. Like an expert surveying land, we see this landmark as making certain our understanding so far of the history in this prophecy.

People from the four quarters of the earth gathered around Christ in His last hours. The Greeks representing the cultured and proud of earth, came saying, "We would see Jesus" (John 12:21). The thief, representing the fallen failures of human life, repented as he was crucified with Jesus. The Roman soldier, a European, was

convicted and said, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). Simon of Cyrene from North Africa bore His heavy cross to Calvary, the first of hundreds of thousands of Africans who since have gladly shared the sufferings of Christ.

Daniel 11:23-26: And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time. And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow; and many shall fall down slain.

Thus far, the angel has taken us step by step in world history down to the time of the crucifixion of Christ, the Prince of the covenant. This came near the close of the "seventy weeks," or 490 years of chapter 9.

Verse 23 should begin a new paragraph in our Bibles, for the angel is now taking us on another journey, this time bringing us down to the final era of the work of God on earth and the everlasting triumph of His church. But he backtracks to the time when the Jewish nation made a covenant with the Romans ("after the league made with him"), and shows us that from the time that Rome assumed the protection of Judea, she began to develop from a small army, in a clever way.

This "covenant" with the Jews was made in 161 B.C., before the days of Rome's glory. From that time, Rome's rise to undisputed world leadership was indeed a miracle. Whereas most kingdoms are established by war and conquest, various kings bequeathed their crowns to the Romans in peace and by choice. Distant nations learned of the

wisdom and justice of the Romans, and invited their protection. Rome further did what no nation had ever previously done: divided the taxes and "spoil" among its conquered or subjugated peoples. It was an attempt at just and benevolent government for the good of all people. (It was later that Rome became cruel.)

The "strong hold" is doubtless the capital city of Rome, from which "he" will prosper in war and craft as long as heaven permits. The "time" is considered by some to be a year of prophetic time in symbol, that is, 360 years literally (see notes on chapter 7:25).

The angel is still going back to events following the league made with the Jews in 161 B.C. We come to the war between Rome and "the king of the south," or Egypt. Mark Antony and Augustus Caesar were contending for the sole rulership of Rome. Antony had entrenched himself in Egypt, where he had yielded himself captive to the lustful appeal of Egypt's queen Cleopatra. Antony and Cleopatra together assembled a fleet of

warships. The kings of Thrace and Asia Minor joined them against Caesar Augustus and the Roman soldiers. Wealth, numbers, and power were on their side. But the inspired prophecy declared that "the king of the south shall not stand." At the most important part of the sea battle off Actium on September 2,31 B.C., Cleopatra suddenly became frightened and sailed away in her ship. Antony, foolishly infatuated with her, followed, and thus abandoned the victory to Augustus Caesar.

Those "who fed of the portion" of Antony's "meat," the land armies and generals who were fighting on his side, became disgusted with what he had done, went over to join the armies of Caesar. In the end, no one remained loyal to the foolish Antony—even Cleopatra betrayed him. He took his own life in despair.

Daniel 11:27: And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.

These two, Antony and Caesar, had professed to be loyal friends, but inwardly were enemies contending for the throne. In order to cement their friendship, Antony had married Caesar's sister. But none of their attempts to unite prospered.

Daniel 11:28: Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

We shall avoid confusion if we remember that the "king" mentioned in these verses does not necessarily refer to a single individual, but to a kingdom or a power prominent in history. Caesar returned to Rome with great glory and much booty from his conquest, his triumphal procession requiring three days to pass.

We learn that "his heart [that of Rome] shall be against the holy covenant." Written for the Jews, this describes how the Romans were against them, to whom they understood He had made a "holy covenant." The Roman general Titus besieged the

city of Jerusalem for five months. So terrible was the famine that some of the Jewish women ate their own children. This was in fulfillment of Moses' warning that should the people of God refuse to hear the greatest of all prophets, Jesus Himself when He should come, they would be left without His guidance and protection. "Thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee" (Deuteronomy 28:49-58). So terrible is the result that comes upon a people who reject the only Savior of the world! In 70 A.D. Titus completely destroyed the city of Jerusalem and their magnificent Temple.

Daniel 11:29, 30: At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

But now we come to the time when Rome was weakened and corrupted. The move of the capital to Constantinople preceded the final break-up and conquest of the Roman empire by the barbarians of Africa and Europe in 476 A.D. (The legs of iron of Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic image representing the pagan empire of Rome now give place to the divided kingdoms of Europe symbolized by the feet of iron and clay.)

Foremost among the barbarian nations that wrecked the Roman Empire were the Vandals of northern Africa. Their capital was the city of Carthage on the coast of the Mediterranean. (In the Hebrew language, the name "Chittim" had reference to all the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean.) The Vandals fought against the Empire and pillaged Rome with their numerous ships which set sail from Carthage.

Rome was "grieved." The glory of the pagan Roman Empire was extinguished.

Now began another form of activity. The "little horn" power which we met in 7:21-25, comes on stage again. The Vandals who conquered Rome, together with two other tribes, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths, opposed the rising power of the papacy. These three kingdoms were brought to our notice in chapter 7 as three of the "ten kingdoms" of the fourth beast, Rome. They were to be as horns plucked up by the roots by the "little horn," the papacy.

Justinian, the Roman emperor, longed to conquer Carthage and the Vandals as punishment for their raids against Rome. But he feared to start, for Rome's army was not as strong as formerly. The needed encouragement was supplied by the Roman Catholic bishop who admonished him to conquer the Vandals because they were considered "enemies of Christ."

Thus the Roman emperor began to "give heed to those who forsake the holy covenant" (RSV). The bishops had indeed forsaken the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

It was for the purpose of conquering the Vandals and their friends that the emperor Justinian made his famous decree exalting the bishop of Rome to be the "head of the church" and the "corrector of heretics." Thus was born the papacy in 538 A.D., in remarkable fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. The world began to enter its midnight—the noontide of the papacy.

Daniel 11:31: And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

Have you ever watched events take place on a stage at night where a spotlight shines on the different players or actors who at that moment are the center of attention? Daniel 11 is the stage throughout the 2300 years of Daniel 8:14 and on into the "time of the end." Verse by verse, the spotlight of inspired prophecy picks out for us the key power that is at that particular time the focus of God's revelation. The key is its special relation to

His work on earth.

Now we pass from pagan Rome to papal Rome. This verse takes us back to chapter 8:11, 12, where we read of "the little horn" taking up within itself "the daily" and "casting down truth to the ground." This verse therefore explains 8:11-13. The capital of the empire of Rome has now been removed to Constantinople (present day Istanbul), and the bishop of Rome is left as the most important person in the West. We now see the papacy taking the spotlight of prophetic attention. It is absorbing something significant, taking it up within itself—paganism—the "continual in transgression."

The Hebrew word "arms" means military might employed to strengthen the papacy and make it supreme. "The sanctuary of strength" likewise means a dedicated place of military might. (In the Hebrew, the word is miqdash, a different word than qodesh in Daniel 8:14 which can mean only God's true sanctuary. (In Isaiah 16:12 and Ezekiel 28:18 we find that miqdash can mean Satan's, or a pagan, sanctuary.) Some scholars see this "sanctuary of

strength" as the base or home of paganism, that is, the city of Rome that was the center of world paganism, sacked in 410 A.D. The Hebrew term here cannot fit any designation of God's sanctuary in heaven.

As we saw in Daniel 8, the word "sacrifice" is not part of the original text which says "the continual in transgression" (8:12). Therefore it refers to the continual scourge of paganism that was such a trial to God's people in exile in Babylon, and continuing on later to the time of the papacy which proved to become something even worse. The chazon vision in chapter 8 presented as two twin evils "the continual in transgression" and "the transgression of desolation," the latter as the worse.

In "the vision" (chazon) of Daniel 8:11-13, the prophet saw paganism being lifted up, or incorporated, or absorbed into "the little horn," the papacy. This was a unique development in world history. Several authorities comment more wisely than they possibly knew:

"The more Christianity [that is, Roman Catholicism] supplanted the heathen worship, the more did it absorb the elements of paganism."

"While Protestants have traditionally held to the idea of a syncretized church to help justify their existence, recent scholarship has demonstrated that the paganism of late antiquity did not die out after the fourth century, but rather attached itself to the church, reshaping it... [in] the church's assimilation of pagan forms and Europe's subsequent plunge into the night."

"Paganism is a perpetual eclipse of Divine Grace. Many Christians live within the penumbra of this baleful eclipse."

But here in chapter 11:31 we see a different Hebrew verb used. Paganism is not said to be absorbed in the little horn as in chapter 8, but "taken away" politically and militarily, so that no earthly power could stand against the papacy. The professed followers of Christ "forsook the holy

covenant" (verse 30) by which God had promised to be their power or support, and turned to obtain it from the civil government, the "arms" of generals and captains of armies. This prepared the way for setting up "the abomination that maketh desolate," something that proved worse than the "continual intransgression."

The vision God gave to Daniel describes the religion of the papacy as paganism dressed in the garments of Christ. "He that heareth My word," said Jesus, "and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life. He is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). This faith of Jesus is the opposite of the "abomination that maketh desolate."

Daniel 11:32: And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.

Good things become "corrupt" when they spoil. The faith of Jesus was the most beautiful and powerful truth the world had seen. In Christ's day

(as in ours) even His enemies could "find no fault in Him." Satan learned not to try to oppose Christ openly. He must "corrupt" Christianity from within. The papacy became his agency.

In what way did he "do wickedly"? There were steps in apostasy:

1. Early church "fathers" began to interpret the Bible according to pagan thought. Probably the first Christian teaching to be so corrupted was the doctrine of love which is agape in the New Testament Greek language. The Hellenistic idea of eros gradually infiltrated agape in the minds of the people. This paralleled the absorption of the doctrine of natural immortality into the church.

2. Next, in order to win more "converts," the teachings of the Bible were altered to accommodate idol veneration introduced in violation of the second of the ten commandments. In order to excuse this sin, the second was dropped by the Roman church, and the tenth was divided into two.

3. The true Sabbath, the memorial of God's creation, was gradually set aside, and the first day of the week, dedicated to the worship of the sun by the ancient pagans, was exalted in its place. Thus the seal of the authority of the God of heaven was set aside.

4. The Bible was kept from the common people. It was considered so difficult that only the priests and clergy could interpret it. Thus the voice of the Holy Spirit was silenced.

5. Due to the false teaching that the dead are still alive, the way was opened for the veneration of the virgin Mary and the "saints," thus people were led to look away from Christ in whom alone we can have forgiveness, to the merits of sinful man himself. (This has grown into contemporary efforts to make Mary the co-redemptrix.)

6. The pope and the priests assumed the right to forgive sins, which only Christ can do. People were led to trust in their own works for salvation instead

of trusting only the righteousness and salvation given by the Son of God.

7. Religious liberty was taken away. Men were forced, under pain of imprisonment, torture, and death, to profess a faith they could not believe in their hearts. People were martyred during the Dark Ages simply because they dared to confess Christ as their only Savior, rather than yield homage to the mystery of iniquity.

But there were always some here and there who did "know their God." The Lord Jesus has always had those in every country and in every generation who serve Him faithfully. Among those who stoutly resisted these false teachings were the Waldenses hiding in the Piedmont Alps. They helped to preserve for us the light of the knowledge of God. They were forerunners of the Protestant Reformation. They kept alive the faith in the ministry of Christ as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. They bled and died that we today might enjoy religious liberty, and that we might have all the glorious light of Christ's truth. In

our day now there are thousands who know Him truly, who will not sell their faith in Him for any price whatsoever. May we be among them!

Daniel 11:33: And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

The "many days" were the 1260 years. Faithful servants of Christ such as the Waldenses, disguising themselves as merchants, traveled throughout Europe teaching the knowledge of the Bible and the ministry of Christ as our High Priest. This they did in a quiet way to those who would listen.

Daniel 11:34, 35: Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

Men such as John Wycliffe of England, Huss and Jerome of Bohemia, and Luther of Germany, provided the "help" here mentioned. The people were taught to exercise faith in Christ alone as High Priest. He "ever liveth to make intercession" for those who believe (Hebrews 7:25). No power in heaven or hell could ever "take away" His heavenly ministry! Thousands were set free from the chains of darkness that had bound their souls.

But the Reformation itself eventually became corrupted. The Reformers tired of the constant struggle, and sought the aid and support of their respective governments for the victory of truth, instead of depending on Christ alone. The perennial problem was the union of church and state! The gospel message was choked by selfishness and politics. The Protestant church once again became captive to the rulers of this world. "Many cleaved to them with flatteries," said the angel.

The Reformation begun by Wycliffe and Luther is still going forward today. Surely we want

to have fellowship with those who follow the light of Christ, those who "know their God ... and do exploits"!

We are now brought to "the time of the end." We learned in chapter 7 that the papacy was to rule for only 1260 years. In 1798 Berthier took the pope prisoner, his temporal power was weakened, and the Dark Ages came to an end. This was therefore the beginning of the "time of the end." We're living in it now!

Daniel 11:36-39: And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and

pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

"The king" here is obviously the power who will be the center of attention at this particular time of history, near the end of the 1260 years of papal supremacy. The long night is drawing to a close. Protestantism has set multitudes free from subservience to the papacy's control. Now one of her most faithful "children" rises up in rebellion against the teachings of the papacy. These untruths provoked the most awful depravity among the people of one of Europe's most enlightened nations—the kingdom of France.

At this point in our study we will look at this prophecy as did the Protestant churches of the early 19th century. Among them thousands awoke as from a long sleep to realize that the books of Daniel and the Revelation were not "sealed," but were "open" for study and understanding. The

British and Foreign and American Bible Societies were formed shortly after the end of the 1260 years. In many denominations there was a phenomenal "Advent awakening" that thrilled multitudes of Christians. The "time of the end" had begun with the close of the 1260 years of papal supremacy. Night had given place to dawning.

They understood Jesus' words, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34), to mean that Jesus planned to come in their lifetime.

These Christian believers came to understand Daniel virtually as we have presented it in this book. Like a jig-saw puzzle coming to fit together, they were overjoyed to see that the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation complemented each other and constituted a precious "present truth" (in the expression of 2 Peter 3:1). Event after event of then current history validated their comprehension of Daniel.

Now came some tumultuous happenings in the

great nation of France (which had recently so generously helped the fledgling United States of America to gain her independence). For these many devout Christians, a giant upheaval in France seemed to be the precise fulfillment of this prophecy. Detail after detail fell into what seemed to be an inspired "place" in the prophetic picture.

All eyes of the Western world were turned on France. And in this conclusion of Daniel 11, the "spotlight" of prophetic attention is directed toward her as on center stage. In 1793 the leaders of France openly discarded the Christian religion (as they understood Roman Catholicism to be). For good measure they threw out the Bible also (in their ignorance of its teachings). In the name of the nation of France, they officially denied the existence of God, a declaration unique in that it was one of the decrees of the governing Assembly of France, and not the private opinions voiced by individuals. When "Thirteen Colonies" had officially "declared" their belief that "all men are created equal," France officially declared the non-existence of this Creator! Thus "the king," the

government itself, publicly "did according to his will," and magnified himself "above every god," and spoke "marvelous things against the God of gods."

The Roman bishop of Paris joined in these atheistic proceedings! Publicly he declared that he had been deceived all his life in following the "Christian" religion, and stated openly that there is no God. Many who had all their lives professed to be Christian, followed his example.

"The king" did not "regard the God of his fathers." All Christian worship was forbidden. The gold and silver in the churches was appropriated by the government. Church bells were broken and cast into cannons. The Bible was burned publicly. The Bible week of seven days was abolished and a "week" of ten days for a time substituted. Marriage was abolished as a sacred ordinance, declared to be binding only during the will or pleasure of the two parties. Thus the natural "desire of women" to be loved and cared for by a life-long husband was not "regarded."

But soon this excess of revolution frightened the rulers of France. They realized that the people must worship something, or soon all law and order would become extinct. They devised a new "god" whom their fathers knew not. A popular dancer of questionable reputation was chosen as the representative of "Reason" and was publicly set before the people as their proper object of sacrifice and worship. This was the new "god" to take the place of the "God of their fathers." This woman was taken to the cathedral of Notre Dame and installed as the nation's "Goddess of Reason." All over the land of France, similar ceremonies were held.

This "god" could be called the "god of forces," for the purpose of the public worship of "Reason" was to secure the loyalty and support of the people for the armies of France soon to embark in an attempt to conquer the world.

Christianity, when it is pure, is a most powerful agency for the enlightenment, progress, freedom,

and prosperity of a nation. Corrupt and apostate "Christianity" is paganism with a Christian robe. It leaves unsubdued the pride and self-worship of the natural human heart (the gadal of Daniel's "continual in transgression"). It tends always to provoke excesses of hatred such as in the French Revolution of 1793-1799. "I will walk at liberty for I seek Thy precepts," David said (Psalm 119:45). Jesus' "yoke is easy," and His "burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

The leaders of revolution and atheism in France occupied the "most strong holds," the authority of government, until 1799. One of the most noteworthy actions of the Revolution was the confiscation and redistribution of the wealth of some two-thirds of the land of France, which had been formerly held in large estates by the church of Rome and the former nobility and rulers of France. This land was then divided and sold at auction in small pieces to anyone who could buy. So, as the prophecy declared, "he ... shall divide the land for gain."

Out of the terror of the French Revolution arose one of the most prominent figures of the 19th century—Napoleon Bonaparte. In the early 19th century, multitudes of Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians saw in Daniel 11 this history delineated. If we had been living in their time, we would have seen it, too.

Could it be that what was "present truth" then is still present truth today? This book takes the position that it was indeed the intention of Jesus Christ to have returned to earth to claim His people within the lifetime of those who first began to understand Daniel and Revelation in the opening of "the time of the end." Their prophetic expositions were carefully studied; their conclusions were conscientious and reasonable. Truth is still truth. God's word has not failed, but God's people have failed to "follow on" to grasp the ever-developing "light" of justification by faith. Their failures have delayed the final victorious conclusion of "the great controversy between Christ and Satan." The delay has not been due to faulty prophetic understandings, but to a failure to grasp the self-

humbling revelations of "the everlasting gospel." It must yet "lighten the earth with glory" when the fourth angel's message of Revelation 18 is finally proclaimed clearly.

Verse 40: And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

We remember how the angel spoke to Daniel many times at the beginning of this chapter about the "king of the north" and the "king of the south." They are the two principal subjects of this prophecy. They are the powers that have figured in the northern and southern portions of what was originally the empire of Alexander the Great. This is the simple pattern of identity that apparently God has chosen.

Evidently the reason why the Lord is so careful to dwell in detail upon these obscure wars and

counter-conquests of the kings of the "north" and of the "south" is to establish our faith beyond all doubt in the fulfillment of the closing part of this prophecy. Egypt has remained the "king of the south" all through this history, and an Islamic power has for hundreds of years occupied the territory which was formerly that of the "king of the north."

There seems to be no reason given in the prophecy for us to assume that the angel now wants Daniel to understand the "kings" of the north and south in any other way. The prophecy of this chapter has until now been very straightforward, never symbolic. With the understanding that the angel is continuing with the same clear language used in verses 1-39, he describes an upheaval between the nations at the very "time of the end," which has been identified as 1798.

Reverent-minded Bible students at the time and shortly after when they could view the events in some retrospect, had some convictions about what this could mean. Such a war did take place in that

very year. Napoleon considered that the Egyptians had committed "outrages against France" and made war with them. With superior might, threatening to conquer Egypt, he provoked the Sultan of Turkey to fight on the side of the Egyptians. On September 2, 1798, the Sultan declared war against France. The English joined the Turks, and with their combined fleets of "many ships," forced Napoleon to retreat for the first time in his career. These well-known developments in what was current history strengthened the convictions of Bible students that the "time of the end" had indeed begun.

We know that God has devoted one entire chapter in Revelation to the history of Islam in prophecy (chapter 9). Could He also be directing our attention here to a parallel passage in some way? We do know that Islam figures on the world stage today far more vividly than any of us thought a generation ago.

But understanding has been far from complete and satisfying. We can go no further than to reaffirm our confidence that history fulfills

prophecy, and wait for the Holy Spirit to teach the church of today to understand more clearly. Abundant evidence established the prophetic faith of thoughtful Christians in the nineteenth century; our spiritual failures of being "lukewarm" in our devotion to Christ are not the consequence of their faulty understanding of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, but on our failure to grasp the advancing light of the gospel of righteousness by faith.

Daniel 11:41: He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hands, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

"The glorious land" is a term that it seems can apply only to Daniel's native land of Palestine, home of God's people in his time. The Islamic forces, aided by the British, swept through Palestine in their campaign to drive the French and Egyptians back to the south in 1800-1801. It is noteworthy that the modern peoples occupying the

ancient territory of the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites escaped pillage and destruction at that time. Bible students at the time saw this as a fulfillment of this detail.

Daniel 11:42-45: He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

Some Bible students understood the "tidings out of the east and out of the north" that troubled" the king of the north" to refer to provocation offered by Russia and Persia which led to the Crimean war of 1853-1856 and the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. Turkey, though weak, rushed forth in

anger and fought savagely.

But she was no match for the superior might of Russia. It seemed as though Turkey would then and there "come to his end". But at this point England and France stepped in to help him, and Russia was bidden to stand back.

Since that time, the Islamic nation of Turkey has been regarded as "the sick man of the east," artificially sustained by the great powers of Europe and America who do not want to see it fall to Russian conquest. The nations have realized more than ever before that the key to world domination is the Middle East. Turkey has held on to its slender thread of territory in Europe all these intervening decades, escaping the brink of destruction in two world wars when she was sorely threatened. Something appears to have held back the final struggle.

Events in the Middle East could well destroy world peace. Oil has now become the world's great hunger, and the Middle East possesses a huge

portion of the world's supply. What they do with their oil and how they price it, vitally affects most countries. Islam, long seemingly asleep, has awakened to a new jihad, or holy war, to make herself supreme religiously, politically, and economically. Oil is now her weapon.

It would seem unwise now to abandon the understanding that Christian people gained of these prophecies during the Great Advent Awakening of the 19th century. There is unmistakable evidence that the Holy Spirit worked in that phenomenal spiritual movement. Who could foresee that today Islam and the Middle East would be the most influential and critically situated nations of the world? So much of Daniel 11 has been concerned with things that happened in the Middle East. Perhaps indeed the closing portion will meet its final fulfillment there.

Undoubtedly, all things were ready during the latter half of the nineteenth century for the close of earth's history and the glorious second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Only one thing

prevented the final fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy: the people of God were not ready.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Since the time when the angels have been holding back the outbreak of the battle of Armageddon, the Holy Spirit has done a mighty work in all the world. Thousands who once sat in the midnight of darkness of paganism are now rejoicing in the knowledge of the Savior. How thankful we should be that verse 45 has not as yet been fulfilled, for when it is, the final events of chapter 12 will immediately take place and the opportunity of responding to the Savior will be forever past.

When the "king of the north" (whoever he may be!) "shall come to his end and none shall help him," Christ our great High Priest, whom the angel spoke of as "Michael," will have to lay aside His

work as Savior, and prepare to come quickly as King of kings and Lord of lords. Then it will be decreed from heaven, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, ... and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still" (Revelation 22:11).

Until that fateful day, the nations anxiously watch for "the king of the north" to "come to his end" while the servants of the Lord watch for the movements of their great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart" (Hebrews 3:7, 8).

Lord, we have understood that the angel's words to Daniel describe what we see in our world of today. Our hearts are made solemn as we realize that soon all things earthly will come to an end. You are only waiting now for Your people to find in Jesus their full and complete Savior from selfishness and sin.

Lord, may Your waiting not be in vain! As the sun sinks in the western sky, write our names in Your book of life, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 12

Daniel Views the End of the World

Daniel 12:1: And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book.

"Michael" is Christ Himself. For Him to "stand up" means to begin to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. This we learn from considering the use of the words "stand up" in verse 2 of chapter 11, where we saw that three kings in Persia were yet to "stand up," that is, reign.

When the "king of the north" comes to his end, Christ will begin His long awaited reign. Until now, He has continued His work as Mediator and

High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. "At that time" which we are considering in this verse He will cease His work as Savior from sin, and become the mighty Judge of their enemies and Protector of His people. To wait until the "king of the north" comes to his end before we listen to the Savior is to wait until too late. The door of mercy which has remained open so long, will then swing shut forever.

When Christ ceases to intercede for guilty man, the Holy Spirit will be withdrawn. There is waiting now in the world such an explosive spirit of rebellion and pent-up wrath that people will be astounded beyond measure when the restraining influence of God's Spirit is finally withdrawn. Then indeed will come a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." Once in a while, even today, we catch little glimpses of the horror that can come when people reject the Spirit of God. This is but a foretaste of what the entire world will be given up to, when once the door is closed. Unbelieving people will be left to their own ways with no restraint.

"Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Daniel's people are God's people, not of any one particular tribe, race, or nation, as the literal Jews, but those of "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6). Their names have been retained "in the book," because they have responded to the seeking love of Christ (Galatians 3:29).

This important "book" in which the names of God's people have been written is the Lamb's "book of life" (see Revelation 13:8). It is called the "book of life" because only those whose names are retained in it will receive the gift of eternal life. John tells us how he saw in vision that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

And we must know, further, that our name will not be blotted out of that book. Jesus has warned us that to begin the Christian life is not enough. To "follow on," to "keep the faith," is what our Savior is concerned about. It is possible for one's name to

be "blotted out" of the book once it has been written there: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels" (Revelation 3:5; see 22:19). We will be the happiest people in the universe when we hear Him "confess" our name.

Some have had their names blotted out of that book of life, although at one time they had their names written in it. There is Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, whom everyone knows about. Instead of overcoming his love of money, he permitted it to overcome him, until he sold the Son of God for thirty pieces of silver. There is king Saul, who at times in his life felt the power of the Holy Spirit working upon his heart (see 1 Samuel 10:6; 19:23, 24). But later he gave in to jealousy and hatred, and rebelled against the Lord. He was eaten by jealousy of David until his heart was filled with an evil spirit. He died in his sin, without hope. There were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, leaders in Israel, who rebelled against God and His chosen servant Moses

(see Numbers 16), and others whose experiences are "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Before Jesus ceases His work as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, it must be determined whose name is to be retained in the book of life, and whose is to be blotted out. This has to be, because Jesus says, "I come quickly: and My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

How will these "rewards" be determined? There must be first an inquiry of all who have professed to serve God so their names have been at some time enrolled in the book of life. This is an investigative judgment. Some call it a "pre-Advent judgment," because it must take place before Jesus returns to earth. When it has been completed, "Michael" (another name for Christ), will "stand up" and begin to reign as King, no longer to serve as High Priest to grant forgiveness to the repentant sinner. The door of mercy which has stood open to the sinner so long, will then swing shut. Then will

go forth the solemn decree, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11). What we are, we will be, forever! (Scary? Then let's be thankful verse 1 hasn't been fulfilled, quite, yet).

Some among the dead will be judged righteous in this pre-Advent judgment. Jesus refers to them as being "accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead" (Luke 20:35). Some among the living will likewise be accounted righteous; Jesus refers to them whose names are retained in the book of life as those who will be "accounted worthy to ... stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36). That means translation at His coming.

This is the judgment which Daniel saw in vision in chapter 7:9, 10, when the "Ancient of days did sit, ... [and] thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: ... and the books were

opened." This investigative judgment takes place while people are still living on the earth, for Jesus urges us to "watch and pray" while it's going on, that we "may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36). This is carried on as part of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which (we learned in chapter 8) began in 1844 at the close of the 2300-year prophecy.

Not only is the book of life considered in this judgment, but there are other books that record all our words, acts, and even secret thoughts (see Malachi 3:16-18; 1 Corinthians 3:5; Ecclesiastes 12:14). All these "secret things" will be revealed in the judgment, spread open to the gaze of "thousand thousands" of angels (and people), unless by repentance and confession we ask for forgiveness and "blotting out."

Something must be "blotted out." Either our names, as Jesus said they would be if we refuse to overcome; or our sins themselves must be blotted out.

Peter speaks of this time: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). The wise man says: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). At the cross of Christ, mercy and truth were met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other (Psalm 85:10). It is the blood of the crucified Jesus that washes away and "blots out" sins, which means two truths: first, the broken law has met in Him its legal substitution; and second, His love revealed in His sacrifice of Himself motivates us to a change of heart (Psalm 51:1, 2). "The Lamb of God ... taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). More than a whitewash, it's "taken away" from the heart.

This "taking away of sin," "finishing the transgression," "making an end of sins" (Daniel 9:24), is what is finally completely accomplished in the cleansing of the sanctuary. It is a work

possible only because of the sacrifice of Jesus made on His cross. It has an effect on the hearts of God's people on earth, because the books of heaven can never be cleansed of the record of our sins until first of all our hearts here on earth have been truly cleansed. Nothing else can make sense.

Those among the living who shall be "accounted worthy" when He comes will be those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," in whose mouth is found no "guile," who are "without fault before the throne" (Revelation 14:4, 5). To bring this about is what Christ died for on His cross.

Daniel 12:2: And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Two general resurrections will come: the first, that of those who died in faith, who will come forth at the second coming of Jesus (John 5:28, 29; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17); and the second, that of the

unbelieving, who will come forth at the close of the one thousand years of Revelation 20 (verses 5, 7, and 8).

But this resurrection which the angel speaks of here is a special one. It comes before the second coming of Christ; it's a mixed resurrection of good and evil people. We read about such a special resurrection in Revelation 1:7, where we learn that some of the people who actually crucified Christ will be among those on the earth who behold Him coming in the clouds of heaven in glory. Among them will be Caiaphas, whom Christ promised that he should see Him come in glory (Matthew 26:64). That promise must be kept! These eminently rebellious people will be given a special opportunity to see the glory of the One whom they hated and murdered. The Father won't torture them physically; just looking will be torture enough. And it is fitting that some among the righteous dead should also be granted a special privilege of seeing the coming of their Lord and Savior.

Daniel 12:3, 4: And they that be wise shall

shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Those who are "wise" have often suffered in this world of evil. It costs something to live a life of faith. We forsake friends, wealth, property, ease, and comfort; sometimes relatives forsake us. We "bear the cross" with Jesus, suffer with Him, endure reproach and ridicule and loneliness, and privation, all with Him.

But who can say that it costs too much? Those who "turn many to righteousness," who pour out their lives in self-sacrifice for the saving of others, will have an abundant reward beyond all counting.

It is Satan who would bewilder and confuse us. He says, "You cannot afford to make the sacrifice involved in keeping the Sabbath! You dare not stand alone in your family for the cross of Christ!"

But the truth is that we gain infinitely more by standing for Jesus. We may lose a job, lose money, lose friends, possibly even (God forbid!) lose even a husband or wife or children or parents or property; but there comes an inheritance as everlasting as stars you see shine at night.

Let us not hesitate to pour out our lives in toil to help to finish God's work on earth. "He that winneth souls is wise," and it is the "wise" who shine forever and ever (Proverbs 11:30).

The book of Daniel was to be opened and understood in the time of the end. Now there are no secrets "sealed" within it. To "run to and fro" may refer to a unique searching of the book of Daniel in the time of the end, bringing "increased knowledge" of its message. Since the beginning of that "time of the end" in 1798, worldwide interest in Daniel has become intense.

This expression may also refer to the great increase of transport and scientific knowledge which has come at the same time as this increased

knowledge of the Bible. Through unprecedented scientific inventions, the Lord has prepared the way for the proclamation of His last-day message. Practically no one is untouched by this, which U.S. News & World Report calls the "info explosion." The commonest yet most astounding example is our instantaneous communication with nearly every person on planet earth through cell phones. Ordinary people of a generation or two ago could never have dreamed of them.

If one compares the 6000 years of human history to a single day between sunrise and sunset, mankind has slept the quiet sleep of bygone ages from sunrise to within twenty minutes of sunset, when suddenly, in that space of a few moments all these modern inventions have sprung into being.

Daniel 12:5-7: Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these

wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

Daniel listens to this conversation between two angels and hears the same time prophecy mentioned that we saw in 7:25—"a time, times, and a half," or three and one-half years of prophetic time. (Counting 360 days to a Bible year, we have a total of 1260 days. Each day standing for a year— see Ezekiel 4:6—we have a total of 1260 years.) During this time, the destroyer of God's people has prospered in his evil work. Following the end of his supremacy there is only a comparatively short time until "all these things shall be finished."

The book of Revelation unseals and explains Daniel. "The man clothed in linen" here reminds us of that "mighty angel" of Revelation who stood

upon the sea and the earth and "lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever ... that there should be time [delay] no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets [including Daniel!]" (Revelation 10:1-7). The Lord is speaking through these two books together.

Daniel 12:8-10: And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

The prophets often "inquired and searched diligently, ... searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify. ... Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things" (1 Peter 1:11-12). We live

in days they longed to see.

The Spirit of God chose to employ symbols in revealing the future to the "wise." None others understand, or even desire to understand. Only the humble in heart "hunger and thirst after righteousness," who earnestly seek the enlightenment of the Spirit of God, and thus are granted to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Can we not just now bow our heads in deep thankfulness to the Lord that He has seen fit to open to us this door of knowledge?

Daniel 12:11: And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand and two hundred and ninety days.

Last of all, the angel gives Daniel additional numerical evidence for the accuracy of his prophecies. Like the girders and cross-members bolted together to reinforce a heavy bridge, these time periods reinforce Daniel's most important prophecies. The 1290 "days" are naturally to be

understood as prophetic symbols, each day for a year, just as the 1260 days of Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 12:6.

We remember that the word "sacrifice" does not occur in the Hebrew words of this text, but has been supplied by translators who supposed it was required (see comments on chapter 8:13, 14; 11:31). The "daily" is a Hebrew term denoting the "continual" exercise of a self-exalting nature "in transgression," the Hebrew word gadal, the evil thing that paganism was, which was taken away politically in order to set up a worse thing—"the abomination that maketh desolate." We understand the meaning to be that the last organized resistance of paganism in Europe should be "taken away" that there should be no political opposition to the setting up of the power of the papacy to rule the world for 1260 years.

Paganism once ruled ancient Europe. Remnants of its superstitions abound in modern life. For example, our days of the week are named after pagan deities. Sunday as a day of worship is a

remnant of ancient sun-worship. The belief in the immortality of the soul apart from Christ has been borrowed from paganism. Some other religious customs and holidays which have no foundation in the Bible but profess to be "Christian" can be traced to the same origin.

This political paganism was once a formidable power in Europe which seriously impeded the progress of the Roman church. The angel spoke of this situation in chapter 11:31. He now declared that from the time that paganism should be "taken away" as a political force in order to set up the papacy's power, should be 1290 years—evidently to the time when the period of papal supremacy should come to an end. Subtracting 1290 from the year 1798 when the pope's temporal power came to an end, we have the year 508.

At that time we see far-reaching changes taking place in European life. In 496, Clovis the king of the Franks (the kingdom which became France) was "converted" to the Roman Catholic faith. He immediately began to force his new-found "faith"

on others. Though his pagan soldiers experienced no change in heart or conversion of character thereby, he ordered them all to march through a river and thus be "baptized." Such a superficial profession of Christian faith was much more agreeable to the natural human heart than the faith of the Savior who said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). Clovis and his soldiers assumed a Christian name and profession.

The king of France was ever afterwards honored as the "most Christian" prince of Europe, and the "eldest son of the papacy." Clovis's baptism prepared the way for the dominance of a system of religion in Europe for 1260 years that had "a form of godliness" but denied "the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5). To this day, it is the custom of multitudes to make the same superficial exchange of the old paganism for an empty and powerless profession of Christianity. It knows no victory over the power of sin and love of self in the heart. Jesus said, "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their

heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8, 9).

Whereas paganism was a "continual transgression," such an empty profession of apostate Christianity is a more fatal "abomination that maketh desolate."

A pagan person can be awakened to a sense of his need of a Savior from sin. but it is almost impossible to arouse the conscience and heart of a person who feels that his empty profession of Christ leaves him "in need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). Multitudes who have been deceived by the "little horn," "the abomination that maketh desolate," remain as blind as the ancient Jews, having never learned to receive Christ into the heart as the only Sacrifice for sin and Savior from it.

The Lord has carefully drawn back the curtain in the book of Daniel and exposed the inner workings of the "mystery of iniquity." His purpose

is a gracious one—to enlighten and warn us to heed the voice of the True Shepherd.

Soon after his baptism in 496, Clovis began a series of wars to bring into subjection to the Roman church the last remnants of opposition among the non-Catholic kings of Europe. Early in 497 he began a campaign against the Visigoths, conquered them, and slew their king. In the year 508, Theodoric, the last remaining king opposed to the Roman faith, fought with Clovis. Though he seemed to have the advantage over Clovis by force of arms, he made peace with him for some strange reason. It was then that political paganism died. Thus Clovis and the Roman church emerged in that year as the undisputed masters of Europe. The way was clear for the complete setting up of the papacy 30 years later in 538 A.D.

Daniel 12:12, 13: Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

It is reasonable to consider that the 1335 "days" begin at the same time as the 1290 symbolic "days." Adding 1335 years to 508 brings us to the year 1843. How can we consider that people living at that time were especially "blessed"? In what way did Daniel "stand in his lot" at that time?

We have seen in chapter 8:14 that the hour of God's judgment began in 1844. It was then that the 2300 years came to an end. Then began the judgment-hour message to "every nation, kindred, tongue and people" of Revelation 14:6-12. Those who were living in that time—yes, we who are living today—are blessed above all people who have ever lived. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears for they hear," said Jesus. "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matthew 13:16, 17). This is the time for "the cleansing of the sanctuary." We see the glorious fulfillment of the angel's inspired prophecy. We see the miraculous, sudden "increase

of knowledge." Soon we shall also see the coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven.

Daniel did not go to heaven as soon as he died, although he was certainly a saint by his life of faith. The angel told him that he would "rest" in his grave, until the "end be." Then he would "stand in his lot" in the judgment when the names of all who have died professing faith in Christ would be called and considered. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

But Daniel's "lot" was assured. He had confessed his sins and forsaken them. All his life he had dwelt in the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91:1). As a branch abides in the vine, he had abode in Christ, the Living Vine, through daily communion with God, through study of His word, and a constant choice to believe. Everlasting life had begun in his heart as a well-spring of water of life springing up to refresh all around him. His death was only a sleep. He will be among those of whom the Savior

speaks, "They ... shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead" (Luke 20:35).

Appendix A

The author has tried to write in a clear style that will be easily understood by anyone as yet unfamiliar with the prophecy of Daniel. This Appendix is intended for those who have questions to ask concerning some special points.

"Higher criticism" has said that the book of Daniel was written in the second century before Christ, not the sixth. The reason is that the "higher critics" don't believe in Bible prophecy. They say it is impossible for any prophet to "see" what will happen in the future. Therefore Daniel was written after the events it describes as "prophecy" took place, they say.

This makes the book to be a forgery by a writer who wanted to deceive his readers. The argument for this late dating is that the Aramaic language in Daniel (2:4 to 7:28) was allegedly the kind spoken in the second century B.C. and not the sixth. However, among the Qumram "Dead Sea Scrolls" the Aramaic Genesis Apocryphon now provides

evidence that Daniel's Aramaic is not that of the later period, but much older!

Daniel was included in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), which was made about the second century before Christ, proving that the book had been known and accepted for a long time as "prophecy" before this.

Further, the book could not have been written during the century of the Maccabees, because it does not correctly reflect the historical events that took place then.

Only one major historical detail in Daniel remains to be confirmed by archaeology: the identity of "Darius the Mede" of chapter 5:31 and 6:1. Since the trustworthiness of Daniel has been established by so many other archaeological discoveries, is it not wise for us to trust him in this one little detail? Samuel Taylor Coleridge well said:

"When we meet an apparent error in a good

author, we are to presume ourselves ignorant of his understanding, until we are certain that we understand his ignorance" (cited by Oswald T. Allis, *The Five Books of Moses*, p. 125).

Daniel 1:1-5

Archaeological evidence is clear that the Jews were taken to Babylon in Exile as Daniel says:

(1) Pottery dug up in Palestine from the period before the Exile is different than that found after the Exile, with none buried in between (William F. Albright, *Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, p. 171).

(2) The Cyrus Cylinder records in cuneiform the action of King Cyrus to allow captive people to return to their homelands, in harmony with Ezra 1:2, 3.

(3) The following is of interest:

"In the ruins of the vaulted building near the

Ishtar Gate (of Babylon) ... some 300 cuneiform tablets were unearthed ... found to date between 595 and 570 B.C. and to contain lists of rations such as barley and oil paid to craftsmen and captives who lived in and near Babylon at that time ... But the name of most significance to us is none other than that of Yaukin, king of Judah, with whom also five royal princes are listed." (Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, p. 188. "Yaukin" is the same as Jehoichin of Judah, son of Jehoiakim (2 Chronicles 36:4, 8).

"Further confirmation of the status of Jehoichin in Babylon comes from the discovery in Palestine of three stamped jar-handles which bore the words, 'Belonging to Eliakim, steward of Yaukin" (G. E. Wright, *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, p. 178).

"The invasions of Nebuchadnezzar in 605, 597, and 587-586 B.C. caused much damage and destruction in Judah. Archaeological evidence shows that many of the cities of Judah were destroyed and not rebuilt, a fact particularly

evidenced in the excavations at Azekah, Bethshemesh, and Kirjath-sepher" (Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, p. 227. W. E. Albright says that excavations show that "the towns were not only completely destroyed by the Chaldeans in their two invasions, but were not reoccupied for generations—often never again in history.")

Daniel 1:12-16

In Western "developed" nations, over 50 percent of men now living are doomed to die of disease of the heart or blood vessels, largely due to eating meat or animal foods, that cause high cholesterol and clogging of the blood vessels. Other causes are refined foods, excessive fats, tobacco, alcohol, and insufficient exercise. Daniel's example of a simple vegetarian diet may mean longer, happier life for you.

Daniel 2:38-40

Gold was used more freely in Babylon than in

Medo-Persia, Greece, or Rome:

"The walls of the cell of Merodach must be made 'to glisten like suns,' the hall of his temple must be overlaid with shining gold, lapis-lazuli, and alabaster; and the chapel of his lordship, which a former king had fabricated in silver, Nebuchadnezzar declares that he overlaid 'with bright gold.' The roofing of E-kua, the cell of Merodach, is also overlaid with 'bright gold'" (Charles Boufflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI: 1977, pp. 25, 26).

Medo-Persia was wealthy but did not use gold as extravagantly as Babylon. The Greek soldiers were noted for their free use of brass (or bronze) in their armor. Ezekiel mentions the traders of Greece dealing in "vessels of brass" (27:13).

Daniel 3:5, 7, 10

The names of these instruments of music give evidence that Daniel was indeed written in the time

of the Babylonian empire. Instruments had been imported from Greece into Babylon as early as his time. No Hebrew instrument is included in this list.

The 1946 Encyclopedia Britannica article on Daniel suggested a late date for the writing of the book partly because of this list of instruments. But in a later edition, the new article on Daniel recognized the growing evidence from archaeology supporting the earlier date.

Daniel 4:33

Some critics have questioned whether this madness actually came upon Nebuchadnezzar, because no one has yet found any inscriptions from official Babylonian documents admitting it. However, everyone knows that anything as embarrassing as this would not be publicized. No tombstone anywhere records that the dead person was insane! And, further, only a small part of the official records of ancient Babylon have been discovered.

However, we do have an incident recorded by Ebydenus and reported by Eusebius that King Nebuchadnezzar uttered a mad prophecy and "forthwith disappeared and Evil-Merodach his son succeeded him on the throne." Berosus, another historian of the Babylonians, hints of something wrong when he tells how Nebuchadnezzar began a building project, then "fell sick and died, after a reign of forty-three years." There is more than a hint here that the Bible account is true.

Daniel 5:1, 30

It is almost amusing how "higher criticism" has been rebuked and refuted by the discoveries that Belshazzar was a real person to whom Nabonidus entrusted the kingship in the last days of the Babylonian Empire. A modern scholar says:

"Of all non-Babylonian records dealing with the situation at the close of the Neo-Babylonian empire the fifth chapter of Daniel ranks next to cuneiform in accuracy. ... It may be interpreted as excelling because it attributes royal power to

Belshazzar, and because it recognizes that a dual relationship existed in the kingdom. Babylonian cuneiform documents of the sixth century B.C. furnish clear-cut evidence of the correctness of ... the Biblical narrative dealing with the fall of Babylon. ... Annals in the Greek language ranging from about the beginning of the third century B.C. to the first century B.C. are absolutely silent concerning Belshazzar, ... The total information found in all available chronologically fixed documents later than the cuneiform texts of the sixth century B.C. ... could not have provided the necessary material for the historical framework of the fifth chapter of Daniel" (Raymond P. Dougherty, Yale University, Nabonidus and Belshazzar, 1926, pp. 199, 200).

The story of how Babylon was captured is also documented from historical sources. Cyrus himself tells the story (Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, edited by J. B. Pritchard, Princeton, 1955, pp. 312-316).

Over ten thousand inscribed clay tablets have

been recovered from the sands of old Babylon that give us tremendous information about the city. Daniel stands the test.

Daniel 7:25

Further comments on the papacy presuming to change God's holy law:

"Either the law (the ten commandments) remains in all its force, to the utmost extent of its literal requirements, or it is passed away with the Jewish ceremonies. ... If it does not exist, let us abandon a mock observance of another day Sunday for it.

"'But,' say some, 'it was changed from the seventh day to the first day.' Where? When? and by whom? No man can tell. No, it never was changed, nor could it be, unless creation was to be gone through again; for the reason assigned must be changed before the observance can be changed! It is all old wives' fables to talk of the change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day. If it be

changed, it was that august personage changed it who changes times and laws ex officio —I think his name is DOCTOR ANTICHRIST" (Alexander Campbell, The Christian Baptist, February 2, 1824)."

(Question) What Bible authority is there for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week?

"Who gave the Pope the authority to change a command of God?"

(Answer) If the Bible is the only guide for Christians, then the Seventh Day Adventist is right in observing ... Saturday. ... But Catholics learn what to believe and do from the divine, infallible authority established by Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church ..." (Father B. L. Conway, The Question Box, p. 243, 1971 edition; Roman Catholic).

Daniel 7:9-11, 22, 26

There are links that bind Daniel 7 and 8

together. Both speak of "the little horn" that persecutes or tramples down God's people, and that blasphemes the God of heaven. Both describe the judgment that condemns the "little horn" and defends God's people. Daniel 7 makes clear that the judgment will come after the 1260 years of papal power, but take place before the Son of man receives His kingdom (verse 13). Daniel 7 does not give a time for the judgment, but chapter 8:14 does (2300 days or years). Thus Daniel 7 prepares the way for us to understand Daniel 8.

Some scholars do not understand the idea of an "investigative" or pre-Advent judgment. Note these comments from a scholar that support this truth:

"The common idea is ... that the dead will all be simultaneously resurrected, and all the living simultaneously changed, and that only then the judgement will sit for ... the eternal destiny of each ... But it is not according to the plain letter of the Scriptures. ...

"... There lurks in the popular idea a

mischievous and confusing error. People take the resurrection as a mere preliminary of the judgement and view the judgement itself as something distinct from the resurrection, and coming after it. ... They consider that the dead are to be awakened for the purpose of being judged. "The truth is, that the resurrection, and the changes which pass 'in the twinkling of an eye' upon the living, are themselves the fruits and embodiments of antecedent judgement.

They are the consequences of adjudications then already made. ... Resurrections and translations are products of judgements previously passed, upon the dead as dead and upon the quick living as quick living. The dead in Christ shall rise first, because they are already adjudged to be in Christ; and the living saints are caught up together with them to the clouds (see 1 Thess. 4: 16, 17) because they are already adjudged to be saints, and worthy to attain that world [see Luke 20:35]" (J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, 12th edition, vol. I, pp. 322-326).

Daniel 8:9-14

Some commentators understand "the little horn" to be the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes. Here are some well-reasoned thoughts refuting this confusion:

"These two thousand and three hundred days can by no computation be accommodated to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, even though the days be taken from natural days" (Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, London: Thomas Tego, 1846, p. 258).

"A horn of a beast is never taken for a single person; it always signifies a new kingdom; and the kingdom of Antiochus was an old one. Antiochus reigned over one of the four horns; and a little horn was a fifth, under its proper kings. This horn was at first a little one, and waxed exceeding great, but so did not Antiochus ... His kingdom on the contrary was weak, and tributary to the Romans; and he did not enlarge it. The horn was 'a king of fierce countenance, and destroyed wonderfully, and

prospered and practised;...'... but Antiochus was frightened out of Egypt by a mere message of the Romans, and afterwards routed and baffled by the Jews. ... The horn cast down the sanctuary to the ground, and so did not Antiochus; he left it standing. The sanctuary and host were trampled under foot two thousand and three hundred days; but the profanation of the temple, in the reign of Antiochus, did not last so many natural days" (Sir Isaac Newton, Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse, comments on Daniel 8).

Daniel 8:14

Are the 2300 days literal years? The Good News Bible renders this verse, "I heard the other angel answer, 'It will continue for 1,150 days. ...'" Some scholars who see Antiochus Epiphanes as the "little horn" also think that the "2300 evenings-mornings" should be understood as 1150 literal days, or 1150 evening sacrifices and 1150 morning sacrifices. However, this is interpretation, not translation. The Hebrew is clear, "2300 evenings-

mornings," and does not permit dividing it in half. When the Old Testament speaks of the daily sacrifices, it never says "evenings-mornings," but "burnt offerings continually morning and evening" (1 Chronicles 16:40). And these two offerings were considered as one unit (Numbers 28:4, 8) that could not be divided in half.

Further, the Hebrew phrase "evenings-mornings" is denned in the Bible as ordinary days:

"And there was evening and there was morning, one day" (Genesis 1:5, RSV: see also Leviticus 24:3). C. F. Keil, a noted Hebrew scholar says of Daniel 8:14: "A Hebrew reader could not possibly understand the period of time 2300 evening-mornings (to be) ... 2300 half days or 1150 whole days, because evening and morning at creation constituted not the half but the whole day. ... We must therefore take the words as they are, i.e., understand them of 2300 whole days" (Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel, 1949, p. 304; most translations recognize these as 2300 "days").

No scholar has ever been able to fit either 2300 or 1150 literal days into the history of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is very obvious that the Holy Spirit never intended this prophecy to be applied to him. Symbolic prophecy in the Bible requires that each day equal a literal year. This key unlocks the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation and makes sense of their time periods.

Some of the Bible reasons for the year-day principle are as follows:

(1) The year-day principle is in harmony with interpreting beasts to represent kingdoms, horns as powers, oceans as peoples, etc. It would be foolish to try to make an exception within these symbolic prophecies, and make the time periods to be literal.

(2) As stated in our text, the Bible upholds this principle (Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6). The Lord Himself says, "I have appointed thee each day for a year." He speaks in both those texts.

(3) The 2300 "days" of Daniel 8:14 cover the

history of the Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires, as the angel says in verses 19-26, "At the time of the end shall be the vision, ... for many days." These empires lasted many times more than 2300 literal days. Nothing can possibly fit except the year-day principle.

(4) The Hebrew word for day (yom) is found in two other related long time prophecies in Daniel, the 1290 and 1335 days of chapter 12:11, 12. This indicates that days-years should be understood for 8:14.

(5) Daniel 11 is obviously an expansion of the Daniel 8 prophecy, covering the same period of time. Yet chapter 11 is not symbolic; it is straightforward language. Three times it speaks of "years" (verses 6, 8, 13) as the parallel of "days" in Daniel 8:14. Thus Daniel 8 and 11 are wedded together and support the year-day principle.

(6) The angel repeatedly told Daniel that these prophecies concerned "the time of the end" (chapter 8:19, 26; 10:13, 14). If the "days" were

literal, this would not make sense; it would mean that the book of Daniel was fulfilled before Christ's time and that His command to "understand" it would be meaningless.

(7) When the Old Testament speaks of literal time, it says plainly, "years." For example, David reigned in Hebron "seven years and six months" (2 Samuel 2:11). And he was in the Philistine camp "a year and six months" (1 Samuel 27:7). But in Daniel 7:25 we have the unusual expression, "a time, times, and half a time." The book of Revelation unlocks this for us by stating that that period is still fixture in John's day (see Revelation 12:24, 6; 13:5). Therefore, there is only one way to understand it: prophetic time, a day for a year. If it were a literal period, it would have been fulfilled long before John's day, and he would have had no reason to repeat it or discuss it.

(8) Further, when the Bible speaks of ordinary time, it never speaks of more than a year as so many days, for example, the natural expression, "three years and six months." But the prophecies

never say that. They always say "1260 days," or "42 months," etc. Thus it is clear that symbolic time is meant, not literal.

(9) The "beasts" that symbolize kingdoms are short-lived animals, but they represent empires that lasted for hundreds of years. A day for a year is appropriate.

(10) The earth rotates on its axis once each day; but it revolves around the sun once each year. It seems natural that in prophetic symbols, the one should be a symbol of the other (see Genesis 1:14).

(11) God is wise to tell His people of events long future in their day, in such a way that their true length might not then be understood; but as the end should draw near, they would understand. Christ as Son of God knew and understood about the time that should elapse between His first coming and His second; yet He left His people from age to age to discover this from these prophecies.

These are "signs" that His second coming is near, and that this is indeed "the time of the end." These prophecies when read by themselves appear like a dry, worthless skeleton. But when they are studied in the light of history and the truths of the gospel message, and we see God's over-all purposes revealed, then they are clothed with flesh, beautiful as a complete living person standing before us. It is the divinely inspired year-day principle that makes it possible to understand them.

(12) The final test of Daniel's time prophecies is: do they fit the fulfillment of history? To understand the 2300 "days" as literal does not make sense in the history of Antiochus Epiphanes, nor of any other power. The 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24 fit perfectly as literal 490 years from 457 B.C. to 34 A.D., and the 3-1/2 "times" of Daniel 7:25 fit as 1260 literal years. To deny the year-day principle is to make both Daniel and Revelation meaningless for our times today, and even to cast doubt on Christ's prophecy in Matthew 24.

What is the sanctuary to be cleansed? It cannot

be the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, for that was destroyed in 70 A.D. and no longer has any meaning since the death of Christ. Neither can it be the land of Palestine or the land of Judah, for "cleansing" or "vindication" has no meaning in relation to land.

The Bible makes plain what the "sanctuary" of Daniel 8:14 means:

(1) Daniel 7:9, 10 speaks of the heavenly courtroom where the "thrones were placed," and "the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Since Daniel 8 further develops the truth of Daniel 7, it is clear that the "sanctuary" is the same courtroom of judgment.

(2) God's throne centers within His sanctuary in heaven (2 Chronicles 18:18; Psalms 11:4).

(3) The natural answer to our question is the New Testament book of Hebrews. Here we read that the Old Testament sanctuary of Moses' time (and later the temple in Jerusalem) was merely a

"shadow" or type of the true heavenly sanctuary where Christ ministers as great High Priest (Hebrews 8:1, 2, 5; 9:1-24, etc.). Thus the heavenly sanctuary is the throne room of heaven, the center of God's government in relation to the "civil war" that Satan has started through inventing sin. The sanctuary is the headquarters of Christ's ministry in behalf of all who believe in Him, the nerve-center of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. What happens in that sanctuary is more important than any earthly political, military, or economic "news." Empires may rise and fall, civilizations come and go, but what really matters to the security of earth and heaven is the victory of God over the rebellion of Satan. The heavenly sanctuary is the focal point of this struggle. This is why all who believe "in Christ" will follow Him by faith in His closing work in the heavenly sanctuary.

What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? Is "cleansed" the correct translation for verse 14? The Hebrew word is nisdaq. Its root idea is "make right," "vindicate," or "restore." But "purify" or "cleanse" may be included in its meanings. The

earlier translations (the Greek LXX, the Latin, the Syriac, and the Ethiopian Coptic) all have "cleansed." The Hebrew sadaq (related to nisdaq) is used in the Old Testament to mean the same as "cleanse" or "be pure" (Job 4:17; 17:9; 15:14; 25:4). In 1948 the Jewish Society of America published an essay by Dr. H. Louis Ginsberg in which he says that the Hebrew portions of Daniel were originally written in Aramaic, and that the original of 8:14 reads "cleansed."

Further, there are word links that join Daniel 8:14 to Leviticus 16, the chapter which describes the cleansing of the typical sanctuary on the day of atonement. The word for "sanctuary" in Daniel 8:14 (qodesh) is used several times in Leviticus 16 (vss. 2, 3, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27) and each time refers to the most holy apartment being cleansed. The same word qodesh is connected with "cleansing" or "purifying" in 1 Chronicles 23:28. And the angel's question in Daniel 8:13, "until when the vision concerning ... the transgression ... ?" contains the same word for "transgressions" in Leviticus 16:16, 21 that means the sins of the people of Israel that

have polluted the sanctuary and must be "cleansed" on the day of atonement. These "links" in the chain join Daniel 8:14 with Leviticus 16 and provide evidence that what the angel is talking about is the antitypical cleansing of the true heavenly sanctuary where Christ is High Priest. (Compare Hebrews 9:23.)

Daniel 9:24-27

The "Gap Theory" of interpreting this passage has become widely popular. We need to consider it. The main points are:

(1) The 70th week of Daniel's prophecy must be separated in time from the 69 weeks by being pushed far into the future just before the second coming of Christ.

(2) The "he" of Daniel 9:27 who "shall confirm the covenant with many for one week" is the Antichrist, not the true Christ. The Antichrist is not the system of the papacy which has already appeared in history, but some mysterious future

individual. (Jesuit theologians invented this theory).

(3) Israel and the Jews are still the true "chosen nation" of God, and the Christian church does not belong in this understanding of Daniel 9:24-27, nor in any of the prophecies.

(4) All the applications of Bible prophecy ground to a halt with the death of Christ on the cross, and the whole world has been in a state of suspension since. "The prophetic time clock stopped ticking" at that time and will not begin again until the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy starts up again with the end of what they call "the church age" and the restoration of the literal Jews as God's chosen people.

Here are some reasons why this "Gap Theory" of interpretation is contrary to the Bible:

(1) There is no hint in the prophecy that the 70th week should be separated from the proper sequence of the preceding 69 weeks. To try to

create a "gap" between them is arbitrary. It is as unreasonable as to try to make a "gap" in Jeremiah's seventy years of captivity. Further, there is no gap between the "seven weeks" and the "sixty-two weeks;" why should there be one between the 69th and 70th?

(2) The "Gap Theory" is a child of the papacy. It is one of their attempts to turn away the finger of prophecy pointing to them as "the little horn" of Daniel 7 and 8, "the man of sin" of 2 Thessalonians 2, and the "beast" of Revelation 13. The Protestant Reformers of the 16th Century clearly recognized the papacy as the fulfillment of these prophecies. Multitudes of Christian people awakened to see in the papacy the true embodiment of the prophetic Antichrist. The papacy called the Council of Trent for the purpose of finding some way to get around this charge, for it was a very disturbing and convincing identification.

Louis Alcazar, a Spanish Jesuit, came up with the idea that not only was "the little horn" of Daniel Antiochus Epiphanes, but "the beast" of

Revelation 13 was the pagan Roman empire persecuting the early Christian church. In other words, the "Antichrist" came long ago before the rise of the papacy. This was one way of turning away the prophetic finger from the papacy. The Jesuit Alcazar was a loyal servant of the Catholic Church. His view is known today as "Preterism."

On the other hand, Francisco Ribera, also a Spanish Jesuit, had an entirely contrary idea. He saw that there were grave difficulties with the Preterist views. Antichrist is a far in the future individual, he said, who will rule for three and one-half years of literal time, rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, deny Christ, abolish Christianity, be received by the Jews, pretend to be God, etc., and thus fulfill the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. His view is called "Futurism."

Both of these theories practically destroy the prophecies, because they make Daniel and Revelation meaningless to us today. They twist Daniel 9:24-27 out of its true context. The theory is speculative and is a mere "private interpretation"

not supported by Scripture, as we shall see.

Nowhere in the Bible do we read that Antichrist is to make a "covenant" with anybody in the last days, or at any time. Jesus quoted these words of Daniel as pointing to His own work, when He said to His disciples at the Last Supper, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28, RSV). We are much safer to follow Jesus' own application of this prophecy than that of the Jesuits.

Sad to say, many modern Protestants have unwittingly accepted this Jesuit doctrine known as "Futurism." They don't realize its true origin.

(3) The clear intent of Daniel 9:24-27 is to show that unless the Jews should repent, the 70 weeks (490 years) would be their last opportunity as a nation to fulfill their obligation as the true "chosen nation" of God. If they should reject and crucify their Messiah and go on to reject His apostles, they would seal their doom as God's

Israel. According to the Bible, those who believe in Christ are the "true Jews" (Romans 2:28, 29; Galatians 3:28, 29). Therefore the faithful Christian church is God's "Israel" today.

Individual Jews can repent and believe in Jesus like anybody else, and Paul makes plain that God still loves the Jews (Romans 11:1-5). And there will be among them a "remnant" who in the end of time will accept the gospel. God has permitted the Jewish nation and race to continue as a witness to His ancient covenant; but the angel pointed out to Daniel that as a nation their final rejection of the Messiah would be the end of their special honor as God's chosen nation.

(4) The idea that the "prophetic clock" stopped ticking with the death of Christ makes the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12 to be meaningless. This is simply a clever device to turn God's spotlight away from the papacy as the "little horn" or Antichrist.

Daniel 11:36-45

We must frankly recognize that there are differing and conflicting interpretations of this passage. Very valuable truth may be lost to our understanding through controversy and confusion. And some may be discouraged by these disagreements and conclude that all of Daniel is likewise uncertain as to its meaning.

However, we have seen that the prophecies of chapters 2, 7, 8, and 9 are so clear and straightforward that it is impossible to avoid the conviction that the Bible indeed explains itself and is meaningful to us today. These prophecies are precious in their clarity. Because the closing part of one prophecy is not understood by all alike, shall we abandon our faith in the others that are so very clear?

We rejoice that so much is crystal clear up to this point. We hope and pray that soon all will see "eye to eye" on this remaining portion of Daniel 11.

"No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" and this includes Daniel 11 (2 Peter 1:20). Therefore, there must be a true understanding of it.

This book is not written in order to "invent" some new interpretation or to discredit what sincere, godly scholars have written in times past (or present). It is written with the prayer that we shall "come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" now in this time, "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:13, 14).

This is the reason why the author has presented the views found in this book. While many voices have presented so-called "new light" on this passage during the past 80 years, the author has not been privileged yet to hear any that involves fewer problems than the "voices" that have spoken longest and most consistently in understanding

Daniel and Revelation.

The author has received help from many books and commentaries in the writing of this book and this Appendix. Among them are the following:

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